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MDC Predicts Quail Season to be Good

OCTOBER 16TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

MDC Predicts Quail Season to be Good

MDC predicts quail season to be good in parts of state
Quail production for 2018 below 10-year average, but good hunting can still be found.

Missouri - With quail-hunting season starting Nov. 1, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) advises hunters that overall quail production was about the same as last year, but below the 10-year average. MDC staff note that good hunting can be found in areas with quality habitat in north and west-central portions of the state.

Each August, MDC conservation agents record the numbers of quail they see while driving a 30-mile route – called the roadside index. A total of 110 routes are completed around the state. These numbers are then tallied and grouped by eight geographic areas of quail production – called zoogeographic regions. (SEE RELATED MAP)

According to MDC, this year's statewide average roadside index of 1.7 birds is the same as last year's and 15% below the previous 10-year average. Regionally, the roadside index ranged from 0 in the Northern and Eastern Ozark Border to 5.3 in the Northwest Prairie.

MDC Small Game Coordinator David Hoover points out that, although statewide production was down, three regions showed counts at or above last year's values.

According to Hoover, the Northwestern Prairie region is up 3.5% from last year and 42% over the 10-year average while the Northeast Riverbreaks region is unchanged from last year but still 12% above the 10-year average. The Western Prairie region had the greatest

increase from last year at nearly 47% but is still 48% below the 10-year average. The Northern Riverbreaks region was down 26% from last year but is still 23% above the 10-year average.

“Having quality habitat is the most important factor for quail production, but weather also plays a very important, and often unpredictable, role,” said Hoover. “This year’s quail production highlighted this complicated relationship between habitat and weather. The drier-than-normal conditions this summer likely benefited quail in many areas with good habitat, while being of little or no benefit to those quail in areas with marginal to poor habitat.”

He added that it is no secret quail populations are much lower than they once were, but habitat conditions are also much different than 50 years ago when quail numbers were at their peak.

“Continued loss of habitat puts additional stress on the remaining quail populations, which are often isolated in islands of habitat, and thus more susceptible to the negative effects of weather and predation,” Hoover said.

He added that the quail community still has much to learn about factors affecting quail production and survival.

“Missouri biologists have recently completed a study in the southwestern portion of the state that has the potential to change how we approach quail management in the future,” said Hoover. “This study is examining how specific habitat management approaches affect quail nesting rates and success as well as brood habitat use and survival. This research, combined with other studies recently published from around the quail range, are shedding light on just how crucial the summer months are for quail populations, and how best to manage for the most favorable conditions.”

More on the roadside survey

MDC Resource Scientist Beth Emmerich manages the August roadside survey, which has been conducted since 1983.

“It represents the best way we have to track quail populations on a statewide basis,” Emmerich said. “The survey does a good job of tracking large-scale population changes and is a good barometer for how more localized populations may also be doing from year to year.”

She added, that since 2013, quail populations in areas of good habitat have experienced relatively good production years.

“In 2015, we saw the highest statewide roadside index in nearly a decade,” Emmerich explained. “That summer was extremely wet, resulting in many crop fields in northern Missouri left unplanted, and many of which developed diverse annual plant cover that persisted well into August. This abundance of good brood cover led to a very good production year for quail, despite the abnormally wet summer conditions.”

Fall hunting prospects

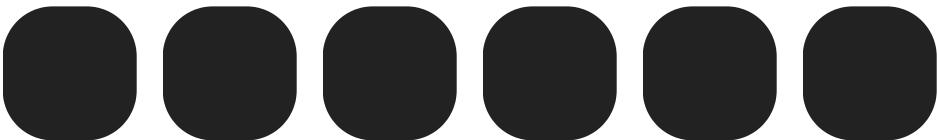
“In northern and west-central portions of the state, hunters should expect bird numbers at or above last year in areas with good habitat,” said Hoover. “Look for large areas of diverse native grass cover intermixed with lots of low-growing woody cover and untilled crop fields and you are likely to find a covey.”

Hunting season for quail is Nov. 1 through Jan. 15, 2019. The daily bag limit is eight with a possession limit of 16. Get more information from MDC online at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/hunting-trapping/species/quail, or from MDC’s 2018 Missouri Hunting and Trapping Regulations booklet, available where permits are sold.

