

# IMPACTS OF DROUGHT ON WILDLIFE

Ed Jahrke

Wildlife Specialist Statewide Supervisor



# Impacts at a Glance – It's all about Habitat

- Habitat for wildlife is food, water, cover, and useable space
- Drought causes poorer habitat suitability
- Lower habitat suitability leads to increased mortality through starvation, predation, reduced production and recruitment (fewer young survive)
- Continued drought accelerates negative impacts to all wildlife populations because habitat gets worse
- Impacts tend to be cumulative = fewer critters

# Drought Impacts to Habitat

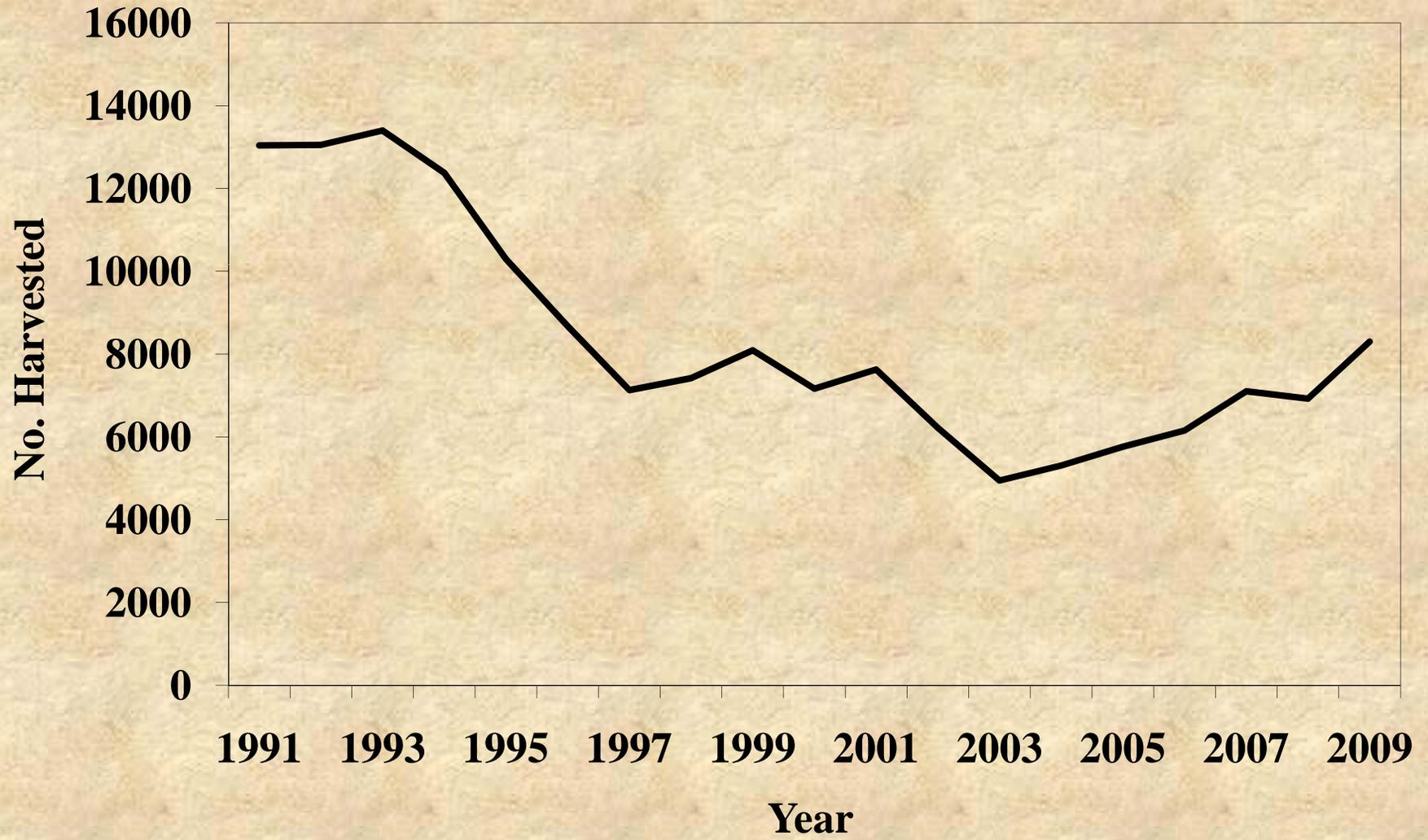


- Dry habitats like those in the Southwest deserts are more sensitive to slight variations in rainfall than wetter habitats.
- Many impacts are indirect, such as drought stress and increased susceptibility of plants to insect damage.
- Because the Southwest is so dry, habitats recover at a much slower rate than in wetter areas of the country
- Drought lowers ‘carrying capacity’ of habitat, so wildlife populations decline

