

Pheasant News and Notes

September 2021



Trivia Question

Who wrote the following?

I find myself willingly at the mercy of creatures that speak a language dictated by necessity and weather, and, in the case of my dogs, by the subtleties of their olfactory senses. In short, my life has been one of idleness and uncomplicated pleasures, an existence of good fortune and sport, of limited accomplishments and few regrets.

Farm Bill and USDA News

USDA-FSA wrapped up CRP General Signup 56 this summer and [announced 1.9 million offered acres were accepted](#). They also said they had accepted nearly 900,000 acres of continuous practice offers so far and expected total CRP enrolled acres to at least break even – there are about 3 million acres whose contracts are expiring at the end of this month. The table below show how many 2021 continuous practice acres need to be enrolled in each state to offset those expirations.

STATE	CRP Acres Expiring 1 Oct 2021	2021 "Acceptable" General Signup Acres	Change (Pending 2021 Continuous Practice Acres Enrolled)
ALABAMA	42,868	16,070	-26,798
ALASKA	33	2,494	2,461
ARKANSAS	21,020	5,281	-15,739
CALIFORNIA	8,573	4,895	-3,678
COLORADO	296,409	315,350	18,941
CONNECTICUT	1	0	-1
DELAWARE	312	0	-312
FLORIDA	4,225	829	-3,396
GEORGIA	25,457	6,331	-19,126
HAWAII	0	0	0
IDAHO	115,617	64,448	-51,169
ILLINOIS	67,918	29,104	-38,814
INDIANA	18,532	5,574	-12,958
IOWA	89,465	20,670	-68,795
KANSAS	366,936	242,932	-124,004
KENTUCKY	12,884	1,253	-11,631
LOUISIANA	26,434	3,595	-22,839
MAINE	1,085	573	-512

MARYLAND	3,114	52	-3,062
MASSACHUSETTS	0	0	0
MICHIGAN	9,093	3,002	-6,091
MINNESOTA	61,570	20,264	-41,306
MISSISSIPPI	77,154	32,747	-44,407
MISSOURI	131,689	57,253	-74,436
MONTANA	137,186	95,210	-41,976
NEBRASKA	95,913	77,682	-18,231
NEVADA	146	0	-146
NEW HAMPSHIRE	0	0	0
NEW JERSEY	170	0	-170
NEW MEXICO	113,728	33,062	-80,666
NEW YORK	2,366	788	-1,578
NORTH CAROLINA	9,101	1,955	-7,146
NORTH DAKOTA	132,870	55,121	-77,749
OHIO	26,483	2,326	-24,157
OKLAHOMA	151,103	101,110	-49,993
OREGON	85,318	66,873	-18,445
PENNSYLVANIA	12,310	0	-12,310
PUERTO RICO	0	0	0
RHODE ISLAND	0	0	0
SOUTH CAROLINA	6,490	1,076	-5,414
SOUTH DAKOTA	110,701	12,437	-98,264
TENNESSEE	20,447	5,015	-15,432
TEXAS	538,675	381,018	-157,657
UTAH	27,065	40,970	13,905
VERMONT	268	0	-268
VIRGINIA	3,642	1,619	-2,023
WASHINGTON	95,002	115,899	20,897
WEST VIRGINIA	834	0	-834
WISCONSIN	18,160	7,586	-10,574
WYOMING	32,678	45,168	12,490
TOTAL	3,001,045	1,877,631	-1,123,414

Todd Bogenschutz (Technical Committee, Iowa) noted that minimum Environmental Benefit Index (EBI) score for accepted bids (175) was significantly lower than most other general signups. FSA also made progress toward complying with the 2018 Farm Bill in taking historic acreage enrollment levels into account – 14 states (AL, CA, FL, ME, MD, MI, MT, NY, NC, OK, PA, SC, UT, and VA) with lagging enrollments (<60% of historic levels) were given preference in this signup by applying a lower minimum EBI (165) for acceptance. Even with these accommodations, FSA expects to be about 4 million acres under the statutory cap.

The final tally of the FY2021 continuous signup acres should be available later this fall, so we'll check back in on the total enrollment when those are released.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

This is the time of year when many Technical Committee members are working on upland hunting forecasts based on summer population surveys or other types of data (hopefully), and then dealing with the media requests for comment afterward. Good luck to everyone during this busy season.

This is also the final year of data collection for the multi-state brood survey assessment conducted by Zachary Deines and Dr. Adam Janke at Iowa State University. Travis Runia (Technical Committee, South Dakota) and Todd Bogenschutz each did some preliminary examinations of their respective 2021 route data and saw what could be a more pronounced effect of dew than was evident in previous years. It will be interesting to see if that effect holds up to more formal scrutiny at ISU.

Sprih Harsh recently finished her doctoral work on pheasants in South Dakota, and her dissertation is now [available online](#). Her project got caught up in some serious staffing and administrative upheaval at South Dakota State, and she deserves a lot of credit for sticking with it and finishing well. Some results of note among the six(!) chapters include that grassland connectivity, not just its percentage of the landscape, was positively related to pheasant abundance, and that chick survival appeared too low (22% through 31 days post-hatch) to sustain populations during their 3-year study (productivity was so low during one of the years – a drought year – that they excluded it from the chick survival analyses).

Pheasants Forever premiered the excellent short film [Long Way Home](#) recently; have a look. Also check out Todd Bogenschutz on PF's [On the Wing podcast](#) – nice job!

This past month I have worked on updating our [key literature document](#) and extending the new National Plan's habitat model to estimate numeric pheasant population changes associated with changing nesting habitat acreages for each state. I'll be asking for some feedback on the latter from the Technical Committee soon.

Pheasant-relevant Media

[Iowa DNR: pheasant season could be second-best in 12 years](#)

[South Dakota's pheasant pop., hunting industry on steady decline](#)

[Non-resident hunters vote on South Dakota pheasant plan by not showing up](#)

[SD predator bounty program: successful wildlife management or needless killing of 134,000 animals?](#)

[North Dakota hunters shoot more grouse, pheasants and partridges in 2020](#)

[Montana wildlife commission OKs pheasant stocking for youth hunt](#)

[A program that pays farmers not to farm isn't saving the planet](#)

[Record \\$19,000 per acre Iowa farmland sale fueled by inflation, strong commodity prices](#)

[80 Acres in Iowa sold for \\$22,600 per acre, sets new state record](#)

Recent Literature

[Harsh, S. 2021. Pheasant ecology in an agricultural landscape in South Dakota. Dissertation. South Dakota State University, Brookings.](#)

[Krieg, J. A. F., E. Parish, and H. I. Jager. 2021. Growing grasses in unprofitable areas of US Midwest croplands could increase species richness. *Biological Conservation* 261:109289.](#)

[Weldon, P. J. 2021. Does human scent bias the survival of bird nests? *Ibis* \(early online version\).](#)

[Barrett, K., and S. L. Rodriguez. 2021. What sources are natural resource managers using to make decisions? *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Meyerpeter, M. B., K. D. Lazenby, P. S. Coates, M. A. Ricca, S. R. Mathews, S. C. Gardner, D. K. Dahlgren, and D. J. Delehanty. 2021. Field methods for translocating female greater sage-grouse \(*Centrocercus urophasianus*\) with their broods. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* \(early online version\).](#)

[Street, G. M., et al. 2021. Solving the sample size problem for resource selection functions. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* \(early online version\).](#)

Trivia Answer

Guy de la Valdène, in *The Fragrance of Grass*. If you are a bird hunter and a reader, you might find it well worth your time.

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>.