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MDC Asks Deer Hunters to Help Limit CWD Spread

SEPTEMBER 06TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

MDC Asks Deer Hunters to Help Limit CWD Spread

The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds deer hunters that properly disposing of carcasses of harvested deer is important in limiting the spread of chronic wasting disease (CWD). MDC also reminds hunters who harvest deer, elk, or moose outside of Missouri and bring the animals back to follow related regulations to help limit the spread of CWD.

CWD is a deadly illness for white-tailed deer and other members of the deer family, called cervids. CWD kills all deer and other cervids it infects. It has no vaccine or cure. CWD is spread from deer to deer through direct contact and through contact with soil, food, and water that have been contaminated through feces, urine, saliva – and carcasses -- of infected deer. Learn more at mdc.mo.gov/cwd.

CWD has been found in Missouri and is slowly spreading. MDC needs the help of hunters to help limit its spread.

Properly dispose of deer carcasses

Carcasses or carcass remains of CWD-infected deer can expose other deer to the disease. Long after infected carcass remains decompose, the soil around the remains can stay infectious, possibly exposing other deer.

To help avoid this exposure risk, MDC recommends the following carcass disposal methods:

- **Place in Trash or Landfill:** The best way to prevent the spread of CWD is to place carcass remains in trash bags and dispose of them through trash collection or a permitted landfill.
- **Bury on Site:** If you can't bag and place in trash or a permitted landfill, bury carcass remains at or near where the deer was harvested. Bury deep enough to prevent access by scavengers. Burial will reduce but not eliminate the risks of spreading CWD.
- **Leave on Site:** As a last resort, leave carcass remains onsite. While this will not prevent scavengers from scattering potentially infectious parts, the remains will stay on the general area where the deer was taken. If CWD is already present on that area, it will likely remain there and not be moved to another area.

- **Do Not Place in Water:** It is illegal to dispose of carcasses or remains in streams, ponds, or other bodies of water.
- **Do Not Burn:** Only commercial incinerators reaching over 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit can generate enough heat for long enough to destroy the prions that cause CWD.

Follow laws for harvested deer and other cervids brought into MO

Hunters who harvest deer, elk, or moose outside of the state and bring the animals back must report the entry into Missouri within 24 hours by calling 877-853-5665, or reporting it online at mdc.mo.gov/carcass. The carcass must be taken to a licensed meat processor or taxidermist within 72 hours of entry.

Hunters just passing through Missouri on their way to another state are exempt from this requirement as long as they are not in Missouri for longer than 24 hours.

The reporting requirement is only for whole carcasses and carcasses that have the head and spinal column attached. Parts that do not require reporting and that are at lower risk for harboring CWD include:

- meat that is cut and wrapped; boned-out-meat;
- quarters or other portions of meat with no parts of the spine or head attached;
- hides or capes from which excess tissue has been removed;
- antlers, including those attached to skull plates; and
- skulls where all muscle and brain tissue has been removed.

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MDC Waterfowl Hunting Reservations Open September 1, 2018

AUGUST 10TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

MDC Waterfowl Hunting Reservations Open September 1, 2018

MDC waterfowl hunting reservations open Sept. 1
Apply online Sept. 1 – 18 to hunt waterfowl on 12 MDC managed wetland areas.

Jefferson City, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reminds waterfowl hunters they have from Sept. 1 through Sept. 18 to apply online with MDC to hunt on 12 wetland areas intensively managed by the Department for waterfowl.

For more information and to apply starting Sept. 1, go to mdc.mo.gov and search “Waterfowl Reservations,” or apply directly at short.mdc.mo.gov/Z4W.

The reservation system allocates half of the available hunting opportunities on these areas for Missouri residents chosen through a random drawing. The other half are for walk-in hunters who draw on-site each morning for the remaining spots.

MDC reminds hunters that waterfowl hunting in Missouri is influenced by habitat conditions, weather, and the timing of migrations more than overall duck and goose numbers.

Get more information on related regulations, seasons, species, permits, limits, and more from MDC’s “Migratory Bird and Waterfowl Hunting Digest 2018-2019,” available where hunting permits are sold.

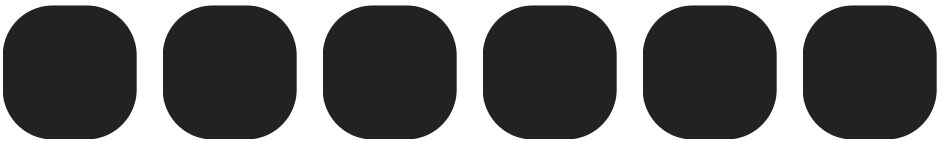
Get hunting details by species from the MDC website at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/.

