

Small Game Harvest 2008-09

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Abstract

The number of licensed small game hunters decreased 3% in the 2008-09 small game hunting season from 2007-08 levels. This is the seventh decrease in license sales in the last eight years. The estimated harvest increased from last season for crow, gray fox, mourning dove, raccoon, and squirrel, while decreases occurred for bobwhite quail, cottontail, coyote, gray partridge, pheasant, red fox, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, and woodcock.

Methods

A sample of survey names was drawn from the 2008-09 sports, small game, senior citizen small game, junior small game, and conservation patron license holders in proportion to the license sales for each county. Ten thousand surveys were mailed in early February. Surveys asked recipients for information on whether they hunted, type of licenses purchased, county of residence, species harvested, number of days hunting each species, and county of harvest for each species. These data were entered into the DNR UNIX production server and analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

Responses were received from 3,025 of the hunters surveyed. The corrected response rate was 30%.

Most hunters purchased a small game license to hunt during the season. Approximately 38% of the licensed small game hunters used a dog during the season. Most dogs were used to hunt game birds (53%). The most commonly used dog was the Labrador Retriever (40%). On average hunter's spent 45.7 days afield either training or hunting with their dog. Hunters spent an average of \$629.67 on dog maintenance per dog owned (Table 1).

The number of people who bought small game, sportsman, senior citizen small game, non-resident small game, 5-day non-resident small game, or conservation patron licenses decreased from 274,582 in 2007-08 to 266,437 in 2008-2009. Hunters spent approximately 2.7 million days in the field during the 2008-09 small game season. The total number of days spent in the field pursuing small game decreased by 3.6% during the 2008-09 season from the previous years total. The estimated harvest increased from last season for crow, gray fox, mourning dove, raccoon, and squirrel, while decreases occurred for bobwhite quail, cottontail, coyote, gray partridge, pheasant, red fox, ruffed grouse, snowshoe hare, and woodcock (Table 2).

No corrections are made for response or prestige bias. Therefore the harvest estimates for some of the less hunted species (bobwhite quail, gray partridge, and gray fox,) are probably less accurate. Small sample size can also have an effect on the results of the counties of highest harvest. Because of this, counties of highest harvest should be viewed with caution. The twenty-five year trend in small game harvest for all species is shown in Figure 1.

Table 1. Responses to the 2008-09 Wisconsin Small Game Hunting Questionnaire.

Question 1. What type(s) of hunting license(s) and stamps(s) did you purchase for your own use for this season?

License Type	Count	Percent
Did not purchase a license	11	0.2%
Sports	882	12.4%
Small Game	1,358	19.0%
Deer	1,121	15.7%
Archery	812	11.4%
Bear	163	2.3%
Patron	834	11.7%
Wisconsin State Waterfowl Stamp	681	9.5%
Federal Waterfowl Stamp	875	12.3%
Pheasant Stamp	402	5.6%

Question 2. Did you use dogs while hunting?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	1,095	37.7%
No	1,810	62.3%

No Response = 120

Question 3. Which of the following did you hunt with the aid of dogs?

Response	Count	Percent
Game Birds	604	53.1
Migratory Game Birds (excluding waterfowl)	235	20.7
Small Game Mammals	151	13.3
Furbearing Animals	56	4.9
Unprotected	11	1.0
Other	81	7.1

Question 4. What Breed(s) of dog did you use?

