

# P.E.I. GAME SURVEY 2001-2002

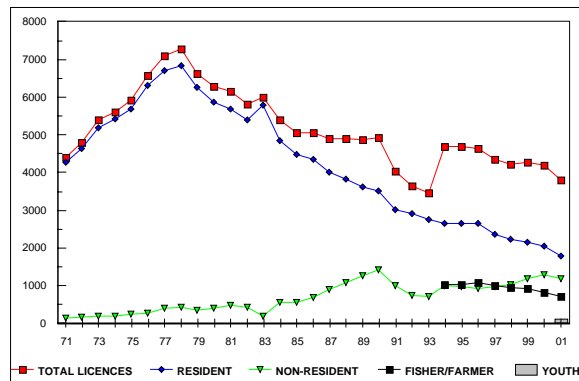
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The annual survey of P.E.I. small game hunters provides a yearly index to game abundance and harvest. A questionnaire was mailed in February to one-third of all licensed hunters (resident, non-resident, commercial fisher/farmer and youth) and the responses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

## Hunting Licenses

Sales of resident hunting licenses declined in 2001 to 1,785 from 2,062 in 2000 (Fig. 1), while non-resident license sales decreased to 1,184 from 1,297 the previous year. Commercial fisher/farmer hunting licenses decreased to 723 from 827. A Youth hunting license is now required for those 12 to 15 years of age. This license, issued free of charge, enables this previously unsampled group

**Figure 1. Annual sales of provincial hunting licenses**



of hunters to be included in the game survey results. The total number of licenses issued in 2001 was 3,802, a decrease of 384 (9.2%) from 2000.

## Results

A second mailing to non-respondents resulted in an increased survey response rate. Of 1,125 survey cards mailed, 543 (50.6%) were returned. Non-residents again had a higher return rate (61.8%) than residents (47.9%), fisher/farmer (46.0%) and youth (43.9%).

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

## Total Harvest

Harvest estimates for all species in 2001 are presented in Table 1 (over). The 2001 harvest results and comparisons with previous years are summarized in Fig. 2.

The ruffed grouse harvest increased to 5,380 from 4,918 in 2000, but was well below the 22-year average of 9,012. The low harvest reflects the steady decline in grouse hunters that has occurred since 1994. The snowshoe hare harvest decreased to 4,867 from 5,123 the previous year, again reflecting low numbers of hare hunters. The kill of Canada geese (18,504) declined from 2000 but continues to exceed the 22-year average of 15,460. The lower goose harvest in 2001 is attributed to fair weather during most of the hunting season. The harvest of black ducks and other ducks increased slightly from the previous year. The black duck harvest was 13,248 while 11,878 other ducks were retrieved. Waterfowl surveys flown in mid November indicated black ducks and Canada geese were lower than previous years.

The short season and the small number of grey partridge hunters resulted in another low harvest for this species in 2001. 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 and snipe hunting appears to be at an all time low.

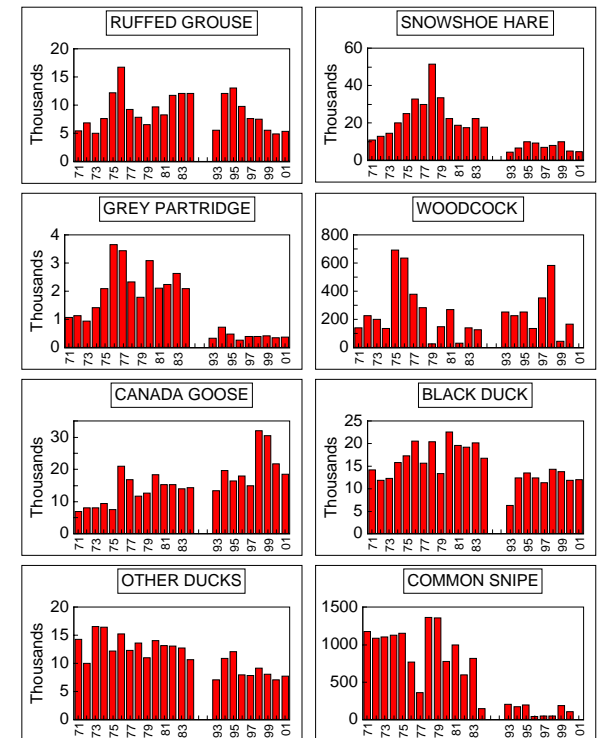
A better indicator of hunter success and species abundance is the average season kill per active hunter.

