

Small Game Harvest 2014-15

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Abstract

The number of licensed small game hunters decreased 1.2% in the 2014-15 small game hunting season from the 2013-14 levels. The estimated harvest increased from last season for bobwhite quail, coyote, gray fox, gray partridge, pheasant, squirrel, and woodcock and decreased for cottontail, crow, mourning dove, raccoon, red fox, ruffed grouse, and snowshoe hare (Table 2). The number of days afield pursuing small game was 2.08 million, down slightly from the 2.11 million observed during the 2013-14 season.

Methods

A sample of survey names was drawn from 2014-15 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 production server and analyzed using the Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Results

Responses were received from 3,652 of the hunters surveyed. The corrected response rate was 37%. Most hunters purchased a small game license to hunt during the season. Approximately 27% of the licensed small game hunters used a dog during the season; they own an average of 1.4 dogs. Most dogs were used to hunt game birds (57%). The most commonly used dog was the Labrador Retriever (37%). On average hunter's spent 46 days afield either training or hunting with their dog. Hunters spend an average of \$716.71 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 247,039 in 2013-14 to 244,034 in 2014-15 (Figure 1). Hunters spent approximately 2.08 million days in the field during the 2014-15 small game season. The total number of days spent in the field pursuing small game was down 1.4% from the 2013-14 season level. The estimated harvest increased from last season for bobwhite quail, coyote, gray fox, gray partridge, pheasant, squirrel, and woodcock and decreased for cottontail, crow, mourning dove, raccoon, red fox, ruffed grouse, and snowshoe hare (Table 2).

Small game hunters who pursued pheasants did so mostly on public land (47%). Seventy-nine percent of land used to pursue pheasants was stocked with pen-reared pheasants (either by the DNR or privately) (Table 1).

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 thirty-year trend in small game harvest for all species is shown in Figure 2.

Table 1. Responses to the 2014-15 Wisconsin Small Game Hunting Questionnaire.

Question 1. Did you hunt small game (excluding waterfowl) in Wisconsin during this season?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	2,109	57.7%
No	1,543	42.3%

No Response = 34

Question 2. Did you use dogs while hunting small game?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	986	26.7%
No	2,666	73.3%

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

Response	Count	Percent
Game Birds	565	57.0
Migratory Game Birds (excluding waterfowl)	184	18.5
Small Game Mammals	156	15.7
Furbearing Animals	71	7.2
Unprotected	13	1.3
Other	3	0.3

Question 4. What breed(s) and number of dogs did you use?

Breed	Count	Percent	Breed	Count	Percent
American Water Spaniel	3	0.3%	Hound	19	1.6%
Beagle	77	6.6%	Irish Setter	7	0.6%
Black & Tan	11	0.9%	Jack Russell Terrier	4	0.3%
Blue Tick	12	1.0%	Lab	435	37.4
Brittany	51	4.4%	Lab Mix	17	1.5%
Chesapeake Bay Retriever	7	0.7%	Llewellyn Setter	2	0.2%
Cocker Spaniel	5	0.4%	Mix	25	2.1%
English Cocker	15	1.3%	Mountain Cur	6	0.5%
English Pointer	10	0.9%	Munsterlander	6	0.5%
English Setter	53	4.5%	Plott Coonhound	9	0.8%
English Springer Spaniel	40	3.4%	Poodle	3	0.3%
German Shepard	2	0.2%	Redbone Coonhound	9	0.8%
German Shorthaired Pointer	115	10.0%	Redtick	3	0.3%
German Wirehaired Pointer	38	3.2%	Springer Spaniel	55	4.7%
Golden Retriever	47	4.0%	Vizsla	12	1.0%
Goldendoodle	2	0.2%	Walker	34	2.9%
Gordon Setter	10	0.9%	Weimaraner	6	0.5%
Griffon	14	1.2%			

Mean Number of dogs owned = 1.4 Dogs per owner

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

Mean = 199.6 Hours

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

Mean = 45.9 Days

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

Mean = \$716.71

Question 8a. On what type of land did you hunt pheasants?

Response	Count	Percent
Private land	176	25.3%
Public land	326	46.9%
Both private and public land	192	27.6%
Don't know what type	1	0.1%

No Response = 13

Question 8b. Was the land you hunted on stocked with pen-reared pheasants (either by the DNR or privately)?

