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NOVEMBER
2014

South Dakota
Wildlife
Federation

www.sdwf.org

OUT OF DOORS

Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation

VOLUME 52, NUMBER 12

Our 2014 drawing winners for the 2014 drawings;

The 2014 Buffalo Shoot is; Larry Vellek, South Dakota.

Winner of the 2014 Pheasant Hunt; Theresa Kiddoo, Ia.

Congrats to the winners and THANK YOU for all of you who purchased your chances and financially support SDWF.

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Pheasant ecology part 3: September and October

In part 2 of this 6 part series, we examined the details of pheasant ecology during July and August. Reproductive responsibilities for roosters are nearly complete by early July. By late July, they have replaced all of their feathers and even managed to gain weight for the first time in 5 months. This trend continues into August as these are easy times for South Dakota roosters. Conversely, we saw hens reach their worst body condition of the year in August. Egg laying, incubating, and brood rearing responsibilities have been extremely energy demanding and decreased



the amount of time she could spend foraging. These energy demanding activities also caused her to delay her molt until July when more energy could be allocated to growing new feathers. Chicks have seen their own challenges as predation and farm equipment have taken their toll. Those that have survived to late August have been targeting protein rich insects for food to grow tissue and feathers. In August, chicks begin replacing their Juvenile feathers with adult feathers which carry on their demand for protein rich insects.

By September and October, the heat of summer has faded along with the struggles that went with it for pheasants. Temperatures have moderated and are well within a pheasant's thermo neutral zone. In other words, pheasants do not need to use more energy to stay warm or keep cool when the air temperature is between 40° and 104° F. Along with the comfortable temperatures and long days of early autumn, abundant food is available through waste grains, weed seeds, and insects. This is good news for pheasants, especially hens which are in their worst body condition of the year coming into September and may weigh 25% less than they did last April.

Although abundant food resources become available during early fall, diet still varies considerably between cocks, hens, and chicks. Before we discuss why this variation in diet occurs, let us consider the differences in nutritional content of the available food resources.

Corn and wheat are the primary waste grains available to pheasants during fall. One could assume these two waste grains would be equally nutritious to pheasants, but that is not the case. Corn contains 23% more metabolizable energy than wheat, but wheat contains 60% more protein than corn. Most weed seeds are highly nutritious with protein levels similar or higher than wheat and metabolizable energy similar to corn. Foxtail grass, an abundant annual grass which frequents farm fields and disturbed areas is highly nutritious, abundant, and highly utilized by pheasants in autumn. Sunflowers, millet, and milo are also locally important food sources. Soybeans, although abundant and high in energy and protein, contain digestive inhibitors which render them nearly worthless as food for birds. Research has revealed that birds lose weight and become malnourished when fed soybeans. Protein rich insects remain available through early fall until the first hard frost.

The completion of wheat harvest in August coincides nicely with the period when hen pheasants need protein and energy

to recover from the demanding tasks of motherhood. Remember, hens are in their worst condition of the year in early September and still have to molt and regrow their feathers. Fortunately, chicks start leaving the hen at 10 weeks of age so by September most broods are on their own. After nesting and brood rearing responsibilities have caused hen pheasant weight to decline by 25%, September provides prime conditions to make up these losses

before winter. Hens now have time to concentrate solely on feeding for the first time in five months.

Since wheat and weed seeds are abundant and a good source of protein and energy, hen pheasants target these food sources in September and October. Insects provide the highest protein content and are targeted as well. By mid-October the amount of wheat available to pheasants has declined due to tillage or germination. Wheat seeds also deteriorate quickly when wet. Fortunately, hens finish their molt in October so her protein demand will decrease at the same time as wheat and insect resources decline. As corn harvest gets underway in October, the hen will consume mostly corn and weed seeds by late October. Corn provides more energy than the hen needs in October so she will gain modest weight for the first time in six months.

Pheasant chicks are experiencing life on their own for the first time in September. Although they still weigh less than their adult counterparts, chicks will consume just as much food as adults. Pheasant chicks still need a diet rich in protein to continue their molt and grow to adult size. Chicks will consume 2-3 times more insects and weed seeds and less waste grains than adults to meet their protein demand. By October, most chicks have reached adult size, but they are consuming more food than adults as the final stages of their molt require additional energy and protein. You may notice that hunter harvested birds in October are in various stages of molting. Late hatched roosters are even hard to distinguish from hens. The age (in weeks) of hatch-year roosters in the bag can be aged by the length of their outer three flight feathers.

