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# Northern Bobwhite Quail

## 2014 POPULATION UPDATE

### DISTRIBUTION & ABUNDANCE



### Bobwhite populations decline following severe winter

The northern bobwhite is a small gamebird that is native to Ohio. While it likely had a limited distribution prior to European settlement, it expanded its range to include all of Ohio as forests were cleared for farms in the 18th and 19th centuries. Bobwhite populations peaked after WWII and have been on the decline since about 1970. Habitats that once benefitted bobwhites have been lost to forest succession in eastern Ohio and to modern agricultural practices and urbanization in western Ohio. Grasslands, old fields, shrubby fence-rows, and ragged forest edges are conditions that benefit the species.

### SEASON:

**NOV. 7, 2014 —  
NOV. 30, 2014**

### DAILY BAG LIMIT: 2

**OPEN: 16 COUNTIES IN  
SOUTHERN OHIO, SEE  
[www.wildohio.gov](http://www.wildohio.gov) for details**

### BEST COUNTIES FOR HUNTING:

**BROWN  
HIGHLAND  
PREBLE**

In Ohio, bobwhite populations have been monitored since 1985 by an annual roadside survey conducted each June to detect whistling males. The survey is currently conducted in 29 counties throughout southern Ohio. Two population indices are derived from the survey, an abundance index (average number of calling males heard per survey stop) and a distribution index (proportion of stops with quail).

In 2014, the bobwhite abundance index was 0.06 males heard per stop, 50% below 2013 values and 32% below the 5-year average. Between 1985 and 2014 the abundance index has declined by 94% for southern Ohio counties. Quail were detected at 4.1% of surveyed locations, a 24% decrease from last year. In 1985 quail were detected among 36% of the areas surveyed. Despite these population declines, habitat management is still the best means to support Ohio quail populations.

