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From the Publisher's Desk

Welcome to the Feb/March issue of Bird Dog & Retriever News. Thank you: subscribers, advertisers, organizations and others.

It looks like we are coming out of Covid FINALLY. There are some events on the calendar, about half of normal. We hope by this fall things will start to get things back to normal.

If we can help by getting your event listed on our calendar here and online get a hold of us. My email and cell number is on www.Bdarn.com.

I just got done subscribing to about twenty five magazine from all the dog & hunting organizations so as they come back online we'll keep you informed. I hope also to pick up some great writers and articles for our readers.

So what do we have in this issue? Our usual myself and Frank Neumayer and a return of a writer who wrote for us for years Jerry Thoms. We have an article from Brad Varney about hunting Ruffed Grouse with Shorthairs in Maine.

The Nebraska Game & Parks has great plans for nice Wood Duck houses that also work for the squirrels. I have 4-5 in back of my place and am going to build a few more. Find a kid and build some.

This issue we have five pages of state news. Expect that to shrink to one or two pages with the June/July issue, but we will fill in with training articles.

If you know of a shooting preserve, trap & skeet range or advertiser that should be in Bird Dog & Retriever News drop us a line and get them more business.

I guess I'm out of space!
See you next issue!

Dennis Guldan

Publisher Bird Dog & Retriever News
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Breeders

The Cost of a Litter

By Dennis Guldan

Every year about this time I get inquires from first time breeders looking into advertising their potential litters. Thankfully after doing a little research most never have that first litter.

So I thought as a public service I would run down the numbers of "The Cost of a Litter." So hopefully the next time someone decides to have just one litter to show the kids the birthing process or to get another great dog, they make think twice or so.

First of all the myths: Breeding my great dog will create another dog exactly like my great dog. Did you ever go to a litter reunion? That's when all the dogs from the same breeding get together. The variation of dogs of the exact same genetics and bloodlines, with the SAME parents will amaze you. In the same litter you will have shy and aggressive dogs. You will have fat & skinny dogs. You will have dogs with great hunting skills and others that prefer butterflies.

So this theory that you are going to duplicate your current dog is a misnomer. Further lets look at your genetics. If you return to your breeder for another pup you will get a dog with similar genetics & surroundings and breeding techniques.

You on the other hand start with one generation off the original breeding and that is only HALF of the equation. Add to that another half you may know little about.

As far as showing your kids the magic of life... rent a video. Unless you are also fine showing them the "HORRORS of life TOO!" Litters go bad especially for inexperienced breeders and first time bitches.

And if you are breeding just for the \$1000 a pup you might be getting read further what

goes into that \$1000 before you continue.

Total up the expenses before you put your dog or family through the possible horror of a litter.

Let's start with the stud fee, what some think is the only fee. Stud fees are typically \$1000 - \$1500 or one pup. But you can drop that price if you have a buddy that has a nice dog. But when people ask about the champions in the bloodlines, as most do, you will need to show them a few generations in the pas.



If you are breeding to a reputable breeder, most will not by the way.

Certifications you will need before most breeders will breed with you: OFA for hips & CERF for eyes: \$400.

OH and a Brucellous and health check for the bitch \$125.

Finding a sire or bitch might involve a few day trips to trials and tests and a few overnights with travel and food. We are only allotting \$500 for that. But I forget you have that buddy.

Now the stud fee \$1500 or a pup. That is assuming you have more than one pup lives and the breeding takes.

So exactly on what date do

you setup the breeding? What do you mean you don't know. For about \$400 you can have a Progesterone test to tell you the exact right day for breeding. We'd hate for you to pay for a breeding that didn't take.

Oh I forgot \$100 for the ultrasound to verify the breeding and how many pups. You can NOW start taking deposits.

Where are these deposits coming from? Who knows you have a litter. Time to start advertising. Add \$200 to that bill which is now at about \$3000 and you have no guarantee of any pups that will make it to selling age.

Let's assume all goes well with no issues and the birth is a great one. Let's start tallying the post birth expenses though we probably left \$1000 of the price of the mating on the table.

Post birth expenses include: Additional food to feed mom & pups \$200. Did you plan on going to work while she is birthing or having issues with the litter add \$500 to the bill. Did you want papers on the pups? \$45.

You may have a puppy vet bill. Worming \$300, Parvo & Distemper shots for the litter \$400. Are you going to do dew claws and tails, people expect it \$300.

Did you plan on going anywhere while you are having the litter or until the puppies are placed? That's 60 days of your life you wont be planning much.

But think of the money you will score with most backyard breeders getting \$500 a pup or \$4000 if you get a litter of 8 to their new owners that all the checks are good.

Well not if you have HALF the expenses that most breeders have with litters. Most expect a \$8000 - \$9000 bill after endless years at shows, trials, tests and club meetings.

Moral of the story: Leave the breeding to the pros, a \$1500 quality dog is CHEAP by any standard.

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Shooting

Improving at Handicap

By Frank Neumayer

Question: *I'm struggling at handicap! Last year I gained a yard to the 24 yard line, but I just can't seem to get my scores back into the nineties? I didn't think one yard would make such a big difference. What can I do... got any advice?*

Answer: I understand your frustration. Let's start by reviewing some basic target criteria so you can better visualize what you're dealing with. Singles and handicap targets travel at 42-43 mph; at a distance of 49-51 yards; at an angle spread of not more than 34 degrees (17 degrees right and left of center); and at a height of 17-18 feet off the ground at their flight apex. As you know, there is a Breaking Zone in which all targets are usually broken regardless of the post or yardage a shooter may be on. This zone is centered roughly 20-25 yards out in front of the trap house, with a height between 13-18 feet above the ground, and at a total width of around 25-26 yards (12-13 yards left and right of center). The key point to remember is, no matter which post or yardage you're on, the only thing that will change is your visual perspective of this breaking zone. This means that all of your concentration, focus, and target breaking action, will fall within the boundaries of this zone.

Again, as you envision this zone, remember it's only your perspective that changes as you move back in yardage and from post to post. It's like sitting up front in a movie theater as compared to sitting way in the back row. The dimensions of the screen never change; it's only your perspective of the screen that changes as you move further back or from right to left. Also, as you move back on the web your perspective

of the breaking zone will become slightly smaller each time. With this zone visually decreasing some shooters get a false sense that everything slows down slightly. In truth, as your zone perspective diminishes, you actually need to react to the target a little quicker. You have several options at this point, but whatever you choose must include increased focus and concentration on being smooth, and especially accurate! One thing you can try, which worked for me, is to hold a slightly lower gun. This way you can maximize your field-of-view; you can



pick-up and get-on the target a little faster; move through it a little quicker; and easily apply the correct lead required... before you take the shot.

