

Pheasant News and Notes

August 2018



Trivia Question

On raising pheasants, who maintained, "Have two hens to each cock. A common hen will sit upon fifteen eggs. They hatch in thirty days. Feed them fifteen days on boiled barley sprinkled with wine; afterwards with bruised wheat and locusts. Give them also ants' eggs. To rub their beaks with garlic and tar will cure the pip. A strike of wheat or half a strike of barley mixed with oil and made into cakes will fatten them in thirty days."

Farm Bill and USDA News

The work to reconcile the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill has begun, but only informally at this point. The House and Senate agriculture committees' leadership members have met, but the Senate didn't officially vote until July 31st to conference the bill. The following day the Senate named their [9 conferees](#) to join the [47 named earlier on the House side](#), but the House's August recess is now underway, making coordinated communication among the conferees challenging.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who is also one of the conferees, said he would like to see a conference report (i.e., a compromise bill) come forward for action shortly after Labor Day, which is pretty ambitious given the House's recess lasting through the holiday. The difference in the two bills regarding Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) work requirements still appears to be the major sticking point, but conservation programs also could cause some arguments. The University of Illinois ag policy folks put together [a good comparison of the conservation titles in the House and Senate bills](#) if you'd like to refresh your memory.

In other USDA news, the Senate ag committee voted unanimously to favorably report the nomination of Jim Hubbard as USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment to the full Senate. His mission area would include oversight of the U.S. Forest Service, but not the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Confused? Me, too. The USDA's post-reorganization org chart is [here](#) to help us keep everything straight.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

August is a busy month for many of our Technical Committee members as summer population data is collected, analyzed, and turned into eagerly-awaited fall hunting forecasts. I've intentionally not asked for any early predictions because I remember how much I disliked those questions before I had the actual data to look at. However, once the numbers are in, I'd ask the Tech Committee to send me your forecasts so I can forward them to the other members (or you can forward them yourselves if you prefer). It's always valuable to know what's going on elsewhere in the pheasant range when you are answering questions. Good luck to everyone in their number-crunching!

Your Plan Coordinator made the trip out to Eugene, Oregon in July for the WAFWA summer meeting and made a presentation to the Western Bird Conservation Committee regarding our activities and progress. While there I got to visit with Casey Cardinal, our Tech Committee member from New Mexico and also the chair of the Western Quail Working Group, about the WQWG's proposed interstate quail

translocation standard operating procedures. Their document is now in the hands of Tom Keller (Tech Committee, Pennsylvania) and the rest of our translocation working group, and a draft pheasant document will be forthcoming prior to our Tech Committee meeting in September.

I also had the pleasure of meeting Mikal Cline in Eugene. She is the new Upland Game Program Coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, and comes to the position most recently from the National Wild Turkey Federation. You can reach her at Mikal.L.Cline@state.or.us or (503) 947-6323. Congratulations to Mikal, and welcome to the group!

Another welcome is in order for Sarah Kindschuh, the new Small Game Section Manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. I spoke to Sarah recently and there's still some discussion underway about who will be handling pheasants in her shop, but in the meantime she is happy to serve as a point of contact for the Technical Committee. You can reach her at Sarah.Kindschuh@dfw.wa.gov or (360) 902-2691.

Finally, I got a research update from Jeff Prendergast (Technical Committee, Kansas) this week. He's going through the last of the samples they collected last fall to measure the prevalence of eyeworms in both pheasants and bobwhites. Early indications are that prevalence was about 10%, with rates higher in the south than the north. After doing a lot of the lab work himself, he's mulling whether or not he wants to collect samples again this year (go for it, Jeff!). Regarding their cover crop research with Kansas State University, they didn't get as many hens radioed this spring as they'd hoped (a problem most of us doing telemetry projects can sympathize with), so their data on brood use of spring-sown cover crops is still a bit sparse. However, it does appear that cover crops are used as nesting cover at least as preferentially as winter wheat, if not more so. In this system the cover crops aren't terminated until mid-summer, in preparation for planting winter wheat.

Pheasants in the Media

[Drought has big impact on North Dakota pheasant population](#)

[Wet streak could adversely affect pheasants](#)

[Iowa pheasant harvest dips to about 221,000](#)

[Understanding how pheasants survive can make you a better hunter](#)

[400 pheasant chicks stolen from Wisconsin facility](#)

[Pheasant survives 25-mile journey stuck in car grill](#)

Also, some cool graphics on land use:

[Here's how America uses its land](#)

And lastly, farming giveth...

[Farming for pheasants](#)

... and farming taketh away...

[Life after CRP: Returning land to crops](#)

Recent Literature

[Madden, J. R., A. Hall, and M. A. Whiteside. 2018. Why do many pheasants released in the UK die, and how can we best reduce their natural mortality? *European Journal of Wildlife Research* 64:1-13.](#)

And the early leader for “Best Research Paper Title of the Year (Game Bird Category)”:

[Poggenburg, C., U. Nopp-Mayr, J. Coppes, and F. Sachser. 2018. Shit happens ... and persists: decay dynamics of capercaillie \(*Tetrao urogallus* L.\) droppings under natural and artificial conditions. *European Journal of Wildlife Research* 64:29.](#)

Trivia Answer

No, it’s not a drunken pheasant hunter who’s got you cornered at a PF banquet, it’s Rutilius Taurus Aemilianus Palladius (or just plain Palladius to his buddies), in *Palladius On Husbandrie*, which was written around 400 A.D. and translated into Middle English around 1420. So humans have been worrying about how to make more pheasants since before the fall of the Western Roman Empire, and somehow we’re still at it. Wine, locusts, tar, and wheat cakes – who would have guessed that recipe could be improved upon?

Be sure to tune in next month, when we’ll meet the inventor of the Holy Roman Surrogator of 554 A.D. Until then, may your mornings be calm and sunny, your dew heavy, and your brood counts much better than last year.

This update is brought to you by the National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan and Partnerships. Our mission is to foster science-based, socially-supported policies and programs that enhance wild pheasant populations, provide recreational opportunities to pheasant hunters, and support the economics and social values of communities. You can find us on the web at <http://nationalpheasantplan.org>.