Response	Count	Percent
Yes	543	78.7%
No	90	13.0%
Don't know	57	8.3%

No Response = 18

Small Game License Sales

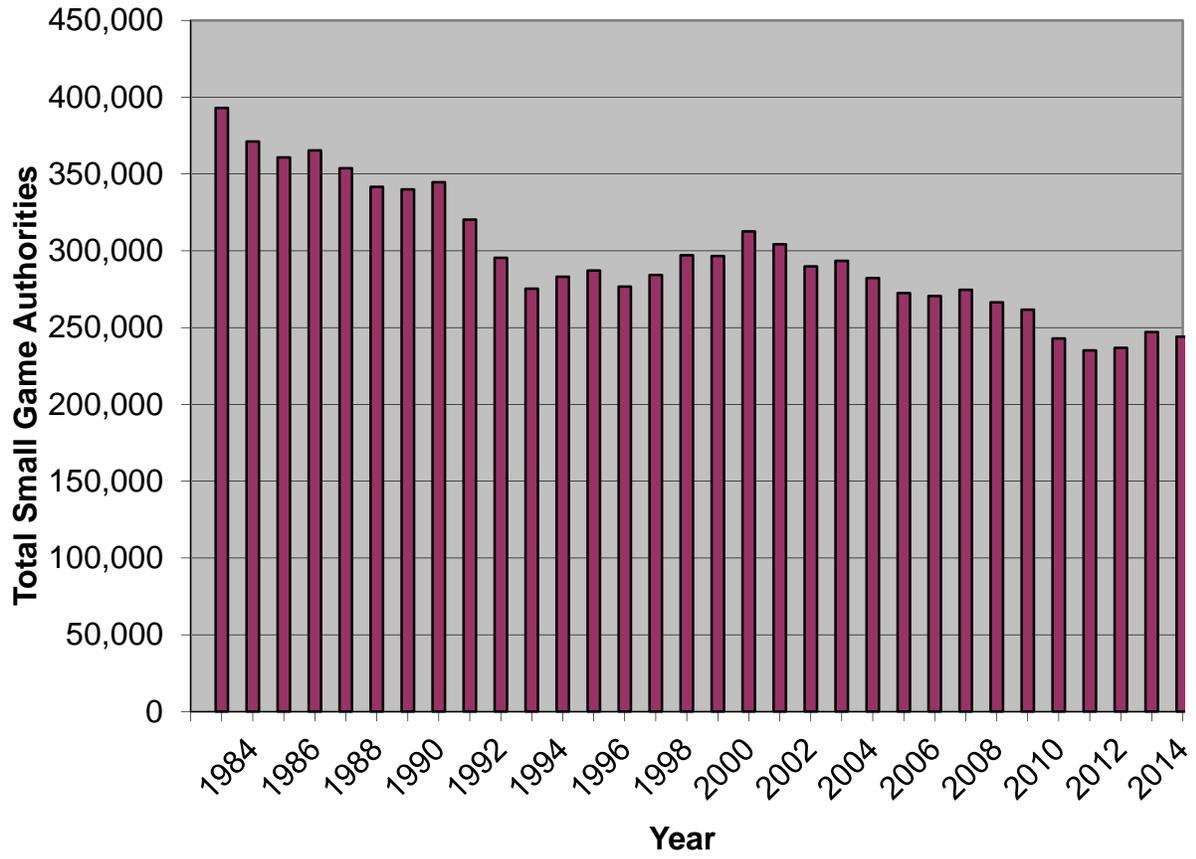


Figure 1. Small Game License sales 1983-2014.

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 2014-15 season.*

Species	Number of Hunters	Percent Hunting	Days Hunted*		Harvest*		Harvest/Day	Top Three Counties
Bobwhite Quail	488	0.2%	3,045	±3,113	1,059	±1,175	0.35	Waukesha, Columbia, Shawano
Cottontail	26,112	10.7%	121,024	±17,575	93,284	±16,114	0.77	Grant, Dane, Dodge
Coyote	22,451	9.2%	190,209	±47,220	43,298	±16,682	0.23	Grant, Iowa, Sauk
Crow	5,125	2.1%	21,980	±7,765	22,841	±8,568	1.04	Kenosha, Monroe, Racine
Gray Fox	4,149	1.7%	32,838	±19,122	9,203	±5,303	0.28	Kewaunee, Marquette, Green
Gray Partridge	488	0.2%	3,244	±3,137	265	±410	0.08	Waukesha, Door, Rock
Mourning Dove	8,785	3.6%	51,309	±21,956	72,694	±22,143	1.42	Waushara, Dane, Jefferson
Pheasant	46,855	19.2%	463,042	±50,503	294,483	±36,501	0.64	Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha
Raccoon	6,101	2.5%	70,906	±50,360	76,203	±36,667	1.07	Sauk, Columbia, Juneau
Red Fox	4,881	2.0%	42,769	±26,948	2,317	±1,180	0.05	Columbia, Green, Rock
Ruffed Grouse	73,210	30.0%	614,256	±54,674	254,826	±31,763	0.41	Price, Forest, Marinette
Snowshoe Hare	4,149	1.7%	14,764	±5,861	3,244	±3,375	0.22	Clark, Eau Claire, Taylor
Squirrel	48,807	20.0%	301,236	±29,991	347,116	±40,465	1.15	Sauk, Grant, Vernon
Woodcock	16,838	6.9%	144,924	±27,417	85,074	±23,462	0.59	Price, Marinette, Burnett

*Confidence interval is 95%.