First Point

As you gain yardage, only slight changes should be necessary to your overall shooting approach. Everything you've established regarding your comfortable shooting position, set-up, call, movement to the target, breaking point, and follow-through, should not require any major changes. However, a few minor or subtle adjustments will be needed based on the variables presented at your new yardage. Extra practice will be required to reestab-

lish your shooting confidence. As I gained yardage, post (1) and (5) were always my most difficult to resolve. I would practice post (1) by setting the machine to throw only hard left-hand targets, I would stay shooting on that post until I had perfected my rhythm, timing, leads, and consistent target breaks. I would simply reverse this approach for post (5), and then set the machine to oscillate as normal for my practice on posts (2) through (4). Also, during normal practice try standing one yard back from your registered yardage mark. This will help strengthen your mental approach and your confidence level for competition.

Second Point

You must make certain that your pattern is still giving you the correct speed-to-target; point-of-impact; and density and spread that you've come to trust. Extra time on the pattern board will

longer yardages, you must apply added focus and concentration on being smooth and accurate! If you're struggling at any yardage, try practicing a few yards forward of your registered mark. Find a point where all of your beaks are even and consistent, then start moving back, one yard at a time, rebuilding your consistency, accuracy, and confidence as you go.

Third Point

As you gain yardage, a key factor is figuring out the proper amount of lead. This could be the most difficult factor for you to resolve. Once your pattern board work is done... the only way to prefect the new leads required, is out on the trap field working from post to post. Start by applying sharp focus to the leading edge of each target, and then add small increments of lead until your target breaks become

even and consistent. For example, at 27 yards, over 24" of lead (depending on your load) may be needed for those hard lefts and rights off post one and five. The major key to your success when moving back on the web will be in how well you can make all the slight, but necessary adjustments needed for the changing perspectives involved. Again, you'll need to seriously plan on spending quality practice time in order to reestablish and perfect every aspect of your handicap game. Just remember, be patient and don't get frustrated! Plan your work and work your plan... and soon everything will come together before you know it.

Recipes

Classic Italian Duck Ragu

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|--|
| 4 SERVINGS | 2 carrots (minced) |
| 3 pounds duck (or goose legs and/or wings) | 2 tablespoons tomato paste |
| salt | 1 cup white wine |
| 0.5 ounces dried mushrooms (broken into pieces) | 1 quart duck broth |
| 3 tablespoons duck fat (olive oil or butter) | 1 quart crushed tomatoes (or tomato puree) |
| 1 cup chopped onion | 2 bay leaves |
| 2 celery sticks (minced) | 2 teaspoons oregano |
| | 1/4 cup chopped parsley |
| | grated pecorino cheese |

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Jason Gooding, Baldwin, WI

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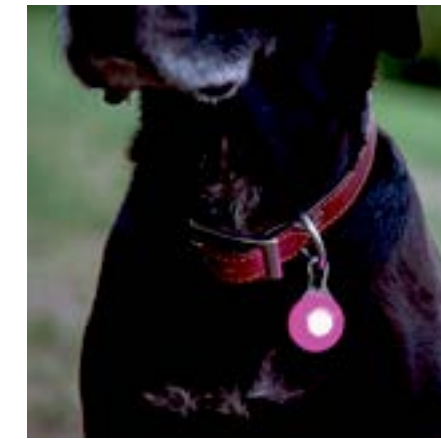
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Days Remembered

Chapter 35: The Last Shot

By Brad Varney

Wednesday, October 26, 2016 will always be a special day for me and my G.S.P. Merrymeeting's Captain Moonshine, Mooney for short.

After getting permission from the owner we entered the Ten Point cover on Ham Hill in Cambridge, Maine. We had only ventured about thirty yards when Mooney got birdie near an apple tree. I moved to the right of the apple tree believing if the grouse flushed wild it would head straight for the thickest cover. This would put me between it and the dark growth.

The ground cover was very thick, but I could hear Mooney's bell. As the bell made less and less noise, I knew Mooney was moving slower, but closer to the grouse.

Suddenly the grouse flushed, but flew to my left, putting the apple tree between the two of us. I fired and missed. I think the apple tree absorbed most of the load of sevens and a half. I fired a second shot and to my surprise the grouse folded and dropped like a rock at thirty yards, with all the trees and branches in the way, I knew I was lucky to make the shot.

Mooney came running to the sound of me shooting. I gave him the command dead bird fetch and my arm pointing towards the downed grouse. It took Mooney only a few seconds to find that grouse. Mooney brought the grouse quickly to me. I praised him and placed the grouse in my hunting coat.

We hunted southerly for several hundred yards in a zigzag fashion. As we approached a cornfield bordered by an old rock wall, we turned to our right or westerly.

We zigzagged till we came to another old rock wall running North-South. We turned to the North and headed for an apple orchard.

Since that first grouse we had not moved another bird, not even a woodcock. I had gunned this cover many times since 1975. Much had changed in those years. The old orchard had been logged recently the area we started our hunt was a horse pasture the first few years I had bird hunted this cover. I was beginning to think we were wasting our time, when Mooney got birdie near a brush pile next to an apple tree.

As I was trying to decide which way I should approach the brush pile a grouse flushed. It surprised me and I rushed the first shot and missed, but made a good shot on the second try. This grouse was a little over thirty yards, but dropped like the first grouse. When I told Mooney dead bird, he was already in the correct area of the grouse. Just like the first grouse, a fast find and a great retrieve.

After praising Mooney it was a chore to make Mooney sit while I put the second grouse carefully in my game bag. Mooney was eager to get on with the hunt.

The old apple orchard had few trees standing as it had recently been harvested for timber.

As we approached the northern portion of the orchard Mooney got real birdie. He worked hard but no grouse. I started for my Jeep when Mooney's bell went silent. As I turned around I saw Mooney on point and a woodcock flying directly away from us. I did not shoot as I felt it was too far. I called Mooney and we walked a logging road a couple hundred yards to my Jeep.

Next, we headed for some covers in the Wellington area. The first cover produced nothing, highly unusual for "the Milk Can cover."

On the gravel hauling road a grouse ran into some small fir trees. I pulled over to the side of the road making sure any logging truck could easily get by.

I got out of the Jeep and loaded my Remington 11-87 shotgun. I opened the back door of my Jeep and let Mooney out. I quickly directed Mooney in the direction of the grouse. He quickly entered the firs. I stood in the road and listened to Mooney's bell.