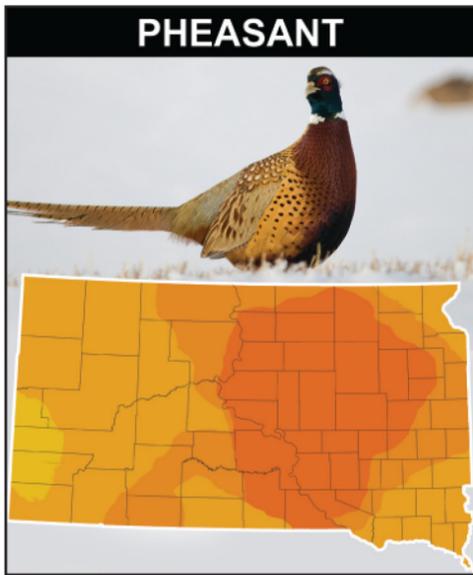
Adult roosters have had it easy since they finished their molt in July and this continues in September and October. Remember, they were able to molt earlier because they did not have any energy draining motherhood responsibilities like the hens. Roosters began bulking up for winter in July, and their weight increase continues into early fall. Insects represent a smaller portion of an adult roosters' diet than hens or chicks. Roosters only need protein for body maintenance and this can easily be supplied through weed seeds, wheat and corn. The rooster's diet mirrors what is available, but corn is preferred when corn and wheat are both available. Roosters continue to store fat reserves as winter is right around the corner.

BARCODED FLATS

Farmers- need a tax deduction this year? Consider donating some grain or land to the SDWF.

You will get a tax break and your support of the SDWF will help protect the land and wildlife you love.

2014 Pheasant Brood Survey released



Legend Species Occurance

- Rare
- Few to Locally Fair
- Fair to Locally Good
- Primary Range

the state, we are going to see an increase in this year's pheasant population," stated Jeff Vonk, GFP Secretary. "Survey results show pheasant numbers rebounded the strongest in central South Dakota; especially in the Pierre, Chamberlain, Mobridge and Winner areas. Results also indicate that pheasant numbers are substantially higher than 2013 throughout much of eastern South Dakota." The 2014 statewide pheasants-per-mile index of 2.68 is up from 1.52 in 2013. The statewide pheasant-per-mile index is similar to 2002 when hunters harvested 1.26 million roosters. "Habitat is at the forefront of the conversation right now and is a crucial factor in pheasant numbers," stated Vonk.

"Bird numbers are higher this year due to excellent reproduction in

2014 Pheasant brood survey indicates higher pheasant numbers PIERRE, S.D. -- The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has completed the annual pheasant brood survey and the results show a 76 percent increase in the statewide pheasants-per-mile index from 2013.

From late July through mid-August, GFP surveyed 109, 30 mile-routes across the state to estimate pheasant production and calculate the pheasants-per-mile index. The survey is not a population estimate, but rather compares the number of pheasants observed on the routes and establishes trend information. Survey routes are grouped into 13 areas, based on a local city, and the index value of each local city area is then compared to index values of the previous year and the 10-year average.

"With favorable weather conditions this past winter and spring, along with the availability of quality nesting habitat across

parts of the state where quality habitat conditions still exist, primarily on grasslands including those enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program as well as fields of cereal crops such as winter wheat. We continue to work in cooperation with the Governor's Pheasant Habitat Workgroup, partner organizations and agencies, and landowners to provide an improved future for habitat in our state." Public hunting opportunities are abundant in South Dakota. Over 1 million acres of publicly owned and private land leased through GFP's Walk-In Area Program and the James River Watershed Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is available in the primary pheasant range of South Dakota. The 2014 public hunting atlas and a web-based interactive map of public lands and private lands leased for public hunting can be found online at <http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/areas>.

"The results of this survey are highly anticipated by many who have a strong interest in South Dakota's hunting heritage. The availability of pheasants and pheasant hunting opportunities in our state this fall should serve to enhance that heritage," concluded Vonk. South Dakota's traditional statewide pheasant hunting season opens on Saturday, Oct. 18, and runs through Jan. 4, 2015.

- See more at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/news/news/august/26.aspx#sthash.OsmW32RP.dpuf>



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President's Column *by Rich Widman*



President,
Rich Widman

As I write this, I'm just back from helping the Brookings and SDSU Pheasants Forever groups with their youth opener hunt. It's a hunt they've been doing for several years now, and I had such a great time that I definitely plan to help in the future.

Although I wish the kids could have had the chance to shoot nothing but wild birds, that's just not possible anymore, so the groups purchased the birds and planted them to allow these beginners to experience the thrill of the hunt. I call them "beginners," but it's sad to say that a couple of these young boys and girls shoot better than some of the middle-aged guys I hunt with! My group of teenagers got their limit, something that hasn't always happened over the last few years, even for veteran hunters.

Now, what I loved the most about this hunt was the fact that the landowners, Tim and Kalyn Gutormson, have created their own little hunting paradise and are willing to share it so these kids can have a memorable hunt. I've said it before and I'll say it again: we have landowner members, whether they are farmers, ranchers or sportsmen, who have their own little pieces of heaven and don't have to worry about the rest of us. But they do. They give money, time and resources because they want to make sure each and every one of us, and our children and grandchildren, get to experience the outdoor traditions SDWF fights for every year.

