

Pheasant News and Notes

December 2020



Trivia Question

What state opens their regular pheasant season the latest?

Farm Bill and USDA News

Lots of news on the CRP front this month. First, USDA [announced](#) that the next general signup period will be January 4th to February 12th, 2021, with a CRP Grasslands signup running from March 15th through April 23rd. Also, FSA [announced](#) that Practice Incentive Payments (PIPs) on non-CREP continuous practices were going up from the current 5% to 20% of the cost of establishment, with some other more limited continuous practice incentives also being increased. It is unlikely that these increases will be game-changers, but every little bit helps. Finally, USDA announced the availability of new 2021 county soil rental rates (SRRs) on their [CRP statistics site](#). Some quick-and-dirty calculations suggest the new rates are up an average of 4.7% from last year. However, 1,334 (42%) of 3,176 counties saw their SRR decline from 2020 levels.

Representative Collin Peterson (D-MN) lost his bid for reelection, so we will have a new chair (Rep. David Scott of Georgia) of the House Ag Committee next year. Representative Peterson has been a staunch supporter of CRP, and on his way out [introduced a bill](#) to not just expand the program, but to establish a 50-million-acre enrollment *floor*. This would certainly address our recent problem of USDA making the acreage cap irrelevant by offering unattractive enrollment incentives. I'm guessing that prospects for passage are not great, but it does throw down the gauntlet as a new Congress convenes next month.

USDA's Risk Management Agency also [announced](#) a narrowing of eligibility for prevented planting payments in the upcoming year. The new rules require an acreage to be planted to a crop and insured in at least one of the previous four years before it is eligible for prevented planting payments. Not sure how many acres this would have affected during the big flood year in 2019, but any rule that helps disincentivize planting of marginal land is probably a good thing.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

According to Management Board member Jim Inglis, CRP continues to be in the national discussion regarding agriculture's role in carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation. Some unfortunate early momentum has gathered around tree planting as the preferred alternative, and grassland conservation interests are trying to prevent that idea from taking root. [USDA's current calculator](#) suggests that woody vegetation sequesters about 60% more carbon per acre than grassland, but most is stored as above-ground biomass that is vulnerable to release through burning. Grasses seem to store about 70-75% of their carbon below ground and thus are more secure. Speaking of fire, it appears that some climate interests are not wild about the idea of prescribed burning as a grassland management tool.

The development of some kind of carbon credit and banking system is part of these high-level conversations (see the [Climate 21 Project's recommendations](#) for one example). Ryan Heiniger of PF

reports that some are resisting the idea of retired cropland being eligible for such credits, reasoning that market forces will ensure that cropland retired in one place will just be broken out somewhere else. If that viewpoint holds, it will further hinder our ability to incentivize grassland conservation in farm country.

Add the 2021 Pheasant Fest to the list of Covid-related cancellations. The 2022 edition will be March 11th-13th in Omaha (fingers crossed).

Travis Runia (Technical Committee, South Dakota) has a paper coming out on lead and pheasants in the *Prairie Naturalist* this month. It is not available online, but Travis might be able to send you a copy once it is published. Also, Matt Broadway (Technical Committee, Indiana) has a recent paper out on prairie-chicken ecology, as does Robert Perez (Technical Committee, Texas) on bobwhites – see the Recent Literature section below. Congrats to Travis, Matt, and Robert!

Finally, I have been working on pulling some pheasant-related information out of the *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* datasets (2011 and 2016 versions) for the economic chapter in our National Plan revision. I offer the figures below without comment for now – they are mostly self-explanatory but will be detailed further in the revision. Thanks to Jeff Prendergast (Technical Committee, Kansas) for helping me get the dataset into a format I could work with.

Figure 1. Average annual small game hunting trip and equipment expenditures reported by pheasant hunters and small game hunters who did not hunt pheasants, based on respondents to the 2011 and 2016 National Surveys of Fishing, Hunting and Outdoor-Associated Recreation (US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau 2011 and 2016). Units are in 2019 US dollars.