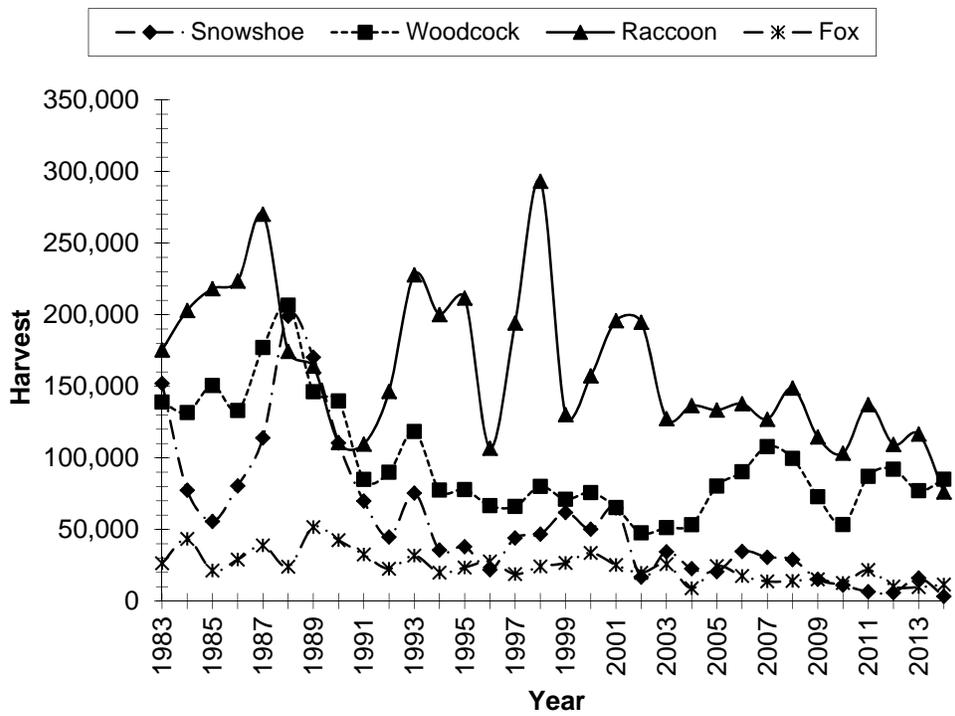
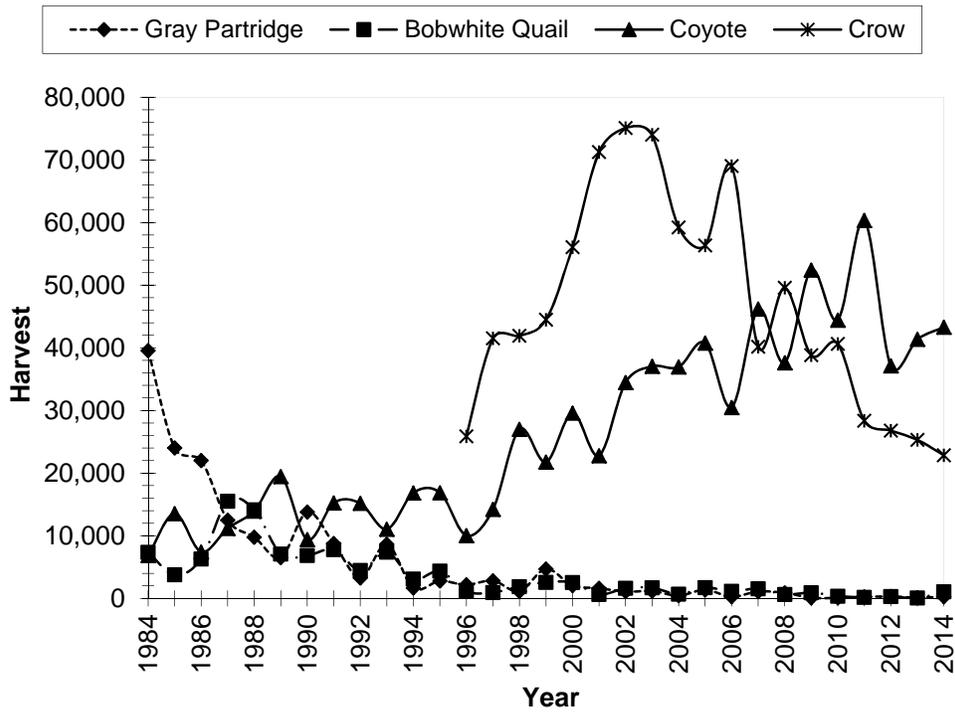


Figure 2. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2014.

