NEVADA CHUKAR FORECAST

2020 - 2021

Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Game Division biologists conducted a series of chukar brood surveys across northern Nevada during July and August of 2020. These surveys are merely meant to provide upland game hunters with general information on chukar productivity in various areas, thereby offering suggestions of more promising mountain ranges to hunt.

Overall, the statewide average production value of 1.7 chicks per adult is considered rather low. Some areas that were productive last year, such as several Churchill County mountain ranges, continue to harbor good bird numbers, but were not nearly as productive this year. A few mountain ranges in Humboldt County showed improvement over last year (e.g. Black Rock and Pine Forest) while others regressed. Some Elko (North Tuscarora) and Eureka (Cortez) County ranges should be fruitful. Over 30 areas were surveyed from late July until late August although some did not provide adequate data to report on. Survey results are summarized in (Table 1). For some survey routes, the overall sample size was not large enough to adequately estimate production.

Table 1. Chukar brood survey results summary for 2020.

County	Hunt Unit	Mountain Range	Adults	Young	Total Birds	Young per Adult
Churchill	181	Sand Springs	150	175	325	1.2
Churchill	182	Stillwaters	69	45	114	0.7
Churchill	183	Clan Alpine	67	0	67	0.0
Churchill	184*	Desatoya*	9	18	27	2.0
Elko	061*	Bruneau*	15	20	35	1.3
Elko	062*	Independence*	5	39	44	7.8
Elko	066*	Snowstorms*	8	32	40	4.0
Elko	067	N. Tuscarora	19	88	107	4.6
Elko	073	Adobe	17	43	60	2.5
Elko	074	Ellen Dee	8	42	50	5.3
Elko	075*	Snake*	7	21	28	3.0
Eureka	141	Cortez	22	78	100	3.5
Eureka	144	Diamonds	15	46	61	3.1
Humboldt	012	Calico	31	28	59	0.9
Humboldt	032	Pine Forest	31	105	136	3.4
Humboldt	034	Black Rock	26	188	214	7.2
Humboldt	051*	Hot Springs*	2	13	15	6.5
Lander	152*	Shoshone*	7	31	38	4.4
Mineral	202	Wassuk	92	89	181	1.0
Mineral	205	Gillis	22	45	67	2.0
Mineral	206	Excelsiors	48	35	83	0.7
Mineral	207	Gabbs Valley	28	30	58	1.1
Pershing	041*	Selenites*	9	30	39	3.3
Pershing	041*	Truckee/Nightingale*	7	30	37	4.3
Pershing	041	Sahwave	47	30	77	0.6
Pershing	041	Lava Beds	27	26	53	1.0
Pershing	041*	Seven Troughs*	12	14	26	1.2
Washoe	013*	Lost Creek*	6	27	33	4.5
Washoe	015	Buffalo Hills	9	45	54	5.0
		Statewide Totals:	*815*	*1413*	*2228*	*Mean: 1.70*

**indicates sample size is too small to estimate production.*

Results of these surveys should be tempered by the total number of birds observed. A sample size exceeding 100 birds is likely reasonable to estimate production with confidence while bird totals within the 50-100 realm should be viewed with caution while anything less than that is considered merely anecdotal observation. Generally, a production value the exceeds 4.5 chicks per adult should yield sustainable to slightly increasing populations. Production and the total number of birds observed is graphically depicted and summarized in Figure 1 by hunt unit or hunt unit groups.