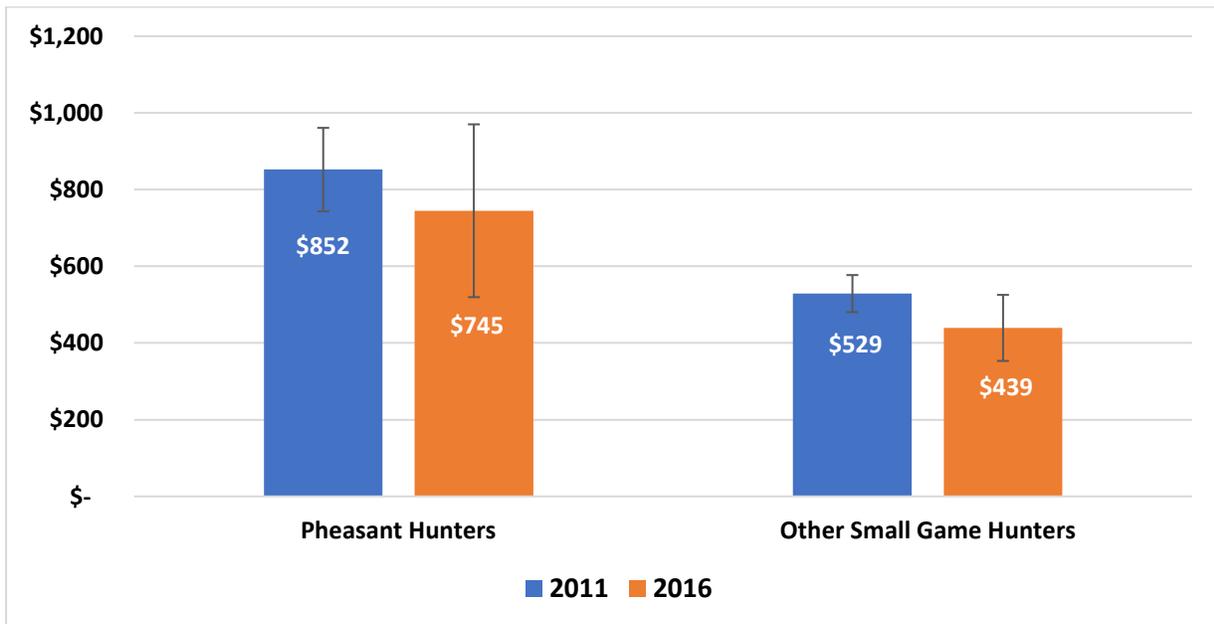


Figure 2. Percent of pheasant hunters who pursued other types of game (US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau 2011 and 2016).