Response	Count	Percent	Response	Count	Percent
Airdale	2	0.10%	Golden Retriever	76	5.6%
American Water Spaniel	5	0.40%	Gordon Setter	9	0.7%
Beagle	96	7.1%	Griffon	3	0.2%
Black & Tan	12	0.9%	Hound	8	0.6%
Blood Hound	1	0.1%	Irish Setter	7	0.5%
Blue Tick	19	1.4%	Jack Russell	2	0.1%
Border Collie	3	0.2%	Lab	548	40.4%
Boykin Spaniel	1	0.1%	Lab Mix	8	0.6%
Brittany	59	4.3%	Large Munster Lander	5	0.4%
Chesapeake Bay Retriever	14	1.0%	Llewellyn setter	4	0.3%
Clumber Spaniel	1	0.1%	Mix	27	2.0%
Cocker Spaniel	5	0.4%	Plott Coonhound	22	1.6%
Collie	1	0.1%	Poodle	1	0.1%
Coon Hound	2	0.1%	Redbone Coonhound	10	0.7%
Cur	6	0.4%	Redtick	1	0.1%
Dachshund	2	0.1%	Retriever	3	0.2%
English Cocker Spaniel	8	0.6%	Rottweiler	1	0.1%
English Pointer / Pointer	24	1.8%	Springer Spaniel	74	5.4%
English Setter	39	2.9%	Swiss hound	1	0.1%
English Springer Spaniel	33	2.4%	Vizsla	20	1.5%
Fox Hound	1	0.1%	Walker	37	2.7%
German Shepard	1	0.1%	Water Spaniel	4	0.3%
German Shorthaired Pointer	106	7.8%	Weimaraner	11	0.8%
German Wirehaired Pointer	34	2.5%	Welsh Springer Spaniel	1	0.1%

Question 5. Approximately how many hours did you (or others), spend training each dog used?

Mean = 128.2 Hours

Question 6. Approximately how many days per year do you use your dog(s) in the field (training and hunting)?

Mean = 45.7 Days

Question 7. Approximately how much money do you spend annually on maintenance per dog?

Mean = \$629.67

Table 2. *The number of small game hunters, percent of total hunters, days hunted, harvest, harvest/day, and top three counties of harvest for all small game species during the 2008-09 season.*

Species	Number of Hunters	Percent Hunting	Days Hunted*	Harvest*	Harvest/Day	Top Three Counties
Bobwhite Quail	693	0.3%	2,642 ±2,302	617 ±791	0.23	Sheboygan, Fond Du Lac, Kenosha
Cottontail	40,792	15.3%	208,481 ±30,522	153,432 ±26,003	0.74	Fond Du Lac, Dodge, Manitowoc
Coyote	27,043	10.2%	195,270 ±36,717	37,609 ±16,508	0.19	Chippewa, Grant, Racine
Crow	9,858	3.7%	48,883 ±17,407	49,588 ±18,226	1.01	Polk, Jefferson, Grant
Gray Fox	5,116	1.9%	38,754 ±15,681	9,248 ±6,500	0.24	Marinette, Polk, Barron
Gray Partridge	959	0.4%	3,259 ±2,656	881 ±1,119	0.19	Kewaunee, Taylor, Washburn
Mourning Dove	18,144	6.8%	82,441 ±17,390	167,173 ±52,778	2.03	Wood, Oconto, Brown
Pheasant	62,106	23.3%	540,801 ±60,657	323,071 ±55,899	0.60	Dodge, Fond Du Lac, Kenosha
Raccoon	10,471	2.9%	129,563 ±41,368	148,764 ±47,931	1.15	Grant, Crawford, Richland
Red Fox	8,366	3.1%	60,069 ±20,066	4,756 ±2,051	0.08	Fond Du Lac, Chippewa, Outagamie
Ruffed Grouse	98,129	36.8%	817,455 ±73,092	438,278 ±67,144	0.54	Price, Sawyer, Marinette
Snowshoe Hare	9,592	3.6%	47,738 ±13,697	28,978 ±11,884	0.61	Price, Taylor, Rusk
Squirrel	61,653	23.1%	390,187 ±43,818	396,176 ±63,213	1.02	Trempealeau, Grant, Iowa
Woodcock	23,153	8.7%	168,406 ±30,508	99,617 ±38,147	0.59	Marinette, Price, Marathon

* Confidence interval is 95%.

