

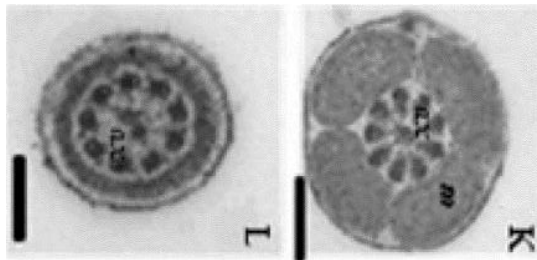
Pheasant News and Notes

October 2022



Trivia Question

What are these?



USDA and Legislative News

Congratulations to Pheasants Forever's Bethany Erb, who was recently [named to the federal Hunting and Wildlife Conservation Council](#). The Council provides input to the Department of Interior and USDA regarding policies that benefit wildlife and habitat conservation; expand fair-chase hunting, safe recreational shooting sports, and wildlife-associated recreation opportunities; and policies that benefit national and local economies. Andrew Schmidt of PF was named Bethany's alternate. Our thanks to both for representing upland wildlife interests on this prestigious panel!

Legislators continue to hear testimony as the 2023 Farm Bill draws closer. The House Ag Committee held a [hearing](#) on September 20th regarding stakeholder perspectives on USDA's conservation programs. The necessity and utility of the programs were widely acknowledged, as was the need for more USDA staff and funding to deliver them. Among the programs discussed, EQIP generally drew the most supportive comments. The National Cattleman's Beef Association representative [seemed to have a neutral view of CRP](#), suggesting that changes in the 2018 Farm Bill made it harder to graze on enrolled acres. He later clarified [here](#) and [here](#) that he was a fan of CRP but was worried about being penalized for grazing when his county's drought designations changed. The National Association of Wheat Growers representative also spoke favorably about CRP but [thought](#) the rules and expectations were too complex.

Notes from Around the Pheasant Range

Fall is finally here. I hope everyone has a safe and rewarding hunting season!

Pheasants Forever recently published its [2022 pheasant hunting forecast](#) covering 22 states. Congratulations to everyone involved in putting this huge effort together.

I attended the AFWA Annual Meeting in Fort Worth, Texas this month, which included our fall National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan Management Board meeting. My notes from these events include:

- At the Management Board meeting, board member Jim Inglis (Pheasants Forever) gave us a legislative and USDA update. USDA is currently doing a good job of getting conservation

program money out the door, which is good because their delivery systems will soon be challenged to deal with the extra \$20 billion coming their way as part of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). NRCS plans to hold a stakeholder meeting with PF and other conservation groups soon to discuss IRA spending priorities. Discussions are ramping up on Capitol Hill regarding the 2023 Farm Bill, and PF is working with other members of the American Wildlife Conservation Partners to write that coalition's Farm Bill platform. There is a chance the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) may get a vote before the mid-term elections, but movement on the North American Grasslands Conservation Act appears less likely.

- I gave the Board a quick tour of our National Plan dashboard and a prototype of a GIS-based habitat estimation tool. Members discussed whether some of the dashboard components could be turned into a more public-facing format to help tell the habitat story to stakeholders and funders. The Board also wants to make sure that any tools we develop are relevant to the funding agencies and incorporate other resource concerns in addition to pheasant outcomes whenever possible. These themes will be further discussed at the Technical Committee meeting next month.
- The AFWA plenary session focused on the "One Health" concept of human, wildlife, and environmental health being deeply interconnected. The natural resource management community has a large role to play in this network, but trust in government and other institutions has eroded. Gaining that trust back will be a long process. Information quality and transparency are the biggest trust builders, though transparency means different things to different generations. Younger people tend to want to see more original source data and to curate their trusted sources of information by topic. Regarding whom the public trusts, family and friends are first, scientists are in the middle of the pack, and marketers/advertisers are last.
- A central subject in nearly all the Agricultural Conservation working group meetings was how to effectively distribute that additional \$20 billion added to USDA conservation programs (excluding CRP) by the IRA for ["climate smart" practices](#), whether that goal is actually achievable, and what will happen to future budget requests if "we" fail. Even though there was no additional funding in the IRA for CRP, FSA is trying to orient the program toward practices that address climate change and species of greatest conservation need.
- FSA representatives reported that as of September 12th, 829,000 acres had been offered in this year's continuous signup, which runs through the end of the month. Also, 263,000 expiring acres were given a voluntary early out without penalty over the summer. Next year's dates for Grasslands and General signups have not yet been determined.
- Southwick Associates is finishing their economic evaluation of USDA's Voluntary Public Access-Habitat Improvement Program (VPA-HIP); this is an update of a similar evaluation done a few years ago. They used data on acres enrolled, federal program expenditures, and user days from 13 states to calculate user spending profiles and federal return-on-investment. Across the states evaluated, the program generated \$9.30 in economic activity for every federal dollar spent, yielding a total of \$54.6 million in hunter expenditures. The final report is expected by the end of 2022.
- A random factoid: federal crop insurance covers damage caused by wildlife.
- In a couple of presentations, former Pheasant Tech Committee member and current Oaks and Prairies Joint Venture Coordinator Robert Perez spoke highly of his experiences at the [Central Grasslands Summit](#), especially the unique steps that were taken to include a geographically and culturally diverse set of participants and the open acknowledgment of "ecological grief" experienced by those working to save a collapsing grassland ecosystem.

