

Ruffed Grouse Drumming Survey Summary 2016

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Ruffed grouse were monitored by counting drumming males on 51 routes throughout 6 mountain ranger districts. Each route consisted of 3-27 listening stations located on game lands. Observers counted drumming males within a 4-minute listening period at each station between March 29th and April 15th, 2016.

Grouse drummed at 62 of the 718 stations (9%). A total of 67 drumming males was detected. On average, each grouse drummed 1.2 times within the 4-minute listening period. As seen in Figure 1, the Cheoah ranger district had both the highest abundance (0.3 grouse per station) and station occupancy rate (26%). No grouse were seen or heard on the Grandfather ranger district during the survey this year.

After accounting for variations between ranger districts, significant drumming count fluctuations are sometimes seen between years (Fig 2). This appears to be especially true with this year's low numbers coming after substantially higher numbers in 2015. On average, 0.11 grouse were heard at each station during this year's survey. This is only slightly above this survey project's lowest numbers recorded in 2007 (.09 grouse/station).

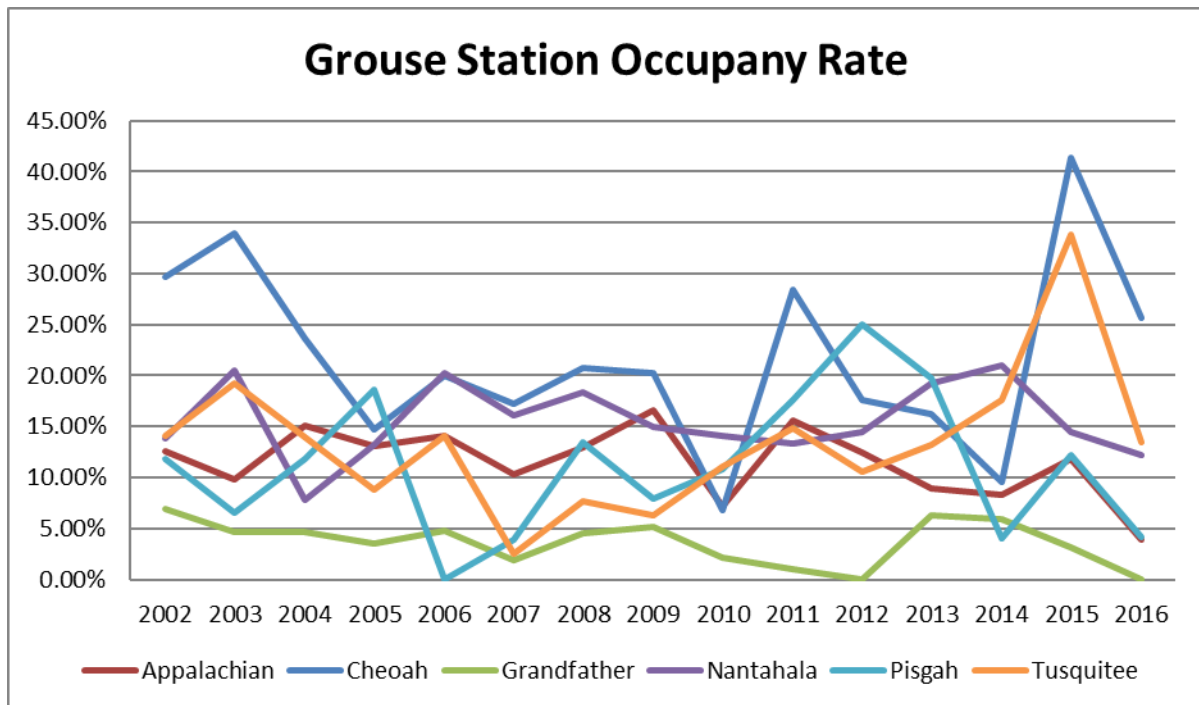


Figure 1. – Average Number of Grouse Heard Drumming Per Station By USFS Ranger District, North Carolina Grouse Drumming Survey, 2002-2016.

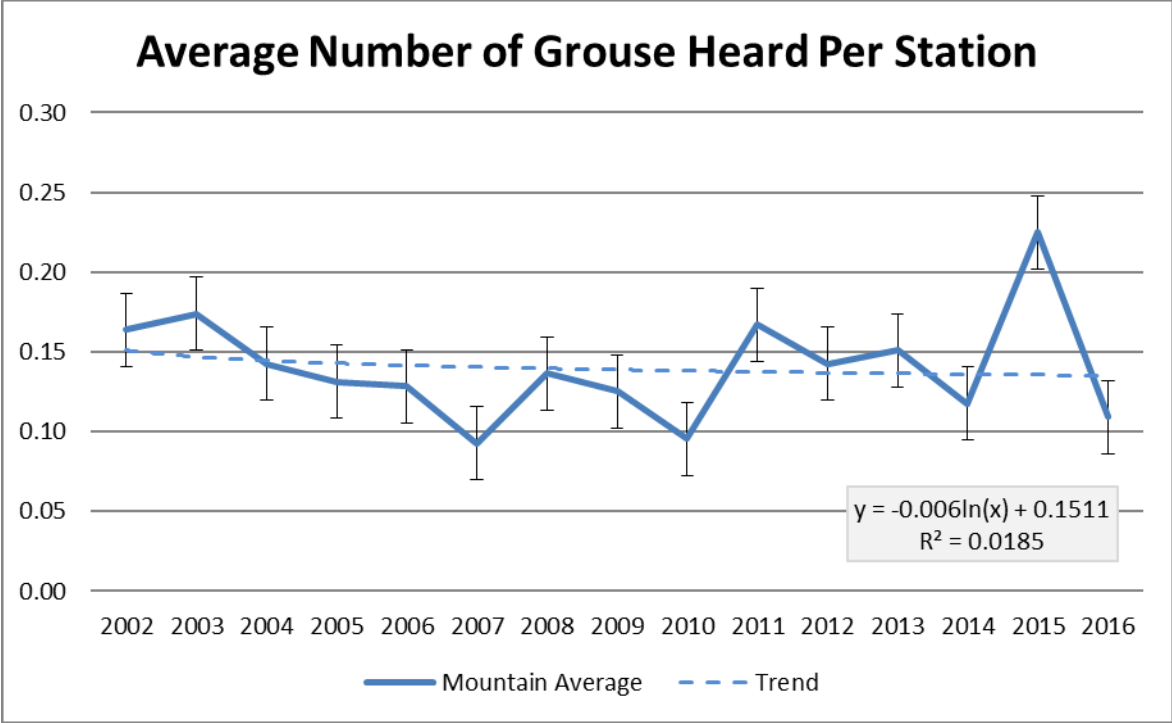


Figure 2. – Average Number of Grouse Heard Drumming Per Station, North Carolina Grouse Drumming Survey, 2002-2016.