Brood Survey Indicates Another Good Year for Pheasants

PIERRE, S.D. - GFP counted an average of 6.32 pheasants per mile in 2009, the fourth highest statewide count in the past 45 years. Although this year’s statewide index has decreased from last year, the 2009 statewide pheasant per mile count is 13 percent higher than the 10-year average.

In 2007 GFP reported the highest brood route survey count in over 40 years. The count went even higher in 2008 with a nine percent increase.

Even though pheasant numbers remain strong, the 2009 survey reveals a 26 percent decrease from 2008.

“The pheasant brood route survey is the standard for gauging how the pheasant population is doing,” GFP Secretary Jeff Vonk said. “Our data represents a very good reflection of pheasant numbers in the areas we survey. While our pheasant population is down from 2008 record, the good news is there are still a lot of pheasants out there heading into the hunting season.”

“In the past 45 years only 2005, 2007 and 2008 have a higher pheasant per mile count then we found this year,” Vonk said.

GFP surveys 110 routes of 30 miles each over a three week period from late July to mid August. Survey data is used to calculate a pheasants per mile index for these routes. GFP can then compare the number of pheasants within each local area on a year-to-year basis, and also against a 10-year average.

“Considering the tremendous pheasant populations we’ve had the past couple of years, I believe even with this decline South Dakota will continue to offer the premier pheasant hunting opportunity in the nation,” Vonk said. “For a historical perspective, we had a pheasant per mile count of 2.69 birds in 2002, yet hunters still harvested over 1.2 million roosters that year.”

… Continued on page 3

Pheasant population
The number of pheasants per mile statewide for the past ten years and the ten year average:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>00</th>
<th>01</th>
<th>02</th>
<th>03</th>
<th>04</th>
<th>05</th>
<th>06</th>
<th>07</th>
<th>08</th>
<th>09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>00</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>5.66</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>7.85</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>6.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 year average</td>
<td>6.32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: S.D. Department of Game Fish and Parks
Levi Chiodi / Argus Leader

Winners of the recently held Pheasant Hunt and Buffalo shoot were:

Keith Hicken of Oklahoma was the winner of the 2009 Pheasant hunt. Michael Finnegan of South Dakota won the Buffalo Shoot. Thank You to all of you for supporting SDWF in purchasing tickets.
Executive Director’s Update by Chris Hesla

By the time you read this article, the first hunting season in South Dakota will be under way. The Mourning Dove season begins the first of September. It is an exciting and very busy time for those of us who love to hunt and enjoy the outdoors here in SD.

Be sure to read the fantastic brood survey results that GF&P has released (front page article). With the many grasshoppers that are around right now, the young pheasants should have plenty of protein to grow on. I have a tough thinking that we will continue with these high numbers in a few years, with our loss of CRP acres here in SD.

I would like to thank the Dakota Sportsmen, Inc. of Watertown and their members who put on and supported the 64th Annual SDWF Convention. I would also like to thank the local area merchants who donated auction items and our own affiliate clubs for supporting the Federation with donations to the auction and finally, the friends and members who took time out of their busy lives to travel and attend the convention -- THANK YOU.

Congratulations to the Conservation Award winners, it was an honor to celebrate your many accomplishments. PLEASE keep up the great work!

President’s Column by Rick Eske

Summer is about over and hunting season is just around the corner. Hopefully everyone got the license that they applied for. Everyone has an enjoyable and safe hunting season.

I would like to send out a couple of thank you. First, I would like to thank the Dakota Sportsman of Watertown for a great 09 Convention. The meetings and banquet were a great success. I would also like to thank all of the Affiliates’ who sent delegates to the Convention. A big thank you to you, the members of the SDWF, for your trust in me and electing me as President for another year.


One of my goals this year is to visit every affiliate club meeting at least once this year. I believe repeating the NRA Hunter Code of Ethics is appropriate here.

1. I will consider myself an invited guest of the landowner, seeking his permission, and so conducting myself that I may be welcomed in the future.

2. I will obey the rules of safe gun handling, and will courteously but firmly insist that others who hunt with me do the same.