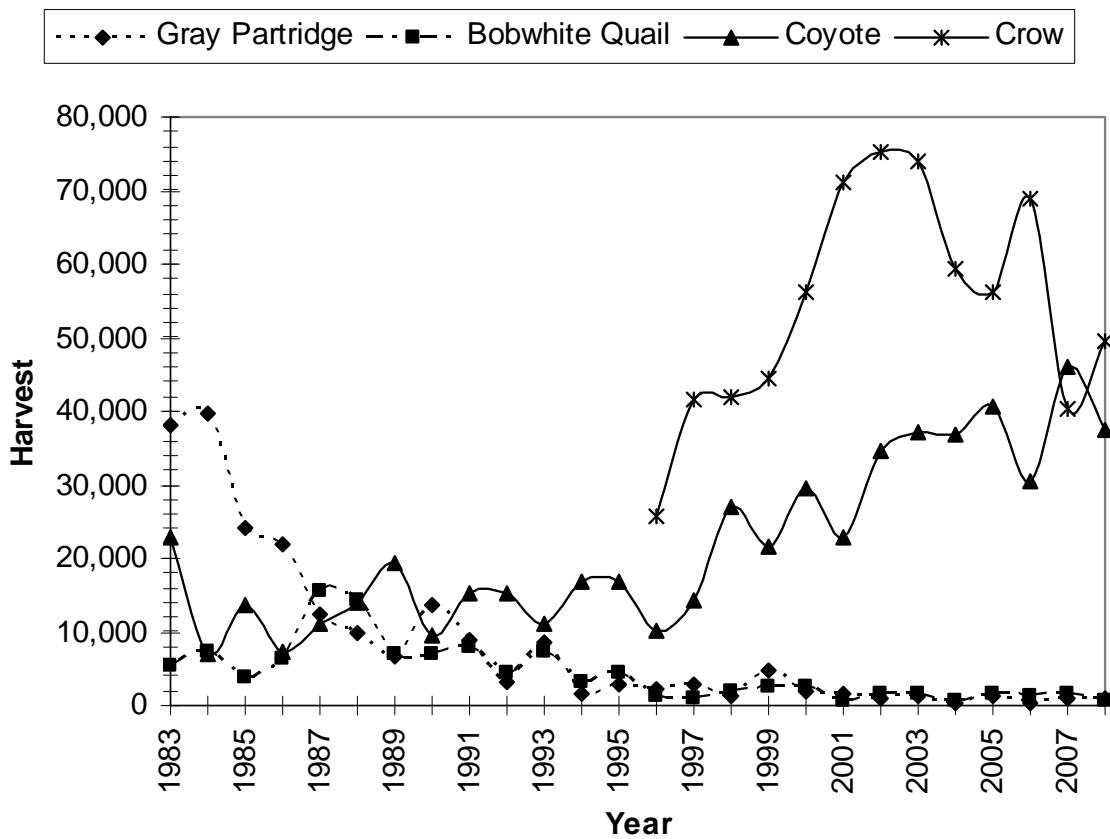
