

Pheasant News and Notes

October 2020



Trivia Question

What 1987 film features this scene with a nice pointer-with-pheasant painting in the background?



Farm Bill and USDA News

The following CRP-related content comes courtesy of AFWA's Greg Pilchak:

VPA-HIP habitat work on CRP and ACEP-WRE – On September 4th, NRCS published a [bulletin](#)

curtailing the use of Voluntary Public Access Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) habitat incentive payments on land that is also enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program or protected under an Wetland Reserve Easement (ACEP-WRE/WRP). AFWA's Public Access Working Group is trying to take stock of the policy's impact on states' public access programs and will continue to work with USDA in the coming weeks to find a solution.

CRP Rental Rates – On September 30th, USDA FSA [announced](#) its provisional, updated county-average rental rates for use in determining soil rental rates in the Conservation Reserve Program in FY21. The rates are based on Cash Rent and Leases Survey estimates for dryland, but State Technical Committees can propose to modify them to encourage enrollment without impacting the rental market. The notice does not indicate whether FSA will reverse course for future CRP signups and allow for individual soil rental rates to be adjusted upward based on soil productivity.

CRP Continuous Signup 55 – FSA recently announced changes to the continuous signup for FY21. Since FSA has not approved SAFE project modification regarding updated or new CRP SAFE project proposals submitted earlier this year, current CRP continuous SAFE projects will no longer be active or available in COLS beginning October 1, 2020. FY 2021 SAFE project approvals will be announced in the future and available when the next General CRP signup begins. CP4B Permanent Wildlife Habitat Corridors will no longer be eligible for continuous CRP signup.

Also, last month USDA published a [notice](#) that grazing can now be used as a CRP mid-contract management with no rental rate reduction. This follows statutory language allowing this in the 2018 Farm Bill.

In other recent legislative news, the House passed the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act, which had earlier passed the Senate and is now headed to the president's desk. The most pheasant-related component of the bill is the reauthorized funding for the North American Wetlands Conservation

Act (NAWCA) at \$60 million annually for the next five years. Management Board member Jim Inglis contributed to an excellent PF video update of this and other recent policy matters; [check it out](#).

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

October is “go time” for pheasant hunting across most of the range, though we have to wait until next month here in the southern Plains. Most states seem fairly optimistic about bird numbers. Pheasants Forever’s communications crew does a good job of querying state biologists about their predictions; you can find their assessments [here](#). Good luck to everyone hitting the field soon.

Speaking of population predictions, Year Two of our multi-state brood survey assessment is in the books. Zachary Deines, the Iowa State grad student doing the heavy lifting on the project, reports the following:

“August roadside surveys were conducted on 94 routes by 83 observers across 10 states. Surveys were conducted from July 21st to August 30th and were visited 5 times on average and ranged from 1 to 8 visits. Ring-necked pheasants were observed on 81 routes and at least 1 ring-necked pheasant brood was observed during a survey on 72 routes. A total of 2,875 adult ring-necked pheasants and 1,290 ring-necked pheasant broods were observed. Northern bobwhite were observed on 32 routes and at least one northern bobwhite brood was observed during a survey on 24 routes. A total of 381 adults and 79 northern bobwhite broods were observed. We plan to work with these data this year and start to evaluate factors affecting detection of pheasants and bobwhites from across their range. We don’t anticipate any major changes to the protocol for next year, our final year of the study. We will be in touch as we learn from these data and plan for that final year.” Good luck to Zak in wrangling the data, and thanks again to everyone who contributed data and funding to this historic project.

We are anxious to see if the Covid-related surge in fishing license sales will translate to hunting participation increases this fall. Bill Moritz with the Wildlife Management Institute is currently trying to get some early data from the Midwest states concerning small game hunting sales to date, and said he will share the results with us once compiled. I’ll pass along anything I hear from him.

In basic science news, [the pheasant genome has now been fully sequenced](#), and different genetic strains of pheasants have [different gut microbiomes](#). In case you were wondering. Also, cropland [continues to expand](#) into areas particularly valuable to wildlife; thanks to Ryan Heiniger of PF for the heads-up.

Finally, I got a chance to plug our partnership on the “Upland Nation” podcast last week. If you’ve got an odd hour to kill, you can check it out [here](#).

Pheasant-relevant Media

[North Dakota hunters, landowners clash as pheasant season approaches](#)

[Changes approved to pheasant hunting in South Dakota](#)

[Majority of hunters, mostly from South Dakota, oppose changing current pheasant regulations](#)

[OnX and Pheasants Forever unite in the name of public land access](#)

[Roadside survey tallies gains in North Dakota pheasant, grouse and partridge numbers](#)

[Good hatch means Minnesota may be flush with pheasants](#)

[More Iowa pheasants, more hunters expected for 2020](#)

[South Dakota’s Governor Noem shoots pheasant in viral video](#)

[Activists sue U.K. ministers over release of game birds for shooting](#)

[Game birds 'could wipe out adders in most of Britain within 12 years'](#)

[Cool graphical depiction of world population density](#)

Recent Literature

[Liu, Y., S. Liu, N. Zhang, D. Chen, P. Que, N. Liu, J. Hoglund, Z. Zhang, and B. Wang. 2020. Genome assembly of the common pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*: a model for speciation and ecological genomics. *Genome Biology and Evolution* 11:3326-3331.](#)

[Ding, J. T. Jiang, H. Zhou, L. Yang, C. He, K. Xu, F. T. Akinyemi, C. Han, H. Luo, C. Qin, and H. Meng. 2020. The gut microbiota of pheasant lineages reflects their host genetic variation. *Frontiers in Genetics* 11:859.](#)

[Liu, S., Y. Liu, E. Jelen, M. Alibadian, C. T. Yao, X. Li, N. Kayvanfar, Y. Wang, F. S. M. Vahidi, J. L. Han, G. Sundev, Z. Zhang, and M. Schweizer. 2020. Regional drivers of diversification in the late Quaternary in a widely distributed generalist species, the common pheasant *Phasianus colchicus*. *Journal of Biogeography* \(early online version\).](#)

[Qismat, M. Z. 2020. The dynamics of live weight of pheasant chicks \(*Phasianus colchicus*\) breeding artificially. *Egyptian Journal of Veterinary Sciences* 51:391-397.](#)

[Lark, T. J., S. A. Spawn, M. Brougie, and H. K. Gibbs. 2020. Cropland expansion in the United States produces marginal yields at high costs to wildlife. *Nature Communications* 11:4295.](#)

[Adkins, K., C. L. Roy, R. G. Wright, and D. E. Anderson. 2020. Simulating strategic implementation of the CRP to increase greater prairie-chicken abundance. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Londe, D. W., D. Elmore, C. A. Davis, S. D. Fuhlendorf, T. J. Hovick, B. Luttbeg, and J. Rutledge. 2020. Weather influences multiple components of greater prairie-chicken reproduction. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Richardson, A. D., A. J. Kroeger, C. E. Moorman, C. A. Harper, B. Gardner, M. D. Jones, and B. M. Strobe. 2020. Nesting ecology of northern bobwhite on a working farm. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* \(early online version\).](#)

[McMahon, B. J., S. Doyle, A. Gray, S. B. A. Kelly, and S. M. Redpath. 2020. European bird declines: do we need to rethink approaches to the management of abundant generalist predators? *Journal of Applied Ecology* 57:1885-1890.](#)

Trivia Answer

Raising Arizona. That's the late Trey Wilson playing the role of Nathan Arizona, owner of Unpainted Arizona, "the largest chain of unpainted furniture and bathroom fixture outlets throughout the Southwest."

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>.