



2023–24 New Mexico Small Game Voluntary Harvest Report



Small game harvest is managed by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department). A Game Hunting License is required to legally take small game. Submission of a small game harvest report is voluntary, and license holders are able to make submissions through the Department's online Harvest Reporting System. For license holders who submit a report, information is collected on if they hunted, what species of small game was harvested, the number harvested, and the county of harvest. Hunters may report hunting in more than one county. There were 35,600 license holders who voluntarily reported they did not hunt small game, 1,452 license holders who reported hunting without harvesting, and 2,637 who reported hunting and harvesting. The return rate of all game hunting license holders submitting a harvest report for small game was 24.9%.

Successful small game hunters submitted a total of 2,324 species harvest reports, with the potential that some hunters may have filed more than one report if they hunted multiple species. Of the license holders who filed a report, hunters were generally satisfied with their small game hunting experience in New Mexico. Species small game hunting satisfaction ratings ranged from 3.0 to 4.1 out of 5.

More small game harvest reports were filed in 2023–24 compared to 2022–23 (Table 1). Though voluntary harvest reporting makes it challenging to draw conclusions about trends in hunter numbers and harvests, small game hunter numbers appear to be up slightly.

Small game harvest can be variable year to year. Small game populations are subject to extreme fluctuations due to annual weather conditions. Poor winter or spring moisture and extreme weather events can reduce the number of breeding adults and lead to poor reproductive success. During years of good weather conditions, populations can rebound very quickly. Late winter and early spring moisture in the southwest seems to have helped to increase Gambel's and Montezuma quail numbers in 2023. Rain in June helped to increase scaled quail and northern bobwhite numbers in some parts of eastern New Mexico as well. Harvest numbers for all quail species were higher in 2023–24 compared to the 2022–23 hunting season.

This report summarizes the reported harvest data for all small game including: quail (scaled, Gambel's, northern bobwhite, and Montezuma), pheasants, dusky grouse, Eurasian collared-doves, and squirrels (Abert's, gray, red, and fox). Information provided from survey results assists the Department with development of recommendations for future small game harvest opportunities.

Table 1. Comparison of the annual number of harvest reports submitted and number of small game reported harvested.

Species	Reports 17-18	Harvest 17-18	Reports 18-19	Harvest 18-19	Reports 19-20	Harvest 19-20	Reports 20-21	Harvest 20-21	Reports 21-22	Harvest 21-22	Reports 22-23	Harvest 22-23	Reports 23-24	Harvest 23-24
Scaled Quail	1,431	24,911	988	13,943	1,013	14,161	1,087	13,271	388	3,383	559	4,879	688	6,658
Gambel's Quail	487	5,014	324	2,505	370	3,306	637	6,782	382	3,220	465	4,351	540	4,763
Northern Bobwhite	151	1,894	100	1,039	104	1,392	88	790	30	194	31	290	62	554
Montezuma Quail	28	117	22	99	34	164	26	144	12	77	33	121	51	257
Unknown Quail*	159	2,177	106	1,315	103	1,336	102	974	40	299	57	460	73	679
Pheasant	41	89	28	57	33	58	29	53	20	53	28	52	14	29
Dusky Grouse	273	805	235	652	249	724	373	1,100	266	734	262	771	370	1,252
Eurasian Collared-Dove	451	10,915	397	8,179	337	5,177	381	5,594	303	3,961	290	4,406	241	3,808
Abert's Squirrel	148	723	81	361	103	476	144	534	89	358	87	325	106	454
Red Squirrel	37	153	20	136	41	208	71	533	46	197	42	481	34	184
Gray Squirrel	26	101	11	26	14	35	28	107	8	15	20	67	25	63
Fox Squirrel	3	8	1	4	1	2	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	2
Unknown Squirrel*	84	275	64	189	97	347	100	372	79	226	64	225	113	499
TOTAL	3,319	47,182	2,377	28,505	2,499	27,386	3,067	30,255	1,644	12,721	1,939	16,429	2,318	19,202

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown.

Species Reports

Scaled Quail

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Chaves	100	1032	3.7
Colfax	1	3	4.0
Curry	26	353	3.8
De Baca	19	158	3.3
Dona Ana	36	267	3.6
Eddy	147	1656	3.0
Grant	25	151	3.9
Guadalupe	9	49	3.3
Harding	7	136	4.6
Hidalgo	23	240	3.8
Lea	70	680	3.3
Lincoln	14	104	3.4
Luna	46	362	4.0
Otero	11	71	3.7
Quay	21	297	3.7
Roosevelt	32	302	3.4
San Juan	5	24	4.0
San Miguel	7	58	4.0
Sandoval	3	22	5.0
Sierra	29	222	4.0
Socorro	49	404	3.1
Torrance	1	15	2.0
Union	5	46	4.0
Valencia	2	6	3.5
TOTAL	688	6,658	3.5

Gambel's Quail

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Bernalillo	1	6	4.0
Catron	12	95	3.7
Cibola	4	38	3.8
Dona Ana	97	922	3.8
Grant	77	749	3.7
Hidalgo	57	697	3.8
Lincoln	6	26	3.8
Luna	87	813	4.0
Otero	15	85	3.2
San Juan	12	106	3.4
Sandoval	1	27	5.0
Sierra	67	591	3.7
Socorro	92	547	3.7
Valencia	12	61	3.3
TOTAL	540	4,763	3.7

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown quail.

