

including California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, and Idaho, as well as Baja Norte, Mexico (Gutierrez and Delehanty 1999, Crawford 2000). They are also found in small disjunct populations as introduced birds on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, and on several islands within the San Juan Islands of Washington (Vogel and Reese 1995, Gutierrez and Delehanty 1999). Vogel and Reese (1998) quote R.D. Mallette (date unknown) that in the early 1970s, mountain quail were "widely distributed over approximately 45 percent of the state [California] in suitable habitat in the mountainous areas from Mexico to the Oregon borders." Within the United States, California contains the largest populations and the widest distribution of this species. Mountain quail are legally hunted in many counties of California (California Department of Fish and Game 2002).

In Nevada, the historic range of mountain quail in the Great Basin is poorly understood, with very little information available on their native distribution (Vogel and Reese 1995, Gutierrez and Delehanty 1999, Crawford 2000). Several authors, quoted by Vogel and Reese (1995), reported that mountain quail were common on both slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountains (including Nevada) in the 1920s and "a sparse resident in the mountainous areas of western Nevada." Gutierrez and Delehanty (1999) report that mountain quail occupy spur ranges of the eastern Sierra Nevada Range in western Nevada and are found in the higher foothill areas to the Sierra Crest where suitable habitat occurs. They also occur as small, scattered populations in the "Toiyobe, Desatoya, Jackson, and Santa Rosa Ranges of northern Nevada." In addition, Vogel and Reese (2002) present anecdotal evidence of mountain quail releases in the State, beginning in the 1870s and continuing into the 1930s or early 1940s.

Since the 1940s, hunter surveys and harvest reports indicate that populations have undergone local extinctions throughout their historic range in Nevada (Brennan 1994). From the 1950s to the 1980s, extensive range fires, invasive plants, reservoir construction, and livestock overgrazing have impacted or eliminated large areas of mountain quail habitat and as a consequence, mountain quail numbers and distribution have declined in many areas of Nevada. However, based on recent Nevada Division of Wildlife (NDOW) surveys, mountain quail have remained stable in the eastern Sierra Nevada mountains of Nevada (Vogel and Reese 2002). Since 1986, NDOW

has released mountain quail into areas that they believe historically supported mountain quail, currently contain mountain quail, and/or sustain suitable habitat. From 1986 to 2002, a total of 1,293 birds have been translocated to Nye, Churchill, Pershing, Washoe, Elko, and Lander counties in Nevada (Vogel and Reese 2002). All of these mountain quail were captured from outside the petitioned DPS at the China Lakes Naval Air Weapons Station in the Mojave Desert of California (Vogel and Reese 2002).

In Idaho, general information regarding the native distribution of mountain quail is ambiguous, although some evidence suggests mountain quail were present prior to European settlement. Three studies cited in Vogel and Reese (2002) describe possible archeological evidence of mountain quail in Idaho prior to the 1800s. Gruhn (1961) documented one specimen of mountain quail from bones in Wilson Butte Cave, Jerome County, south-central Idaho; Murphey (1991) reported a possible mountain quail pictograph found at the Jarbidge rock site, Jerome County, southwestern Idaho; and Rudolph (1995) identified mountain quail bones from the Hetrick site in the Weiser River Valley, Washington County. The pictograph is an abstract rendition that portrays a gallinaceous-like bird with prominent barring on the side of the body, heavy bill and feet, and top-knot, which is short and curved over the top of the head as in California quail (*Callipepla californica*) (Crawford 2000). The mountain quail bone material was identified using comparative techniques of bones known to be mountain quail. The possible mountain quail bone material collected from these two archaeological sites may be positively verified by protein synthesis analysis and dated using radiometric techniques (Miller, Faunal Analysis and CRM Services, pers. comm. 2002). Crawford (2000) suggests that these birds may represent remnant populations from Pleistocene glaciation.

Today, mountain quail in Idaho occur at the extreme northeastern edge of their range-wide distribution. Mountain quail were translocated successfully in Idaho beginning in the late 1800s (Crawford 2000, Vogel and Reese 2002). For example, as summarized by Crawford (2000), mountain quail were translocated to Kootenai County using birds captured from western Washington in 1897. Other mountain quail were translocated to Ada, Owyhee, and Lincoln counties in the 1920s, although the origin of these birds is generally unknown. Mountain quail were present in the 1930s throughout

the central and southwestern areas of Idaho (Vogel and Reese 1998). In the 1950s, they were still found along riparian areas in central and southwestern Idaho, but overall numbers had declined since the 1930s, particularly in Nez Perce and Latah counties. Various causes of decline have been identified. Vogel and Reese (1998) cited a paper by T.B. Murray (1938) that suggested that drought and habitat alterations reduced mountain quail numbers by more than 50 percent in western Idaho, and that suitable food and cover were also reduced by more than 50 percent from the turn of the century until the 1930s.

During the 1980s, numbers declined steadily, and the only remaining populations that exist now are in the lower Salmon and Snake River drainages and the foothill and mountain areas of the Boise River drainage (Robertson 1989). Although mountain quail have been infrequently sighted in these areas since the 1980s, recent mating call surveys in several areas of the Boise River drainage found no evidence of their presence (Kniesel 2002). The hunting season for mountain quail in Idaho was closed in 1984.

The first recorded information on mountain quail in Oregon was of a specimen collected in 1806 by Reubin Field, a member of the Lewis and Clark expedition (Jackle *et al.* 2002, Pope 2002). During the same expedition, two other mountain quail were collected near Rooster Rock State Park, Multnomah County, along the Columbia River. Mountain quail translocations began as early as 1860 in the Pacific Northwest, with one reference that all mountain quail in the Willamette Valley of Oregon resulted from introductions (Crawford 2000). These translocations, combined with natural and subsequent movement patterns, may have accounted for more recent (post-1900) distributions of mountain quail in many parts of eastern Oregon and into western Idaho (Jackle *et al.* 2002). Vogel and Reese (1995) reported that historically mountain quail occupied more extensive areas in Oregon than they did in the early 1900s, primarily because of the "open burns and logged-over areas that have replaced enormous areas of the original dense forest of the Pacific Northwest." Recently logged areas in the Cascades, Coast Range, and Klamath mountains provide excellent shrub habitat for mountain quail and may have allowed some populations on the west slope of the Cascades to expand their range (Vogel and Reese 1995). Gabrielson and Jewett (1940), as referenced by Vogel and Reese (1995), reported mountain quail in suitable