

Pheasant News and Notes

August 2020



Trivia Question

What state has the highest daily bag limit for wild pheasants?

Farm Bill and USDA News

We noted last month that an expansion of the Soil Health and Income Protection Program (SHIPP) was apparently being supported by Senators Thune (R-SD) and Hoeven (R-ND) as part of the Senate's COVID relief bill. This followed the SHIPP expansion from 50,000 to 5 million acres called for under the House's relief bill passed weeks ago. As it turned out, a SHIPP expansion did not make it into the "final" Senate proposal in late July (the [Farm Bureau was not enthused about a SHIPP expansion](#), which didn't help its cause). As we know, the Senate proposal was rejected by House leadership and negotiations continue on a compromise relief bill. At this point it appears unlikely that a SHIPP expansion will be in the final mix, but who knows.

Regardless, some storylines are starting to emerge around the next Farm Bill's conservation title. Among them are the low initial demand for CRP (including SHIPP) under the current rules such that total enrolled acres continue to decline; the apparent support in some bipartisan circles for a SHIPP expansion; more obvious bipartisan support for climate-related incentives; rising consumer demand for products delivered through sustainable, regenerative agriculture; and last but not least, controlling costs. These will obviously be framed against whatever commodity prices and trade issues are in place when negotiations take place, and the results of the election will determine whose priorities get emphasized.

The holy grail is finding a way to deliver more habitat at a lower total cost. Given the opaque and unimaginative way the Congressional Budget Office sometimes scores costs, this can be a difficult nut to crack. However, if we are fortunate enough to be asked our opinion, it would be to our benefit to think ahead of time about our preferred ways to deliver the habitat we want most efficiently. We have only been through one general signup, but it certainly looks like reducing CRP rental payments to a fraction of the soil rental rate is not the way to go. Having an alternative in hand might come in, well, handy.

In other USDA news, NRCS [announced](#) it is now accepting applications for Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) funding. Applications will be accepted through November 4th. Also, Matt Lohr, chief of the NRCS, recently [announced](#) he is stepping down, so administering all those RCPP applications will be someone else's problem.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

Another of our founding Management Board members has moved on to new challenges. [Clayton Wolf was recently named Texas Parks and Wildlife's new Chief Operating Officer](#) and thus requested his replacement on the Board by Acting Wildlife Director John Silovsky. We thank Clayton for helping stand up the Board and actively contributing during his tenure, and congratulate him on his promotion. We

also look forward to meeting John in person someday when we can safely get more than five unrelated people in a room.

Year Two of the multi-state brood survey project at Iowa State is off and running. Ten states (IA, ID, KS, ND, NE, NM, OH, OK, SD, and WA) are contributing data from 92 routes, with each route being run a target of five times. Zach Dienes, the ISU grad student on the project, used last year's data to suggest we needed about 100 routes this year to yield robust results, so we just about hit the target. Travis Runia and the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks staff again provided the data collection app – thanks, Travis! We look forward to the insights that Zach and Adam Janke can extract from this year's observations.

South Dakota is the policy news generator again this month. SDGFP is [contemplating](#) several changes to their hunting season, including a uniform 10:00 a.m. daily starting time, running the season through January 31st, and increasing the daily bag from three roosters to four during December and January. The first two changes are proposed to start in 2020, and the bag limit change in 2021. The agency is currently soliciting public comments and will decide on the proposals at their September 2-3 Commission meeting.

Our upcoming Technical Committee meeting in Texas has been postponed until early 2021 for obvious reasons. If things are still shaky on the disease front this winter, we will probably hold the meeting virtually.

Finally, Technical Committee members Joseph Lautenbach (Ohio) and Tim Lyons (Minnesota) have new papers out on [grassland birds](#) and [Canada geese](#), respectively. Congrats, Joseph and Tim! If others have new publications coming up, please let me know.

Pheasant-relevant Media

[South Dakota ends pheasant brood survey, proposes extending hunting season](#)

[Pheasant chicks cause Iowa traffic accident](#)

[North Dakota pheasant population up or down?](#)

[Spring pheasant count in North Dakota provides optimism after dismal fall](#)

[Walz cancels 2020 Minnesota Governor's Pheasant Hunting Opener](#)

[Minnesota Pheasants Forever chapter expands wildlife complex in wellhead protection area](#)

[One of world's largest and rarest pheasants spotted In Malaysia](#)

[Video: cheatgrass threatens Gunnison sage-grouse](#)

[How absentee landlords keep farmers from protecting water and soil](#)

[Drone swarming approved in U.S. for agriculture](#)

['Here's your check': Trump's massive payouts to farmers will be hard to pull back](#)

Recent Literature

[Dwight, I. A., J. H. Vogt, P. S. Coates, J. P. Fleskes, D. P. Connelly, and S. C. Gardner. 2020. Linking nest microhabitat selection to nest survival within declining pheasant populations in the Central Valley of California. *Wildlife Research* 47:391-403.](#)

[Reynolds, D., and J. D. Loy. 2020. Decrease in hatchability of pheasant eggs associated with *Enterococcus faecalis*. Avian Diseases \(early view\).](#)

[Kroeger, A. J., C. S. DePerno, C. A. Harper, S. B. Rosche, C. E. Moorman. 2020. Northern bobwhite non-breeding habitat selection in a longleaf pine woodland. Journal of Wildlife Management \(early view\).](#)

[Olaya-Arenas, P., M. E. Scharf, and I. Kaplan. 2020. Do pollinators prefer pesticide-free plants? An experimental test with monarchs and milkweeds. Journal of Applied Ecology \(early view\).](#)

[Mawdsley, J. R., T. Simmons, and D. Rubinoff. 2020. Voluntary conservation, not regulation, will be key to monarch butterfly recover. Wildlife Society Bulletin \(early view\).](#)

[Prosser, D. J., T. Collier, J. D. Sullivan, K. E. Dale, C. R. Callahan, P. C. McGowan, E. J. Gaylord, J. M. Geschke, L. Howell, P. R. Marban, and S. Raman. 2020. Using thermal infrared cameras to detect avian chicks at various distances and vegetative coverages. Journal of Fish and Wildlife Management 11:245-257.](#)

Trivia Answer

Kansas, with a four-rooster daily bag limit. Pending Commission approval, South Dakota may offer four birds per day during the latter part of the 2021 season.

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>.