

2016 NEVADA CHUKAR FORECAST

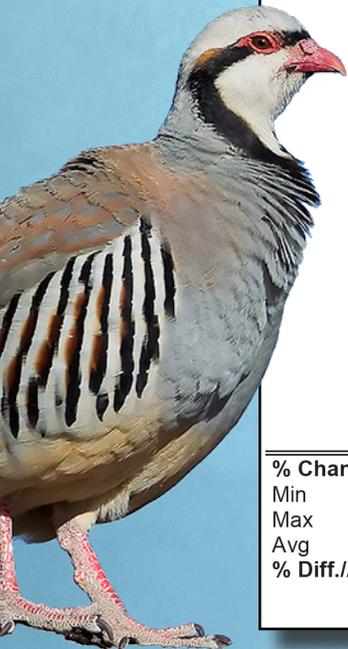
The Nevada Department of Wildlife was able to conduct aerial chukar density surveys in all 13 transects established in northern Nevada (see Figure on opposite page) during the week of August 15-18, 2016. Funding for these surveys was made available through the Nevada Chukar Foundation. Results of the survey were largely mixed with seven transects reporting an increase in observed birds per square mile while six transects saw declines. The most significant decline was apparent in the Santa Rosa transect with a 66% decline from 2015. Lesser declines

were observed in the Pine Forest, Sonoma, Izzenhood, Rock Creek and Granites transects. Alternatively, notable increases were observed in the Argenta, Lava Beds, Sheep Creek and Double H transects. There seems to be some fairly drastic variation, even within specific areas, and mountain ranges adjacent to one another can have quite different results. Overall, results of the survey were positive with a 5% increase in observed birds per square mile compared to last year, and this year's average is 28% greater than the long-term average.

NEVADA AERIAL CHUKAR DENSITY SURVEY PLOTS

Birds Observed per Square Mile

Year	Double H	Santa Rosa	Pine Forest	Jackson	Sonoma	Lava Beds	Selenite	Buffalo Hills	Granites	Argenta	Izzenhood	Rock Creek	Sheep Creek	Overall Average
90	62	76	57	168	64	47	8	35	17	69		115		65
91	23	51	59	134	3	26	7	46	23	33		56		42
92	26	40	90	76	2	14	7	41	41	25		36		36
93	6	6	51	42	7	16	6	4	0	20	23	27	17	17
94	21	13	80	66	18	37	11	22	6	20	23	86	28	33
95	32	17	41	55	19	57	11	23	9	62	16	68	29	34
96	18	20	61	54	34	52	5	62	32	26	15	97	18	38
97	32	11		109						26	11	54	42	41
98	18	45	44	140	37	61	11	31	53	46	13	39	58	46
99	77	102	59	258	125	125	25	67	51	48	6	74	112	87
00	39	59	81	156	49	44	17	46	41	37	11	92	53	56
01	81	85	130	109	31	41	31	32	100	35	23	56	58	62
08	32	61	61	15	112	60	33	70	49	9	25	39	3	44
09	49	41	195	82	104	70	21	58	35	28	32	21	7	57
10	62	87	109	56	66	46	31	76	66	40	37	46	17	57
11	59	37	108	130	167	129	103	77	54	62	59	48	37	82
12	49	33	89	47	150	77	25		57	33	59	87	38	62
13	36	44	136	18	58	49	49	29	33	17	19	17	23	41
14	59	61	83	75	71	80	66	71	58	28	35	28	36	58
15	47	76	107	59	62	48	35	74	62	24	47	47	21	55
16	77	26	74	69	48	90	46	88	57	54	35	43	39	57
% Change	64%	-66%	-31%	17%	-23%	88%	31%	19%	-8%	125%	-26%	-9%	86%	5%
Min	6	3	40	15	2	14	5	4	0	9	6	17	3	9
Max	105	102	195	258	167	129	103	88	100	95	59	127	112	87
Avg	43	41	82	96	58	55	27	47	39	38	27	60	35	45
% Diff./Avg.	78%	-36%	-10%	-28%	-17%	65%	73%	85%	46%	41%	31%	-28%	11%	28%



2016-17 CHUKAR HUNTING

An estimate of online small game survey questionnaires indicate that there were 43% fewer hunters that hunted chukar during the 2015-2016 season than in 2014-2015. This resulted in less overall harvest (approximately 60,000 birds) than the prior season, but the return on investment was the best since 2011 with 6.8 birds per hunter and 1.4 birds per day. With less hunting pressure, a fall that provided a good amount of green vegetation, a winter with greater overall snowpack than in recent years, a mild February that provided a reprieve from winter conditions and fairly abundant spring moisture, one would think that the table was set for a fantastic chukar production year. Unfortunately, that didn't materialize across the board as we would have anticipated. However, there are still some bright spots that should peak the wing-shooter's interest and overall, look for a bit better season than last year.

In conjunction with the aerial density surveys, some ground brood surveys were also conducted. Brood surveys conducted in Hunt Unit 041-042 documented 710 birds (this was the greatest number of birds observed since 2011 in this unit group) with a young per adult ratio of 3.5. Within this portion of Pershing County, hunters may want to try the Sahwawe and Seven Troughs Ranges. Additionally, brood surveys were

also conducted in Churchill County with positive results. A total of 534 birds were observed; composed of 504 young and 53 adults for a young per adult ratio of 9.5. This is considered a high recruitment ratio and should result in good to very good chukar hunting. Look to mountain ranges such as the Stillwater, Clan Alpine and Sand Springs to encounter good bird numbers early in the season.

Some large wildfires burned important chukar and other wildlife habitat during the summer of 2016, and it is likely that the fire season will continue into October unless there is a drastic change in the weather. The Izzenhood survey transect, and almost the entirety of the Izzenhood Range, burned in the 122,000 acre "Hot Pot" fire. Additionally, the Virginia Mountain fire complex burned some popular chukar hunting habitat during the summer of 2016 as well. Hunters may want to avoid these areas to enjoy a better experience and to decrease stress on various wildlife populations.

