

What We Know About WEATHER

Weather & Habitat: Two factors determine the abundance and distribution of upland game populations in Iowa - weather and habitat.

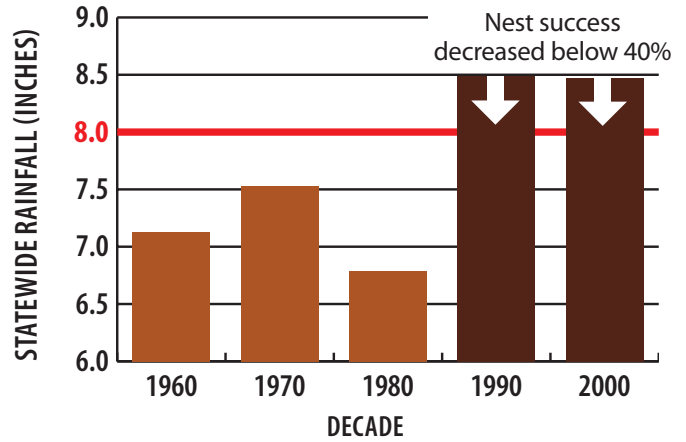
Rule of Thumb: Pheasant numbers increase with mild winters and warm, dry springs; and decrease with snowy winters and cool, wet springs.

Nest Success: Must be above 40 percent to maintain pheasant populations. More than 8 inches of rain during nesting (April-May) will result in nest success below 40 percent.

Winter Survival: Normal winter snowfall is about 25 inches from December-March. Average hen survival for Iowa is about 65 percent, during normal winter.

Monitoring: Since 1962 Iowa has conducted standardized roadside surveys on upland game. Changes from year-to-year reflect weather; and long-term changes reflect habitat.