Buy hunting permits from numerous vendors around the state, online at mdc.mo.gov/buypermits, or through MDC’s free MO Hunting mobile app, available for download through Google Play for Android devices or the App Store for Apple devices.

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Potential Changes for Crappie Fishing At Wappapello Lake

AUGUST 07TH 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

Potential Changes for Crappie Fishing At Wappapello Lake

MDC seeks public input on possible regulation change for crappie fishing at Wappapello Lake

Potential regulation change will increase the opportunity for anglers to harvest fish.

Wappapello, Missouri - The Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) is seeking public input on a possible regulation change for crappie fishing at Wappapello Lake in Wayne County to both allow anglers to keep more crappie and promote more consistency in the quality of the fishery. Wappapello Lake is a popular fishing location in Southeast Missouri. According to MDC, crappie are the most popular fish sought by anglers fishing the lake.

Under the existing MDC regulation, anglers may harvest a daily limit of 30 white and black crappie combined with a minimum length of 9 inches. Under the proposed regulation change, there will be no minimum length limit for crappie. The daily limit will remain at 30 crappie, but not more than 15 of those fish could be above 9 inches.

“Only about two percent of the black crappie in Wappapello ever reach nine inches,” explained MDC Fisheries Management Biologist Dave Knuth. “Therefore, not many black crappie get harvested by anglers with the current regulation.”

The proposed regulation change would allow anglers to harvest more of the slow growing black crappie, while preventing overharvest of white crappie.

“I hope to see a lot of the anglers at these upcoming meetings and have the opportunity to visit with them about this proposed change,” Knuth said.

MDC will hold two public meetings focusing on the proposed regulation change for Wappapello Lake:

Sept. 17, 6 to 8 p.m. at New Home General Baptist Church, 1864 Hwy AA, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901.

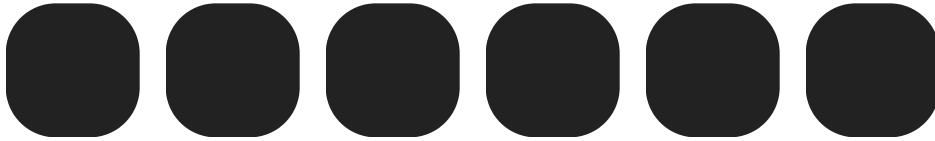
Sept. 18, 6 to 8 p.m. at Greenville Elementary Gymnasium, 195 Walnut St., Greenville, MO 63944

MDC invites public comment on the proposed regulation change online at **www.mdc.mo.gov/CrappieComments**.

Fishing regulations can vary between waters so anglers should check regulations for the specific waters they are fishing. For more information about fishing in Missouri, visit **<https://huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/fishing>**.

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MO Dept of Conservation Offers Federal Duck Stamps Online Only

AUGUST 02ND 2018 BY DEE LOFLIN

MO Dept of Conservation Offers Federal Duck Stamps Online Only

MDC now only offers Federal Duck Stamps online

MDC offices no longer sell physical Federal Duck Stamps. Buy them online at www.mdc.mo.gov/buypermits.

Missouri - Due to declining sales of physical Federal Duck Stamps at its offices where hunting permits are sold, the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) will no longer sell physical stamps at its offices.

Waterfowl hunters can still buy Federal Duck Stamps electronically through MDC's online permit website at mdc.mo.gov/buypermits or through its mobile app MO Hunting. For MO Hunting users, Federal Duck Stamps bought through MDC's website or the app will appear on the app. Learn more about MO Hunting at <https://bit.ly/2LsOCJg>.

When you buy an electronic Federal Duck Stamp, it is valid as a Federal Duck Stamp for 45 days from the date of purchase. Within that time, a physical Duck Stamp will be mailed to you. If you purchase the Federal Duck Stamp electronically from MDC, the stamp will show up on the MO Hunting app or can be printed immediately after purchasing. After 45 days, you must carry your current, signed Federal Duck Stamp while hunting.

According to MDC, out of the 33,300 duck stamps sold through the Department last year, only around 500 were bought at MDC offices, or about 1.5 percent. The rest were purchased online.

Waterfowl hunters can still purchase physical Federal Duck stamps at select U.S Postal Service locations. For more information, visit usps.com, call 800-782-6724, or contact a local post office.

For more information on the Federal Duck Stamp program, go online to fws.gov/birds/get-involved/duck-stamp.php.

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