

NEVADA CHUKAR FORECAST 2022-2023

Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) Game Division biologists conducted a series of chukar brood surveys across central and northern Nevada during the summer of 2022. 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.

During late July and throughout August of 2022, 41 areas were surveyed throughout central and northern Nevada. Condensed results are presented in Table 1. Some survey routes were pooled within individual Hunt Units and Unit Groups to obtain adequate sample sizes. Some surveys were compromised and delayed due to severe monsoonal thunderstorms that appeared in early to mid-August. Overall, the calculated statewide average production value was 3.7 chicks per adult. This represented a 61% increase in production compared to the 2021 value of 2.3 chicks per adult. This value is still below that necessary to substantially increase chukar populations from a statewide perspective. For the 2022 season, some areas of western Pershing County, much of Churchill County and many

areas in northeastern Nevada will provide adequate chukar hunting opportunities. Overall, base populations of chukar appear low and production was highly variable. Areas with good production and adequate sample sizes included hunt units 032, 034, 061/071, 066-068, and 074/081. Conversely, areas with poor production and sample sizes included most mountain ranges in eastern Pershing County and several ranges in Washoe County. Although several attempts were made to survey the Granite Range and associated areas in Hunt Unit 014, not enough birds were observed or classified to develop a production estimate. The same can be said for the Calico Mountains, but the survey was conducted just after a significant thunderstorm which affected the results.

Hungarian Partridge: Biologists in the Eastern Region recorded encounters with this species during the summer months. A total of 24 adults and 164 chicks were classified for a chicks per adult ratio of 6.8:1. This is encouraging, and folks interested in hunting this species should look to the Independence and Tuscarora Ranges and public lands around the flanks of the Ruby Mountains.

Chukar Brood Survey Results Summary for 2022

County	Hunt Unit	Adults	Young	Total Birds	Young/Adult
Churchill	181-182	36	204	240	5.7
Churchill	183-184	16	68	84	4.3
Elko	061/071	17	112	129	6.6
Elko	066-068	63	330	393	5.2
Elko	074/081	42	257	299	6.1
Eureka	141, 144	11	41	52	3.7
Eureka/Lander	155	22	59	81	2.7
Humboldt	032, 034	26	132	158	5.1
Lander	152	30	75	105	2.5
Mineral	202	10	54	64	5.4
Pershing	041	81	305	386	3.8
Pershing	042	106	107	213	1.0
Pershing	043-046	24	35	59	1.5
Washoe	015	15	59	74	3.9
	Totals:	477	1,779	2,337	3.7

* 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. Anything less than 50 birds observed is considered merely anecdotal. Generally, a production value that 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 (page 2) by hunt unit or hunt unit groups.



