

2025 August Quail and Pheasant Roadside Survey Results

Summary

- Statewide quail abundance was 20% lower than 2024
- Three of the zoogeographic regions showed increases, while five showed decreases
- Areas with good habitat have reported good productivity and increased quail numbers
- Ring-necked pheasant numbers showed a slight increase (14%) over 2024

Northern Bobwhite Abundance

Conservation Agents conducted roadside counts of bobwhite quail from August 1-15 in 111 of Missouri's 114 counties. Clay, Jackson, and St. Louis counties are not included because they are high density urban areas near Kansas City and St. Louis. Surveyors count the number of quail observed while driving ≤ 20 miles per hour along permanent 30-mile mostly gravel road routes. Participants are instructed to conduct counts beginning at sunrise on clear, dewy mornings with light winds to increase chances that bobwhite will be near roadsides. These observations are used to provide an index of quail abundance across the landscape. Because only a small portion of each county is sampled, the index best represents quail population trends at large scales, such as statewide and multi-county blocks such as the zoogeographic region. The statewide long-term trend of the index closely follows other large-scale indices of abundance, including the North American Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and Missouri quail harvest estimates. The roadside survey routes are run almost entirely through private land, so the quail index is representative of conditions on Missouri's private lands.

This year's statewide index of 1.68 quail per 30-mile route is 20% lower than last year's index of 2.10. Despite having a warmer than average December, January and February tended to be 2-4 degrees below normal. Below average temperatures and increased moisture led to higher-than-average snowfalls in many portions of the state, mostly in the southern 2/3rds of the state. May and June precipitation events were heavy especially in the southern portion of the state, then dried up while July rainfalls were higher in the northern part of the state. August and September were overall quite dry for much of the state. Where there is good habitat, there has been an uptick in quail brood sightings, including many later hatched birds, probably due to the drier conditions.

Ring-necked Pheasant Abundance

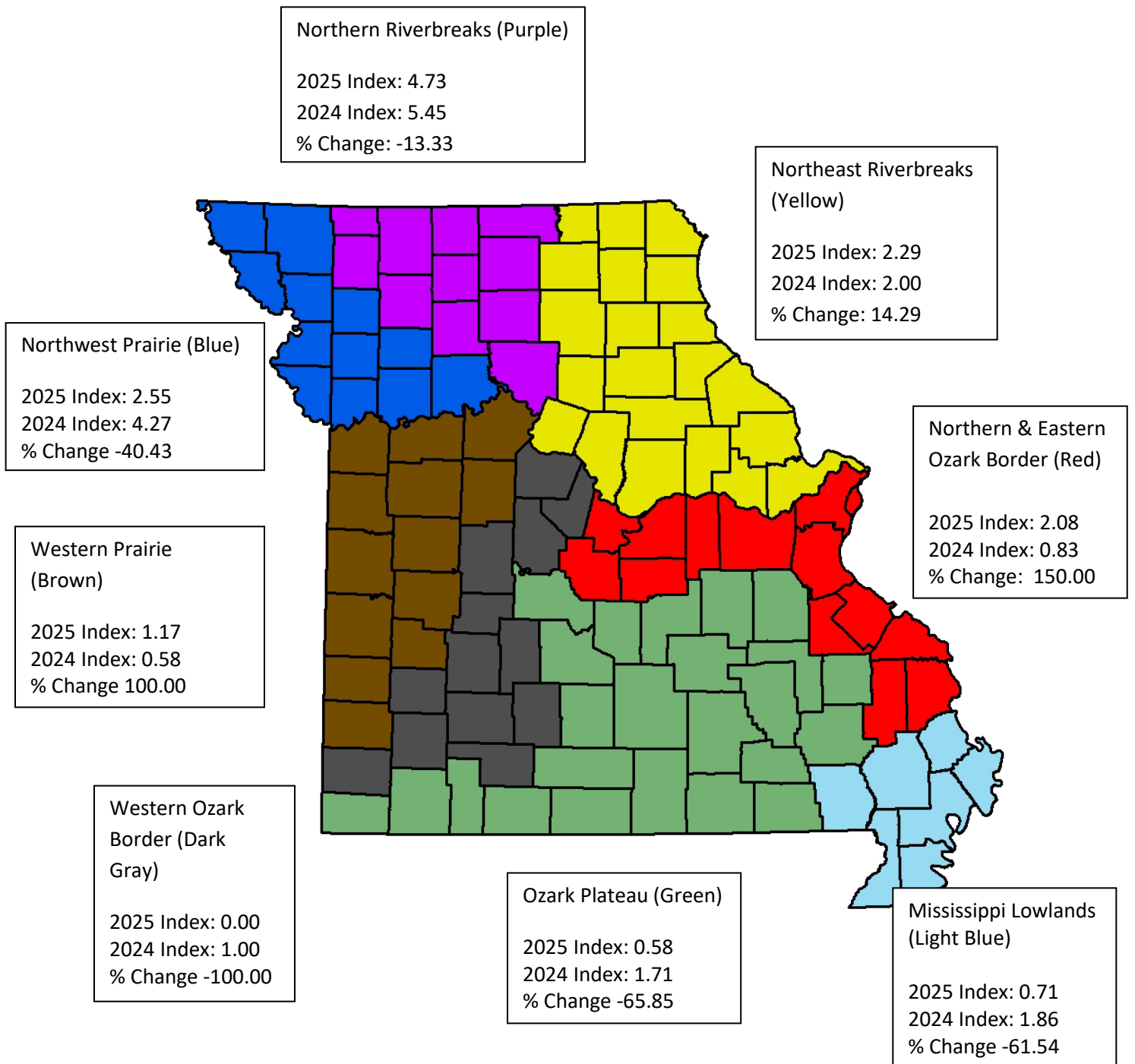
The Conservation Agents' Roadside Survey counts the number of pheasants observed along 72 standardized 30-mile routes (a subset of the routes sampled for bobwhites) during August 1-15. The 2025 survey showed an increase in Missouri's pheasant population. The 2025 statewide count of 0.25 pheasants per 30-mile route was up 14% compared to 2024. The pheasant range in Missouri is limited to the northern third of the state. Pheasants should have had good overwinter survival and nesting

