

Pheasant News and Notes

May 2018



Trivia Question

Who wrote “poetry is a pheasant disappearing in the brush?”

Farm Bill and USDA News

As you know, the House Ag Committee passed its version of a new Farm Bill last month with a strictly partisan vote. Committee Chairman Conaway has suggested the possibility of the bill being taken up by the full House the week of May 14th, but as far as I can tell floor time has yet to be scheduled.

Now that the House bill is in the public square, the analyses and opinion machines are humming. For a good summary of the bill’s estimated changes in spending over time, see Farmdoc Daily’s analyses [here](#). The [Republican Study Committee opined](#) there should be no new enrollments in CRP (as well as CSP) because “demand for enrollment in CRP has declined steadily over recent years.” (Huh?) Oh, and Congress should decouple farm subsidy programs from nutrition subsidy programs, end commodity subsidy programs, reduce crop insurance subsidies, and defund a variety of other programs. These and similar proposals led Ranking Member Peterson to suggest the House bill may lack the Republican votes to pass along strictly partisan lines given Democrats seem unified against it. There is also currently some haggling about the rules under which amendments might be proposed in the full House; proponents are trying to prevent the introduction of “poison pill” amendments by opponents that would assure the bill’s failure.

On the Senate side, Ag Committee Chairman Roberts said he and Ranking Member Stabenow have no major disagreements concerning the relevant issues, but he has not indicated when their bill would be introduced or released for public scrutiny.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

A number of states have experienced a late onset of spring, leading to worries of delayed nesting and less time for re-nesting attempts. This is getting some press in South Dakota; you can read a story [here](#) that quotes our Tech Committee’s own Travis Runia from SDGFP. Since most chicks are produced from nests initiated in May and June, the late spring might be more of a hen body condition issue than a delayed opportunity to nest per se, as Travis points out. Pheasant Forever’s state-by-state report on spring conditions can be found [here](#).

Your Plan Coordinator has been working with the Prairie Pothole, Rainwater Basin, and Playa Lakes Joint Ventures to create the first building blocks for a range-wide pheasant habitat model and GIS-based decision support tool that can help estimate the effects of large-scale land use changes. The utility of such a tool was endorsed by the Tech Committee at their 2016 meeting and is part of the Coordinator’s work plan approved by the Management Board. We will soon submit a letter of intent as the first step in applying for a [Multi-State Conservation Grant](#) to help fund this effort, and USDA-FSA has also expressed interest in providing funding once their new fiscal year rolls around. If we are invited to submit a full MSCG proposal, I will set up a conference call with the Tech Committee members within

those three joint ventures to solicit comments and field questions. If you have concerns or comments at this point, feel free to give me a call.

The Tech Committee's working group on translocation guidelines held a conference call last week. The group decided to examine the Western Quail Working Group's soon-to-be-released document on the same subject and see if we can work with them towards a common set of recommendations. Jeff Prendergast of Kansas and Robert Perez of Texas are members of both groups (and of the Northern Bobwhite Technical Committee, who are also developing guidelines), so we have good lines of communication among those working on this issue. The desire is to bring forward a common document that can be blessed by our Management Board, AFWA's Resident Game Bird Working Group, and ultimately the AFWA directors.

Pheasants in the Media

[Pheasant hunt with Tom Brokaw goes for \\$200,000](#)

[Vigilante animal rights group releases thousands of pheasants from U.K. farm](#)

['Demise of the monarch' amidst plummeting pheasant populations](#)

[More CRP and fewer USDA staff means higher wildfire risk in Texas panhandle](#)

Recent Literature

[Williamson, L. T. 2017. Monitoring wild ring-necked pheasant restoration in Pennsylvania. Thesis. Pennsylvania State University. 76pp.](#)

Gren, I. M., T. Häggmark-Svensson, K. Elofsson, and M. Engelmann. 2018. Economics of wildlife management – an overview. *European Journal of Wildlife Research* 64: 22.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10344-018-1180-3>.

Moulton, M. P., W. P. Cropper, Jr., A. J. Broz, and S. A. Gezan. 2018. Patterns of success in game bird introductions in the United States. *Biodiversity and Conservation* 27:967–979.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10531-017-1475-9>.

Lutter, S. H., A. A. Dayer, E. Heggenstaller, J. L. Larkin. 2018. Effects of biological monitoring and results outreach on private landowner conservation management. *PLoS ONE* 13(4): e0194740.
<http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0194740>.

Mustin, K., B. Arroyo, P. Beja, S. Newey, R. J. Irvine, J. Kestler, and S. M. Redpath. 2018. Consequences of game bird management for non-game species in Europe. *Journal of Applied Ecology*.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/1365-2664.13131>.

Trivia answer

Wallace Stevens. A nice compliment to both poetry and pheasants given his presumed high regard for the former. Stevens, who by the early 1950s was regarded as one of America's greatest contemporary poets, produced his most acclaimed works while remaining employed as an insurance company executive. So much for the myth of the starving artist.

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>.