You've all read in my past columns how I've taken after those landowners who take a short-term view of our resources, creating problems for both sportsmen and future farmers and ranchers. I've also praised the many landowners who take the long view, doing all the right things, conserving our resources and leaving the land better than when they got it (i.e., the "True Environmentalists"). Their actions benefit all creatures, including our families. Their conservation activities support our wildlife, and we sincerely appreciate all their efforts.

Why is all this so important, you might ask. Well, a healthy ecosystem is the basis of all life, including not only crops and livestock, but also wildlife and humankind. I would guess that most SDWF members grew up as I did, with fairly abundant habitat and game, and many opportunities to enjoy it. For many reasons, those opportunities are becoming more and more limited, which means fewer young people have the chance to develop a strong relationship with the outdoors. Recent studies show a continuing decline in the number of young people who are interested in hunting, partly because of a lack of places to hunt and people to hunt with. We can turn this trend around by conserving habitat, working with landowners, and volunteering our time to mentor young hunters.

These actions offer great rewards for us, and even greater rewards for the youngsters. I recently had the chance to reflect on my first pheasant, and it reminded me how important my early outdoor experiences were. I started walking with the adults at age 6, with strict instructions to stay close to my dad and out of danger. Only when the shooting was done and he gave the signal was I allowed to run out and retrieve the birds. This was a great time of training, and I learned a lot about hunting techniques and safety before I ever carried a gun.

At age 9, my dad allowed me to use my Uncle Bob's old single-shot .410 farm gun and hunt for the first time. I was nervous and excited at the same time. I walked an entire cornfield with the men, seeing plenty of birds but feeling too nervous to fire a single shot. As we came to the edge of the field, pheasants exploded out of the cover in all directions, and I finally pulled up and tried to pick one rooster out of the hundreds in flight. I pulled the trigger, the hammer fell, the gun blasted, and a rooster dropped. To this day, I don't know if I really hit it, but the men all hollered, "You got your first bird!" and I was proud to claim it.

Those early years of hunting were very important for me. I learned that to be "one of the guys," I had to earn the privilege by showing that I knew the rules and could follow them. I gained a greater appreciation for the outdoors by spending time walking the fields, observing the birds and breathing the fresh air. And I began to feel responsible for keeping the land, water and air healthy for everybody to enjoy.

How will kids today develop their love of nature and their sense of stewardship toward the environment? How will they learn about gun safety and responsible land use? They won't, unless we take the time to teach them. This means taking them hunting and fishing, demonstrating how a responsible sportsman/woman behaves and providing access to healthy land and water where they can experience the outdoor activities that mean so much to all of us.

Update:

SDWF sent letters about 2 month ago to Governor Dugaard and Attorney General Jackley asking them to step in to stop and overturn the many illegal closings of township roads now going on. These Townships' actions are preventing access to public land and water for hunters and fishermen. GF&P, who manages the public's land in these areas, is also reminding these townships that they can't close roads and section lines. We haven't heard back from the Governor or Attorney General, but will keep you informed.

Lastly, enjoy this hunting season and be safe and responsible. Don't litter and do respect landowners and other hunters. Be a true Sportsman/woman!

Executive Director's Update *by Chris Hesla*



Executive Director
Chris Hesla

Elections are right around the corner. Because the SDWF is a 501c3 non-profit organization, neither the organization nor the Executive Director can endorse any political candidate-but we can educate and inform. I urge every one of you to research your candidates and choose those that best support your views and beliefs. Ask the candidates their positions about hunting and fishing whenever they ask for your vote, and again educate and inform. After the elections, continue to work with your elected officials and keep them informed of the importance of your issues.

The SDWF Camo-Coalition has set Monday, February 9th as its Annual Camo-Day at the legislature. PLEASE take a day out of your life, come to Pierre, and help protect your hunting and fishing heritage in our State legislature.

SDWF is again sending out 21-Gun Giveaway tickets along with chances to shoot a buffalo in Custer State Park in 2015. Please, when you get these tickets in the mail, consider purchasing some. Fundraisers such as these raffles are largely responsible for the financial survival of SDWF. I thank you in advance for your continued support. We can and do make a difference!

My opening pheasant weekend is spent in Potter County on land owned by a very good friend. That weekend has grown into a tradition that I look forward to more and more each year. The landowner's son and usually at least two of his friends make their annual trip from Texas, along with about 15 others from across South Dakota. We spend Friday getting the farm ready, putting away equipment for the winter, throw in a little target practice, and maybe sight in a deer rifle or two for the upcoming deer season. Early Friday evening we have a very special

meal where everyone coming for the weekend brings their specialty to share. Friday night is spent in the Legion of Gettysburg, donating money to their fundraising efforts to support youth baseball. It's about my 16th year going to Gettysburg and I see the same friends year after year in the shared tradition of the South Dakota Pheasant Opener. It should be a holiday!

