

# Rural Mail Carrier Pheasant Survey 2009

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## **Abstract**

For the second year in a row, and three of the last four, the number of pheasants seen by rural mail carriers during the April survey period has dropped from the previous year. In 2009 the decrease was 35% from the previous year. The number of pheasants seen per 100 miles driven was 0.44 in 2009, down from 0.68 seen per 100 miles driven in 2008.

## **Methods**

Survey forms were mailed in early April to postmasters in 32 counties across Wisconsin's pheasant range. Postmasters were asked to distribute the forms to their rural mail carriers. Carriers were instructed to record their route number, distance driven, and the number and sex of pheasants seen along their route on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in the third full week of April. Data from the returned surveys were entered into the DNR UNIX production server and analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

In an effort to expand coverage of the Rural Mail Carrier Survey, Grant county was added in 1995 to the list of counties that were surveyed. None of the totals for Grant county will be used in the statewide totals so a long term trend can be observed.

## **Results**

Rural mail carrier participation decreased by 0.4% in 2009. Six hundred and eighty-four respondents saw 449 pheasants during the April 21, 22, and 23 survey period. This is a 33% decrease from the total number of pheasants seen in 2008. The counties with the highest number of pheasants seen per 100 miles driven were Lafayette (1.90), Washington (1.46), St. Croix (1.26), Polk (0.79) and Fond du Lac (0.77) (Table 1, Fig. 2).

Long and snowy winters in 2007-08 and 2008-09, along with a wet and cool spring in 2008, have set pheasant numbers back statewide. The statewide average number of pheasants seen per 100 miles driven decreased to 0.44 in 2009, a 35% decrease from 2008 levels. The number of pheasants seen per 100 miles driven is lower than the long-term mean of 0.60 (Figure 1). The number of pheasants seen per observer decreased 31% from the 2008 levels, and was 0.67.

**Table 1. Rural Mail Carrier Pheasant Sightings 2007-2009.**

County	Pheasants Sighted			Sightings/100 miles Driven		
	2007	2008	2009	2007	2008	2009
Barron	22	5	7	1.58	0.35	0.31
Brown	24	13	27	0.51	0.23	0.51
Calumet	4	4	3	0.17	0.17	0.12
Columbia	6	1	6	0.15	0.02	0.12
Dane	18	27	13	0.27	0.40	0.22
Dodge	16	19	14	0.37	0.51	0.33
Door	7	6	3	0.29	0.24	0.11
Dunn	9	18	3	1.03	1.49	0.32
Fond du Lac	64	36	31	1.61	1.04	0.77
Grant <sup>1</sup>	65	43	15	0.94	0.59	0.26
Green	28	3	12	0.90	0.10	0.34
Green Lake	11	32	8	0.66	1.83	0.43
Iowa	96	45	5	3.04	1.49	0.18
Jefferson	29	9	10	0.95	0.36	0.23
Kenosha	12	9	2	0.80	0.66	0.14
Kewaunee	13	13	6	0.77	0.57	0.24
Lafayette	59	28	28	3.89	1.69	1.90
Manitowoc	34	14	10	1.03	0.40	0.29
Oconto	10	2	13	0.41	0.11	0.52
Outagamie	16	11	10	0.40	0.23	0.25
Ozaukee	37	20	14	2.25	1.66	0.71
Pierce	19	24	13	0.73	1.08	0.55
Polk	42	49	21	1.45	1.80	0.79
Racine	10	3	1	0.28	0.11	0.04
Rock	55	25	18	1.07	0.46	0.37
St. Croix	101	112	83	1.51	3.21	1.26
Shawano	19	1	0	0.93	0.04	0.00
Sheboygan	16	14	7	0.46	0.38	0.22
Walworth	10	17	3	0.29	0.39	0.08
Washington	10	67	55	0.36	1.78	1.46
Waukesha	12	8	13	0.21	0.16	0.25
Winnebago	10	13	9	0.51	0.62	0.44
Unknown	0	11	1	0.00	2.78	0.37
Total	819	659	449	0.83	0.68	0.44

