

Western Birds

The
Wingshooter's
Newsletter

Special Web Sample



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Dove numbers up 15 percent in state

Call counts this spring, an indicator of the dove population, are up more than 15 percent over last year in California, according to data from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Fish and Game.

Call counts are conducted along the same routes each year in the spring and the number of calling birds is tallied. While the 10-year trend is flat (up just 1 percent which is statistically insignificant), David Dolton with the USFWS in Colorado said the short term trend is positive for doves after a steady 30-year decline.

This analysis of the complex call count data chimes nicely with what field biologists and hunters are reporting from throughout the desert regions this year: excellent dove numbers. Biologists were seeing so many doves during their quail and chukar counts that all noted how many more birds than normal they had tallied.

Now to throw just a little water on your enthusiasm: All these glowing predictions were prior to nearly two weeks of thunderstorms in the desert that have scattered doves — in the best case scenario — or drove vast numbers of them south — in the worst case. Look on the bright side: there are going to be more doves because there are more in the population. Some updates.

IMPERIAL COUNTY DOVE FIELDS: Leon Lessica, with Desert Wildlife Unlimited in Impe-



rial County, said his group will again have more than 20 planted fields open to hunters in Imperial County from near the Wister Unit of the Imperial Wildlife Area south to Calipatria. Planting and labor were partially funded by the DFG again this year, and these private fields have become hugely popular with Southern California

bird hunters because they attract so many birds.

Normally we print a list or map these fields, but a downloadable and printable map of the 2004 fields is available at www.desertwildlifeunlimited.com. It will give you all the information you need. And as a reminder for later in the year, some of these fields are also holding decent numbers of quail and a few pheasants.

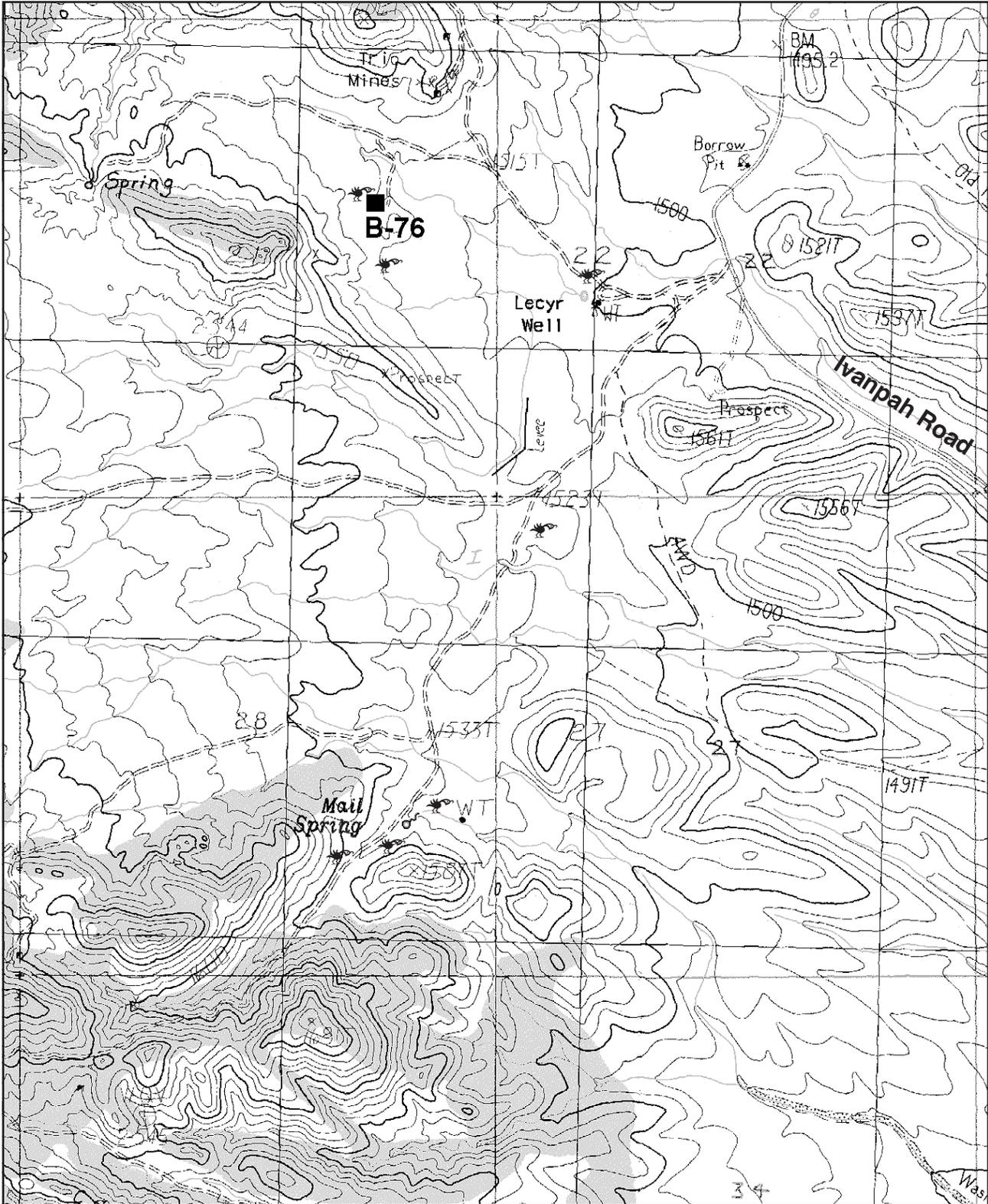
The DFG will also have public dove hunting on planted fields at Wister, which is usually so-so, and the nearby Finney-Ramer Unit, which is usually excellent the opening few days of the season.

