

# Quail Hunting Prospects, 2009

## Agriculture and Grassland Program Management Note 09-6

### 2008-2009 Hunting Season

Our harvest estimates are based upon results from 2008-09 Illinois Hunter Harvest Survey. An estimated 21,962 hunters harvested 151,170 quail. The number of quail hunters afield was 10.8% lower than last year. Even though hunters spent more time in the field last year, they harvested 19.9% fewer birds than in the previous season.

Table 1. Quail hunter participation and success 2003-2009.

Season	Harvest	Hunters	Average Quail/ Trip	Average Quail/ Season	Average Days/Season	Total Days Hunting
2003-04	204,236	30,044	1.15	6.8	5.91	177,617
2004-05	263,293	38,913	1.22	6.77	5.55	216,064
2005-06	244,521	29,983	1.44	8.16	5.67	170,108
2006-07	198,207	24,918	1.48	7.95	5.38	133,972
2007-08	188,710	24,614	1.34	7.67	5.74	141,227
2008-09	151,170	21,962	1.04	6.88	6.64	145,720
Percent change 2008-2009	-19.9%	-10.8%	-22.3%	-10.3%	+15.7%	+3.2%

### Quail Population Indices

IDNR biologists surveyed 53 routes in 2009 for whistling bobwhites. Observers recorded an average of 7.33 calls per stop, virtually the same as last year's average. Calls in the south central Illinois were up slightly and down slightly in west central and far southern Illinois. None of the changes were statistically different from the 2008 survey results. Observers conducting the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) ran surveys in June. The average for these routes in 2009 was 14.9 quail per route (3.7% more than in 2008). The change was not statistically significant.

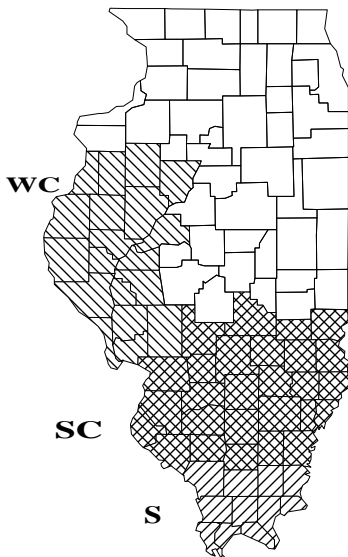


Table 2. 2009 quail call-count results.

	Calls Per Stop 2009	Calls Per Stop 2008	Percent change from 2008	Statistically significant change <sup>1</sup> ?
West-Central	6.13	6.73	-8.9%	No
South-Central	9.88	9.52	3.8%	No
South	2.35	2.38	-1.3%	No
State	7.328	7.331	0.0%	No

<sup>1</sup>Statistically significant (P< 0.05). (Wilcoxon Matched-Pairs Signed-Ranks Test)

Figure 1. Regional boundaries

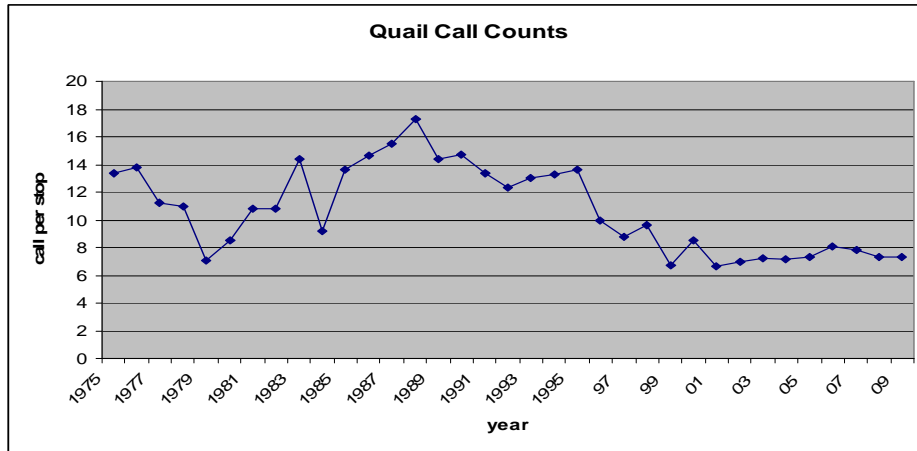


Figure 2. Quail call-counts 1975 - 2009.

### Weather

Last winter was 3.4 degrees warmer than average. There were 3 more days of snow cover and 18.1% less snowfall than the previous winter. Parts of southern Illinois were struck by a severe ice storm in late January.

Illinois experienced its 8<sup>th</sup> wettest and 11<sup>th</sup> coolest summer on record. Rainfall was about 1.6 inches above average and it was 3 degrees cooler during the nesting season.

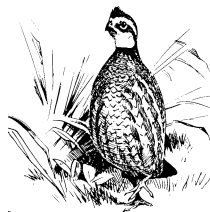
### 2009 Season Outlook

It appears that quail numbers will be about the same as 2008 in Illinois. Breeding populations were unchanged in the primary quail range. Temperatures during the nesting season were below normal but rainfall was above normal. Quail production should have been good except for extremely wet areas. Hunters that have access to good habitat should have a good chance at a successful hunt.

Due to the wet spring, it is likely that some crops may still be in the field during part of the season. This may make hunting more difficult until the crops are harvested.

### Best Areas

Look for farms with a good mix of row crops, small grains, legumes and grassland (excluding fescue and reed canary grass) well connected by wooded fencerows and forest edges. Though quail occur throughout the state, the most productive regions continue to be south-central and west-central Illinois. Based on average annual harvest from 1997 through 2002, some of the top counties are: Franklin, Perry, Wayne, Adams, Brown and Jersey.



**2009-2010 Season Dates:** November 7, 2009 thru January 8, 2009 (North Zone)  
November 7, 2009 thru January 15, 2010 (South Zone)

**Bag Limit:** 8

**Possession Limit:** 20

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