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Small Quail Can Provide Fast Shooting

Quail and pheasant hunts open Nov. 6

If you've ever thought about hunting quail in Utah, this fall might be the time to give it a try.

California quail and Gambel's quail populations have done well in Utah the past few years. And they appear to be doing even better this year.

Hunts for both species of quail start Nov. 6. Utah's ring-necked pheasant hunt starts the same day.

Pheasants

Despite a continuing loss of habitat, more upland game hunters—about 15,000—pursue pheasants than any other upland game species in Utah.

Hunters who take to the state's farm fields and other areas that have good pheasant habitat should find fair to good numbers of birds this fall. "Nesting conditions were good for pheasants this past spring," says Dave Olsen, upland game coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

Olsen says counties along the Wasatch Front and Millard County in west-central Utah provide some of Utah's best pheasant habitat. This habitat includes river bottoms, marshes and thickets near farm fields.

Olsen says many of these areas are privately owned or are close to private property. "Don't wait until the last minute to approach a landowner about getting written permission to hunt his or her property," he says. "Try to get this permission way in advance of the hunt."

You must have written permission to hunt private land that's properly posted. More information is available on page 13 of the 2010 - 2011 Utah Upland Game Guidebook.

The guidebook is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks.

California quail

California quail are found mostly in brushy thickets near the edge of fields and farms in northern, central and northeastern Utah.

These areas are usually found in urban settings. Because they're usually found in urban areas, it's important that you obey the law and that you're careful where you shoot. And remember that you must have written permission to hunt on private land.

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Gambel's quail

Gambel's quail are found in southwestern Utah, mostly in the Mohave Desert near the Nevada and Arizona borders in Washington and Kane counties.

Olsen says Gambel's quail populations and the amount of rain that falls in the spring go hand-in-hand; if plenty of rain is received, plenty of quail are usually available in the fall. And southwestern Utah received plenty of rain this past spring. "Those who know where to find quail should have a fun hunt," Olsen says.

The best places to find Gambel's quail include draws that are near water and that have almond and other types of brush in them.

When you find quail, get ready for some fast shooting. The birds could be together in small groups or in a covey of as many as a dozen quail. The action happens fast when the birds flush. Usually, the entire covey flushes at once. But sometimes smaller groups of birds will flush—two or three birds at a time—after the main covey has flushed.

"Shooting can be fast and furious," Olsen says. "When you're done, you'll either be picking up a bird or two or waving goodbye to the birds you missed."

Olsen says chukar partridge populations are also doing well in the Mohave Desert this fall, so you might find some chukars there too.

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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Apply for a 2011 Sportsman Permit

Applications for Utah's most prized hunting permits accepted soon

Applications for next year's most prized Utah hunting permits—2011 sportsman permits—will be available by Nov. 1.

Only Utah residents may apply for sportsman permits. One sportsman permit is offered for each of the following species: Desert bighorn ram, Rocky Mountain bighorn ram, buck deer, buck pronghorn, bull elk, bull moose, hunter's choice bison, hunter's choice Rocky Mountain goat, black bear, cougar and wild turkey.

If you draw a sportsman permit, the dates you can hunt vary. But in most cases, they're longer than the regular season dates. You can also hunt on almost any unit in Utah that's open to hunting the species you drew a permit for.

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Highly prized

“Sportsman permits are highly prized,” says Judi Tutorow, wildlife licensing coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. “If you’re one of the lucky hunters who draw one, you’ll have plenty of days—and plenty of areas—to hunt.”

You can apply for a sportsman permit starting Nov. 1 at www.wildlife.utah.gov. Applications must be submitted no later than 11 p.m. on Nov. 18.

Draw results will be posted by Dec. 9. If you draw a permit, you’ll also receive a letter in the mail. “That’s one letter you’ll probably want to frame,” Tutorow says.

For more information, see page 31 of the 2010 Utah Big Game Guidebook (www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks) or call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office. You can also call the DWR’s Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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