## Average Harvest

Average season harvests from 1971 to 2001 for all game species are summarized in Figure 3 (over).

The average season bag for ruffed grouse increased from 3.7 to 3.9 and reflecting a recovery from the bottom of the grouse population cycle. Snowshoe hare populations were reported to be healthy, but the number of snowshoe hare harvested per hunter declined from 6.9 in 2000 to 6.0 in 2001. Although the average goose kill declined to 6.2 from the previous three season record highs, it remains the fifth highest in 22 years of surveys. The sub-population of geese in the eastern Atlantic region remains healthy. Grey

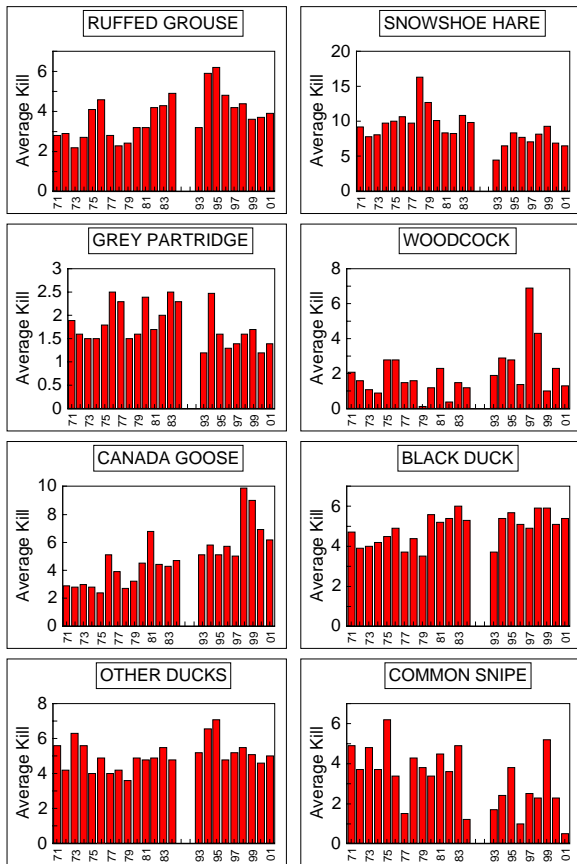
**Figure 2. Estimated total harvest of all species.**



Partridge continue to provide recreation to a limited number of hunters. The one-week increase in the hunting season initiated in 1998 had little impact on the harvest. Total kill and kill per active hunter decreased only slightly in 2001.

Interest in snipe hunting decreased significantly in 2001 as did the kill and are well below average. The number of woodcock hunters decreased considerably in 2001 and average season harvest dropped below average. The number of hunters remains well below average.

**Figure 3. Average season harvest per active hunter.**



**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 (19,094 hunter trips). This was followed by

ESTIMATED KILL BY LICENSED HUNTERS	RUFFED GROUSE	GREY PARTRIDGE	SNOWSHOE HARE	COMMON SNIPE	AMERICAN WOODCOCK	BLACK DUCK	OTHER DUCKS	CANADA GOOSE
ESTIMATED NO. OF LICENSED HUNTERS	5,380	388	4,867	4	89	12,022	7,742	18,504
AVG. KILL PER ACTIVE HUNTER	1.338	261	7.43	12	71	2,058	1,445	2,880
NO. KILLED BY SURVEYED HUNTERS	3.9	1.4	6.5	0.5	1.3	5.4	5.0	6.2
% LICENSED HUNTERS WHO HUNTED	669	49	607	1	13	1,539	986	2,656
NO. SURVEYED HUNTERS WHO HUNTED	31.3%	6.3%	20.6%	0.4%	1.8%	52.3%	36.1%	78.6%
AVERAGE TRIPS PER ACTIVE HUNTER	170	34	112	2	10	284	196	427
HUNTER SUCCESS RATE (GAME/TRIP)	6.3	3.0	6.0	1.5	1.9	6.5	6.1	6.1
TOTAL EST. HUNTER TRIPS PER SEASON	0.63	0.48	0.84	0.33	0.69	0.84	0.82	1.03
	8,467	827	4,618	16	119	14,130	9,387	19,094

**Table 1. Hunter performance & Kill estimate: 2001-2002.**

black duck (14,130), other ducks (9,387) and ruffed grouse (8,467). Snowshoe hare hunters took 4,618 hunter trips, grey partridge hunters 827, and woodcock and snipe hunters 119 and 16 hunter trips, respectively. This year's figures for *total hunter trips* and *average trips per active hunter* showed a slight decrease from 2000'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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