

# Pheasant News and Notes

January 2022



## Trivia Question

In what decade did North American pheasant abundance reach its peak?

## Farm Bill and USDA News

Todd Bogenschutz (Technical Committee, Iowa) sent along several interesting links, including a call from two Democratic senators for a [40-million-acre CRP authorization](#), thoughts from a Republican senator about the [potential effects of some climate proposals on Farm Bill conservation programs](#), and [a new NASA soil moisture data portal](#). Those involved in the multi-state brood survey project will recognize the potential importance of timely soil moisture data in adjusting raw brood count data – the analyses to date suggest this is a significant covariate affecting counts.

AFWA's Greg Pilchak reports that USDA continues to roll out program information related to their agency-wide "Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry" (CSAF) initiative. NRCS released a list of [33 conservation practices and 81 enhancement activities](#) it says have a quantifiable effect on greenhouse gas emissions and/or carbon sequestration, and thus can be used to help meet CSAF goals. Quantified benefit estimates for each can be accessed through the [COMET-Planner tool](#).

CSAF is also a priority in the new EQIP Conservation Incentive Contracts (CIC) option. EQIP has had a historic problem implementing multi-year projects, which the CIC specifically addresses via 5- or 10-year contracts for [eligible practices](#). There are several [administrative hoops](#) state NRCS offices must jump through before offering the program to producers, however. USDA explicitly hopes this program will serve as a gateway leading producers into the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).

NRCS also announced their Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) On-Farm Conservation Innovation Trials awardees a few weeks ago. Notable among the winners was the Iowa and Minnesota staff of Pheasants Forever, whose proposed project will "explore a financial assistance model that promotes the adoption of precision agriculture and precision conservation strategies and tools on a farm-wide scale to identify opportunities for conservation and inform decision-making." The goal of this five-year project is to work with 80 producers, analyze 25,000 acres, convert 3,200 acres of marginal cropland to perennial cover, and deliver 24 education and outreach events. Congrats to the successful grant writers and project leads.

## Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

John McLaughlin (Technical Committee, Texas) has been hard at work planning next week's Tech Committee meeting in Lubbock. It sounds like about a dozen of us are planning to attend in person, with another bunch tuning in virtually.

Congrats to Nicole Davros (Technical Committee, Minnesota) and her coauthors on a new publication detailing potential exposure of wildlife to insecticide spray drift. Target chemicals were found in adjacent grasslands up to a quarter mile from crop field edges, with chlorpyrifos levels above the

contact lethal dose (LD<sub>50</sub>) for honeybees present up to 25 m from field edges. You can check out the rest of the paper [here](#).

I've spent the last few weeks developing a couple of interactive dashboards – one to display the data, results, and goals contained in the new edition of the National Plan, and the other to track national and state CRP data. I'll be getting feedback on these from the Tech Committee next week, then making them more widely available thereafter.

Regarding the Plan dashboard, one obvious need is a way to track habitat metrics going forward (the datasets used in the Plan stop at 2019) in relation to our state and national goals. We used a spreadsheet model to develop our metric estimates, so our base datasets (USDA crop data, pheasant abundance indices, etc.) often required several sequential Excel manipulations (cut and paste, sort, cell-based formulas, etc.) to prepare them for the model. While this worked okay, it is a challenge to reproduce correctly – even for the person (me) who originally organized it. To help solve this problem, I'm also working on an R script that manipulates and analyzes the base datasets in a more transparent and reproducible way. This will also allow easier updating of our key metrics as new data become available.

### **Pheasant-relevant Media**

[Pheasant hunters returned to South Dakota fields](#)

[California sheriff's pheasant program helps local inmates](#)

[Mixed results in most recent report on USDA Conservation Reserve Program](#)

[Senator suggests building climate mitigation on USDA conservation programs](#)

[Climate bill would expand USDA stewardship programs](#)

[Man hit with birdshot at Utah hunting club](#)

[Council on hunting and wildlife conservation reinstated](#)

### **Recent Literature**

[Shirley, T. R., and A. K. Janke. 2021. Use of small, unmanned aircraft systems and mist nests to capture ring-necked pheasants. \*Wildlife Society Bulletin\* \(early online version\).](#)

[Goebel, K. M., N. M. Davros, D. E. Andersen, and P. J. Rice. 2021. Tallgrass prairie wildlife exposure to spray drift from commonly used soybean insecticides in Midwestern USA. \*Science of the Total Environment\* \(early online edition\).](#)