Mooney's bell was getting slowly farther away and I was thinking I will never see this grouse again. Suddenly I heard the grouse flush. It came across the hauling road. It was a left to right shot, quite similar to a station four skeet shot. I rushed the shot and fired too quick missing behind an easy shot.

I knew immediately what I had done wrong. I focused on the grouse's head as it went behind the top of several maple trees. I fired and the grouse flew about three feet disappearing behind some dark growth. I could hardly believe I missed that second shot. I took Mooney for a dead bird search, but to no avail. Another grouse just made a former skeet champion very humble.

The only thing I had to fall back on was my former mentor and expert grouse hunter Bud Flint. Bud often said, "The person who never missed a grouse had not hunted them long enough!"

Mooney and I hunted several more covers. We moved a few more grouse, but no points and no shots. Once a pair of grouse flushed together, a possible double, if I could see and shoot through trees, the opportunities for a double on grouse is rare. Making that double is very rare.

Late in the afternoon I reversed direction and started back down the logging road for home. Overall it was a good day. Mooney and I had fun. Most birds outwitted us, but we got two grouse. We should have had one more. If luck was on our side we might have scored a true double. All things considered a very good day.

As I rounded a bend two grouse ran across the gravel road from right to left. I quickly pulled my Jeep to the far right. I got out and loaded my Remington 11-87 twelve gauge. I opened the back of the Jeep and let Mooney out. I pointed my arm and told Mooney bird. He ran to the area where I last saw the

Buy The Book: Thanks to Brad Varney we have an excerpt his book Maine-ly Bird Hunting, 191 pages, \$19.99 from Brad Varney, www.VarneyClaySports.com Copyrights 2017

two grouse.

Mooney immediately went on point. The grouse were probably only a few yards in front of Mooney hiding in some scattered fir and young maple.

I decided my best chance for a shot was to stay in the road and send Mooney into flush the grouse. I gave Mooney a tap on the head and said birds get um. Like a black jet Mooney disappeared, immediately I heard that familiar sounds of old thunder wings taking flight.

In fifty-nine years of grouse hunting I had never seen anything like the following.

Both grouse flushed simultaneously at about fifteen yards and about ten yards apart. The really strange part is they both were coming back across the road I was standing in.

I shot the grouse on the left as it topped a fir tree directly in front of me. The bird on my right had already made it across the road as my muzzle caught up with it and fired.

Feathers flew and its legs dropped. I had to take my shotgun from my shoulder as I was bent to my right as far as I could turn and bend. I quickly repositioned my feet and body for a going away shot if necessary. The grouse was losing altitude and headed for a stand of thick firs.

It was near sunset and getting dark. I knew if that grouse made it to the firs we might never recover it. I quickly fired my third shot an ounce and one half of # six shot. Almost immediately that half dead grouse began to tower. The grouse was getting farther away.

I had seen grouse tower a number of times before and if found were most always dead.

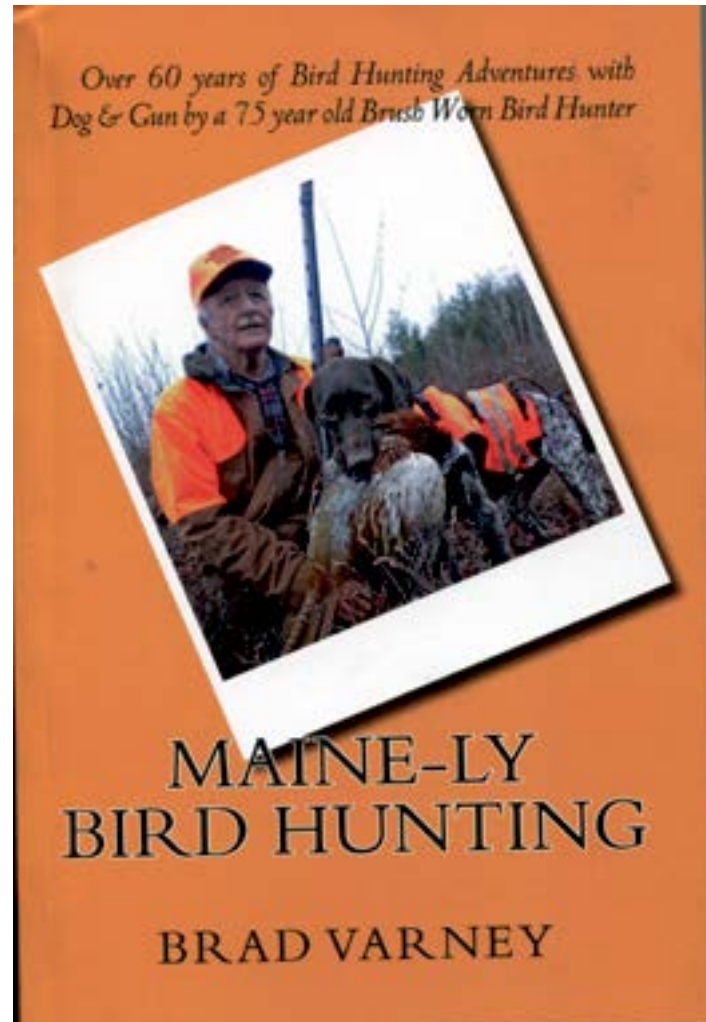
All I could think was I should never have fired that last shot. Apparently a pellet from that shot hit it in the head and now it was flying over the firs to an even more, dense stand of cedar.

To a brush worn grouse hunter making a double on grouse is equal to shooting a ten point, two-hundred-pound buck.

After making a good shot on any trophy, losing it is the last thing any sports person wants to happen.

After flying, towering, flying or gliding the grouse descends awkwardly into the cedars about one hundred and fifty yards away.

I used a tall lone pine about two hundred and fifty yards away to help mark the area the grouse landed



With Mooney at heel and the sun setting we started out on a recovery mission. I knew it was a long shot at best. Thirty yards and I came across an old skidder trail going downhill which I took.

Luck was on our side, because at the bottom of the hill the skidder trail turned towards the area I had last seen the grouse. The skidder trail was now more of a moose trail with lots of swale grass.

I no longer was I able to see the lone pine tree. The cedar trees and the skidder trail being in lowland obstructed any view of that lone pine.

I had to use my sense of direction and some lucky guess work. After walking about one hundred yards along this low trail I felt I was near the area the grouse had landed in.