Montezuma Quail

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Catron	5	28	4.0
Chaves	1	5	3.0
Dona Ana	1	10	5.0
Grant	2	28	4.0
Hidalgo	10	28	3.7
Lincoln	3	23	4.7
Luna	4	42	4.5
Otero	3	10	4.0
Sierra	14	57	4.1
Socorro	8	26	3.9
TOTAL	51	257	4.0

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown quail.

Northern Bobwhite Quail

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Chaves	2	62	4.0
Curry	23	217	4.0
De Baca	1	20	5.0
Eddy	3	27	3.7
Lea	8	75	3.3
Quay	2	20	4.0
Roosevelt	23	133	3.9
TOTAL	62	554	3.8

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown quail.

Unknown Quail

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Catron	1	15	4.0
Chaves	10	52	3.4
Colfax	1	8	4.0
Curry	4	14	3.3
De Baca	2	16	3.5
Eddy	25	303	3.4
Grant	3	8	4.0
Guadalupe	3	32	4.7
Lea	12	128	3.8
Lincoln	2	31	4.5
Quay	1	10	4.0
Roosevelt	4	31	4.0
Sierra	1	4	3.0
Socorro	3	20	4.0
Valencia	1	7	3.0
TOTAL	73	679	3.6

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown quail.

Ring-necked Pheasant

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Chaves	2	5	4.5
Curry	1	3	3.0
Eddy	5	9	2.8
Socorro	4	6	3.8
Valencia	2	6	4.5
TOTAL	14	29	3.6

Dusky Grouse

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Colfax	15	58	4.3
Los Alamos	4	8	3.5
Mora	15	46	3.9
Rio Arriba	97	305	4.0
San Miguel	38	113	4.1
Sandoval	27	58	4.0
Santa Fe	31	115	4.4
Taos	143	549	4.0
TOTAL	370	1,252	4.0

*Reports outside of species range were considered an error and removed from analysis.

Eurasian Collared Dove

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Bernalillo	2	12	4.5
Catron	4	21	3.5
Chaves	30	556	4.1
Cibola	2	13	3.5
Colfax	3	23	4.7
Curry	5	49	3.8
De Baca	1	10	3.0
Dona Ana	44	761	4.0
Eddy	35	853	3.6
Grant	8	92	3.9
Guadalupe	1	10	4.0
Harding	1	5	3.0
Hidalgo	4	30	4.0
Lea	22	311	3.7
Luna	4	55	4.0
McKinley	1	2	3.0
Mora	2	9	4.0
Otero	5	38	3.2
Quay	2	16	3.5
Rio Arriba	1	3	5.0
Roosevelt	3	61	5.0
San Juan	6	31	3.3
Santa Fe	4	80	4.0
Sierra	9	109	3.7
Socorro	14	145	3.1
Torrance	3	42	4.0
Union	6	215	4.5
Valencia	19	256	3.6
TOTAL	241	3,808	3.8

Abert's Squirrel

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Catron	30	160	4.5
Cibola	10	80	4.2
Colfax	1	4	2.0
Dona Ana	1	5	3.0
Grant	13	57	3.8
Los Alamos	2	9	3.5
McKinley	3	7	4.0
Mora	1	2	3.0
Rio Arriba	8	11	4.1
San Juan	2	3	4.0
San Miguel	5	12	3.6
Sandoval	10	29	3.5
Santa Fe	4	15	4.5
Sierra	7	31	4.7
Torrance	7	25	4.3
Valencia	2	4	4.0
TOTAL	106	454	4.1

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown squirrel.

Red Squirrel

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Catron	2	5	4.5
Lincoln	2	11	3.5
Los Alamos	1	2	4.0
Mora	1	2	4.0
Otero	12	81	4.3
Rio Arriba	4	15	4.5
San Miguel	3	5	4.3
Sandoval	4	46	3.5
Santa Fe	1	1	3.0
Taos	4	16	4.0
TOTAL	34	184	4.1

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown squirrel.

Gray Squirrel

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Catron	19	47	4.0
Grant	6	16	4.2
TOTAL	25	63	4.0

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown squirrel.

Fox Squirrel

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Lincoln	1	2	3
TOTAL	1	2	3

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown squirrel.

Unknown Squirrel

County	Hunter Reports	Harvests	Hunter Rating
Bernalillo	2	3	4.0
Catron	1	5	5.0
Chaves	3	24	3.7
Cibola	12	27	4.3
Curry	1	1	4.0
Dona Ana	2	25	5.0
Grant	1	5	5.0
Lincoln	7	21	4.1
Los Alamos	4	19	3.8
Luna	3	28	4.0
McKinley	1	6	4.0
Otero	7	27	3.7
Rio Arriba	13	40	4.2
San Juan	4	11	3.8
San Miguel	5	9	3.2
Sandoval	13	68	4.2
Santa Fe	7	20	4.0
Sierra	6	45	4.0
Socorro	17	98	4.2
Taos	1	2	3.0
Torrance	2	14	4.0
Valencia	1	1	4.0
TOTAL	113	499	4.1

*Reports outside of species range were considered a misclassification and were changed to unknown squirrel.