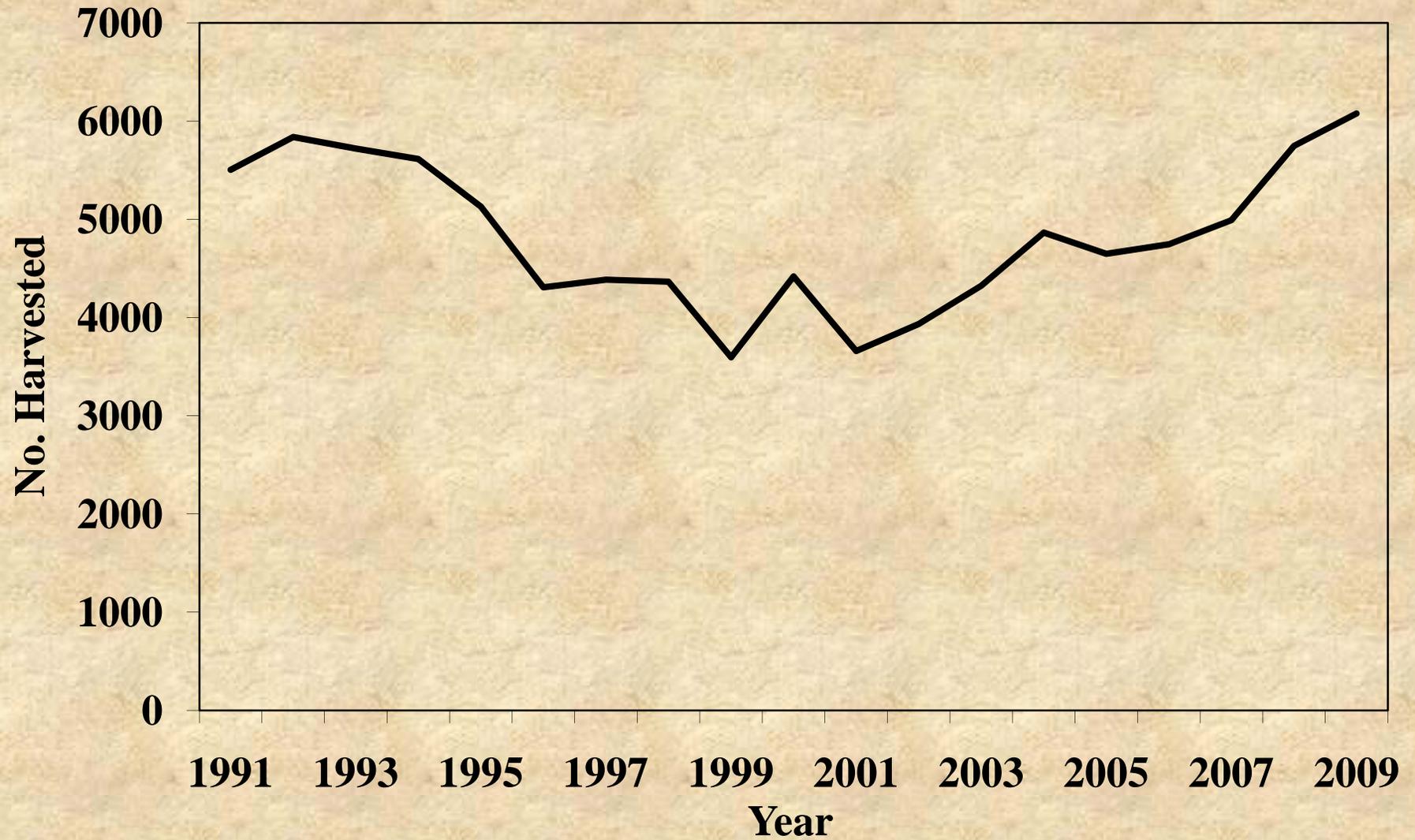
# Variation of Impacts on Wildlife

- Severity of impacts varies by wildlife species
- K-selected species (long-lived, few large well-developed young, good parental care) and sensitive species populations are typically impacted more drastically. Abundance tends to show definite trends in response to habitat condition. Habitat carrying capacity can dictate population size (e.g., deer, elk, predators).
- r-selected species populations (short-lived, many young, less parental care) are more resilient to annual impacts. They show wide variation year-year in abundance. Carrying capacity for these species is rarely (if ever) achieved (e.g., quail, rodents)