I told Mooney dead bird find. Within a few yards Mooney entered the cedars acting very birdie. I could only see part of Mooney when his bell went silent. Again I said dead bird find, a command he knew. I could see his legs move towards me and then freeze again. I once again gave Mooney the dead bird fetch command. Mooney reached down and picked up a large beautiful dead grouse, which he brought to me.

I was so proud of Mooney, I felt like he was the best dog in the whole world.

I said, "Mooney I could kiss you." We quickly returned to the Jeep where I took pictures of Mooney and all four grouse. The pictures came out, but very dark as the light was fading fast.

Anytime you make a double on grouse in the Maine woods it becomes and unforgettable feat. Doing it at seventy-four years old, with the greatest bird dog in the world, "Merrymeeting's Captain Moonshine is the ultimate!"

Brad Varney hails from Richmond ME.

Medical

Pet Talk: Eye Conditions, Cataracts, Allergies, Heart Murmurs in Dogs,

Cataracts Could Affect Your Pet's Vision

If you've noticed your pet's eye lenses becoming cloudy or opaque, your pet could be developing cataracts. Though cataracts can decrease vision, or even cause complete blindness, not every companion animal that develops cataracts requires surgery. Dr. Lucien Vallone, clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, explained how cataracts can affect pets.

"Cataract is an opacity of the lens," Vallone said. "clear lens is necessary for good vision; thus, any opacification can cause decreased vision. However, not all cataracts are the same. Some cases of cataracts are so severe they can cause blindness and inflammation in the eye, which may cause significant discomfort. Some cases are small enough they don't interfere with vision at all and should be monitored."

All companion animals can develop cataracts, but Vallone said cataracts are common in dogs. Several breeds of dogs may be predisposed to cataracts, though not every dog within these breeds is affected.

"Veterinarians encourage dog breeders to participate in breed-soundness examinations," Vallone said. "These examinations screen dogs for any evidence of heritable disease. Specifically, veterinary ophthalmologists will usually recommend prospective pet owners to ask dog breeders if their dogs have undergone yearly Eye Certification Registry (ECR) examinations. These examinations are performed by board-certified ophthalmologists and help breeders to eliminate cataracts that are potentially inherited."

Vallone added that cataracts in companion animals, "especially dogs," could be a sign of another health concern, such as diabetes mellitus.

"In addition to cloudiness of the eyes, diabetic animals often display fluctuations in appetite, weight, thirst, and urination," Vallone said.

Currently, cataract surgery is the only treatment for companion animals to restore clarity to the lens. Vallone said the procedure is similar to cataract surgery in humans but requires general anesthesia. Topical therapies often can prevent the common and painful complications of cataracts but cannot restore vision.

If you think your pet may be developing cataracts, consult your veterinarian. All animals with any form of cataracts should be evaluated by a veterinarian or veterinary ophthalmologist to help preserve vision and health.

Heart Murmurs in Dogs

When a veterinarian uses a stethoscope to listen to your dog's heart, chances are that the heart will sound normal. However, in some cases, a veterinarian may hear an abnormality such as a heart murmur.

Sonya Wesselowski, a clinical assis-

tant professor of cardiology at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, said heart murmurs are abnormal heart sounds caused by turbulent or rapid blood flow within the heart. In dogs, heart murmurs are usually the result of a leaky or narrowed heart valve.

Heart murmurs are not always a cause for concern. Wesselowski said that some soft heart murmurs could be normal in growing puppies less than 6 months of age. However, most heart murmurs in dogs do indicate that there is an underlying abnormality of the heart. In some cases, the heart murmur could be caused by a congenital heart defect the dog was born with, or due to a heart disease that develops later in life.

How can you know if your dog has a heart murmur? Wesselowski said that regular examinations with your veterinarian are crucial for detection of heart

murmurs,

as a heart

murmur it-

self does

not cause

any signs or

symptoms.

Instead, a

heart mur-

mur is a

finding that

suggests a

cardiac prob-

lem may be

present.

If a heart

murmur is

detected in

your dog, Wesselowski recommended

additional testing to investigate for an

underlying heart condition.

"Cardiac ultrasound, also known as

an echocardiogram, is the definitive test

to determine the cause of your dog's

heart murmur and diagnose any under-

lying heart disease," Wesselowski said.

"Your veterinarian may also choose to

perform an X-ray of your dog's chest as

an initial screening test to look for evi-

dence of heart enlargement."

Even if a dog is not showing signs

of heart disease such as lethargy, exer-

cise intolerance, cough, difficulty

breathing, or fainting spells, further

investigation into the cause of a heart

murmur is always a good idea, Wesselowski said. These tests can help to

determine if your dog would benefit

from starting cardiac medications or if

they should have more frequent check-

ups to monitor their heart condition.

In general, most heart murmurs are

an indication of an underlying heart

condition and should be taken serious-

ly. If your veterinarian detects a heart

murmur in your dog, be sure to invest-

igate the murmur and determine the

best way to protect your dog's heart

health.

Pets Can Have Allergies, Too

With spring right around the corner, many of us are bracing ourselves for pesky allergies. Just like people, pets can suffer from allergies, too. While humans cough and sneeze their way through allergy season, pets usually deal with allergies differently.

Dr. Adam Patterson, a clinical associate professor and chief of dermatology at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, said every animal has a different reaction to allergies, just as people respond to allergies differently. However, most animals display itch as a hallmark sign of allergic skin disease.

"An itch may be manifested as licking, chewing, biting, rubbing, scratching, head shaking, and/or scooting," Patterson said. "Common itchy body areas include the face, ears, paws, armpits, groin, rump, and anal region. Horses may present with an itchy skin disease and/or hives."

Allergens that most commonly irritate pets include fleas, pollen, molds, mites, insects, danders, and food.

"Every pet has its own itch tolerance, which means the intensity and reason(s) for your pet's itch may not be the same as another animal," Patterson said. "Regardless of the animal, allergic patients are prone to bacterial and yeast infections that can cause skin discoloration, hair loss, pimples, scabs, and/or ear disease."

If your pet shows any sign of an allergy, it is best to contact your veteri-



narian so they can properly diagnose the cause of itch. Your veterinarian can also perform tests to determine the most effective treatment plan to alleviate your pet's discomfort.

We all know how annoying allergies can be, so be sure to keep an eye on your pet this allergy season. If your pet shows any sign of an allergic skin disease, visit your veterinarian to help alleviate your pet's discomfort.

Watch Out For Canine Eye Conditions

Vision may not be a dog's strongest sense, but it still plays an important role in daily life. A dog's eye health can deteriorate because of aging or disease, so dog owners should be aware of the various eye issues that can occur.