SDWF and SDWF Camo-Coalition have hired an attorney from Sioux Falls to advise us. At the forefront is protection of access to water over private land. After the recent lawsuit by some landowners against the state to close water to fishing and hunting, the SDWF Camo-Coalition will do everything we can to protect our access to water for generations to come. We again took the step and hired legal counsel.

Thank you for all that you do. We can and do make a difference!

South Dakota Wildlife Award Winners

John Pollmann - Communicator of the Year Award



Pictured left to right are Scott Hed, SDWF and Camo Coalition Board of Directors, John Pollmann, and Mark Widman, Vice President of SDWF.

John Pollmann of Dell Rapids is the 2014 recipient of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation's Communicator of the Year Award. Pollmann's writing on the pure enjoyment of hunting has inspired experienced and new hunters alike. However, Pollmann also tackles the major conservation issues facing the Upper Midwest. His articles on wetland loss, native prairie conversion and farm bill policy have helped raise awareness among the conservation community and policy makers. Pollmann has been a true champion and voice for sportsmen on these issues.

Dennis and Margaret Skoog - Youth Conservation Award



Pictured left to right are SDWF Vice-President Mark Widman, Assistant Camp Director Dan Opp, Dennis and Margaret Skoog, and Camp Director Mike McKernan.

The South Dakota Wildlife Federation recently presented the 2014 Youth Conservation Award to Dennis & Margaret Skoog of rural Milbank, SD. Dennis has been a long time SDWF member, board member and officer of the South Dakota Wildlife Federation. He and Margaret have worked for nearly two decades at the SDWF Youth Conservation Camp, mentoring the young people of South Dakota. Dennis and Margaret have donated their time, talent and sponsored campers at their own expense. Margaret has also served as the camp nurse during this time.

"...In those days, we had never heard of passing up a chance to kill a wolf. In a second we were pumping lead into the pack, but with more excitement than accuracy... When our rifles were empty, the old wolf was down, and a pup was dragging a leg into impassible side rocks. We reached the old wolf in time to watch a fierce green fire dying in her eyes. I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes-something known only to her and to the mountain. I was young then, and full of trigger-itch; I thought that because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunter's paradise. But after seeing the green fire die, I sensed that neither the wolf nor the mountain agreed with such a view... From A Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold

South Dakota Wildlife Award Winners

Continued from page 4....

Dr. David Willis - Educator of the Year Award



Pictured left to right are Mark Widman, SDWF Vice President, Willis's sons Jamie Kerr and Matt Willis, and retired conservation officer Spencer Vaa.

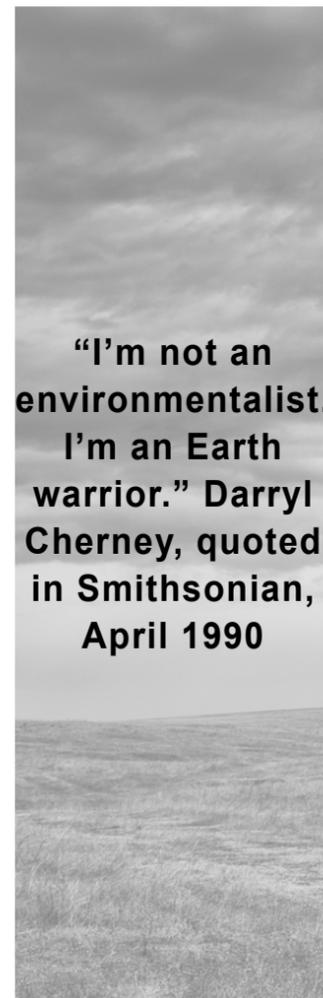
Dr. David Willis was honored posthumously by the South Dakota Wildlife Federation with the 2014 Educator of the Year award for his long-time teaching and research excellence in fish and wildlife education. Dave's greatest pride was with his students at South Dakota State University, aptly called "Willis Nation". Hundreds of undergraduate and graduate students under Dave's tutelage are now making important contributions to fish and wildlife conservation in South Dakota and throughout the United States. Dave passed away on January 13, 2014 and was a Distinguished Professor and Head of the Department of Natural Resource Management at SDSU.

Lori Goldade - Conservationist of the Year Award



Pictured left to right are Mark Widman, Vice President of the SDWF, Lori Goldade, and Bill Bowen, Vice President of the Sportsmen's Club of Brown County, an affiliate of the

Lori Goldade is the recipient of the 2014 South Dakota Wildlife Federation Conservationist of the Year Award. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the Federation. Goldade, of Aberdeen, SD, received the award due to her many years of dedicated service to the sportsmen and other citizens of the state. She not only belongs to many clubs and organizations, but is instrumental in keeping them successful and effective.



