

# Pheasant News and Notes

September 2019



## Trivia Question

When President Trump recently called part of Baltimore “rat and rodent infested,” he unwittingly referenced a problem with deep wildlife management roots (and earned a gold star from the Department of Redundancy Department). What award-winning pheasant biologist worked on Baltimore’s urban rodent issues early in his career?

## Farm Bill and USDA News

USDA’s CRP Signup 52 ended on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. I’m not sure when to expect a final tally of how many new continuous and re-enrolled acres were offered and accepted during the signup, but presumably those figures might be available prior to the expected general CRP signup still scheduled (hopefully?) for December. USDA’s latest [monthly CRP report](#) shows only 3,707 continuous practice acres had been enrolled during the signup through the end of July, but there’s probably a lag between actual contract signings and their reporting by USDA. Either that or the signup is on track to be a failure (if your goal is to actually enroll acres) or a success (if your goal is to not spend any money on conservation programs) of historic proportions.

USDA also published a summary of all the 2018 Farm Bill programs available to producers; you can find it [here](#). It’s handy to have them all listed in one place.

Finally, the ag news in August most relevant to us was the 19 million acres [USDA estimated](#) were prevented from being planted to crops this spring due to poor weather and its aftermath. This is the most “prevent plant” acres since USDA began estimating the metric in 2007. However, USDA’s August crop report suggested corn production would not be down as much as it previously estimated, which caused corn prices to tank. Some producers did not take the bad news well; USDA [pulled its staff](#) from a Midwest crop tour after they were threatened by a farmer in Iowa. Things are a little tense out there.

## Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

‘Tis the season to analyze summer survey results and write hunting forecasts. So far I’ve seen 2019 results for Iowa (-17% from 2018), Nebraska (-14%), and Wisconsin (+8%), but a lot more are on the way. Below are links to each state’s pheasant or upland game page most likely to contain survey results when they become available (not all states will produce annual statistics or forecasts, though).

[California](#)  
[Colorado](#)  
[Idaho](#)  
[Illinois](#)  
[Indiana](#)  
[Iowa](#)  
[Kansas](#)  
[Michigan](#)

[Minnesota](#)  
[Montana](#)  
[Nebraska](#)  
[New Mexico](#)  
[New York](#)  
[North Dakota](#)  
[Oklahoma](#)  
[Ohio](#)

[Oregon](#)  
[Pennsylvania](#)  
[South Dakota](#)  
[Texas](#)  
[Utah](#)  
[Washington](#)  
[Wisconsin](#)

Those 19 million prevent plant acres could complicate interpretation of summer brood surveys in some areas. All that new, potentially useable summer habitat (depending on how the fields were managed) could theoretically change the way broods selected roadside habitats, throwing a new wrinkle in comparisons with last year's indices. As usual, writing fall forecasts is a difficult and thankless job – unless the numbers are way up. Good luck to everyone!

On Friday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks announced they were shutting down their nest predator bounty program on Monday, August 12<sup>th</sup>, as they were nearing their monetary cap of \$500,000 in payments. They promptly got an additional 5,100 tails submitted that last day, for a program total of [54,460 tails](#) at \$10 per tail. Predicting the behavior of bounty hunters is also a difficult and thankless job.

Finally, the *Wildlife Society Bulletin* is releasing a special issue on private lands management sometime in the coming months. There is a reception at the AFWA annual meeting in Minneapolis on Thursday evening to publicize the event, if you're in the neighborhood.

### **Pheasant-relevant Media**

[As South Dakota bounty program ends, questions linger about effectiveness](#)

[Minnesota's annual pheasant count gets a tech update](#)

[Iowa hunters hit their mark as pheasant harvest hits 10-year high](#)

[Pennsylvania announces third annual wild pheasant hunt](#)

[UK animal activists killed thousands of pheasants by releasing them](#)

[Is grass-fed beef really better for the planet? Here's the science](#)



Sean Rodriguez of the Phillies recently wore an oddly generic pheasant hat during post-game interviews. His remarks got some attention that night because 1) he had just hit a game-winning home run, and 2) he called out his home fans for booing their own players during the game. The next day, the home fans booed him when he was introduced and cheered when he was hit by a pitch in the second inning. Nice hat, though.