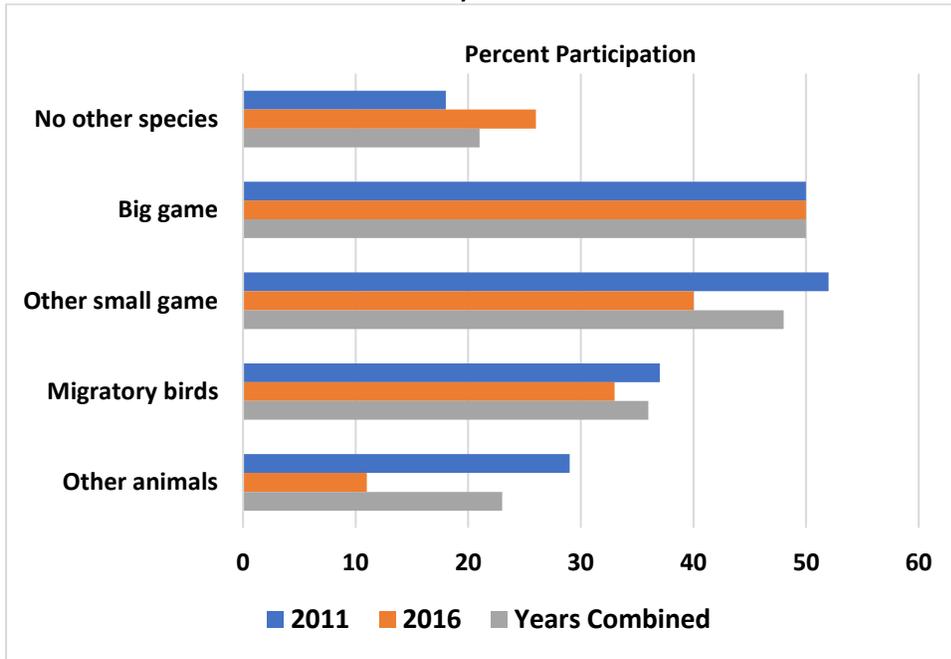


Figure 3. Percent of pheasant hunters who pursued other game species (US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau 2011 and 2016).

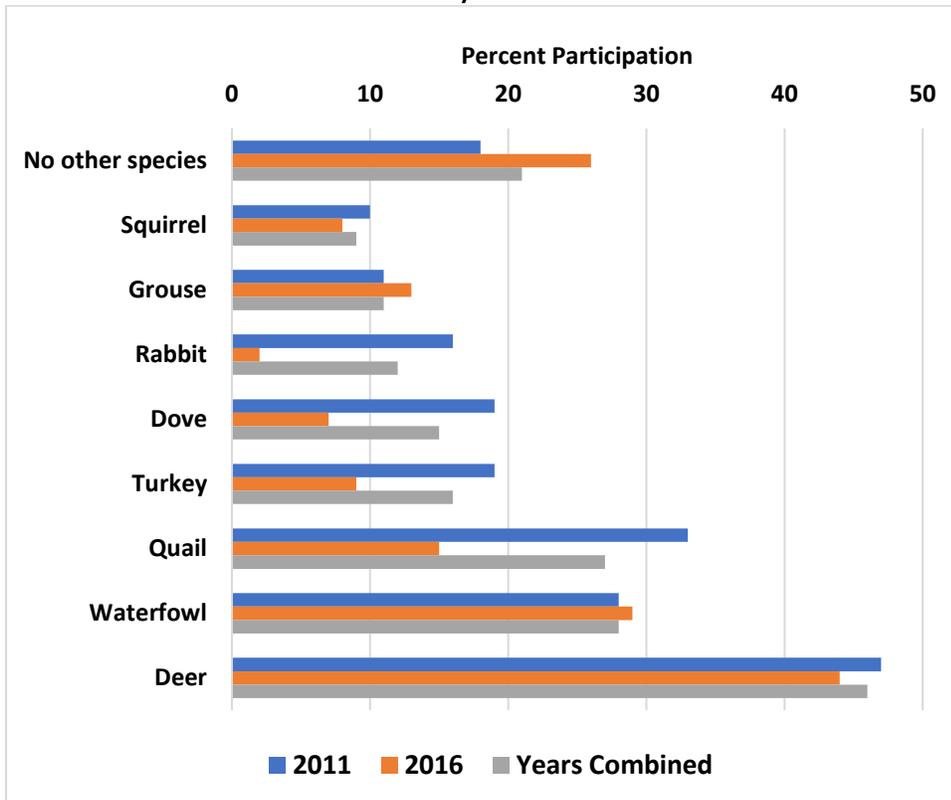
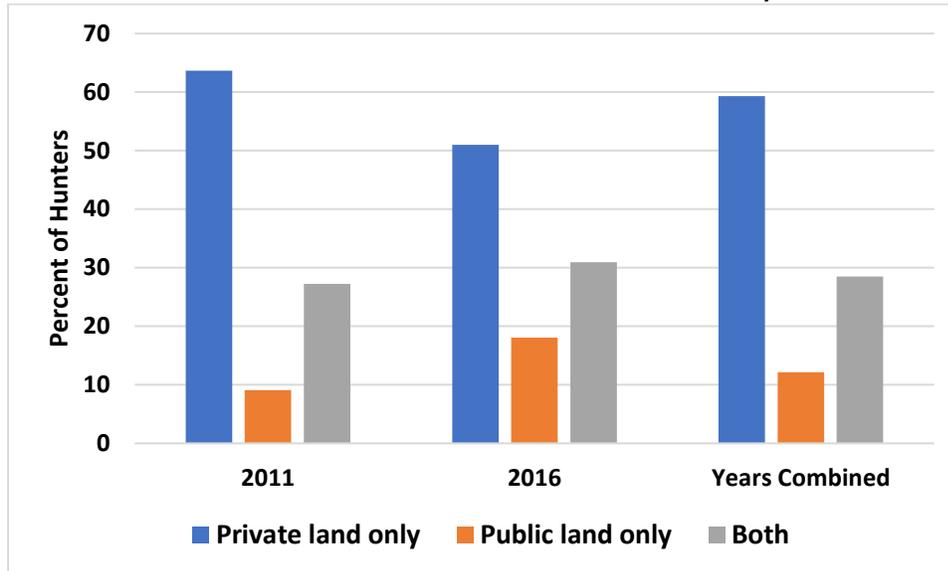