3. I will obey all game laws and regulations and will insist that my companions do likewise.

4. I will do my best to acquire those marksmanship skills, which insure clean, marksmanship kills.

5. I will support conservation efforts which can ensure good hunting for future generations of Americans.

6. I will pass along to younger hunters the attitudes and skills essential to a true outdoor sportsman.

7. I will acquire the hunting skills, which insures clean, marksmanship kills.

8. I will do all in my power to ensure good hunting for future generations of Americans.

9. I will support conservation efforts which can ensure good hunting for future generations of Americans.

10. I will pass along to younger hunters the attitudes and skills essential to a true outdoor sportsman.
New Options Available for Farmable Wetlands Program

Pierre, S.D. - The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently announced that producers can now sign up for new options in the Farmable Wetlands Program (FWP). The FWP is a voluntary program that helps producers restore up to 1 million acres of farmable wetlands and associated buffers.

“The Farmable Wetlands Program is a very useful tool for producers to manage small, scattered wetlands on their property,” said South Dakota Secretary of Agriculture Bill Even. “It gives farmers and ranchers another option for managing their operations.”

The program was included in the 2002 Farm Bill, and the 2008 Farm Bill expanded the eligibility requirements to enroll additional land not previously eligible for the program. To be eligible for enrollment in the new FWP, land must fall into one of four categories:

* Land must be cropland, planted to an agricultural commodity three out of the 10 most recent crop years and be physically and legally capable of being planted in a normal manner to an agriculture commodity; or
* Land for a constructed wetland developed to receive flow from a row crop agricultural drainage system for the purposes of providing nitrogen removal and other wetland functions; or
* Land devoted to commercial pond-raised aquaculture during 2002-2007; or
* Land that was cropped between Jan. 1, 1990, and Dec. 31, 2002, that was cropped at least three of 10 years and was subject to natural overflow from a prairie wetland.

The maximum enrollment for the FWP cannot exceed 40 acres for wetlands or constructed wetlands, 20 acres for overflow prairie wetlands and enrollments of wetlands; buffers shall not exceed 200 acres per tract.

The FWP offers producers significant enrollment incentives, including a Signing Incentive Payment of $100 per acre to enroll their land, a Practice Incentive of 40 percent of the cost to establish the practice, 50 percent cost-share, and a rental rate equaling 120 percent of the soil rental rate.

“Producers looking for ways to enhance their land for wildlife should take a close look at the Farmable Wetlands Program, especially with the new options approved in the 2008 Farm Bill,” said South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks Secretary Jeff Vonk. “Landowners in the northeastern part of the state may find it particularly appealing because overflow prairie wetlands are now included in the program.”

Current enrollment in the Farmable Wetlands program is approximately 46,600 acres in South Dakota and 188,800 acres nationally.

To enroll in the Farmable Wetlands Program, landowners should visit their local Farm Service Agency Office (FSA) or visit www.fsa.usda.gov.

Good Year for Pheasants . . .

According to Vonk, one key element that has sustained good pheasant populations over the past several years has been the quality habitat resulting from the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Federal cutbacks in the program have resulted in a loss of 24 percent of the CRP land in South Dakota over the past three years.

South Dakota’s regular pheasant season opens on Saturday, Oct. 17 and runs through January 3. The statewide youth season is Oct. 3 through Oct. 7, and the resident-only season on public land runs Oct. 10 through Oct. 12.

The detailed 2009 Pheasant Brood Survey Report, complete with a look at pheasant counts in the different local areas around the state, can be found on the GFP Web site at: www.sdgfp.info/Wildlife/Hunting/Pheasant/Outlook.htm.
The SDWF’s 64th Annual Convention was held August 15-16 in Watertown. Dakota Sportsmen, Inc. hosted the annual event.

Saturday morning the convention was brought to order by the President, Rieck Eske of Warner. After the seating of the delegates, the group focused on SDWF business. Guest speakers included GF&P Wildlife Secretary Jeff Vonk. Sec. Vonk expressed the Department’s appreciation of help and support that the SDWF provides them both during the year and especially during the legislative session.

Saturday evening was the Annual Fundraising Auction, which consisted of many treasures to bid on. Conservation Award winners were also honored. Annual Conservation Awards are given to people that are nominated by federation members or affiliates, and then selected by a committee. SDWF honored eight very deserving conservationists this year.

“South Dakota Conservationist of the Year” was awarded to Ev Hoyt of Rapid City. Ev is a South Dakota native who grew up hunting and fishing in eastern South Dakota, but has lived in the Black Hills area for the past twenty years. Ev retired in 2004 as Director and President of Black Hills Corporation and Black Hills Power. Ev served as President of the Black Hills Sportsmen Club for two years and currently serves on the board of directors. While serving as President, he inaugurated Landowner Appreciation Dinners which were hosted and funded by the Club to recognize landowners who participate in the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Walk-In-Area programs. Dinners have been held in Buffalo, Hot Springs, Martin, Wall and Faith, South Dakota. Ev was instrumental in setting up the dinners, including sending invitations and thank you letters to over 500 participating landowners.

