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Advisory Announcement

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Low Ruffed Grouse Numbers near Delta Junction and Tok

(Fairbanks) – Spring drumming surveys completed over the past five years suggest that ruffed grouse numbers near Delta Junction and Tok continue to remain low. While prolonged lows in ruffed grouse numbers are not unprecedented, managers were expecting the start of an uptick in the typical 8- to 10-year grouse population cycle. Although harvest could prolong population lows in local areas that are easily accessible by hunters, it is unlikely to have a strong negative effect at the larger population scale if there is intact and relatively inaccessible habitat (i.e., refugia) surrounding heavily hunted areas. At this time managers are not going to adjust bag limits and season dates as there is little confidence that doing so would result in a measurable increase of ruffed grouse numbers next year. This advisory announcement is to inform the public that numbers of ruffed grouse near Delta Junction and Tok may continue to be low this fall.

Small game hunters are encouraged to share their field observations regarding the number of ruffed grouse observed with local area staff in Delta Junction or Tok or with our Small Game biologists located in Palmer and Fairbanks. In addition to providing field observations, hunters are encouraged to participate in our wing donation program (<https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=smallgamehunting.getinvolved>). Further spring drumming surveys will be repeated in spring 2023 at which point ADF&G will reassess the status of Interior ruffed grouse.

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