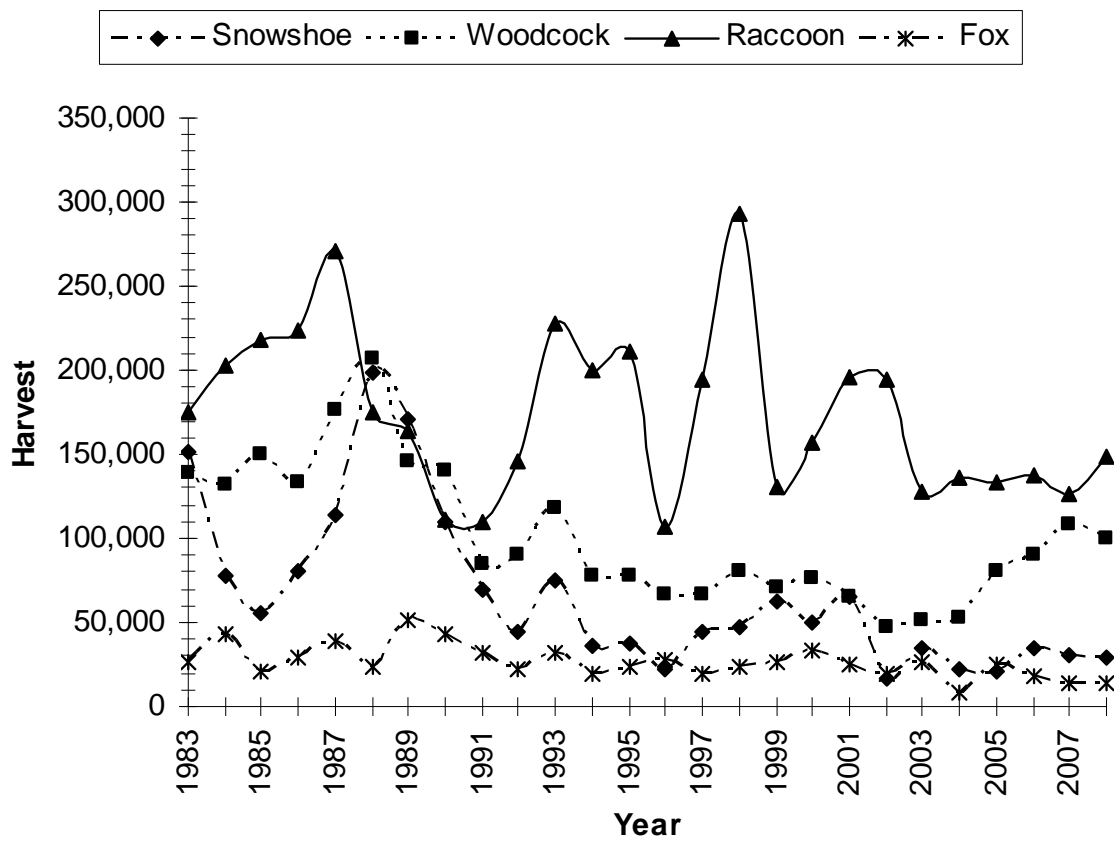