Harold Goeden of Sioux Falls was honored as “South Dakota Wildlife Conservationist of the Year” for the habitat work that he has placed on his three farms in South Dakota and his farm in Minnesota. Harold believes that in order to preserve the tradition of enjoying the outdoors and nurturing future generations, he needs to be actively involved in the area of conservation and mentoring the youth.

Kevin Woster of Rapid City was honored as “South Dakota Communicator Conservationist of the Year.” Kevin currently reports for the Rapid City Journal. Kevin is not only a talented writer who brings life and personality to any outdoor news story, he is an avid sportsman himself. As a sportsman, he understands the ethics of the hunt, the pure enjoyment of a day in the field or on the stream or lake, and has a deep respect for wildlife, which he conveys so passionately and persuasively in his articles.

(Above) Ev Hoyt (L) accepting his Conservationist of the year award from SDWF and Black Hills Sportsmen Board member Ken Schroeder and SDWF’s President Rieck Eske (R ).

(On right) Senator Dave Knudson (C ) is accepting his Conservation Legislator of the year award from 29-90 Sportsmen’s Club member and SDWF Past President Charlie Rokusek and Rieck Eske.

(On left) SDWF’s Conservation Awards were purchased from and assembled by Academy Engraving, Wooden Mallet Custom, Hitch N Post all businesses in the Aberdeen area. Thank you for your great work and dedication to Conservation.
SDWF’s President Rieck Eske of Warner was honored as the “Youth Conservationist of the Year.” Unlike so many that can barely see past the end of their rifle barrel, Rieck has visions of the future for all of our children and grandchildren. His goal is very simply to make sure there are wild places for the kids to go, and wildlife that they can view and hunt. Rieck is a dedicated volunteer for many conservation organizations, including the Sportsman’s Club of Brown County. Among his many accomplishments include helping start the Annual Aberdeen Area NRA Youth Sportsfest Camp five years ago, and a youth .22 league this year.

Phil and Brenda Mitzel, who live on Lake Richmond north of Aberdeen, were honored as “Water Conservationists of the Year.” Phil and Brenda enjoy the fishing that they have off of their dock, but they had a vision to improve the fishing for everyone who enjoys and uses the lake for recreation. The Mitzels, along with other individuals and organizations they helped organize, are installing 400 fabricated fish “condos” made of PVC pipe and poly fencing, plus 400 lick-tub clusters, and 200 Christmas tree brush piles. In the very near future, thousands of people that the Mitzels will never know or meet will benefit from their labors. Countless kids will catch their first perch or bluegill and countless parents and grandparents will be able to experience the joy and smile of their kids and grandkids when they land their first fish.

Bob Thompson of Rapid City was honored as “Forest Conservationist of the Year.” Bob is a Mystic area ranger for the National Forest Service. Even though Bob’s job as a ranger includes many of his duties that he was honored for, Bob has shown that he is an exceptional employee who works in a collaborative fashion with other agencies and individuals. He acknowledges the public’s desire for superior wildlife and fisheries habitat management on public lands, and strives to always provide that management for everyone who uses the national forest.

Jim and Angie Sokup of Sioux Falls were honored as “Soil Conservationist of the Year.” Jim and Angie have donated about 80 acres of land to the city of Sioux Falls for an urban family fishing spot. The land is delicate, but the donation and continued protection of the land and fishing pond will reduce soil erosion and improve water quality in the area. The pond will be stocked annually, and fishing piers and playground equipment will be installed so the entire family will be able to enjoy this urban fishing pond.

Senator Dave Knudson of Sioux Falls was honored as “Conservationist Legislator of the year.” Over the many years he has served the people of Sioux Falls in the South Dakota legislature, Sen. Knudson has always demonstrated a strong belief in conservation, public hunting and public access. He is an unwavering supporter of sportsmen’s issues and our 2nd Amendment rights.

Sunday morning, after the delegates were seated, SDWF continued their business portion of the convention by approving the yearly budget and electing officers and board members for the next year.

The Marshall County Sportsmen Club of Britton will host the SDWF 65th Annual Convention in August next year at their clubhouse south of Britton.
South Dakota Wildlife Federation Donors

At the recent Winter Board Meeting the SDWF Board created the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. The Council was created to allow recognition of the individuals who support SDWF above and beyond their membership and raffle donations.