conditions this year. Continued loss of habitat, especially those enrolled in Conservation Reserve Program lands has had a negative impact on overall pheasant populations in Northern Missouri.

Average number of quail counted per 30-mile route by Conservation Agents in 111 counties during August 1-15, 2025.

Zoogeographic Region	# of counties run in 2025	# of Quail Counted 2025	# of Quail Counted 2024	% Change 2024-2025
Northwest Prairie	11	2.55	4.27	-40.43
Northern Riverbreaks	11	4.73	5.45	-13.33
Northeast Riverbreaks	21	2.29	2.00	14.29
Western Prairie	12	1.17	0.58	100.00
Western Ozark Border	13	0.00	1.00	-100.00
Ozark Plateau	24	0.58	1.71	-65.85
Northern and Eastern Ozark Border	12	2.08	0.83	150.00
Mississippi Lowlands	7	0.71	1.86	-61.54
Statewide	111	1.68	2.10	-20.17

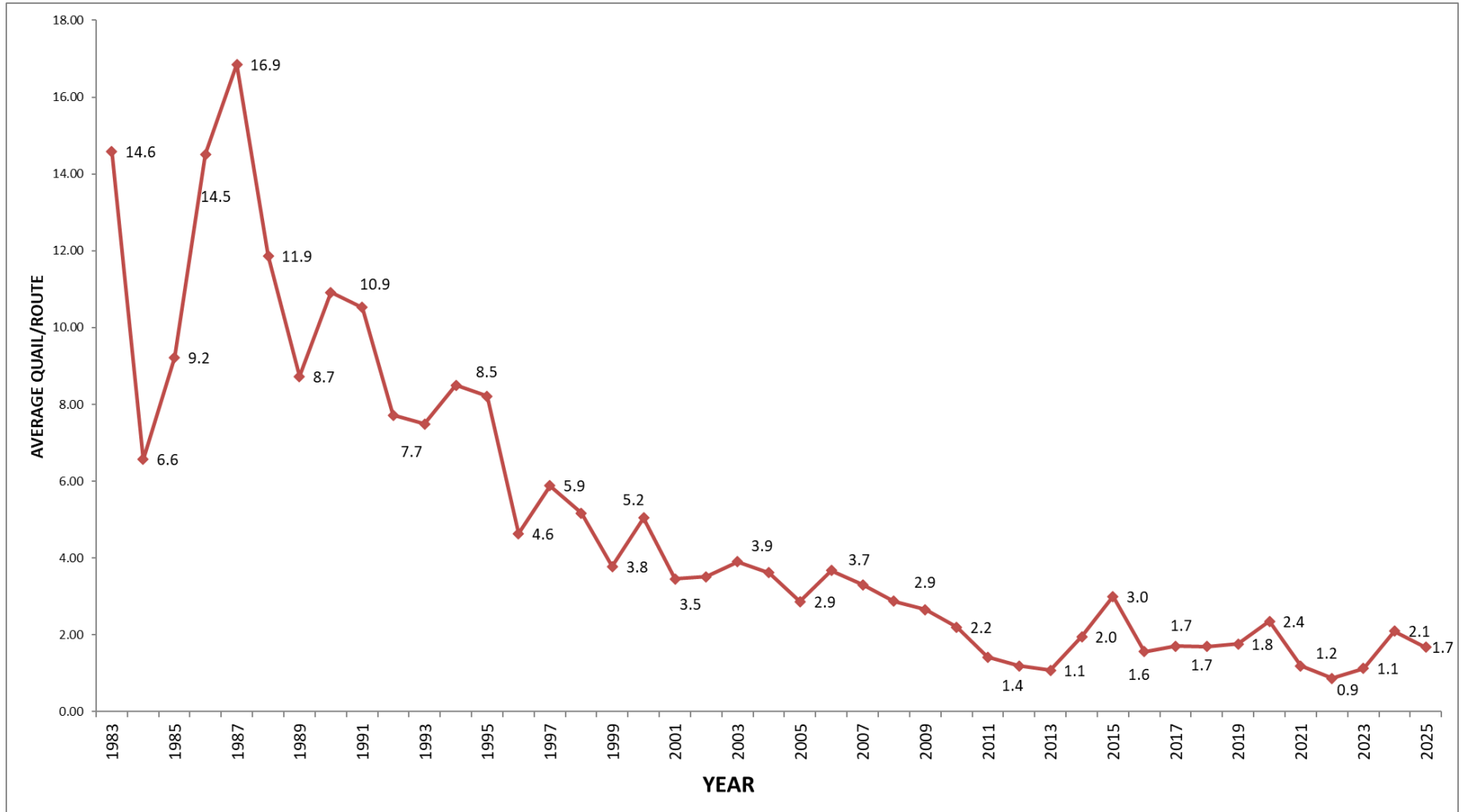
Map of zoogeographic regions in Missouri showing the 2025 and 2024 quail roadside index and the 2-year percent change.



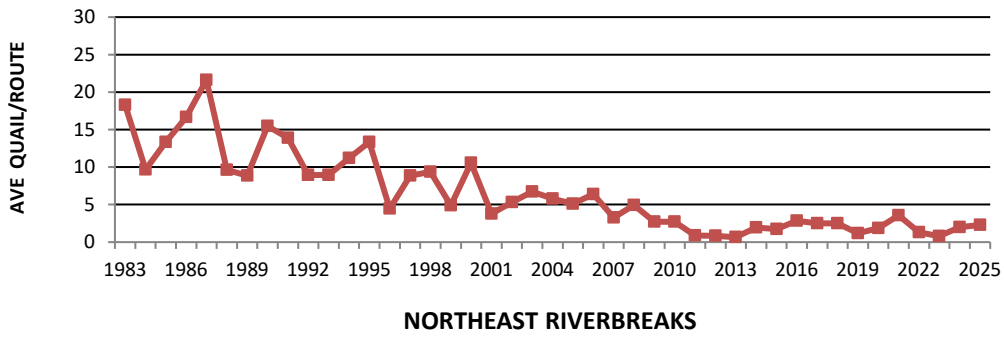
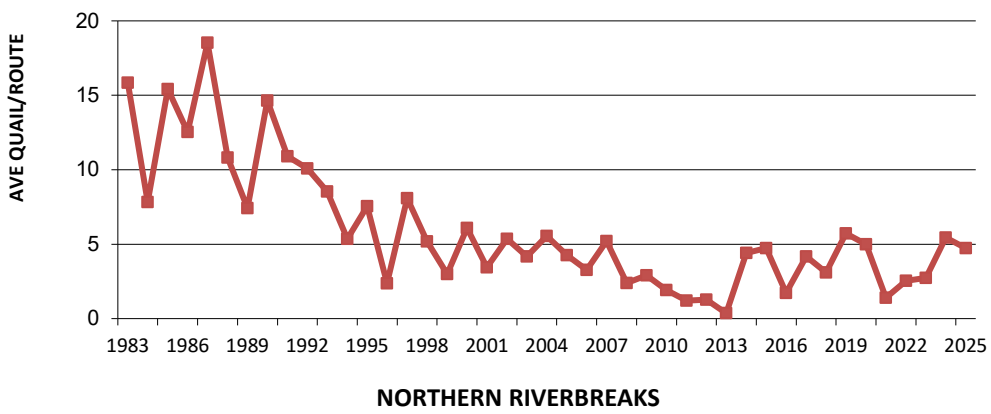
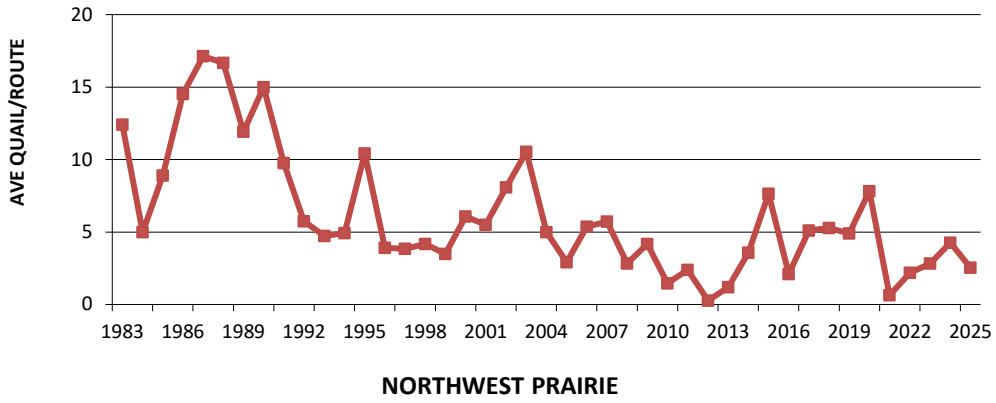
Average number of pheasants counted per 30-mile route by Conservation Agents along 72 routes during August 1-15, 2025 (“.” indicates that percent change cannot be calculated due to a zero value in the denominator).

