

Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project No: W-15-R-74
Title of Job: 2017 Northern Bobwhite Whistle Count Survey

Job: H1



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 21 July 2017

Northern bobwhite whistle counts were conducted between 15 June and 15 July 2017, 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 2017 was higher than in 2016 (Table 1). Regional indices were also higher, except in the Republican zone, than in 2016 (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 2017 indices of abundance increased compared to 2016 statewide and in all regions but the Republican; however, confidence intervals overlapped, indicating increases were not statistically significant. Regional and statewide 2017 indices were also higher than the 2012-2016 (5-year) mean, except in the Republican region 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.

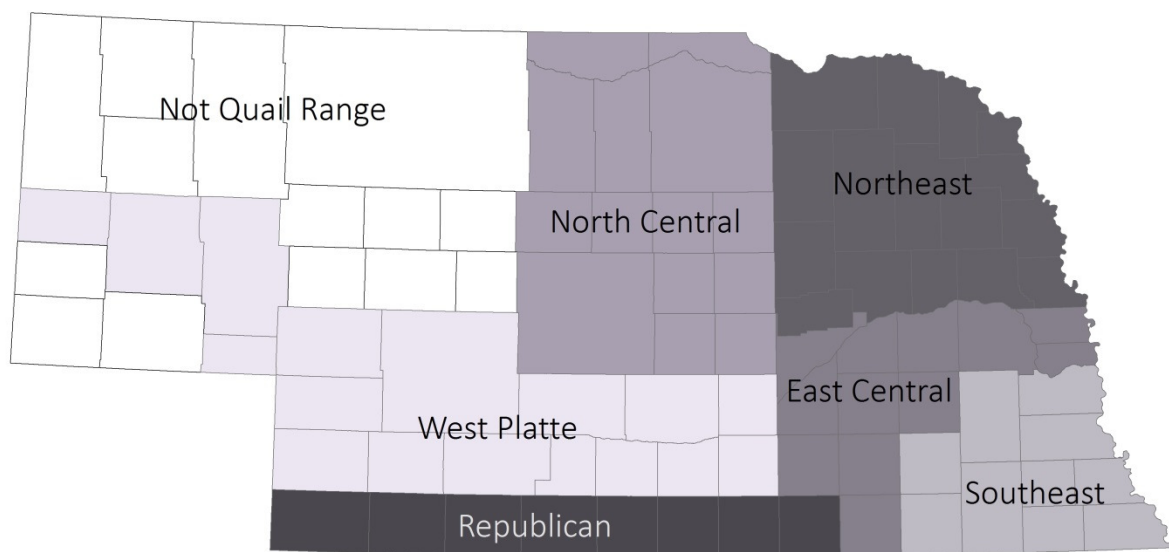


Table 1. Mean number of calling male bobwhites heard per stop along roadsides during the 2017 bobwhite whistle count survey, by bobwhite management zones (Figure 1).

Zone	Number of Routes	Calling Males per Stop:		
		2017 x̄ & 90% CI	2016 x̄ & 90% CI	2012-2016 x̄ & 90% CI
East Central	3	1.62 (0.00-4.94)	1.49 (0.00-3.04)	1.21 (0.00-2.84)
North Central	4	1.50 (0.09-2.91)	1.13 (0.00-2.32)	1.20 (0.40-2.01)
Northeast	7	0.61 (0.20-1.02)	0.42 (0.01-0.73)	0.43 (0.18-0.67)
Republican	6	1.47 (0.87-2.07)	1.72 (0.78-2.65)	1.70 (0.63-2.78)
Southeast	14	2.31 (1.74-2.88)	1.97 (1.49-2.45)	1.81 (1.34-2.27)
West Platte	6	1.81 (0.40-3.22)	1.44 (0.42-2.47)	1.18 (0.48-1.89)
Statewide	40	1.68 (1.34-2.02)	1.47 (1.18-1.77)	1.37 (1.09-1.66)

Table 2. Percent change in the mean number of calling males heard during the 2017 bobwhite whistle count survey from 2016 and the 5-year mean, by bobwhite management zone (Figure 1).

Zone	Percent Difference from:	
	2016 Mean	2012-2016 Mean
East Central	9	34
North Central	33	25
Northeast	45	42
Republican	-15	-14
Southeast	17	28
West Platte	26	53
Statewide	14	23

Figure 2. Time series (1965-2017) of the mean number of calling bobwhites heard per stop during the whistle count survey, by bobwhite management zone (Figure 1).