"I'm not an environmentalist. I'm an Earth warrior." Darryl Cherney, quoted in Smithsonian, April 1990

SD Wildlife Federation Donors

At the 2003 Winter Board Meeting, the SDWF Board created the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. The Council was created to allow recognition of the people 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(c3) non-profit, all donations are tax deductible. These tax-deductible contributions will speak volumes for the future of the SDWF's Wildlife Legacy Council! Please consider your donation today. Donations can be sent to SDWF, PO Box 7075, Pierre, SD 57501.

The Legacy Council consists of five different donation levels. These donation levels were revised October 2011 to: Level V Eagle \$1,000 & above; Level IV Buffalo \$501 - \$999; Level III Elk \$301 - \$500; Level II Deer \$201 - \$300; and Level I Pheasant \$100 - \$200.

December 2012

LEVEL IV BUFFALO OLSON, JEFF - SD SCALET, CHUCK & GINGER - SD	LEVEL II DEER GILBERT, JIM - CA LEVEL I PHEASANT BLACKBURN, JOHN - SD	DRAKE, ROBERT - SD FORMAN, KURT - SD FOXWORTHY, ROBERT - KY FRYBARGER, JIM - NM FUERST, KEVIN - SD HEEDUM, ROGER - NE HEPPER, GREGORY - SD JOHNSON, LYNN E. - SD	KALLEMEYN, LARRY - SD KING, T. CLEVE - MI KRODINGER, LAWRENCE - MO MILLER, O. LARRY - SD MILLER, RICHARD - SD MUNDON, KENT - SD PARCEL, KERRY - SD PETERS, DUANE - SD	PICEK, LARRY - SD PORISCH, ROBERT - MN RILEY, MIKE - MO SATTTLER, ARNOLD - SD STANFORTH, WINFIELD - CO
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November 2012

LEVEL III ELK BARRETT, DENNES - SD TOSCANA, VIC - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT COOPER, JOHN - SD GREENWOOD, KEN - OK MADDOX, ALEX - TN	MCMASTERS, LEIGH - SD OLSON, MURDEAN - SD PAUL, K-LYNN, AZ SORNA, MICHAEL - TX	WALKER, JIM - ID WISWALL, F. HERBERT - SD ZOELLNER, KENNETH - CA
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October 2012

There were no legacy donors this month.

September 2012

LEVEL II DEER HALLSTROM, KEN - SD STAMMER, MARLIN - CA	LEVEL I PHEASANT BUCKNER, EVERETT - AR BUCKNER II, WILLIAM - AR	GREGORY, J.T. - GA KERN, LARRY - MN SCHMID, JOHN - CO
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August 2012

LEVEL V EAGLE CHAPMAN, JOHN W. - PA LEVEL II DEER LEMONDS, JIM - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT ADAMS, MEL - TN AYLER, JOHN - KS CASLER, DAVID - MO CHRISTOPHERSON, M.E. - SC	DILLON, JOHN - UT JOHNSON, DARRELL - SD MESSERSCHMIDT, LOYAL - SD OCHOCKI, ROBERT - CA RAINEY, TIMOTHY - MN	SCHERSCHLIGHT, JEFFRY - SD VAA, SPENCER - SD WILDMAN, DENNY - OH
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July 2012

LEVEL IV BUFFALO WORDEN, JAMES - CA LEVEL III ELK CARLSON, HENRY - SD STEINBERG, ROGER - MN LEVEL II DEER BERRY, CHUCK - SD POPOWSKI, JOHN - SD	LEVEL I PHEASANT ANDERSON, EDDIE - TN BEALKA, ROBERT - WI BRAKEBUSH, CARL - WI DENNIS, JACK - NV GEBHART, RONALD - AK GRIFFIN, JOHN - OK HEFFRON, GEORGE H. - CO HUBER, DANIEL - SC	JONES, DONALD - CO LUTZ, BOB - MT MCGUIRE, ARVID - WI PAXTON, GARY - OK RITER, JR., ROBERT - SD SAMPSON, TERRY - SD SCHEURENBRAND, BRUCE - CA SCHLUTER, BOB - MN SEELEY, GARY - KS	SIMON, DARREL - SD SWORDS, L.F. - MS WARE, WILLIAM - MS WELCH, HARVEY - IL WHEELER, STEPHEN J. - SD WORSHAM, JERRY - WA
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June 2012

There were no legacy donors this month.