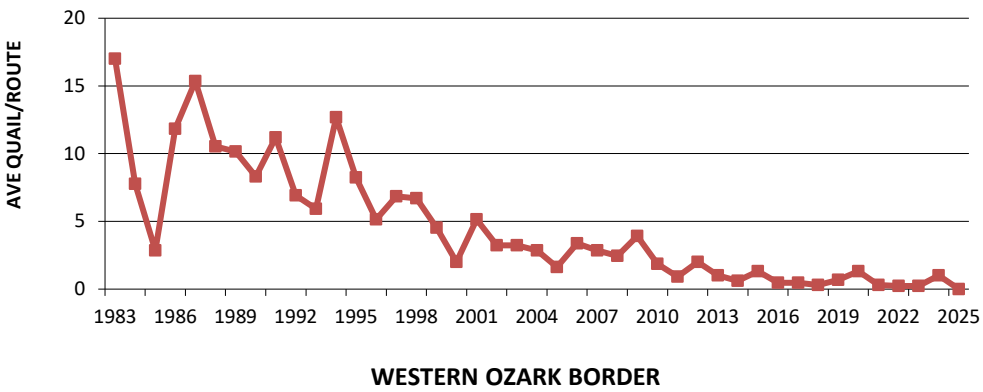
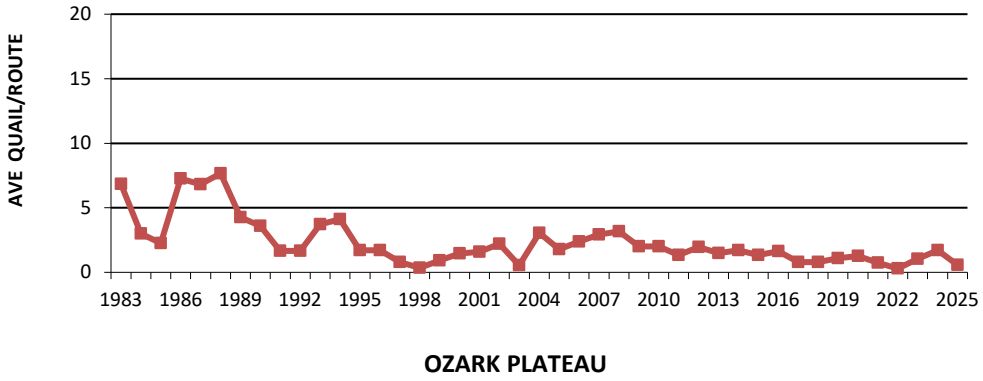
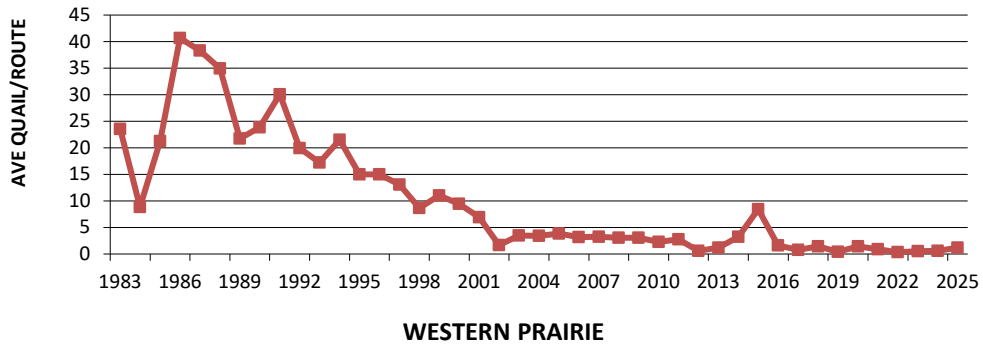
Zoogeographic Region	# of routes run in 2025	# of Pheasants Counted 2025	# of Pheasants Counted 2024	% Change 2024-2025
Northwest Prairie	18	0.22	0.00	.
Northern Riverbreaks	21	0.33	0.33	0.00
Northeast Riverbreaks	24	0.29	0.38	-22.22
Western Prairie	3	0	0	.
Mississippi Lowlands	6	0	0	.
Statewide	72	0.25	0.22	14.06