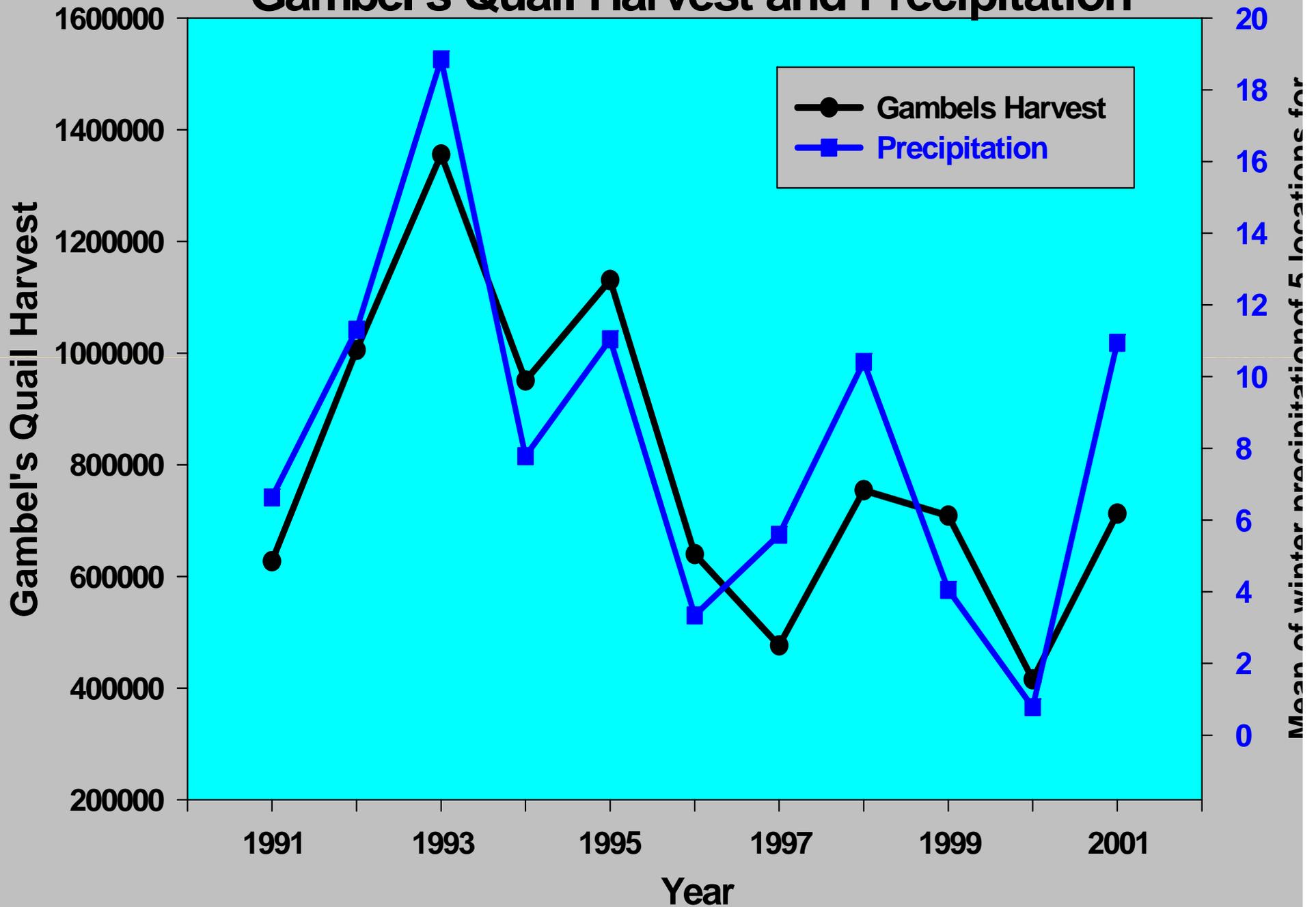
## Mule Deer Harvest



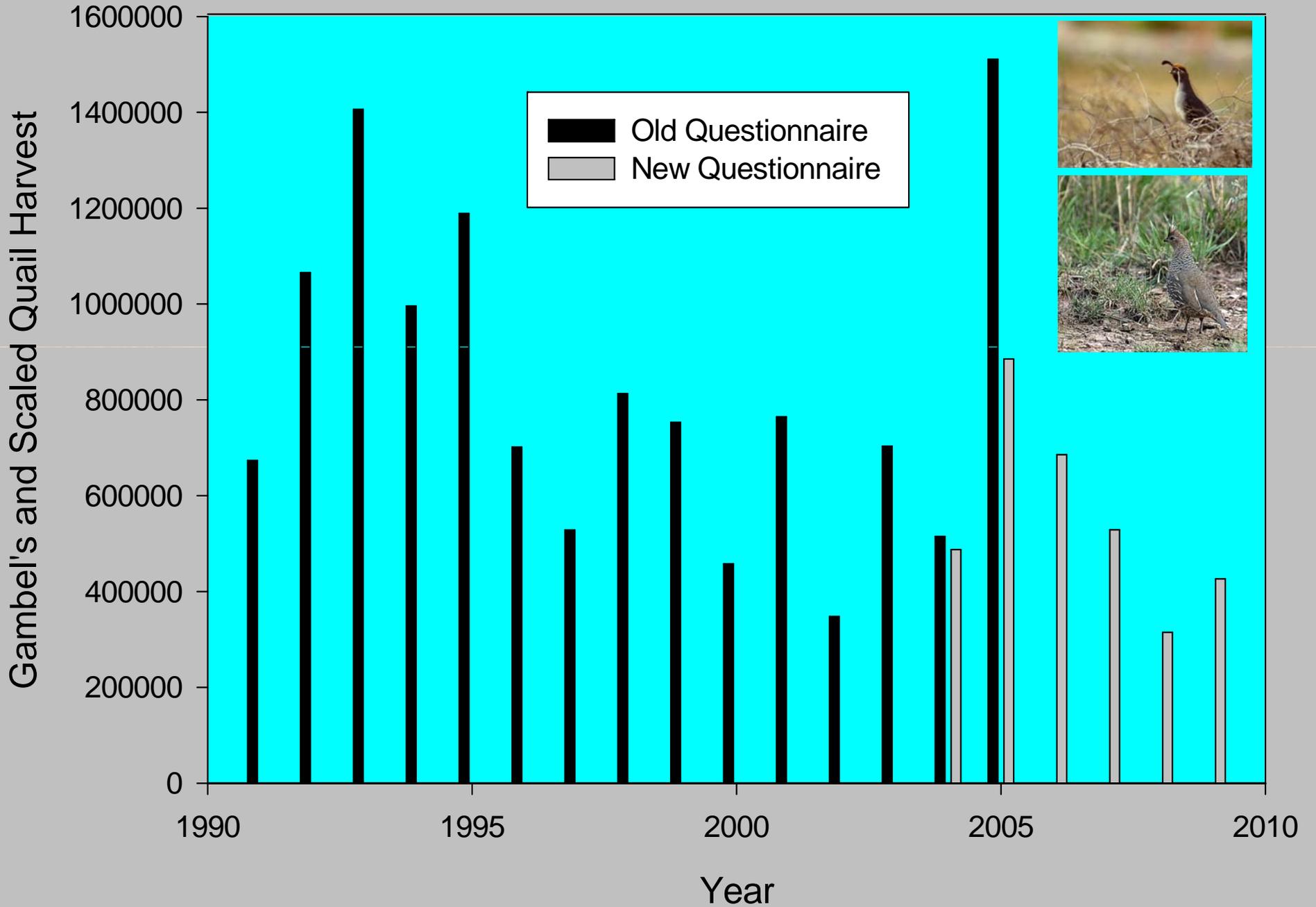
## White-tailed Deer Harvest



# Gambel's Quail Harvest and Precipitation



# Quail harvest by year



# Impacts to all Wildlife

- Similarities exist regarding impacts to game and nongame, terrestrial and aquatic, predators and prey
- Sensitive species (T&E, others) are greatly impacted by long-term drought since this represents another major limitation to population increase
- Some species of fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians have lost crucial habitats as a direct or indirect result of long-term drought.
- Drought tends to concentrate wildlife, making them much more susceptible to disease and predation
- Drought + Habitat Fragmentation = reduced wildlife populations and increased challenges for Wildlife Agencies