Dr. Lucien Vallone, a clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, specializes in ophthalmology and regularly treats eye conditions in dogs.

Vallone said there are three main categories of canine eye problems: diseases of the ocular surface, diseases that cause inflammation within the eye, and glaucoma.

Diseases of the eye's surface impact the conjunctiva—the mucous membrane over the eye—and the cornea—the clear, protective outer layer of the eye. Vallone said these diseases include inflammation of the cornea, dry eye, and eyelid abnormalities.

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The second category is diseases that cause inflammation within the eye, collectively called uveitis.

"Uveitis is often linked to diseases that affect the dog's body systemically, like certain tumors or infections," Vallone said.

Lastly, glaucoma occurs when there is increased pressure inside the eye, resulting in loss of vision. He said this is one of the most common causes of pain and blindness in dogs.

A dog experiencing any of these eye conditions will usually have red, squinty eyes that leak discharge. If the dog has reduced vision, it may also have altered behavior, such as a reluctance to climb stairs or go outside.

"These signs might occur more frequently at nighttime, rather than daytime," Vallone said. "These subtleties may help a veterinarian discern one cause of vision loss from another."

If a dog is diagnosed with any of these eye conditions, its veterinarian may recommend medical, surgical, or even supplemental therapies. Common supplements are believed to provide beneficial antioxidant effects to the lens and retina within the eye.

"These effects may help to delay or prevent several progressive and degenerative diseases of the eye," Vallone said, though he added that more research is needed before these effects can be proven.

He said many causes of eye discomfort or vision impairment are correctable, especially if treated early. If you suspect your dog has any eye conditions or if you notice any indications of vision loss, see a veterinarian for a diagnosis.

Fortunately, if a dog does become blind, either from aging or an eye condition, it is not as serious as some may believe. Dogs are excellent at using their noses and ears to navigate and are great at re-learning how to do things after losing their sight.

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Pet Talk is a service of the College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences, Texas A&M University. Stories can be found at vetmed.tamu.edu/pet-talk. Suggestions for future topics may be directed to editor@cvm.tamu.edu

ILLINOIS

April 3 GSP Club Of Illinois Hunt Test Des Plaines WMA West Grounds Wilmington IL Perry Dlugie perrydlu@comcast.net 847-417-4688 www.gspci.org
 April 24-25 Fort Dearborn GSP Club Hunt Test Des Plaines Wildlife Area West Grounds West Grounds Joliet IL Christine Policandriotes wwchl@aol.com 815-955-8700 http://fortdearbornspclub.org/

IOWA

June 25-26 Tri State Labrador Retriever Club of Iowa Hunt Test Lost Grove Lake Eldridge IA Nicolette Wennekamp dnwennekamp@gmail.com 319-480-0457
 June 25-26 Tri State Labrador Retriever Club of Iowa Field Trial Lost Grove Lake Eldridge IA Nicolette Wennekamp dnwennekamp@gmail.com 319-480-0457

MICHIGAN

April 3 Irish Setter Club Of Michigan Hunt Test Highland Recreation Area Silo Course Barn Course Highland MI Jackie Shelest jackieshelest@gmail.com 517-281-1319 irishsetterclubofmichigan.com
 April 5 American Brittany Club Inc. Trial Ionia Recreational Area Ionia MI Donna Janulis ejannus@aol.com 708-738-7916 clubs.akc.org/brit

April 9 Michigan Brittany Club Trial Ionia Recreational Area Ionia MI Bob Watson bobeddiawatson@gmail.com 906-362-9472 www.michiganbrittanyclub.com
 April 10-11 Fort Detroit GWP Club Trial Highland Recreation Area Barn & Silo Courses Highland MI Susan De Graw schnellberg@comcast.net 586-781-9496 www.fdgwpc.org
 May 1-2 Vizsla Club Of Michigan Trial Ionia Recreation Area Ionia MI Keleigh Masserant themasserants@hotmail.com 517-505-1855 www.michiganvizsla.org
 May 7 Flat Coat Retriever Society Of America Trial 10357 Staines Road 10357 Staines Road Fenwick MI Lou Vreeland vreelandskywatch@aol.com 616-899-2417 www.fcrsainc.org
 May 7 Irish Setter Club Of Michigan Trial Highland Recreation Area Silo Course Silo Course Highland MI Jackie Shelest jackieshelest@gmail.com 517-281-1319 irishsetterclubofmichigan.com
 May 22 Michigan Saginaw Valley Brittany Club Trial Ionia Recreation Area Ionia MI Kathy Gulembok gulembok@gvsu.edu 616-340-9723
 May 28 Fort Detroit German Wirehaired Pointer Club Trial Highland Recreation Area Highland MI Susan DeGraw schnellberg@comcast.net 586-781-9496 www.fortdetroitgwp.com

Calendar

May 30 Vizsla Club Of Michigan Trial Highland Recreation Area Highland MI Keleigh Masserant themasserants@hotmail.com 517-505-1855 www.michiganvizsla.org
 May 31 Vizsla Club Of Michigan Hunt Test Highland Recreation Area Highland MI Keleigh Masserant themasserants@hotmail.com 517-505-1855 www.michiganvizsla.org

MINNESOTA

May 14 Hennepin County Amateur Retriever Club Trial Marten Meadows 1 1/2 Miles Est Of Hwy 10 Sauk Rapids MN Linda Twiss lindatwiss688@msn.com 612-964-7543 www.cmrcmn.org
 May 16-17 GSP Club Of MN Hunt Test Kelly Farms 11425 155th St N Marine on St Croix MN Jami Meath lhkgsp@gmail.com 651-895-2664 www.gspcmn.org
 May 16 Lake Country Retriever Club Hunt Test MN Horse & Hunt Club 2920 E 220th St Prior Lake MN Janet Wirth 612-940-4643 www.lcretrieverclub.org
 May 27-29 Central Minnesota Retriever Club Trial Marten Meadows 1 1/2 Miles Est Of Hwy 10 Sauk Rapids MN Paul Hanson pjhanso@gmail.com 320-493-6055 www.cmrcmn.org

June 17-19 Hinckley Retriever Club Trial Kettle River Retriever Grounds 27846 Roberts Rd. Hinckley MN Sonia Liedman sliedman@frontiernet.net 651-402-9022 www.lcretrieverclub.org