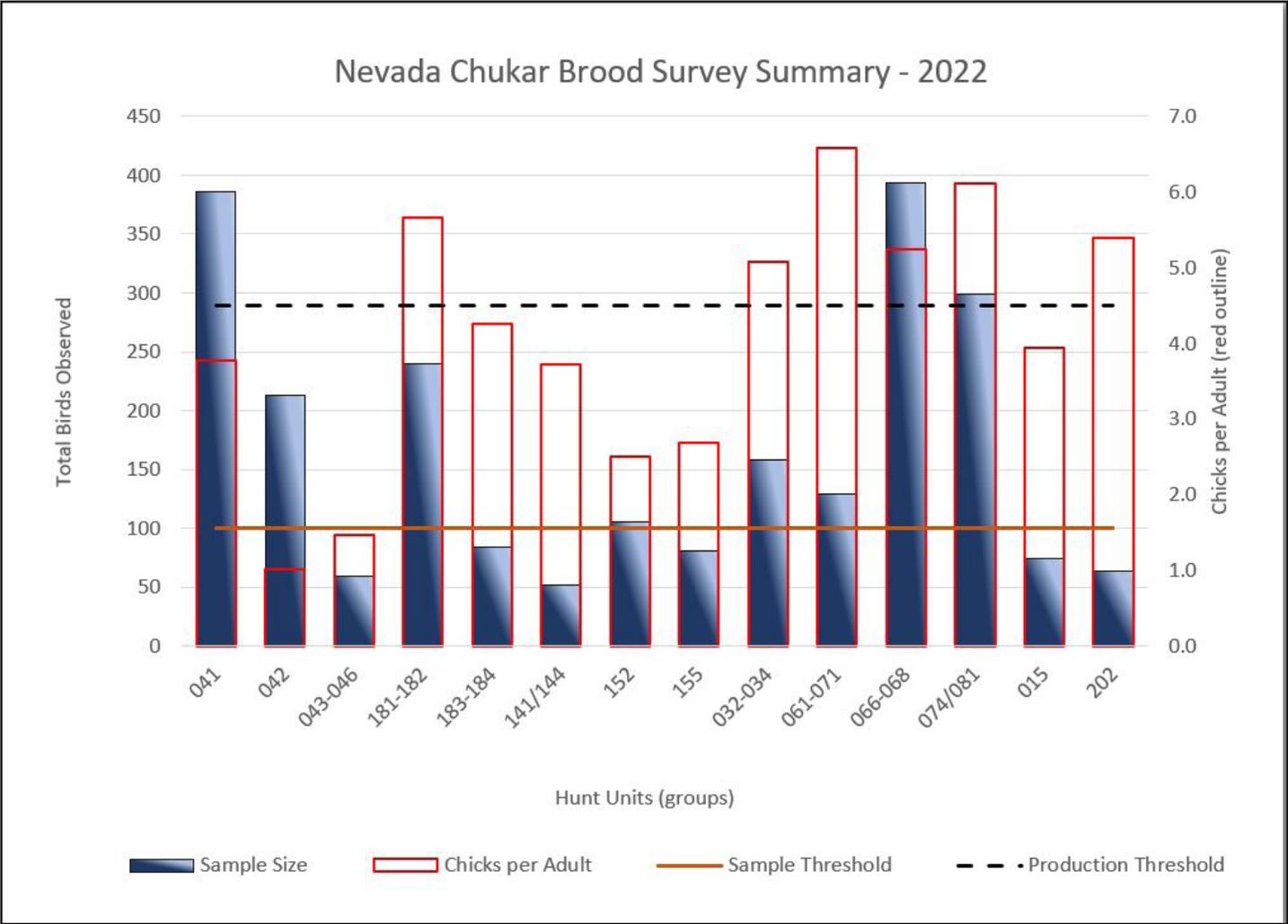


Figure 1. Birds observed and estimated production during the 2021 chukar brood survey. Ideally, total birds (sample size, blue column) would extend beyond the sample threshold of 100 birds and production values would exceed the production threshold of 4.5 chicks per adult.



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



Churchill County: Survey results this year paint quite a different picture compared to those of last summer and chukar hunters should be pleased with what they find in most mountain ranges in this county. Above average monsoonal moisture was received throughout Churchill County during the mid-summer months of 2022 which improved habitat conditions and provided chukar with some respite from the hot summer temperatures.



Elko County: Consecutive mild winters have likely favored chukar in this area of the state and most hunt units or unit groups exceeded the sample and production thresholds. For less experienced chukar hunters and those hunters that don't know the county well, Elko can be a challenge as birds can be distributed widely across the landscape. The Snowstorms, South Tuscarora Range, portions of the Independence Range and Bruneau River should provide quality chukar hunting this season.



Eureka County: Portions of Eureka County will offer some decent chukar hunting while others will not. Even though sample sizes were not very robust, production in the Diamond Range looks promising and should provide some adequate hunting, particularly during the winter months if ample snowfall is received. The same cannot be said of the Cortez Range where few birds were encountered during survey efforts. Heavy rainfall during the summer improved habitat conditions here.



Humboldt County: Chukar numbers are down in Humboldt County. However, the Black Rock, Pine Forest and even the Santa Rosa Range should provide fair chukar hunting during the 2022-2023 season. Prepare to wear out a pair of boots though.



Lander County: Look for mountain ranges in this county to be similar to last season. Chicks per hen values here were estimated at 2.6, although sample sizes were relatively low suggesting that hunting within the county would likely be poor to fair at best. However, weather conditions could have affected surveys in Lander County. Some mountain ranges such as the Shoshone Range and the northern portion of the Toiyabe Range should provide at least fair chukar hunting this season.



Pershing County (West): A few western Pershing County ranges such as the Nightingale Range and Selenite Ranges as well as the Lava Beds should provide fair chukar hunting. Others such as the Sahwave, Seven Troughs and Trinity Ranges appear to be a bust this year.



Pershing County (East): Same as last year, no need wasting your time here. Lack of precipitation and poor habitat conditions have negatively impacted this area of the state.



Washoe County: There may be a few bright spots in the southern portion of the county, but overall, this probably isn't a good year to target mountain ranges in northern Washoe County for chukar. Poor survey results were realized in the Granite, Calico and Fox Ranges. Habitat conditions in each of these ranges have suffered immensely from extreme drought conditions and a litany of other issues including poor livestock grazing practices and high numbers of wild horses.