Figure 4. Percent of pheasant hunters pursuing small game on private land, public lands, and both (US Fish and Wildlife Service and US Census Bureau 2011 and 2016).



Pheasant-relevant Media

[Minnesota pheasant bag limit increase takes effect](#)

[Iowa DNR says pheasant hunting okay in pandemic](#)

[Dry conditions and decline in CRP a detriment to Texas pheasants](#)

[South Dakota hasn't sold as many licenses to nonresident pheasant hunters so far this year](#)

[North Dakota man arrested for shooting at pheasants out car window, meth](#)

[As biotech crops lose their power, scientists push for new restrictions](#)

[Pheasant for Thanksgiving? MacFarlane Pheasants sees a boost in business](#)

Recent Literature

[Schindler, A. R., D. A. Haukos, C. A. Hagen, B. E. Ross. 2020. A multispecies approach to manage effects of land cover and weather on upland game birds. Ecology and Evolution \(early online version\).](#)

[Smith, E. G. W. 2020. Why hunt upland game birds? Pheasant, grey partridge and sharp-tailed grouse hunter motivations, satisfaction and recreation specialization. Thesis. University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada.](#)

[Eliason, S. L. 2020. A place to hunt: some observations on access to wildlife resources in the western United States. Human Dimensions of Wildlife \(early online version\).](#)

[Martin, K. A., J. R. J. Chelladurai, Y. Sato, and M. T. Brewer. 2020. Syngamus asphyxiation in a captive ring-necked pheasant. Veterinary Parasitology: Regional Studies and Reports 22:100493.](#)

[Hardy, M. A., M. S. Broadway, C. D. Pollentier, V. C. Radeloff, J. D. Riddle, S. D. Hull, and B. Zuckerberg. 2020. Responses to land cover and grassland management vary across life-history stages for a grassland specialist. Ecology and Evolution 10:12777-12791.](#)

[Cohen, B. S., D. D. Marquardt, N. W. Bakner, R. M. Perez, and B. A. Collier. 2020. Daily movements, space use, and habitat selection of GPS-tagged northern bobwhite in Texas. Wildlife Society Bulletin \(early online version\).](#)

[Coppola, P. M., C. K. Williams, T. M. Terhune II, J. Parke, and J. Cecil. 2020. Landscape connectivity influences survival and resource use following long-distance translocation of northern bobwhite. Journal of Wildlife Management \(early online version\).](#)

[Yeiser, J. M., P. E. Howell, G. T. Wann, and J. A. Martin. 2020. Addressing temporal variability in bird calling with design and estimation: a northern bobwhite example. Journal of Wildlife Management \(early online version\).](#)

[Henden, J. A., D. Ehrich, E. M. Soininen, and R. A. Ims. 2020. Accounting for food web dynamics when assessing the impact of mesopredator control on declining prey populations. Journal of Applied Ecology \(early online version\).](#)

Trivia Answer

New Mexico. Texas opens December 5th this year, and New Mexico on December 10th.

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>.