Rain During Nesting – April-May

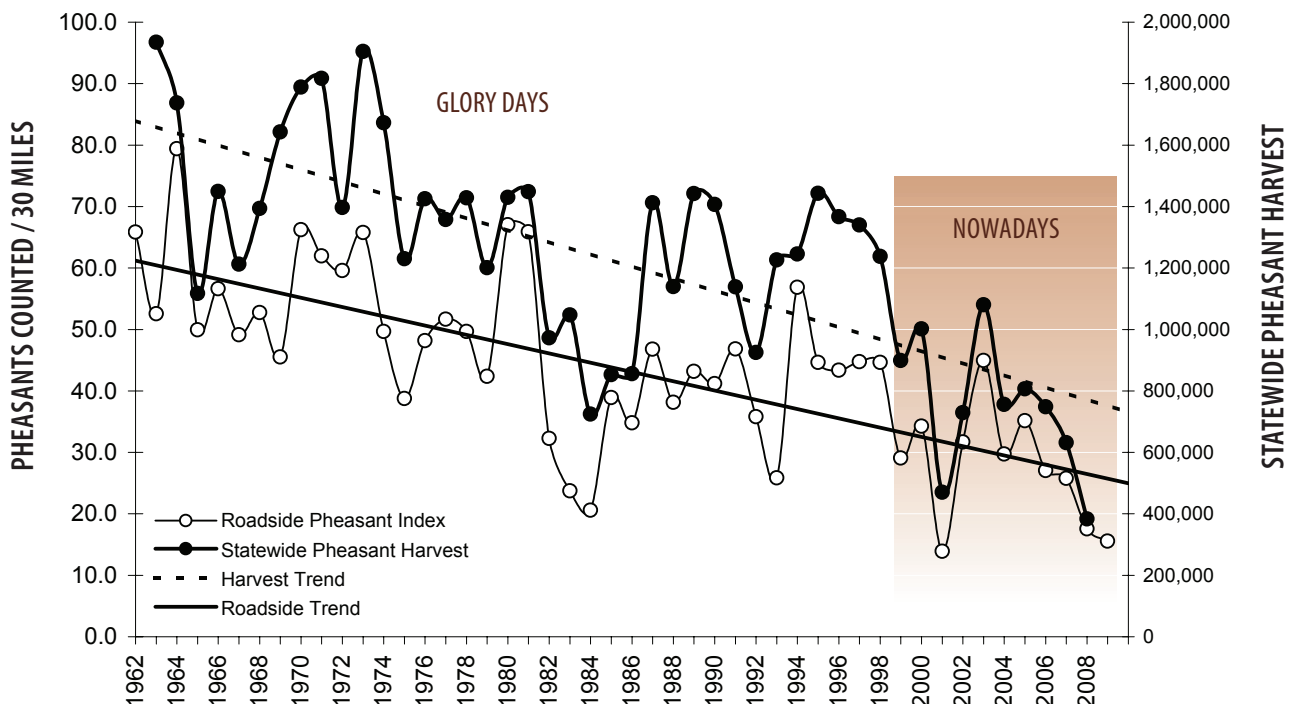


Snow – Winter Survival

December - March	Snow Totals	Historical Perspective
2006 - 2007	30 inches	20% above normal
2007 - 2008	42 inches	65% above normal
2008 - 2009	32 inches	25% above normal
2009 - 2010	47 inches	85% above normal

Since 1962 – This is the first time snowfall remained 20 percent above normal four years in a row. Once previous (1982-1984) three years in a row also resulted in historical low pheasant numbers.

Statewide Pheasant Trends



What We Know About **HABITAT**

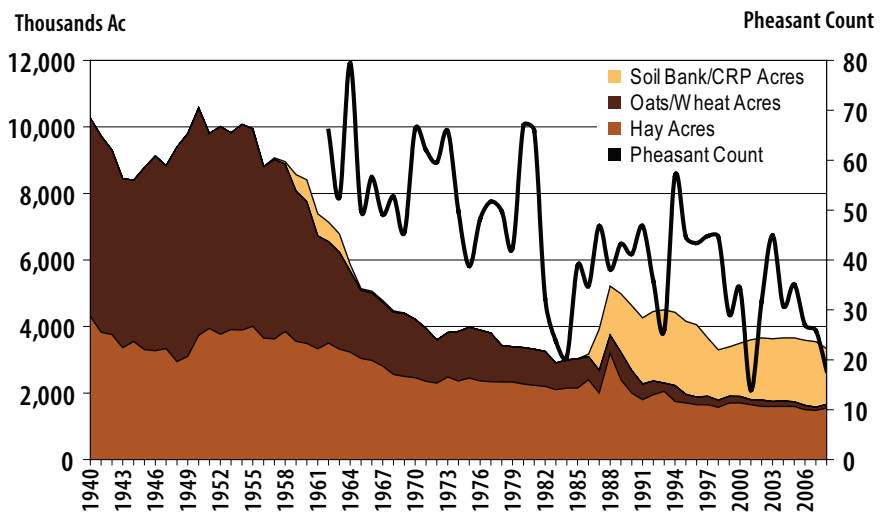
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Landscape: Iowa's landscape is dominated by agriculture. Only **1 percent** is owned by the public and can be managed by the DNR for wildlife conservation. Private landowners, not DNR, control wildlife conservation on the remaining **99 percent** of the land.

Habitat Loss: Between 1990 and 2005 Iowa has lost 2,496 square miles of pheasant habitat, an 8 mile-wide strip of habitat stretching from Omaha to Davenport.

Hunter Harvest: One rooster can be harvested for about every four acres of habitat. This means, if Iowa loses 60,000 acres of CRP, 15,000 harvested birds will be lost.

HABITAT and HARVEST



SUMMARY:

Snow Cover: Snow fills habitat, covers food, concentrates birds and increases exposure to predators.

Winter Survival: It is impossible to compensate for winters with especially low survival – reproduction (nesting) would have to exceed the maximum values pheasant have demonstrated.

Shelterbelts: Good winter cover located next to good food sources improves survival during the winter by reducing exposure to predators and bad weather.

Nest Success: Heavy rains and wet weather can destroy nests, chill chicks and reduce numbers of insects for broods to eat.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Focus on HABITAT: We cannot control the weather, but we can be good stewards to the landscape.

Ask Questions: Pay attention to conservation issues and keep in touch with your legislator. Contact your local DNR or Pheasants Forever staff with any questions.

Increase Winter Survival & Increase Nest Success: Landowners are key. Set aside proper habitat and locations that can withstand damp springs. If we rely on lowland and drainage ditches for nesting, we are prone to loss during wet springs. If we rely on insufficient shelter, such as road ditches, during severe winters we are prone to lose hens.

4 ACRES HABITAT = 1 ROOSTER

1994: 4.4M acres habitat and 1.1M pheasant harvested.
2008: 3.3M acres habitat and 0.8M pheasant harvested.
Contact your local biologist for more CRP acres.