MISSOURI

April 10-11 Bootheel Retriever Club Hunt Test Mantz WMA Millersville MO Ed Bickerstaff bickerstaffeddie@gmail.com 573-748-0560
 April 17-18 Missouri Uplands NAVH-DA Huntsville MO William Wundrack wundracks2016@gmail.com 573-489-2899 http://www.mouplands.org/

MONTANA

June 19-20 Missouri Headwaters E Springer Club Hunt Test Black Bird Fishing Access Three Forks MT Cheryl Johnson shadowbark2014@gmail.com 406.581.2805 www.mhgdcc.org

NORTH DAKOTA

June 24-29 Minot Retriever Club Hunt Test Minot Retriever Grounds Burlington ND Ed Sehn sehn@srt.com 701-833-7826

PENNSYLVANIA

April 10-11 Schuylkill Valley GSP Club Hunt Test Freeland Kennel Club Weatherly PA Deborah Wenger dbwengrich@gmail.com 484-354-5577 http://www.svgspc.com/
 April 24-25 Greater Delaware Valley Pointer Club Hunt Test Clover Hollow Hunting Preserve 6951 Lime Kiln Road Slatington PA Peter Benson yvette.thomas@pmca.com 610-739-3309 www.dweimclub.org
 June 4-6 Fort Pitt Retriever Club Trial Pymatuning Waterfowl Area Crawford County Linesville PA Patrick Martin patmartin317@gmail.com 724-822-7713

WISCONSIN

April 10-11 GSP Club Of WI Hunt Test Ottawa Field Trial Grounds Hwy 67 and 106 Eagle WI Karen Combs thtgspp@yahoo.com 920-303-0240 gspcw.com
 April 20-21 West Allis Training Kennel Club Retriever Trial West Allis Training Kennel Club Hwy Es S73 W24150 National Ave Big Bend WI Ann Klobucnik baklobucnik@wi.rr.com 414-573-4627 www.watkc.org
 May 20-23 West Allis Training Kennel Club Retriever Trial West Allis Training Kennel Club Hwy Es S73 W24150 National Ave Big Bend WI Ann Klobucnik baklobucnik@wi.rr.com 414-573-4627 www.watkc.org
 June 20-23 West Allis Training Kennel Club Retriever Trial West Allis Training Kennel Club Hwy Es S73 W24150 National Ave Big Bend WI Ann Klobucnik baklobucnik@wi.rr.com 414-573-4627 www.watkc.org

A more complete calendar at www.Bdarn.com
 "In a survey, 80 percent of women thought their ass was too fat, 15 percent said their ass was too thin and the other five per cent said they didn't care - they would have married him anyway."

GET to KNOW ME!

Will Stone's South Dakota Hunts

By Jerry Thoms

Anyone with an obsession for ringnecks has to chase roosters on this 1,000 acres of pristinely managed prairie.

Described as one of the oldest commercial hunting operations in South Dakota, South Dakota Pheasant Hunts started in 1955 on the family farmstead by Bill Stone and is now owned and managed by his son, Will, and Will's wife, Fay.

"Dad planted trees, preserved wetlands, and cultivated native prairie years before there were many government financial programs to support any kind of conservation practices to create habitat for wildlife," the 62-year-old Will recalls. Stone has developed his dad's legacy into over 1,000 acres of land all devoted to wildlife in general and pheasants

er and weather conditions. Self-guided hunts are offered to clients with their own dogs.

"We encourage our hunters to bring their own dogs," Stone says. "And more than half our hunters bring several different breeds of hunting dogs."

Large groups of 20 or more hunters are welcome, but they might be divided into smaller parties for convenience, efficiency and safety. Some hunts require the ability to walk a couple miles in relatively heavy cover consisting of food plots, shoulder-high prairie grass, head-high cattails, and treelines with tall shrubs and hardwoods.

Some of these habitat types can be hunted by "wingmen" who prefer easier walks in cut paths along field edges. Likewise, some hunters can block the ends of food plots, fields, sloughs and tree belts where pheasants are concentrated then flushed in bunches of a dozen or more.

Though newcomers to South Dakota Pheasant Hunts are encouraged to go with the guides the first day or two, clients can hunt on their own once they become familiar with the property. Though large groups can be accommodated, small groups made up of family members or friends have always been important at South Dakota Pheasant Hunts.

Special consideration is given to parent-and-children combinations because Will Stone enjoys seeing moms and dads and sons and daughters sharing outdoor experiences.

"Several family groups have hunted at South Dakota Pheasant Hunts for three generations," he notes.
WHEN TO COME Popular times for coming to South Dakota Pheasant Hunts start in September when the weather is typically cool in the early mornings and late afternoons while mid-day might be too warm for long walks for hunters and their dogs. By October, most days will start in the 30s and rise into the 40s or 50s, providing comfortable conditions for longer walks in heavy cover. November and



December usually will be cool to cold with a chance of snow and high winds that will push pheasants into high grass, tall cattails and heavy brush in the trees.

South Dakota hunting preserves are open until March 31, which provides three months of possible winter trips "for preserve pheasants that all behave wilder than wild this time of the year," hunters often say. There's a "weather gamble," however, during these months, so long-range weather forecasts need to be carefully watched when making any late-season plans.

Rates at South Dakota Pheasant Hunts are among the most economical in the region with day hunts priced at \$150 per gun for three birds with \$48 per person per day fee for a preserve license or \$78 for a five-day license plus \$150 per day for three roosters. Or, to avoid buying a daily or five-day license, a hunter can buy a nonresident \$125 South Dakota state small game license which allows 10 days of pheasant hunting in the state and seasonal long access to preserves anywhere in South Dakota from Sept.1 to March 31.

The South Dakota small game license is for sale at South Dakota Pheasant Hunts lodge. For those with a state hunting license, there are thousands of acres of public access hunting property within 40 miles of Stone's preserve.

"Some of our hunters will hunt our property for a couple of days then go to public land for a few days," Stone says.

FINE AMENITIES For those interested in wildlife art, The Terry Redlin Museum is located in Watertown, 27 miles to the northwest of Gary on I-29. The museum is a huge structure containing hundreds of Redlin's original paintings in the permanent collection as well as thousands of prints and

other art objects for sale. Twelve miles south of Watertown is Kone's Korner, a medium-size gun store with a wide variety of new and older collectible and classic firearms for sale. Some fine shotguns are also available.