Thank you to the following donors for their contributions to the SDWF. Please consider becoming a member of the Wildlife Legacy Council. SDWF is a 501(c)3 non-profit, all donations are tax deductible.

Contributors

**Level I Pheasant** - $50-$99

- Bill Andersons, SD
- Phil Enz, SD
- Bill Billingsley, SD
- Ted Amundson, SD
- AE Bailey, MN
- Ken Batteau, KY
- Robert Batth, WI
- Bob Bob, WI
- Harry Bell, MS
- John Blackburn, IL
- Bennie Boettel, CA
- Dan Blackwell, SD
- Michael Bonnetz, IA
- Pat Bumble, CA
- Richard Brick, CA
- Allen Brown, SD
- Bill Brown, CA
- John Chickering, MI
- Donald Burton, CO
- Howard Burns, SD
- Jim Burma Sr., SD
- William Buckner II, AR
- Jeff Brown, MN
- Allen Brown, SD
- Richard Brick, CA
- Pat Bowar, SD
- Bennie Boetel, SD
- Harry Bell, MS
- Loren Becker, MN
- Robert Bathrick, MN
- AE Bailey, MN
- Stephen Akkerman, MN
- Ken Greenwood, OK
- Eric Johnson, MN
- Thomas Flesher III, OK
- Dave Eisenbeisz, CO
- 29-90 Sportsmen’s Club, SD
- Larry Eisenbeisz, MN
- Kenton Eisenbeisz, SD
- Dennis Eckert, SD
- Brian Dressing, SD
- Larry Denison, VA
- Dennis Darrington, SD
- Jim Dahlberg, SD
- Mike Cummings, SD
- Mike Cameron, SD
- Larry Clevenger, NE
- Bob Drake, SD
- John Christopherson, SC
- Scott Engblom, MO
- Ed Golding, SD
- Phil Edler, MN

**Level II Deer** $100-$249

- Mel Adams, TN
- Mike Anderson, PA
- Richard Andersons, SD
- Robert Beaksa, WY
- Kevin Beattie, CO
- Steve Block, CA
- Bill Blackwell, SD
- Richard Brick, CA
- David Blackwell, SD
- John Burrums, NV
- Larry Burress, ND
- David Casler, CO
- Stuart Cameron, SD
- Craig Connell, ND
- John Cooper, SD
- Gary Coward, CO
- Mike Cummings, SD
- Jon Cullen, MN
- Denis Darrington, VA
- John Dennis, NV
- John Donovan, SD
- Brian Dressing, SD
- Mark Dupe, CO
- Dennis Eckert, SD
- Kenton Eisenbeisz, SD
- Larry Clevenger, NE
- Robert Elbe, WI

**Level III Elk** $250-$499

- 29-90 Sportman’s Club, SD
- Dave Blackwell, SD
- Thomas Flasher III, OK
- Kenneth Halstrom, SD
- Eric John, WI
- Virginia John, WI

**Level IV Buffalo** $500-$999

- Black Hills Sportman’s Club
- Ken Greenwood, OK

**Lover’s Eagle** - $1000 and above

- Andrew Watson, PA
- Beadle Co., SD
- Sportsman’s Club

**Unfortunately**

- Richard Dillon, MN
- High Plains Wildlife, SD
- Kenneth Michael, WA
- Steven Roberts, MN

**Republic National**

- Distributing Company, SD
- Chapter of NWTF, SD

**Out Of Doors** • August 2009

**It is not often that wildlife advocates and hunters agree on hunting issues, but there is widespread agreement on shooting captive animals that have no means to escape.**

By: Joe Miele, Las Cruces, N.M.

Thorough thought people believe that killing animals within a fenced enclosure is an abominable practice. The Boone and Crockett Club publicly condemns the “pursuit and killing of any big game animal kept in or released from captivity to be killed in an artificial or bogus ‘hunting’ situation.” Orion the Hunter’s Institute decrees cannot be kept as a pet, as an extension of the “ethical hunt.” There are many activities that are clearly unfair as well as unethical. At the top of the list is shooting captive or domesticated big game animals in commercial killing areas.”

There is no conservation value in slaughtering confined animals who have been brought in for the purpose of killing them for fun and profit, and no claim can be made that the hunts are “necessary” to prevent overpopulation, starvation or the spread of disease. Likewise, there is no element of “the fair chase” that hunters believe requires a requirement for an ethical hunt.

The barbarity of canning hunting has no place in modern society, and we wish North Dakota Hunters for Fair Chase success in their campaign to allow the people to decide the issue in a democratic way.
Teaming With Wildlife Act Has South Dakota In Mind

PIERRE, S.D. - Thanks to the state’s Congressional representation, South Dakota’s wildlife and natural habitat could have a banner year.