May 2012

LEVEL V EAGLE Nat'l Wild Turkey Federation - SD LEVEL IV BUFFALO LEE, KARL O. - SD LEVEL II DEER FENSTRA, HARRY - MN	JOHNSON, ERIC - MN STADTFELD, CRAIG - SD LEVEL I PHEASANT BAKER, FRED - OH FLINT, FORREST - MN HANSEN, VIRGIL - SD	KEELER, CHARLES - MN KOUTSKY, JOHN - IL LINDNER, RONALD - SD LIPPINCOTT, ROB - TX MATSUKAGE, FAY - CO SCHUPP, TERRY - AZ	TESCH, CURT - SD WALKER, GALE - SD WINTER BROS UNDERGROUND - SD ZOELLNER, KENNETH - CA
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April 2012

LEVEL IV BUFFALO THE SPORTSMAN'S CLUB OF BROWN CO. - SD	LEVEL II DEER O'REILLY, LARRY - MO LEVEL I PHEASANT CONNELL, CRAIG - SD	ECKERT, DENIS - SD HIX, DOUGLAS - ID KIEFT, LARRY - MI MAYES, TERRY & LA REE - SD	PAHL, CHARLES - SD
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March 2012

LEVEL V EAGLE BEADLE CO. SPORTSMEN - SD BLACK HILLS SPORTSMEN - SD DAKOTA SPORTSMEN, INC. - SD HIGH PLAINS WILDLIFE FEDERATION - SD LEVEL III ELK BROOKINGS WILDLIFE FEDERATION - SD HAATVEDT, CY - SD HECLA SPORTSMAN CLUB - SD	SD WALLEYE UNLIMITED - SD LEVEL II DEER 29-90 SPORTSMAN'S CLUB - SD BIG SIOUX CHAPTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUND. - SD DIETER, CHARLES - SD PEDERSON, TIM - SD PHEASANTS FOREVER YANKTON CHAPTER - SD LEVEL I PHEASANT AKKERMAN, STEPHEN - MN	BAGAU, TERRY - MN BROWN, ALLEN B. - SD CHALUS, DENNIS - CO CRISSMAN, EARLE - SD DAHLBERG, JIM - SD DENISON, LARRY - VA ELBE, ROBERT - WI EVANS, RALPH - FL GOEDE, DAN - SD GRASS LAKES CONSERVATION CLUB - SD HOFTIEZER, GREG - SD	JACKSON, WARREN - SD JUNGERS, ROMAN - WI KRETCHMAN, JIM - SD MADLAND, JON - SD NORDBY, DAVID O. - CA SATHER, DUANE - SD TOBIN, THOMAS - SD WHETSTONE SPORTSMAN CONSERVATION CLUB - SD WICKSTROM, GERALD - SD
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February 2012

LEVEL III ELK STAMMER, MARLIN - CA	LEVEL I PHEASANT ANDRESEN, RICH - SD BORMANN, DANIEL - WI	DIVICH, DUANE - TX NEISSL, E.J. - AR RUMPCA, HAL - SD	SIMPSON, JOHN - SD WIDMAN, MARK - SD
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January 2012

LEVEL V EAGLE OLSON, JEFF - SD LEVEL III ELK MCCARTHY, STEVE - SD	LEVEL II DEER BRICK, RICHARD - CA MARTIN, JIM - SD MCCLELLAN, JR., DR. HERBERT - SD	SCHROEDER, JR., KENNETH - SD LEVEL I PHEASANT GOODMAN, RICHARD - OH KASISCHKE, CARL - MI	LEWIS, HOWARD - CA MCCARLSON, PAUL - SD PESEK, RON - SD WIDMAN, RICH - SD
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"JUST ONE"

New Member Program

The SDWF has approximately 3,000 members. We are constantly fighting to keep our outdoor heritage and to conserve our natural resources. We can't continue without our members and we can't keep fighting unless we grow our membership.

Encourage your friends that enjoy the outdoors to join the SDWF directly or through a local affiliate club. "JUST ONE" new member can make a world of difference!



Love the outdoors and need a tax deduction this year?

If you have a car, van, truck, ATV, or boat that's in reasonably good shape and you aren't using, donate it to the SDWF. You'll get a nice tax break and will feel great knowing you helped our great organization protect South Dakota's outdoors.



888-OVERBAG

SDWF Membership Application

To continue our conservation efforts - we need your help! Please donate generously.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

e-mail: _____

SDWF \$20/Yr Membership Fee \$ _____

SDWFCamo-Coalition lobbying donation: \$ _____

Send Donation and
Membership Application to:
SDWF

P.O Box 7075
Pierre, SD 57501-0952

CC _____ EXP _____ CV _____

Check - make checks payable to SDWF



Brood count improving, but problem remains

The Game, Fish & Parks will release the results of the much-anticipated brood route survey at the end of next week.

On the surface, it will be good news — an expected dramatic increase over 2013 numbers that were well 75 percent below the 10-year average. But there is a deeper issue at play, one that involves a continuing decline in South Dakota's pheasant population due to the loss of quality upland habitat.

Biology tells us that dramatic, short-term fluctuations for a pheasant population are dictated primarily by the weather, and months of persistent drought in 2012 followed by an extremely cold and wet spring in 2013 set the stage for the recent nosedive. Moderate temperatures and adequate moisture have returned in 2014, and anecdotal reports from folks in the traditional pheasant belt suggest there are birds — and lots of them.