<sup>1</sup>Not included in totals

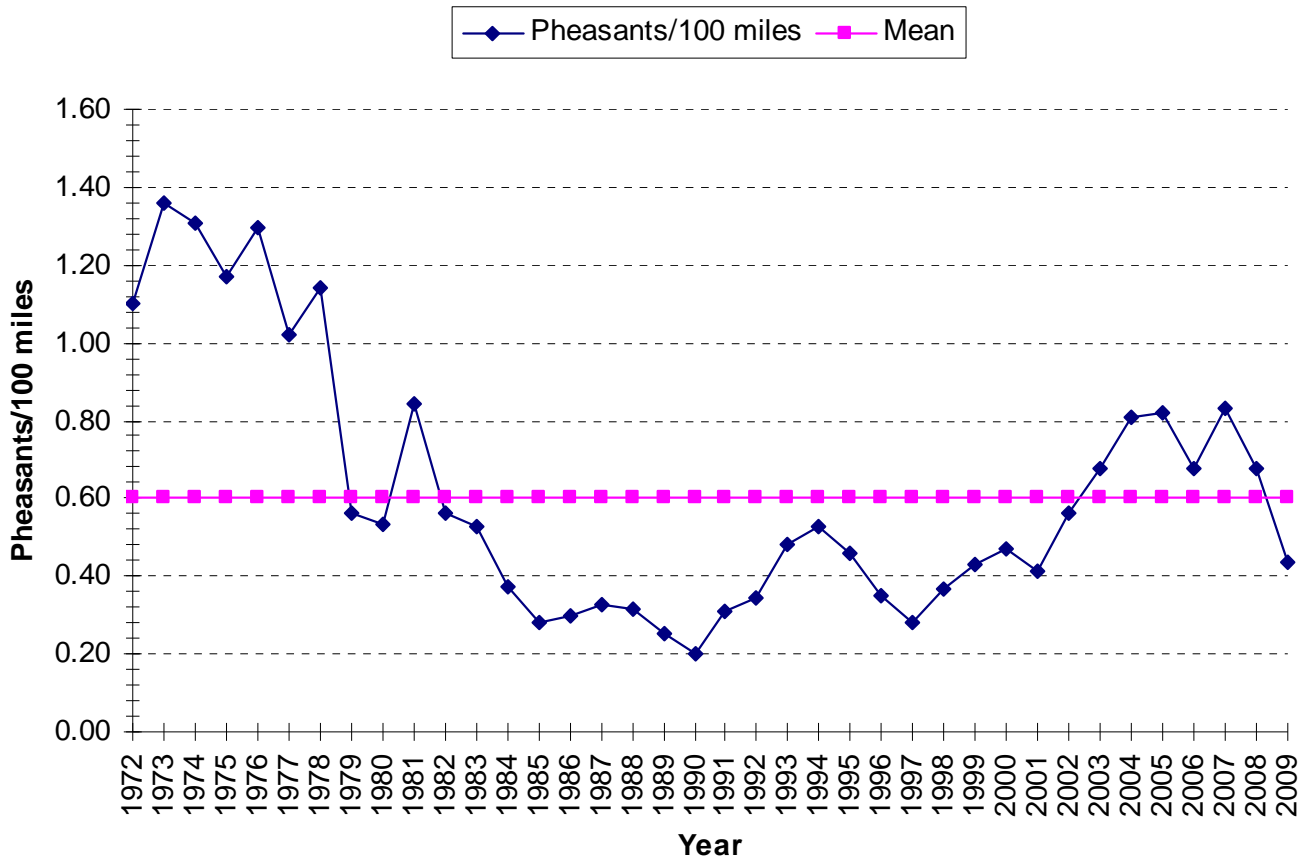


Figure 1. Pheasants seen per 100 miles driven, 1972-2009.

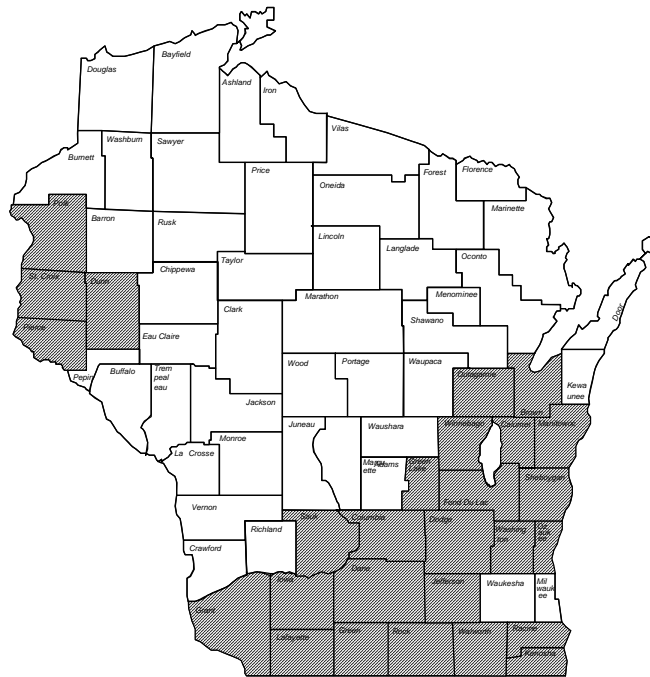


Figure 2. Counties encompassing all or some of Wisconsin's primary pheasant range.