# Economic Impacts of Declining Wildlife

- Loss of direct and indirect \$ for local Arizona communities from hunters and non-hunters alike
- Reductions in customer outlay for sporting goods, etc.
- Fewer Federal \$ for Wildlife Management
- Represents a direct loss to Arizona Game and Fish Department in license revenues
- Times of poor habitat quality require increased management actions from AGFD and others, despite reduced \$

# Increased Management Actions

- During periods of low wildlife abundance, survey efforts must increase
- More effort and \$ for population maintenance
- Water catchment maintenance/water hauling costs increase
- Habitat maintenance costs increase
- Many species move into town in search of water and food
- ‘Nuisance’ wildlife calls increase as human-wildlife conflicts in urban settings increase

# Water Developments and Water Management





# Total Number of AGFD Water Developments Statewide

Development Type	
Typical Collection Catchments	987
Pot Holes	100
Storage Tank/Drinker Only	5
Spring	86
Well/Windmill	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1187</b>

# Water Hauling Comparison Data

- 1996 and 2002 – AGFD hauled approximately 1.4 million gallons of water
- A typical year sees approximately 400,000 gallons of water hauled to wildlife
- 2008 – AGFD SSDV hauled 173,200 gallons.
- 2009 – AGFD SSDV hauled 214,000 gallons.
- 2010 – AGFD SSDV has hauled 311,000 gallons as of 6/30/2010



6/24/09 8:24 AM

Cuddeback



06/21/09 08:18 PM 111



03/23/09 10:39 AM chipper



03/15/09 04:34 AM chipper



06/18/09 09:21 PM

2009-06-27 7:53:11 AM

M 1/3

96°F



WAYNE WEBER

RECONYX

2009-07-07 2:16:51 PM M 3/3

● 114°F



MOHAVE 1

RECONYX

2009-06-22 11:52:58 AM M 1/3

115°F



MOHAVE 1

RECONYX





D. Reuter







Questions?

