

P.E.I. GAME SURVEY 2000-2001

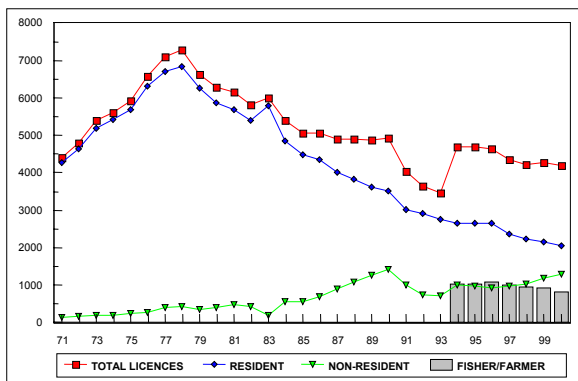
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The annual survey of P.E.I. small game hunters provides a yearly index to game abundance and harvest. A questionnaire was mailed in February to one-third of all licensed hunters (resident, non-resident and commercial fisher/farmer) and the responses to that questionnaire are summarized below.

Hunting Licenses

Sales of resident hunting licenses declined in 2000 to 2,062 from 2,150 in 1999 (Fig. 1), while non-resident license sales increased to 1,297 from 1,192 the previous year. Commercial fisher/farmer hunting licenses decreased to 827 from 934. Prior to 1994, farmers and commercial fishermen were exempt from hunting license requirements. This

Figure 1. Annual sales of provincial hunting licenses



license, issued free of charge, enabled this previously unsampled group of hunters to be included in the game survey results. The total number of licenses issued in 2000 was 4,186, a decrease of 90 (2.1%) from 1999.

Results

A second mailing to non-respondents resulted in an increased survey response rate. Of 1,283 survey cards mailed, 746 (58.1%) were returned. Non-residents again had a higher return rate (72.1%) than residents (54.9%) and fisher/farmer (46.0%).

Survey results are presented in the following figures, table and discussion.

Total Harvest

Total harvest in 2000 for all species, except American Woodcock, decreased slightly from 1999. The 2000 harvest results and comparisons with previous years are summarized in Fig. 2 and Table 1 (over).

The ruffed grouse harvest decreased to 4,918 and was well below the 21-year average of 9,207. The low harvest probably reflects the steady decline in grouse hunters that has occurred since 1994. This species is also near the bottom of its 10-year population cycle. The snowshoe hare harvest decreased to 5,123 from 9,961 the previous year, again reflecting declining numbers of hare hunters (the lowest on record) and heavy snow during January and February. The kill of Canada geese declined significantly from 1999 but continues to exceed the 21-year average of 15,500. The lower goose harvest in 2000 is attributed to lower survival of young. The harvest of black ducks and other ducks decreased slightly from 1999. The black duck harvest decreased to 11,890 while 7,141 other ducks were retrieved. Waterfowl surveys flown in early December indicated black ducks and Canada geese were plentiful but fair weather probably contributed to slightly lower harvests of all waterfowl.

The short season and the small number of grey partridge hunters resulted in another low harvest for this species in 2000. Total kills of woodcock and snipe vary considerably from year to year due to the small number of hunters that pursue each, and variability resulting from the small sample size. Interest in woodcock hunting appeared to increase among Island hunters in 2000 with 1.6% of

licensed hunters (75) actively pursuing this species.

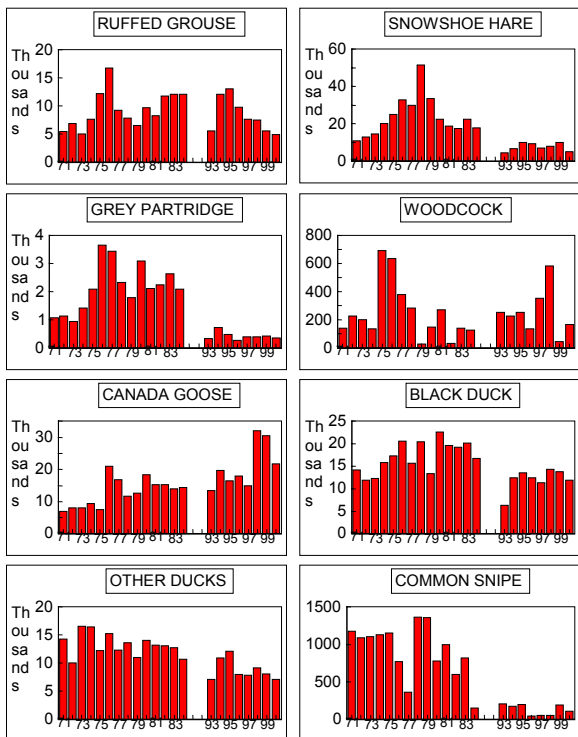
A better indicator of hunter success and species abundance is the average season kill per active hunter, which follows.