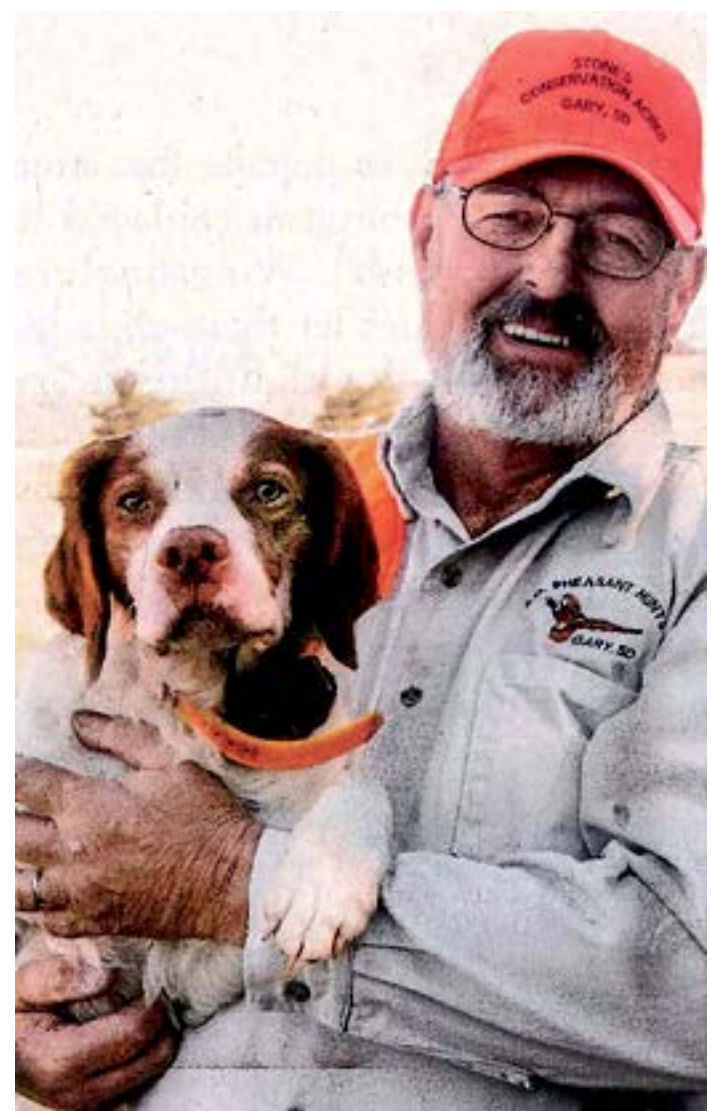
The main lodge for South Dakota Pheasant Hunt is in Gary, 75 miles north of Sioux Falls on I-90 then 10 miles east of Clear Lake on Highway 22. A 140-year old church building has been converted into a motel-type facility where each of 10 rooms has two beds and a private bathroom with a toilet, sink, and shower.

There is a lower level in the building with a 175-person capacity dining area and a complete kitchen where country-type breakfasts (eggs and bacon with toast and pancakes) and lunch (homemade soup and sandwiches) are prepared daily by the staff. Clients are welcome to use the kitchen for preparing their own snacks and meals. Evening meals can be provided at the lodge or can be had in town at the local restaurant. Or at two supper clubs only a few minutes away.

"We also suggest that hunters who bring their own dogs be sure that their dogs are up-to-date in their training, in good physical condition and practiced in hunting pheasants. We also encourage the use of e-collars with stimulation and beeper locators to maintain control of all dogs in the field," Stone emphasizes.

"Our ad in *Gun Dog* magazine has produced about half our business in the past 20 years with most hunters every season," Stone says. "So there are lots of references available for prospective customers!"

For more information on South Dakota Pheasant Hunts, call 605-520-8836 or 877-260-2686 and checkout their website at huntingsdpheasants.com.



and pheasant hunting in particular.

Located in remote farm setting in east-central South Dakota five minutes from the town Gary, South Dakota Pheasant Hunts consists of may corn and sorghum food plots, huge cattail sloughs wet in the middle but walkable on the edges, long treelines full of pheasant-friendly brush that only dogs can navigate and great tracts of native prairie where ringnecks may loaf all day or finally come to roost in late afternoon.

Guided hunts are offered using Stone's veteran Brittans that spend more than 140 days in the field each season searching for, pointing, and retrieving roosters in all kinds of cov-

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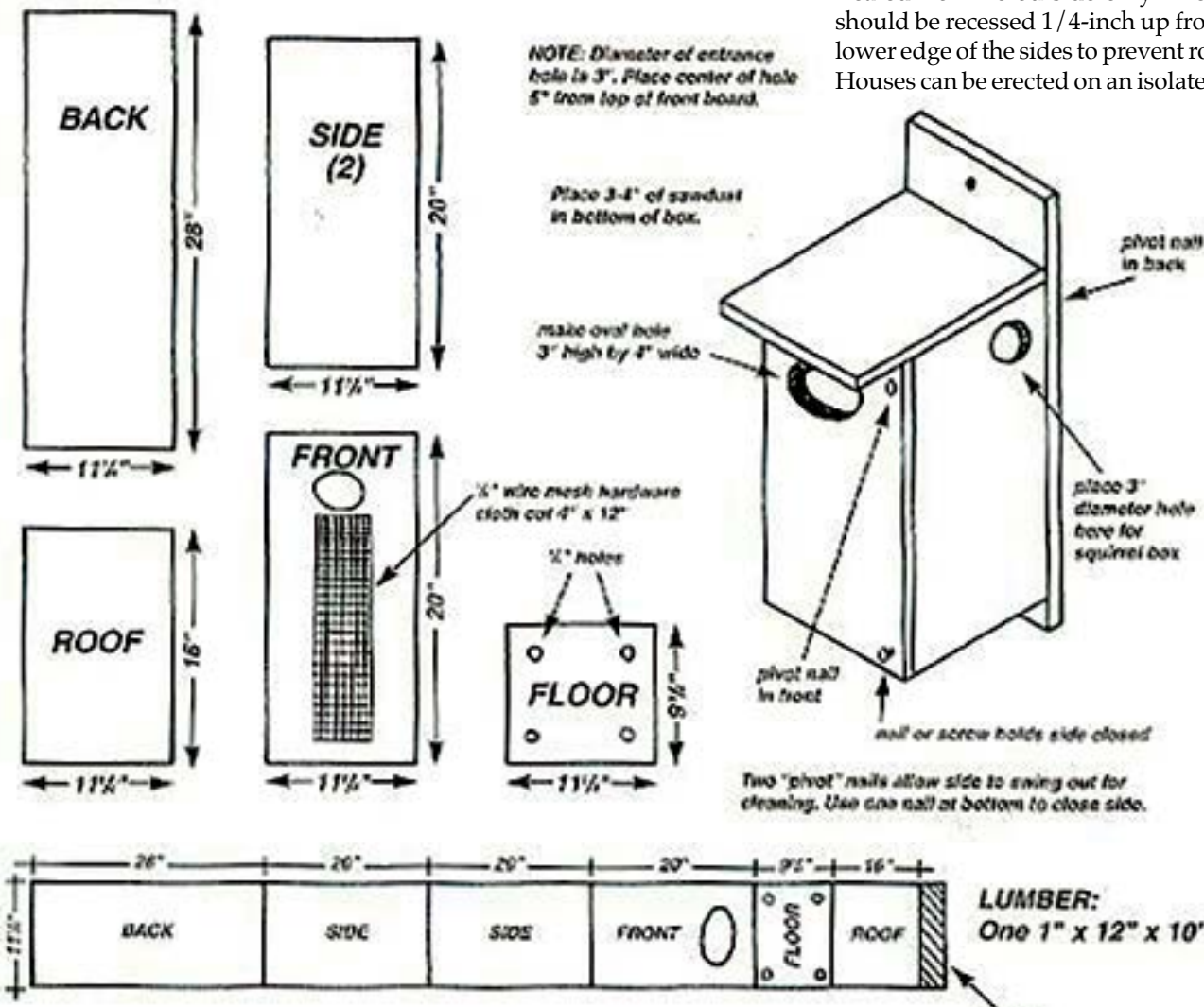
That Time of Year to Build Wood Duck Boxes

