

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project No: W-15-R-73
Title of Job: 2016 Northern Bobwhite Whistle Count Survey

Job: H1



Dr. Jeffrey J. Lusk
 Upland Game Program Manager
 20 July 2016

Northern bobwhite whistle counts were conducted between 15 June and 10 July 2016, inclusive, in each of the bobwhite management zones (Figure 1). Statewide, within the range of the bobwhite, the mean number of males heard calling per stop in 2016 was higher than in 2015 (Table 1). Regional indices were also higher, except in the North Central and Northeast zones, than in 2015 (Tables 1 & 2, Figure 2).

Caveats. The bobwhite whistle count survey does not provide information on bobwhite population size, but is an index of breeding male abundance. At a statewide scale, these indices are correlated with harvest, and are useful for forecasting conditions hunters might encounter during the fall hunting season, particularly when combined with the results from other surveys.

Interpretations. The 2016 indices of abundance increased compared to 2015 statewide and in all regions but the North Central and Northeast; however, confidence intervals overlapped, indicating increases were not statistically significant. Regional and statewide 2016 indices were also higher than the 2011-2015 (5-year) mean, but were not statistically significant.

Take-home Message. Northern bobwhite populations appear to be continuing their rebound after the severe winters of 2009-2010 and the severe drought off 2012-2013. Although not significantly different from last year or the 5 year mean, the trends indicate increasing bobwhite abundance.

Figure 1. Bobwhite management zones.

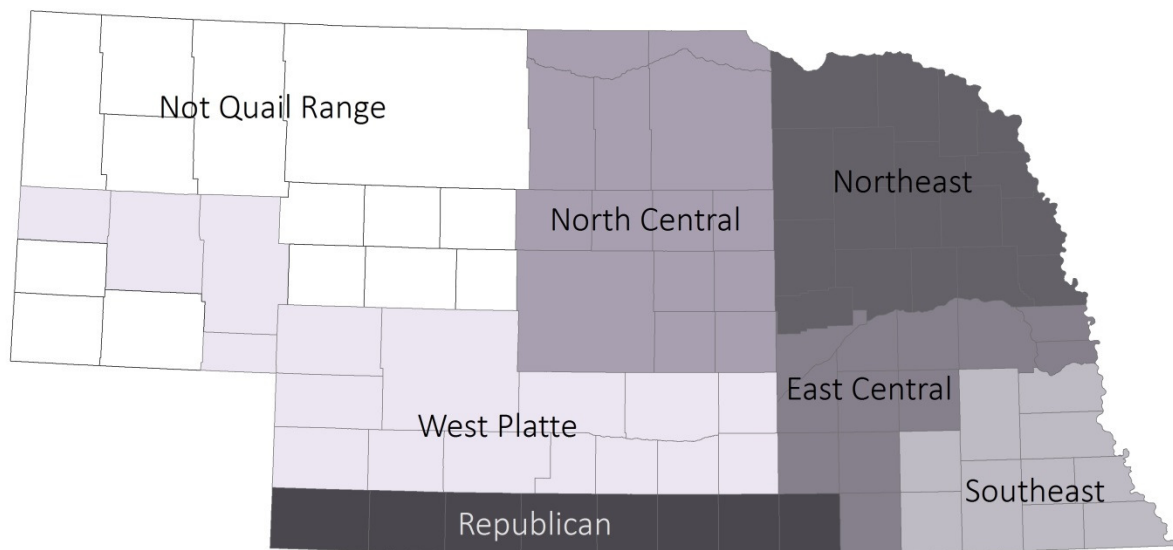


Table 1. Mean number of calling male bobwhites heard per stop along roadsides during the 2016 bobwhite whistle count survey, by bobwhite management zones (Figure 1).

Zone	Number of Routes	Calling Males per Stop:		
		2016 x̄ & 90% CI	2015 x̄ & 90% CI	2011-2015 x̄ & 90% CI
East Central	4	1.49 (0.00-3.04)	1.10 (0.00-2.55)	0.86 (0.00-2.19)
North Central	4	1.13 (0.00-2.32)	1.34 (0.31-2.36)	0.96 (0.51-1.41)
Northeast	7	0.42 (0.01-0.73)	0.48 (0.22-0.74)	0.40 (0.17-0.62)
Republican	6	1.72 (0.78-2.65)	1.13 (0.48-1.78)	0.88 (0.59-1.17)
Southeast	15	1.97 (1.49-2.45)	1.92 (1.29-2.55)	1.43 (1.01-1.86)
West Platte	6	1.44 (0.42-2.47)	1.14 (0.60-1.68)	1.02 (0.35-1.70)
Statewide	42	1.47 (1.18-1.77)	1.37 (1.03-1.62)	1.02 (0.81-1.23)

Table 2. Percent change in the mean number of calling males heard during the 2016 bobwhite whistle count survey from 2015 and the 5-year mean, by bobwhite management zone (Figure 1).

Zone	Percent Difference from:	
	2015 Mean	2011-2015 Mean
East Central	35	73
North Central	-16	18
Northeast	-12	5
Republican	52	95
Southeast	3	38
West Platte	26	41
Statewide	7	44

Figure 2. Time series (1965-2016) of the mean number of calling bobwhites heard per stop during the whistle count survey, by bobwhite management zone (Figure 1).