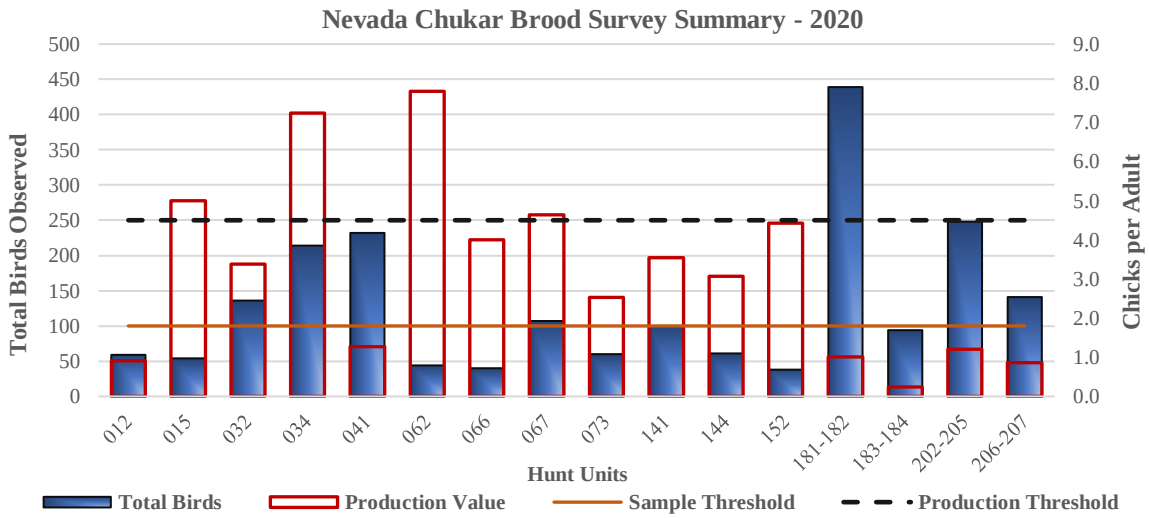

Figure 1. Birds observed and estimated production during the 2020 chukar brood survey. Ideally, total birds (sample size, blue column) would extend beyond the sample threshold of 100 birds and production values would exceed the production threshold of 4.5 chicks per adult.

The following provides some general descriptions of what to expect for chukar hunting this fall for several Counties:

Churchill County

Overall chukar numbers continue to be fairly robust in most Churchill County mountain ranges, but production appears to have dropped off significantly. Expect to find a few coveys per day, but getting within practical shooting range might be more difficult than in years past due to a preponderance of adult birds.

Elko County

This rating does not apply to the entire County, but production throughout most of the survey routes was moderate and should provide hunters with decent opportunities. Hunting pressure is certainly less in Elko County compared to more popular areas like Washoe and Humboldt County, so it might be worth a trip, especially when one considers the additional opportunities for Hungarian partridge, where production was estimated at 4.3 chicks per adult.

Eureka County

Bird numbers and productivity appears to have improved in the Cortez Range and Diamond Mountains. Don't expect to intercept covey after covey, but enough to keep things interesting.

Humboldt County

It is difficult to uniformly rate counties like Humboldt due to the high variability from one range to the next. Bird numbers and production appear to have improved in the Black Rock and Pine Forest Ranges, but were poor in places like the Double H and Santa Rosa Ranges. Very dry conditions were prevalent throughout this County during the spring months.

Lander County

Observed bird numbers and productivity were relatively low in most Lander County mountain ranges, although some areas may continue to hold small to moderately sized coveys. Dry conditions during the spring of 2020 influenced this normally productive area of the state. Portions of the Sheep Creek and Shoshone Ranges will be okay.

Mineral County

Production in here appears to be down markedly from 2019. A very dry spring in this portion of the state was the likely contributor and bird numbers are likely not dense enough to have a productive hunt. The wild card here is the Wassuk Range. With good knowledge of this area, chukar hunters could achieve some success.

Pershing County

Surveys in the western portion of Pershing County produced mostly poor results. Unfortunately, no surveys were conducted in the eastern portion of the County (hunt units 043-046). Other than the Nightingales and the Selenite Ranges, production was poor, much like Churchill County. Perhaps the Humboldt and East Ranges performed better.

Washoe County

Like Elko County, this rating does not apply to the entire County, but there are at least a few ranges that were productive and where bird numbers carried over. The Buffalo Hills and areas around Wall Canyon should provide above average hunting while observations in the Granites and Calico Ranges were relatively poor.