

## Kentucky Afield

By Norm Mince  
Over 10,000 more deer were harvested during the 1986 gun season than in 1985, according to an informal telephone survey conducted by the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

The total number of deer harvested by gun was 37,476, tallied by check station operators, conservation officers and other departmental personnel during the period November 8-17, compared to last year's figure of 27,465.

As expected, the western third of the state produced the largest district harvests, as did the northern-central region. The first and second districts (western) were reported harvesting 4,146 (that figure does not include Calloway County harvest) and 12,272 deer, respectively, while the fifth district in the northern-most tip of the commonwealth reported 6,724 deer taken during gun season.

According to the survey, rabbit and quail numbers were reported about the same as last year. Western Kentucky is still the best place for quail overall, while Eastern Kentucky

showed the largest increase in rabbit populations.

A total of 2,785 hunters took 1,566 rabbits and 469 quail compared with last year's figures showing 2,383 hunters harvesting 2,120 rabbits and 814 quail. One factor which may have impacted this year's survey was the poor hunting conditions on opening day, Thursday, November 20.

Grouse numbers increased, according to the report, which showed 24 grouse taken from the eastern-most third of the state. There was also one report of a grouse sighting in the first district at the opposite end of the state.

The report is a fairly accurate showing of what hunters can expect during the small game season, which again this year can be rated fair to good overall.

Thanksgiving holidays often bring to mind several traditional things such as family gatherings, turkey and stuffing and pumpkin pie, but it also provides an excellent opportunity to spend a day or two in the field in search of cottontails, bobwhites, grouse and a variety of other game

which provide great table fare.

Many families will opt for a buffet meal to supplement "Old Time" leftovers.

Some will be enjoying venison, taken recently. Whatever the case, there is ample reason to give thanks for the opportunity to experience the abundance of outdoor activities available throughout the state.

For those who may not have harvested a deer during gun season, or those who are interested in taking two deer, remember bow season is still in progress until December 31.

The holidays may be the perfect time to arrow a deer, which may be a little more calm now that the forest gun season has concluded. Duck season, which opens Thanksgiving Day, offers another opportunity for the hunter as this time of year. The point system is in effect, and hunters must possess both a federal migratory bird stamp and a state duck stamp, in addition to a valid hunting license before duck hunting. Duck season reopens December 14 through January 14.

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