

Pheasant News and Notes

August 2021



Trivia Question

A Viennese bronze pheasant figurine made its way onto PBS's "Antiques Roadshow" this week. The appraiser thought it was created around 1900. How much was it worth?



Farm Bill and USDA News

The [USDA announced the latest CRP Grasslands signup](#) last month, which runs through August 20th. The minimum rental rate is \$15 per acre, with an additional \$5 per acre paid if the enrollment is in priority zone counties of the Greater Yellowstone elk migration corridors or the "Dust Bowl Zone" in southern Great Plains.

CRP was a topic of discussion last week among two Republican Senate Ag committee members on opposite sides of the lagging enrollment issue. At a [confirmation hearing](#) for Robert Bonnie, the Biden administration's nominee for USDA Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, Senator Boozman of Arkansas pushed Mr. Bonnie to defend USDA's recent increase in incentive payments (the Senator contends the increases are unlawful, which USDA denies). However, Senator Thune of South Dakota generally supported USDA's effort to boost CRP acreages. As of this writing, no date has been set for a vote on Mr. Bonnie's confirmation.

On the other hand, Thune and bipartisan co-sponsors in both the Senate and House [introduced a bill](#) to require USDA to allow haying of CRP during the primary nesting season "when certain conditions are met and in consultation with the state technical committee." The text of the bill ([S. 2484](#)) was not yet available online, so no word yet on how those "conditions" are described.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

As most of you know, the big news for the partnership was the Management Board's approval of the revised National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan last week, which is now available on our [website](#). Thanks again for the Board and Technical Committee's work on the document over the past two years; now we can give our full attention to accomplishing the work items we prioritized in the Plan.

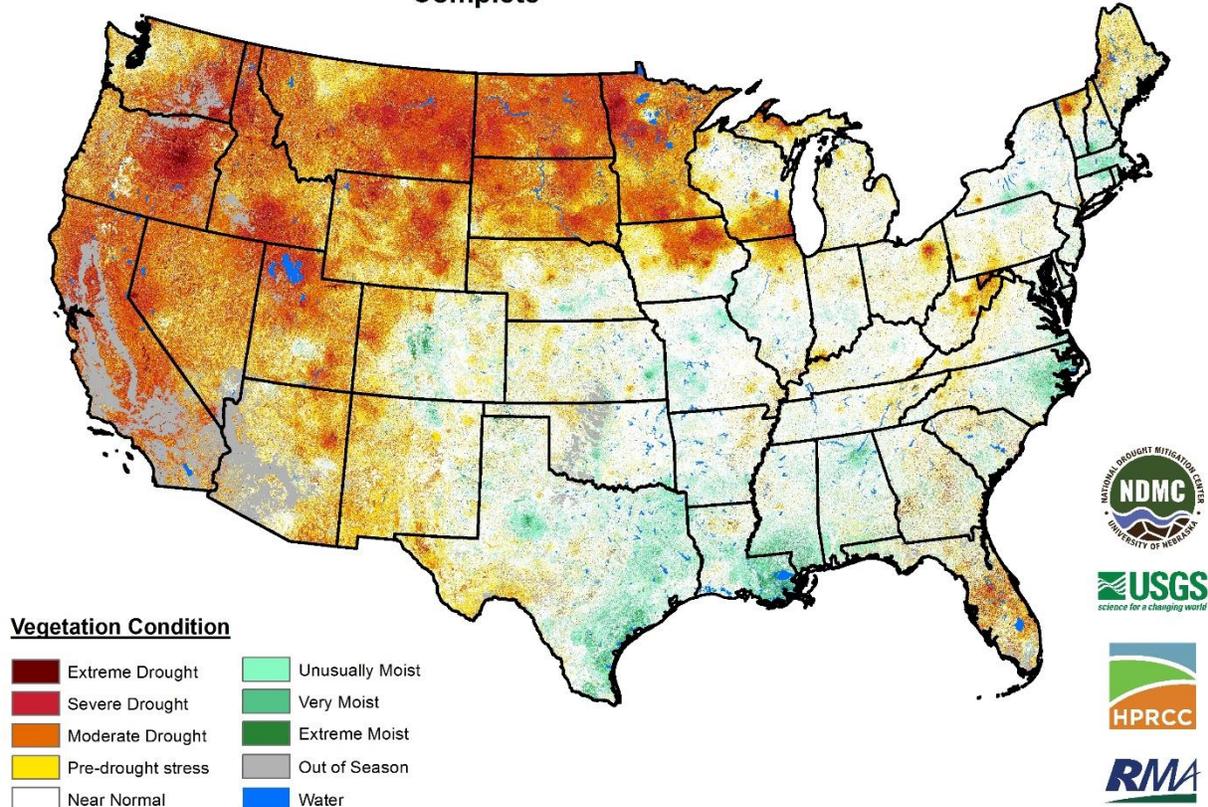
Ahead of its formal approval, I was invited by Bob St. Pierre to talk about the Plan on PF's *On the Wing* podcast. If you have an hour to kill, you can [give it a listen](#).