Based on last year's numbers, however, it would be hard to go anywhere but up. But consider this: the 2014 statewide PPM index could increase by 100 percent, and it would still be 50 percent below the long-term average.

The 2013 pheasant season will go down as one of the poorest in more than 20 years, with major declines in the number of hunters, total pheasant harvest and pheasants harvested per hunter. As bad as things were last year, the bigger concern remains for what the season represented in the big picture: the loss of habitat.

It's a downward trend that the state has seen before with the end of the Soil Bank program roughly half a century ago, when ground that had been idled came back into production. Consequently, the pheasant population crashed and hunters in South Dakota suffered through decades of poor hunting until the advent of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The result was similar to the Soil Bank era: large blocks of undisturbed grass on the landscape meant a significant upward trend in the pheasant population.

Since 2007, however, the number of acres enrolled in CRP has been on the decline, dipping below 1 million acres last year for the first time since the late 1980s, and a lowered cap on enrollment in the most recent Farm Bill has conservation leaders worried that it will be a struggle to stay above 900,000 acres

in South Dakota in only a year or two. To make matters worse, in the past seven years South Dakota has witnessed the accelerated loss of non-CRP grasslands as well, adding fuel to a fire already burning through the heart of pheasant production habitat.

History has shown us how this story continues unless we put more grass back on the ground, and to that end, efforts are being made to reverse the trend of habitat loss.

The launch of Pheasants Forever's new regional headquarters in Brookings marks a new approach to building and strengthening relationships with farmers, ranchers, landowners, business leaders, municipalities and all those who benefit from the habitat that supports pheasants.

Governor Dugaard's Pheasant Habitat Work Group is finalizing a list of recommendations for actions the state can take, and by all accounts the ideas being generated by the group could have a real impact if implemented. Since holding the pheasant habitat summit last winter, the governor has shown a commitment to finding realistic solutions to the problems posed by the loss of grass and other habitat, and it would come as a complete surprise if he didn't take action on the plan from the work group when it lands on his desk.

Senators John Thune (Sodbuster), Tim Johnson (support for conservation compliance) and Representative Kristi Noem (Protect our Prairie Act) have all made a point of taking action for habitat loss in the state, too.

And habitat is where our focus should remain, no matter what the brood route survey says next week. A likely up-tick this year — perhaps even a sizable one — will be great news for the state and \$223 million pheasant hunting industry. Greater news, however, would be continuing strides to keep and restore large blocks of grass, which bears the greatest impact on the long-term potential for South Dakota's pheasant population.

Habitat is the key to maintaining our state's role as the premier pheasant hunting destination in the nation. Let's keep putting grass on the landscape and see just what kind of difference that will make.

Written By John Pollman and re-printed with permission from Argus Leader

600 RIDERS TAKE PART IN MICKELSON TRAIL TREK

PIERRE, S.D. - According to state Division of Parks and Recreation officials, three days of sunshine helped make last weekend's 17th annual Mickelson Trail Trek a success.

"The beautiful Black Hills scenery and fall colors help attract riders each year," said Dana Garry, Mickelson Trail manager. "The ride went well, and we couldn't have asked for better weather especially after last week's snow. We were excited to have the maximum 600 riders, several were returning for their 17th year."

This year's event, held Sept. 19-21, brought people to the Black Hills from 27 states as well as Canada and Germany. Over the three days, trekkers rode past scenic Sheep Canyon and Crazy Horse Monument, across the Freedom Bridge south of Mystic and into Lead-Deadwood on the final leg of the trail.

"Staff from the South Dakota Division of Parks and Recreation, along with many volunteers, worked hard to pull this year's Trail Trek together," Garry said. "We would especially like to acknowledge and thank the volunteers and the Chambers of Commerce that greeted the trekkers with water, snacks, ice cream and meals along the way."

The annual ride is held the third weekend of September, with the 2015 Trail Trek scheduled for Sept. 18-20. Online registration should be available in December, and Garry encourages riders to sign up as early as possible to ensure a spot in the ride. The trek is limited to 600 riders.

The Mickelson Trail was recently named number one of the 10 Best Car-Free Bike Paths in the USA by bicycling.com.

- See more at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/news/news/september/22.aspx#sthash.yMhyITps.dpuf>

GF&P Commission looks to save time and money

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department wildlife biologists spend weeks every year compiling the information necessary for the Commission to set big game seasons.

The time those biologists spend making small adjustments to each season every year could probably be better spent, according to an independent review of GF&P's big game management program. The review, conducted by the Wildlife Management Institute, laid out a number of suggestions to help improve big game management in the state.

One of those suggestions was setting seasons two or more years at a time.

Most states set their big game seasons two to three years at a time, which allows biologists to spend more time on the science of managing their big game populations. South Dakota sets its seasons every year, meaning biologists spend much of their time preparing season proposals.

Biologists are spending countless hours crunching numbers and making relatively small changes to each season, every year. Those small changes don't amount to much impact on populations, said GF&P Secretary Jeff Vonk.