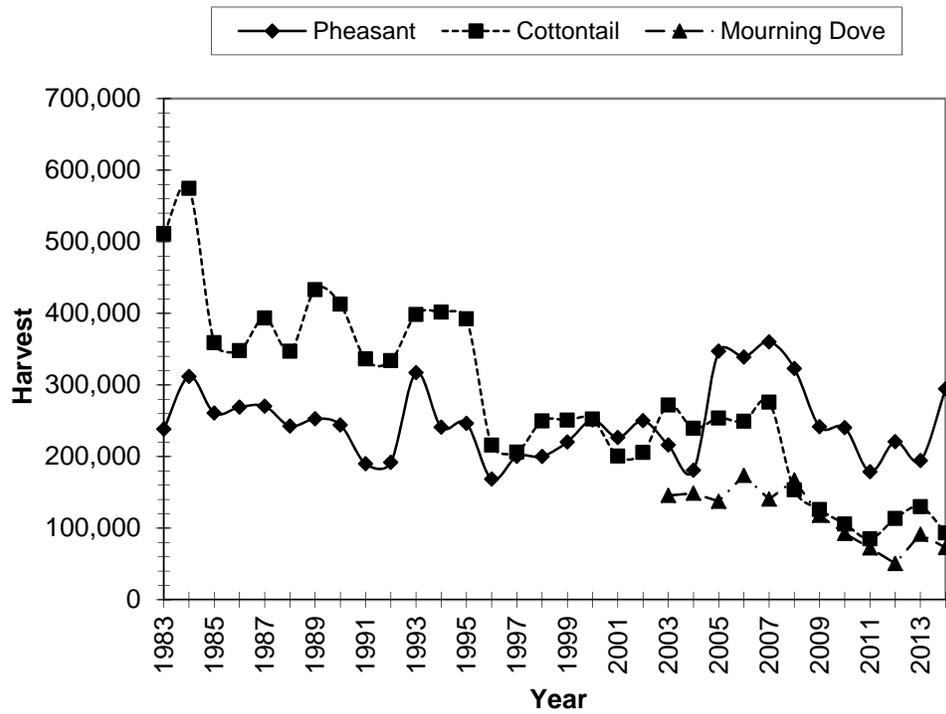
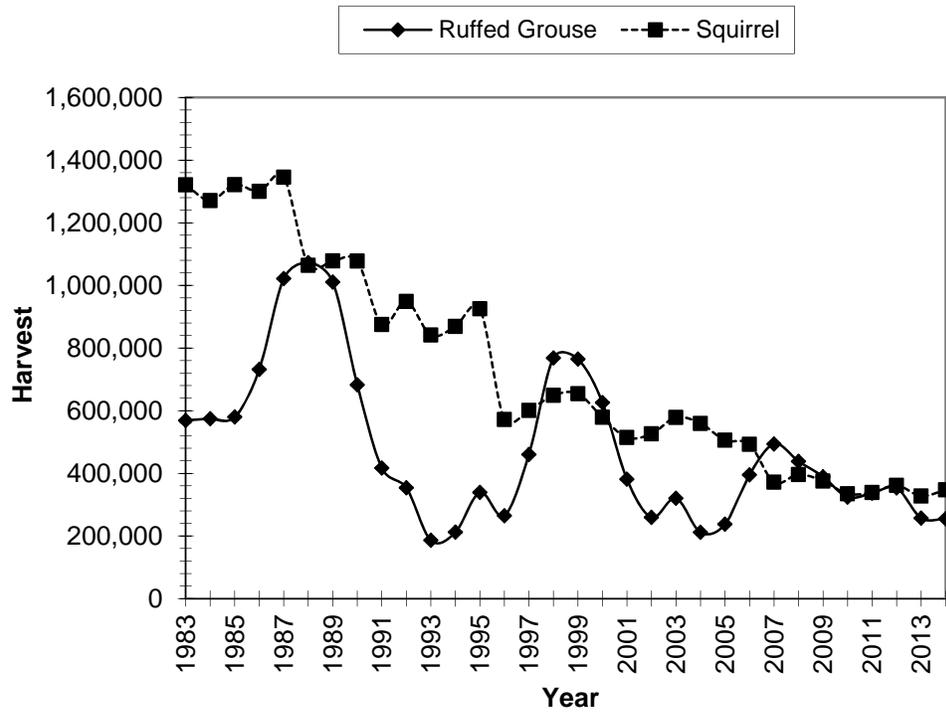


Figure 2. Small game harvest trends for all species 1983-2014 (continued).