The only problem with these places is the crowds they attract. I'm getting to be a crabby old bastard and prefer to hunt by myself or with just a few buddies. I don't like to get pelted or have shot rain down on me.

Apparently a lot of you are the same way because increasingly I'm being asked about guided and/or private land hunting opportunities.

Here are some ranches/guides that will be offering (Continued on Page 4, See *Dove Opener...*)

Map Special



This map of guzzler B-76 is made from portions of the USGS 7 1/2-minute *Ivanpah* (left) and *Castle Peaks* (right) quads.

Map Special

Guzzler and two springs in Mojave Preserve

I spent a day in the East Mojave with Cliff McDonald earlier this summer, documenting over a dozen wells that have been shut down and water sources that have been removed by the National Park Service. In the process, we also visited a number of guzzlers and natural springs on the Mojave National Preserve. The amount of wildlife around those water sources was amazing, especially doves and quail.

The area mapped on the opposite page had two springs and a nearly-full guzzler. While Lecyr Well was dry, there was still an amazing number of quail at Mail Spring and guzzler B-76, which is marked 2-78 on the guzzler. (I know that doesn't make sense, but that's how it is on my DFG data.)

I have put our little logo quail at places where we saw or heard coveys of individual coveys of Gambel's quail in our little tour of this area. I would guess there were at least 100 quail at Mail Spring, scattered in three coveys, and there were probably 60 quail at B-76. We heard a covey near Lecyr Well (even though it was dry), and we saw a few young birds, the tail end of a covey we could hear calling, just off the road to Mail Spring (probably heading there for water).

Cliff and I ate lunch near Mail Spring, and while we were there, probably 30 doves came into spring to get a drink in the middle of the day. I could only imagine what it would have been like in the evening.

This spot is far enough away from some of the more popular areas for hunting on the preserve that it doesn't get much hunting pressure. McDonald also said that few hunters knew of the B-76 guzzler, and the little spur road over to it had not been driven from some time when Cliff and I were there. I've added this road to the map, so it won't show on your MapTech software or on a printed USGS quad.

While we didn't go up to the other, unnamed spring shown on this map, McDonald confirmed it was there, and he said it was a popular spot for doves and quail — and deer.

The map here is located on page 71 and 72 of your DeLorme map book. You can find Mail Spring at the right edge of page 71 between the B and C coordinates. This area is on the *Ivanpah* USGS quad. In my map, I included part of the *Castle Peaks* USGS quad to get a portion of Ivanpah Road (on page 72 of the DeLorme) for easy navigation.

GPS Corner

Coordinates for two guzzlers and two springs in Mojave Preserve

These are the coordinates for the guzzler and two springs off Ivanpah Road mapped on page six, and the one guzzler mapped on page 5 near Hackberry Spring. Both areas are located in the Mojave National Preserve and can be found on page 71 or 72 of your DeLorme.

With each guzzler or location plotted in this section, there are two sets of coordinates provided. The first is longitude and latitude, given in degrees, minutes, seconds, and hundredths of seconds. The second reading is a conversion to UTM coordinates. Both of these sets of coordinates are based on North American Datum 1927 (NAD 27).

Quad listings are for U.S. Geological Survey 7 1/2 minute maps.

■ B-76 GUZZLER

Lat/Lon: W115 15 36.08/N35 16 53.85.
UTM: Zone 11, Easting: 0658241, Northing: 3905464. USGS quad: Ivanpah.

■ MAIL SPRING

Lat/Lon: W115 15 31.45/N35 15 46.27.
UTM: Zone 11, Easting: 0658395, Northing: 3803384. USGS quad: Ivanpah.

■ UNNAMED SPRING

Lat/Lon: W115 16 13.45/N35 16 56.13.
UTM: Zone 11, Easting: 0657296, Northing: 3905518. USGS quad: Ivanpah.

■ B-18 GUZZLER

Lat/Lon: W115 13 44.34/N35 05 13.94.
UTM: Zone 11, Easting: 0661449, Northing: 3883950. USGS quad: Hackberry Mountain.

L A T I T U D E