"The amount of time we spend adjusting 25 licenses in these units every year is, quite frankly, a waste of time," Vonk said.

The idea behind setting season for several years at a time would be to save both time and money.

GF&P Terrestrial Wildlife Administrator Tom Kirschenmann presented the idea as part of an update on the WMI report to the Commission last week, at its August meeting.

There would be a number of advantages to the plan, Kirschenmann said. Those include, giving staff more time to collect data on each species, reducing the chance of errors being made in the licensing process and giving the Commission more time to work on larger policy issues such as public access to hunting and fishing resources.

Feeding and Identifying Birds in Your Back Yard

PIERRE, S.D. - Nearly 45 percent of South Dakotans watch wildlife around their homes. Feeding wild birds is one of the most popular outdoor activities across the country. Individuals do not need a license or special skills to enjoy feeding or watching wildlife; just an interest and a commitment to doing it right.

Keep a few things in mind if you choose to feed birds:

- **Place feeders where you can watch, enjoy and photograph feeding visitors.**
- **Place the feeder on a pole away from trees, if bothered by squirrels at feeders.**
- **Move feeders if birds strike any windows.**
- **Place feeders near cover to protect feeding birds from weather and predators, such as free-roaming cats.**
- **Offer several feeding sites to avoid overcrowding and disease transmission.**
- **Some birds, such as sparrows, juncos, doves and pheasants feed on the ground or on a flat platform.**

Black oil sunflower seeds appeal to many birds. Ground-feeding birds may prefer corn, milo or millet to sunflower seed. Avoid offering human "table scraps" which may attract rodents or raccoons.

Remember to keep feeders and feeding areas clean by regularly raking up seed hulls and scrubbing cleaners with soapy water and rinsing in water with a small amount of bleach. If you notice sick or diseased birds, disinfect your feeders and stop feeding for 10-14 days to avoid further spreading diseases.



Regularly moving the feeder area around can help prevent diseases caused when birds feed in the same area with bird droppings. Seed should also be stored in tight, waterproof containers to prevent mold and to discourage rodents.

If you are just beginning to learn to identify birds at your feeders, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has free publications to help. Free publications include "Backyard Birds of South Dakota" or the new "South Dakota's Diurnal Birds of Prey." This new book includes color photos and descriptions of 19 species of hawks, falcons and eagles, plus two diurnal owl species. Request free publications online at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/critters/birds/default.aspx>.

Project FeederWatch is a citizen science project led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. The project helps track wintering bird patterns and provides valuable information about diseases affecting wild birds. To become a FeederWatch citizen scientist, visit <http://feederwatch.org/>.

For more information on birds and other critters in South Dakota, visit <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/critters/default.aspx>.

- See more at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/news/news/september/4.aspx#sthash.AU-RmVfw.dpuf>

GFP Commission sets 2015 meeting schedule

(Meeting times are first day

1 – 5 pm local and continues second day 8 am – noon local)

- **January 15-16, 2015 Pierre**
– RedRossa Convention Room
- **Thursday-Friday 808 W Sioux Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501**
- **February 2015 – No meeting**
- **March 5-6, 2015 Pierre – RedRossa Convention Room**
- **Thursday-Friday 808 W Sioux Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501**
- **April 1-2, 2015 Brookings – Days Inn**
- **Wednesday-Thursday 2500 East 6th Street, Brookings, SD 57006**
- **May 7-8, 2015 Custer State Park – Creekside Lodge**
- **Thursday-Friday US Hwy 16A, Custer, SD 57730**
- **June 4-5, 2015 Fort Pierre – Holiday Inn Express**
- **Thursday-Friday 110 E Stanley Road, Fort Pierre, SD 57532**
- **July 1-2, 2015 Pierre – RedRossa Convention Room**
- **Wednesday-Thursday 808 W Sioux Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501**

- **July 23-24, 2015 Reserved for possible contested case hearing – Pierre**
- **August 6-7, 2015 Aberdeen – AmericInn**
- **Thursday-Friday 301 Centennial Street, Aberdeen, SD 57532**
- **September 2015 – No meeting**
- **October 1-2, 2015 Spearfish – Holiday Inn Convention Center**
- **Thursday-Friday 305 North 27th St, Spearfish, 57783**
- **Nov. 5-6, 2015 Mitchell – Ramada Inn**
- **Thursday-Friday 1525 West Havens St., Mitchell, SD 57301**
- **Dec. 10-11, 2015 Pierre – RedRossa Convention Room**
- **Thursday-Friday 808 W Sioux Avenue, Pierre, SD 57501**



"Let us... permit nature to take her own way; she better understands her own affairs than we."

Michel de Montaigne

Sportsmen/women- Want to help fund SDWF and the Youth Conservation Camp plus reduce your taxes this year? Donate stocks and land to the SDWF. You not only won't have to pay

JUST ONE