### **Recent Literature**

[Dwight, I. A., P. S. Coates, J. H. Vogt, J. L. Atkinson, J. P. Fleskes, D. P. Connelly, M. G. Meshriy, S. C. Gardner, S. T. Stoute, and M. E. Pitesky. 2019. Monitoring breeding and survival of ring-necked pheasant \(\*Phasianus colchicus\*\) in the Sacramento Valley, Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta, and Klamath Basin, Northern California – five-year summary, 2013-2017. U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report 2019–1062, 90 p.](#)

[Bogenschutz, T. R., C. S. Jennelle, M. W. McInroy, and S. D. Roberts. 2019. Use of surgical tissue adhesive and body mass change to assess ring-necked pheasant brood foraging habitat. \*Journal of the Iowa Academy of Science\* 126:1-5.](#)

[Glas, Z. E., J. M. Getson, and L. S. Prokopy. 2019. Wildlife value orientations and their relationships with mid-size predator management. \*Human Dimensions of Wildlife\* 24:418-432.](#)

[Blascovich, G. M., and A. L. Metcalf. 2019. Improving non-hunters' attitudes toward hunting. \*Human Dimensions of Wildlife\* 24:480-487.](#)

[Gigliotti, L. M., and L. A. Sweikert. 2019. Wildlife value orientation of landowners from five states in the upper midwest, USA. \*Human Dimensions of Wildlife\* 24:433-445.](#)

[DeLay, N. 2019. The impact of federal crop insurance on the Conservation Reserve Program. \*Agricultural and Resource Economics Review\* 48:297-327.](#)

[Lunsford, K. D., P. E. Howell, T. B. Roberts, T. M. Terhune, and J. A. Martin. 2019. Survival and growth of northern bobwhite offspring post-translocation. \*Journal of Wildlife Management\* 83:1326-1335.](#)

[Fulbright, T. E., H. N. Kline, D. B. Webster, E. D. Grahmann, F. Hernandez, L. A. Brennan, and M. W. Hehman. Non-native grasses reduce scaled quail habitat. \*Journal of Wildlife Management\* 83:1581-1591.](#)

### **Trivia Answer**

Allen W. Stokes. One of Aldo Leopold's last Ph.D. students, Stokes won The Wildlife Society's Publication Award in 1955 for his *Population Studies of Ring-necked Pheasants on Pelee Island, Ontario* (Tech. Bull., Wildlife Series No. 4, Ontario Dept. of Lands and Forests, Toronto, 154 pp). The monograph was based on Stokes' 1952 UW dissertation (finished four years after Leopold's death) which documented, among other things, the highest pheasant densities ever recorded in the wild – 5 birds per acre on the 10,000-acre island, with a harvest of 2.5 birds per acre during a 4-day season.

In 1945, prior to starting his dissertation research, Stokes worked for John Emlen, a boyhood friend from Pennsylvania, on the Rodent Ecology Research Project at Johns Hopkins University's School of Hygiene and Public Health. European ships docking in Baltimore during World War II sparked an irruption of Norway rats, causing fears of plague and the potential for germ warfare. Both Emlen and Stokes had earlier worked for Leopold and brought their shared habitat-centric view of wildlife management to the urban rat problem. They and their colleagues researched basic rat ecology and tested both habitat- and toxicant-based control methods, resulting in several publications in the mid to late 1940s. If you're curious, there's an interesting account of the city's competing wartime rat control approaches available [here](#).

Drs. Stokes and Emlen went on to complete distinguished careers in behavioral ecology at Utah State University and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, respectively. Dr. Stokes died in 1996 at the age of 81, and Dr. Emlen in 1997 at 88.

*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>.*