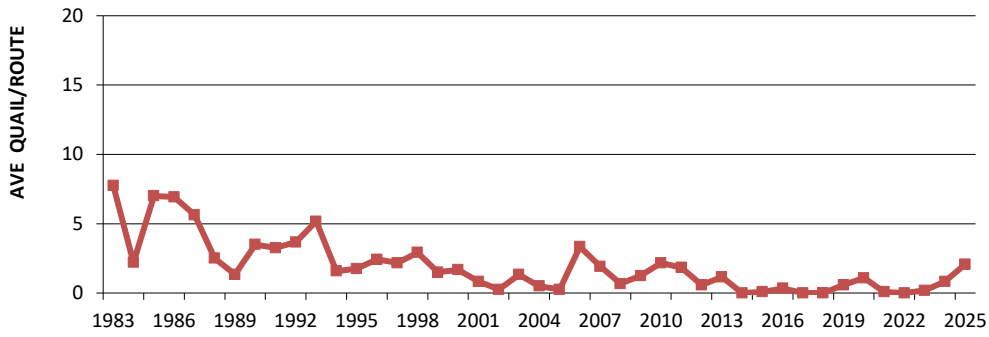
Average number of quail observed per route on the August Roadside Survey from 1983-2025.



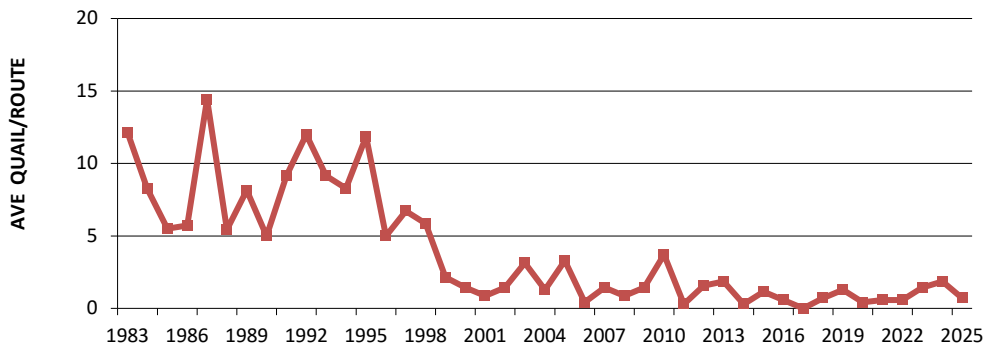
Average number of quail per route by zoogeographic region from 1983-2025.







NORTHERN AND EASTERN OZARK BORDER



MISSISSIPPI LOWLANDS