The Teaming with Wildlife Act, introduced by U.S. Sen. Tim Johnson and co-sponsored by U.S. Sen. John Thune, would provide $350 million annually over five years to help states carry out their Wildlife Action Plans. The comprehensive plans are the primary conservation tools adopted in every state and U.S. territory to keep fish and wildlife healthy and off the list of threatened and endangered species.

South Dakota would be eligible to receive $3.4 million each year from the Act for five years.

Sen. Johnson was honored by the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition and the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies for championing federal funding for state-based wildlife conservation as part of the Teaming with Wildlife Act, which was introduced in March 2009. The award recognizes the senator’s leadership in supporting legislation to establish a first-of-its-kind funding program to help state fish and wildlife agencies advance their State Wildlife Action Plans into on-the-ground action to prevent at-risk wildlife from becoming endangered nationwide.

“I am honored to receive this award from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies,” Johnson said. “South Dakota has a deep history of appreciation for the outdoors, and that’s why I introduced important legislation that will help preserve our wildlife.”

“We are fortunate to have a very supportive congressional representation when it comes to healthy wildlife and suitable habitat,” said GFP Wildlife Diversity Coordinator Eileen Dowd Stukel. “We are the only state to have both of our senators signed onto the Act. Working with the cooperation of Governor Mike Rounds, and Senators Johnson and Thune, our staff is very pleased with the Teaming with Wildlife Act and the benefits it will provide South Dakota’s wildlife.”

Stukel noted that South Dakota’s Teaming with Wildlife coalition includes 179 groups and businesses, representing several hundred thousand South Dakotans. There is no charge to join the coalition. Members simply go on record in support of the need to ensure responsible management of wildlife and natural habitat in South Dakota and the nation.

People may join by visiting South Dakota’s Teaming with Wildlife Web site at: http://www.sdgfp.info/Wildlife/Diversity/teaming.htm

To lean more about Teaming with Wildlife and State Wildlife Action Plans, visit www.teaming.com and www.wildlifeactionplans.org

Gifford Pinchot, in The Fight for Conservation, 1910

“The American people have evidently made up their minds that our natural resources must be conserved. That is good. But it settles only half the question. For whose benefit shall they be conserved? For the benefit of the many, or for the use and profit of the few? The great conflict now being fought will decide. There is no other question before us that begins to be so important, or that will be so difficult to straddle, as the great question between special interest and equal opportunity, between the privileges of the few and the rights of the many, between government by men for human welfare and government by money for profit, between the men who stand for the Roosevelt policies and the men who stand against them. This is the heart of the conservation problem today.”

Men can never escape being governed. Either they must govern themselves or they must submit to being governed by others.

Theodore Roosevelt, Jamestown, VA, April 26, 1907

South Dakota would be eligible to receive $3.4 million each year from the Act for five years.
PIERRE, S.D. - Over one million acres of private land leased for public opportunity awaits hunters as they take the field this autumn, and the Game, Fish and Parks Department wants to know how well the land is serving the public.

The Walk-in Area program was started in 1987 as a way to pay private landowners to allow additional public hunting opportunity on their land.

Payments to landowners are based both on acreage and on the quality of habitat. There are 1.3 million acres enrolled and GFP has budgeted $2.15 million for the 2009 Walk-in Area program.

“This is the first year of what will probably become a three-year evaluation. We want to get a good grasp on how many people are using Walk-in Areas, what areas they are using, and what they are using them for,” GFP Secretary Jeff Vonk said.

GFP will be focusing particular attention on the northwestern part of the state with a more in-depth evaluation of the Walk-in Areas there.

GFP staff will record use of select walk-in areas and leave a survey card on cars parked there, or when possible will conduct interviews of hunters returning to their vehicles after using an area.

Information will also be gathered from six additional parts of the state, although personal interviews will not be conducted in these areas. “We will be leaving a survey card on vehicles,” Vonk said. “It is very important in our refinement and improvement of this program that hunters complete our questionnaire and return it as promptly as possible.”

Individuals who are surveyed as part of the process will be asked questions concerning what they were hunting, how often they hunt Walk-in Areas, and how they assessed their experience on this particular Walk-in Area.

"When the Earth is sick, the animals will begin to disappear."

Chief Seattle (1786-1866)

"You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of your grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons of the earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves."

Chief Seattle (1786-1866)