

# Carryover Birds Expected to Bolster Prospects for Quail Season

The 2016 Texas quail season served as a renaissance reminder of how good hunting can be when all the right elements converge. Specifically, weather and habitat aligned to create a “super boom” year for quail production that led to exceptional hunts the likes of which had not been seen in many years.

Quail enthusiasts are hoping some of that magic will carry over this fall when the season gets under way Saturday, Oct. 28. For that to happen, a sizable percentage of last year’s birds will have to carry over as well, according to wildlife biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department,

This year’s quail production, although not as robust as last year’s, is expected to be adequate to sustain populations in areas having suitable habitat. Heading into 2017, average amounts of late winter and spring rainfall set up sufficient

nesting cover, winter forage and enough insects to trigger nesting. A lack of timely rainfall during the summer, however, may have hurt chick survival.

“Portions of South Texas and the Rolling Plains regions were in moderate drought during mid-summer, which may have negatively impacted brood survival,” said Robert Perez, quail program leader with TPWD. “Hunters will likely see more adult bobwhites in the bag compared to more productive years.”

TPWD projections are based on annual statewide quail surveys that were initiated in 1978 to monitor quail populations. This index uses randomly selected, 20-mile roadside survey lines to determine annual quail population trends by ecological region. This trend information helps determine relative quail populations among the regions of Texas.

Comparisons can be made



This covey took flight on a ranch in northwest Coke County near Silver.

between the mean (average) number of quail observed per route this year and the long term mean (LTM) for quail seen within an ecological region. The quail survey was not designed to predict relative abundance for any area smaller than the

ecological region.

A regional breakdown of this year’s TPWD quail index survey, including highlights and prospects, is available online.

Quail hunting season runs through Feb. 25, 2018. The daily bag limit for quail is 15,

with 45 in possession. Legal shooting hours for all non-migratory game birds are 30 minutes before sunrise to 30 minutes after sunset. The bag limit is the maximum number that may be killed during the legal shooting hours in one day.



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