Meanwhile, the drought continues over much of the pheasant range, and states are kicking off their roadside brood counting activities (including those associated with the multi-state project led by Zachary Deines and Adam Janke at Iowa State). Many are waiting to see how the former will affect the results of the latter – we'll keep our fingers crossed.

Vegetation Drought Response Index

August 1, 2021

Complete



I attended the WAFWA summer meeting last month. My pheasant-relevant notes included:

- The plenary session focused on the Biden administration's 30x30 plan, now fully rebranded as the "America the Beautiful" plan. The speakers seemed in agreement that the greatest chances of success will come through local-level partnerships and priority-setting rather than top-down edicts, but the necessary role of federal participation was generally acknowledged. No one seemed sure about how the effort will actually change management activities on federal lands.
- The Wildlife Chiefs meeting was entirely focused on big game and large carnivore issues. I don't recall even lesser prairie-chickens or sage-grouse coming up. The phrase "waterfowl hunter" came up near the end of the meeting thanks to Jake George of Kansas; that was as close as the discussion got to a bird issue.
- The Western Quail Working Group (WQWG) meeting was ably chaired by our own Casey Cardinal (Technical Committee, New Mexico). Al Eiden of PF/QF reported on several issues, including the recent hire of Andy Edwards as the new QF brand manager, a recent *On the Wing* podcast series on western quail, a new state-level PF/QF priority planning effort, and that 175 of PF/QF's field biologists are working in the range of at least one quail species.

- Via a WQWG recommendation, the Western Bird Conservation Committee approved a new Western Upland Gamebird Workshop to occur as a one-day add-on to the fall/winter Western Quail Working Group meeting. The new session will cover partridge and forest grouse species that are not already covered by existing working groups and technical committees.
- The WAFWA Sage and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Technical Committee is working on sage-grouse trapping and translocation protocols and sage-grouse population monitoring guidelines.
- According to Southwick Associates, only 60% of hunter education graduates ever purchase a hunting permit, and less than 30% of graduates are currently purchasing permits.
- Peter Coates of USGS's Western Ecological Research Center won WAFWA's Federal Conservation Partner of the Year Award. Dr. Coates was recognized for his sage-grouse and raven research, but has done significant work on pheasants in California, as well. He and Shawn Espinoza of Nevada also won the Robert L. Patterson Award at the 2021 Western Agencies Sage and Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse Workshop. Congrats!

Pheasant-relevant Media

[North Dakota drought impacting wildlife from birds to fish; effects on hunting uncertain](#)
[Pandemic-era rush to Iowa parks continues, hunting license sales up, fishing down](#)
[Iowa DNR prepares for annual roadside pheasant survey](#)
[Iowa pheasant hunters and pheasant harvest increased in 2020](#)
[Iowa DNR: 2021 pheasant season could be similar to last year](#)
[Drought impact on pheasants? SDGFP eyeing positive fall season from mild winter, successful spring nesting](#)
[Drought likely to impact South Dakota pheasant hunting, but wildlife experts optimistic on season](#)
[Governor Noem announces results of nest predator bounty program](#)
[Nonresident pheasant hunters dropped to modern low in South Dakota for 2020 season](#)
[Thune, Johnson unveil bipartisan, bicameral Conservation Reserve Program Flexibility Act](#)
[Son sues father over pheasant hunt injury](#)
[Rural bankers see farmland price deceleration ahead](#)

Recent Literature

[Madden, J. R. 2021. How many gamebirds are released in the UK each year? *European Journal of Wildlife Research* 67:72.](#)

[Coates, P. S., S. T. O'Neil, D. A. Munoz, I. A. Dwight, and J. C. Tull. 2021. Sage-grouse population dynamics are adversely affected by overabundant feral horses. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Shew, J. J., C. K. Nielsen. 2021. Differential effects of policy-based management on obligate and facultative grassland birds. *Agriculture, Ecosystems and Environment* \(early online version\).](#)

Trivia Answer

The “bird” figurine was worth about \$800-1,000 in 1998 but had dropped to \$600 as of three years ago. Still, keep your eyes peeled.



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>.