Figure 1. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2008.

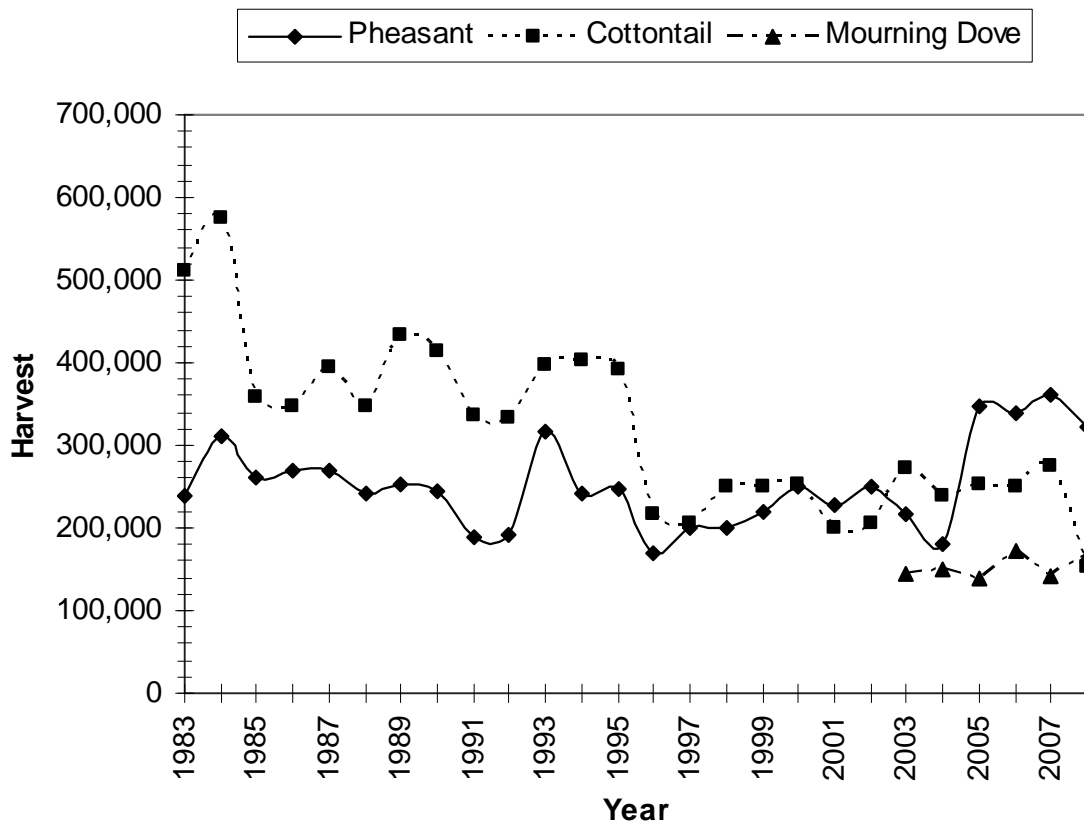
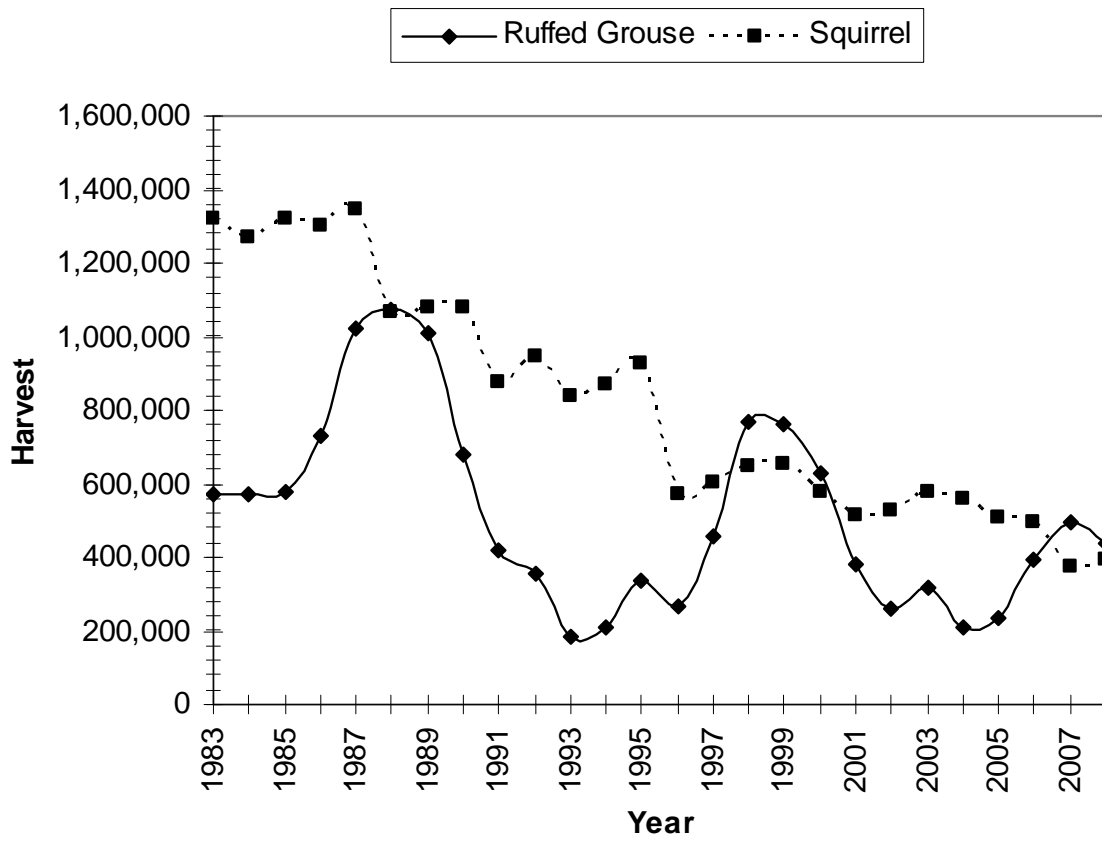


Figure 1. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2008 (continued).