Average Harvest

Average season harvests from 1971 to 2000 for all game species are summarized in Figure 3 (over).

The average season bag for ruffed grouse increased slightly from 3.6 to 3.7 and probably reflects a recovery from the bottom of the grouse population cycle. Snowshoe hare populations were

Figure 2. Estimated total harvest of all species.

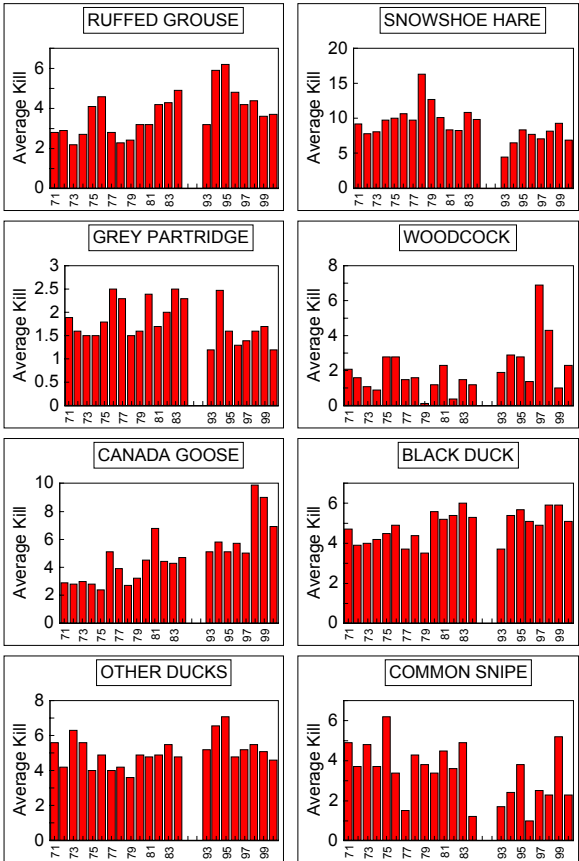


reported to be healthy, but the number of snowshoe hare harvested per hunter declined from 9.3 in 1999 to 6.9 in 2000 reflecting deep snow conditions during the last half of the hunting

season. Although the average goose kill declined to 6.9 from the previous two season record highs, it remains the third highest in 22 years of surveys. The sub-population of geese in the eastern Atlantic region remains healthy.

Grey partridge continue to provide recreation to a

Figure 3. Average season harvest per active hunter.



limited number of hunters. The one-week increase in the hunting season initiated in 1998 had little impact on harvest. *Total kill* and *kill per active hunter* decreased only slightly over 1999.

Interest in snipe hunting decreased in 2000 as did the kill and are still below average. The number of

Table 1. Hunter performance and kill estimate: 2000-2001

	RUFFED GROUSE	GREY PARTRIDGE	SNOWSHOE HARE	COMMON SNIPE	AMERICAN WOODCOCK	BLACK DUCK	OTHER DUCKS	CANADA GOOSE
ESTIMATED KILL BY LICENSED HUNTERS	4,918	363	5,123	110	168	11,890	7,141	21,741
ESTIMATED NO. OF LICENSED HUNTERS	1,323	297	737	48	75	2,269	1,488	3,125
AVG. KILL PER ACTIVE HUNTER	3.7	1.2	6.9	2.3	2.3	5.1	4.6	6.9
NO. KILLED BY SURVEYED HUNTERS	792	59	829	18	27	2,012	1,198	3,934
% LICENSED HUNTERS WHO HUNTED	28.8%	6.6%	19.8%	1.1%	1.6%	53.2%	34.7%	76.9%
NO. SURVEYED HUNTERS WHO HUNTED	215	49	148	8	12	397	259	574
AVERAGE TRIPS PER ACTIVE HUNTER	6.6	3.2	6.7	2.6	6.3	5.9	5.9	5.9
HUNTER SUCCESS RATE (GAME/TRIP)	0.56	0.38	0.69	0.86	0.36	0.87	0.78	1.15
TOTAL EST. HUNTER TRIPS PER SEASON	8,752	954	4,940	126	472	13,859	9,170	19,742

woodcock hunters increased considerably in 2000 and average season harvest was above average. However, the number of hunters remains well below average.

Hunter Activity

Statistics on the amount of time spent hunting each species were again gathered this year. Results are summarized in Table 1. Not surprisingly, more time was spent hunting geese than any other species (19,742 hunter trips). This was followed by black duck (13,859), other ducks (9,170) and ruffed grouse (8,752). Snowshoe hare hunters took 4,940 hunter trips, grey partridge hunters 954, and woodcock and snipe hunters 472 and 126 hunter trips, respectively. This year's figures for *total hunter trips* and *average trips per active hunter* showed a slight decrease from 1999's figures for most species.

Additional Information

This report presents a brief summary of the information gathered from the game survey. More details may be obtained by contacting:

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