- Regarding that collapse, Dr. Dirac Twidwell (University of Nebraska-Lincoln) reported that despite millions of dollars spent on brush removal (primarily of eastern red cedar and mesquite), no county in the Great Plains has been able to stabilize, let alone reverse, the amount of brush-encroached rangeland within its borders.

The Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports and the Outdoor Foundation recently released the [2022 Special Report on Hunting and the Shooting Sports](#). Regarding hunting participation:

- 4.6 percent of the U.S. population ages 6 and over went hunting at least once
- 27 percent of participants were female, up from 16 percent a decade ago
- Share of hunters who were Black or Hispanic increased 4 percent and 1 percent, respectively, on average for the past 3 years
- “For food/meat” was the number one motivation for hunting
- 49 percent of hunters first participated before the age of 18
- 68 percent of hunters were introduced to hunting by a family members

In related news, the 2023 National R3 Symposium will be held May 23-25 in Albuquerque, NM.

Pheasant-relevant Media

[Pheasants Forever’s Bethany Erb named to federal council to support hunting, conservation efforts](#)

[Pheasants test positive for avian flu as experts warn against release of millions of game birds](#)

[Public land use issues highlighted in South Dakota governor's race](#)

[Minnesota pheasant numbers increase after favorable spring weather](#)

[North Dakota pheasant and partridge numbers are up](#)

[Early bird special: Washington seniors have chance to hunt pheasant before main season](#)

[Pennsylvania hunters have more pheasants to pursue](#)

[Connelly: Pheasant stocking a popular management activity](#)

[Pheasant season in South Dakota draws “general” interest](#)

[Full report available from research measuring efficacy of R3 programs](#)

[What hunters and anglers need to know about the CRP Improvement Act](#)

[Ag reps testify on value of conservation programs](#)

[PF video: finding community in the uplands](#)

[Native bird being reintroduced to West Virginia](#)

[Trees are overrated](#)

[More Iowa farmers consider double-cropping amid USDA change](#)

[How South Dakota became known for its pheasant salad sandwich](#)

Recent Literature

[Gethoffer, F., N. Curland, U. Voigt, B. Woelfing, T. Ludwig, U. Heffels-Redmann, H. M. Hafez, M. Lierz, and U. Seibert. 2022. Seroprevalences of specific antibodies against avian pathogens in free-ranging ring-necked pheasants \(*Phasianus colchicus*\) in Northwestern Germany. PLoS ONE 16:e0255434.](#)

[Lindell, C. A., and A. A. Dayer. 2022. Six principles for working effectively with landowners to advance bird conservation. Ornithological Applications \(early online version\).](#)

[Drescher, M., Y. H. Kim, and G. K. Warriner. 2022. Private landowners' childhood nature experiences affect their feelings of connectedness-to-nature and land stewardship as adults. *Biological Conservation* 274:109713.](#)

[Rudzki, E. N., et al. 2022. A guide for developing a field research safety manual that explicitly considers risks for marginalized identities in the sciences. *Methods in Ecology and Evolution* \(early online version\).](#)

[Smith, A. P., et al. 2022. Confidence, community & conservation: Exploring the relationship between self-efficacy and experience in female hunters. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism* \(early online version\).](#)

[Ellis, M. B., C. A. Miller, and S. G. Pallazza. 2022. The effect of individual harvest on crippling losses. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Bai, Y., and F. Cotrufo. 2022. Grassland soil carbon sequestration: Current understanding, challenges, and solutions. *Science* 377:603-608.](#)

[Barker, R. E., A. D. Apa, and R. S. Lutz. 2022. Columbian sharp-tailed grouse female and nest survival in northwestern Colorado. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Barker, R. E., A. D. Apa, and R. S. Lutz. 2022. Survival of Columbian sharp-tailed chicks and juveniles in northwestern Colorado. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Behnke, T., P. Street, S. Davies, J. Q. Ouyang, and J. S. Sedinger. 2022. Non-native grazers affect physiological and demographic responses of greater sage-grouse. *Ecology and Evolution* 12:e9325.](#)

[Buckley, B. R., J. B. Hardin, M. J. Chamberlain, and B. A. Collier. 2022. Survival, harvest, and population size of Rio Grande wild turkeys in Texas. *Journal of Wildlife Management* \(early online version\).](#)

[Keever, A. C., B. A. Collier, M. J. Chamberlain, and B. S. Cohen. 2022. Early nest initiation and vegetation density enhance nest survival in Wild Turkeys. *Ornithology* \(early online version\).](#)

Trivia Answer:

They are cross sections of pheasant sperm cells, courtesy of [Castillo et al. \(2022\)](#). Yes, someone somewhere actually got paid to take pictures of pheasant gametes. If you'd have told me the first one was a hipster tattoo, I wouldn't have argued.

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 <https://nationalpheasantplan.org>.