[Kraus, H. M., W. E. Jensen, G. R. Houseman, M. L. Jameson, M. M. Reichenborn, D. F. Watson, and E. L. Kjaer. 2021. Cattle grazing in CRP grasslands during the nesting season: Effects on avian reproduction. \*Journal of Wildlife Management\* \(early online version\).](#)

[Rischette, A. C., B. A. Geaumont, R. D. Elmore, C. S. Schauer, K. K. Sedivec, and T. J. Hovick. 2021. Duck nest density and survival in post-Conservation Reserve Program lands. \*Wildlife Society Bulletin\* \(early online version\).](#)

[Sinnott, E. A., F. R. Thompson III, M. D. Weegman, and T. R. Thompson. 2021. Northern Bobwhite juvenile survival is greater in native grasslands managed with fire and grazing and lower in non-native field borders and strip crop fields. \*Ornithological Applications\* \(early online version\).](#)

[Rosenblatt, C. J., S. N. Matthews, R. J. Gates, W. E. Peterman, and M. B. Shumar. 2021. Are northern bobwhites an umbrella species for open-land birds in Ohio? Journal of Wildlife Management \(early online version\).](#)

[Anthony, C. R., L. J. Foster, C. A. Hagen, and K. M. Dugger. 2021. Acute and lagged fitness consequences for a sagebrush obligate in a post mega-wildfire landscape. Ecology and Evolution \(early online version\).](#)

[Pollentier, C. D., M. A. Hardy, R. S. Lutz, S. D. Hull, and B. Zuckerberg. 2021. Gobbling across landscapes: Eastern wild turkey distribution and occupancy–habitat associations. Ecology and Evolution \(early online version\).](#)

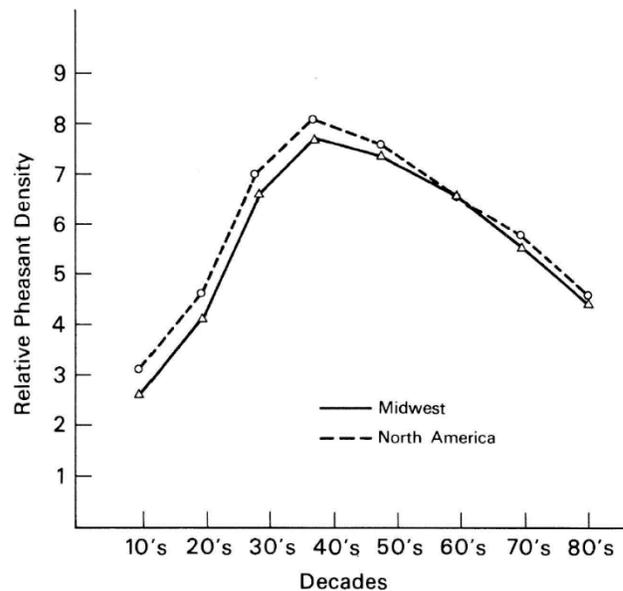
[Hinrichs, M. P., M. P. Vrtiska, M. A. Pegg, and C. J. Chizinski. 2021. Motivations to participate in hunting and angling: a comparison among preferred activities and state of residence. Human Dimensions of Wildlife \(early online version\).](#)

[Burton, S. E., K. A. Frank, S. J. Riley, and D. B. Kramer. 2021. The role of social networks in partnership development with state wildlife agencies. Human Dimensions of Wildlife \(early online version\).](#)

[Kellner, K. F., N. L. Fowler, T. R. Petroelje, T. M. Kautz, D. E. Beyer, Jr., and J. L. Belant. 2021. ubms: An R package for fitting hierarchical occupancy and N-mixture abundance models in a Bayesian framework. Methods in Ecology and Evolution \(early online version\).](#)

[Pienkowski, T., et al. 2021. Balancing making a difference with making a living in the conservation sector. Conservation Biology \(early online version\).](#)

**Trivia Answer:** The 1940s. The graph comes from a subjective assessment by state pheasant biologists in the mid-1980s and is presented in Robert Dahlgren's paper "Distribution and abundance of the ring-necked pheasant in North America," in [Pheasants: Symptoms of Wildlife Problems on Agricultural Lands](#) (1988), edited by D. L. Hallett, W. R. Edwards, and G. V. Burger.



*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>.*