The traditional wood duck box has helped the beautiful wood duck make a remarkable recovery during the past 20 years. In this century, some people believed the wood duck was becoming extinct.

The entrance hole should be an oval 3 inches high and 4 inches wide. This hole excludes most raccoons. The hole should be centered 19 inches above the floor. An 18" x 3" strip of 1/4 mesh hardware cloth should be cut out and the cut edges folded back. This should be attached inside the box under the entrance to function as

a ladder for the newly hatched ducklings. Sometimes squirrels will tear this ladder loose so it will need to be checked annually. Or the wood under the entrance hole should be roughened with a chisel to give the ducklings the footholds they need. The roughened area should extend below the entrance hole for 1 foot. At least 3 inches of mixed sawdust and chain saw wood chips should be placed in the nest to serve as nesting material. The roof should be wired so the box can be opened for maintenance. Paired roofing nails with large heads should be used around the top of the box to wire it shut so raccoons can't open the box. The house should be constructed of wood that is strong and can be made weather resistant. It can be painted, stained, or treated - on the outside only. The floor should be recessed 1/4-inch up from the lower edge of the sides to prevent rotting. Houses can be erected on an isolated tree

or on a 16-foot long, 4" x 4" post that is cypress, cedar or preservative-treated wood. An aluminum or tin sheet should be nailed around the post under the house to prevent squirrels and raccoons from entering. Used aluminum printing plates from newspaper offices can be purchased very cheaply and stapled lengthwise to the 4" x 4" post under the nest box. Since wood ducks are not territorial, two or more houses can be placed on the same post or tree. Vigilant starling control will be necessary in wood duck boxes. Remove their nests and eggs whenever they occur. The top of a wood duck box should be fastened to its support so that it leans forward a couple of inches. This facilitates the drainage of the rainwater. To strengthen the box, nail a 9-3/4" long 1x2 along the inside top edge of the front. Nail a similar size piece onto the back just under where the roof rests. Boxes placed on posts in water should be about 6 to 8 feet above the water's surface. Wood duck boxes should be placed over water or in woodland habitat up to half-a-mile from lakes, ponds, marshes, and rivers. Since the hen must lead her ducklings to water after they hatch, the habitat between the house location and the water's edge should be free of major obstacles like highways, fences with small mesh wire, and street curbing. Box entrances near water should face the water. Otherwise, there seems to be a slight preference for south and west facing entrance holes. Ideally, boxes on land should be 30 to 100 feet from the water's edge. The chance of predation by raccoons is higher along the water's edge. Annual maintenance on wood duck boxes should be completed by March 1. Boxes should be opened, inspected and more sawdust added if necessary. You may wish to cut a small door into the side of wood duck boxes so you can easily check the boxes from the side. Make sure the door fits tightly, admits no sunlight or rain, and can be wired shut to prevent raccoons from entering.



State News You Can Use!

ILLINOIS

IDNR AWARDS GRANTS FOR PHEASANT HABITAT PROJECTS

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) today announced the approval of \$151,645 in grants for wildlife habitat projects through the State Pheasant Fund Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program.

The program provides for enhancing pheasant wildlife habitat through projects developed by not-for-profit organizations and governmental entities. Funding for the State Pheasant Fund Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program comes from the sale of Habitat Stamps to hunters.

The State Pheasant Fund Advisory Committee approved \$151,645 in funding for the projects outlined below. They also approved \$348,355 in funds set aside for IDNR land acquisition for additional state pheasant habitat land areas as those become available.

- Pheasants Forever - A project to hire four fulltime positions for Farm Bill Biologists to provide conservation technical assistance for the restoration of improved habitat on state owned and private lands totaling approximately 30,000 acres of pheasant habitat restoration. These positions will help manage existing projects in Peoria, McLean, Woodford, Livingston, Tazewell, DeWitt, Ford, Iroquois, Kankakee, Vermillion, Champaign, Douglas, Piatt, Fayette, Effingham, Jasper, Shelby, Cumberland, Moultrie, Coles, Rock Island, Henry, Mercer, Henderson, Warren and Knox counties, and seek out additional projects with landowners and resource professionals within the project area. State Habitat funds totaling \$125,876 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$377,624 in matching funds. <https://pheasantsforever.org/>

- Pheasants Forever - A project to purchase a Broyhill Sprayer Unit and a Great Plains Seed Drill to be used for pheasant habitat restoration work on state-owned and private lands. This equipment will be stored and managed by the local Pheasants Forever Chapters of Tazewell and Stephenson counties. State Habitat funds totaling \$25,769 were awarded, with the grantee providing \$10,000 in matching funds. <https://pheasantsforever.org/>

Potential applicants for these pheasant habitat programs can find more information on the IDNR website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/grants/Pages/Pheasant-Funding.aspx>

To view the Notice of Funding Opportunity for these programs or to browse all State of Illinois grant opportunities, see <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Grants/SitePages/CSFA.aspx>

IOWA

HABITAT IS CRITICAL FOR PHEASANTS DURING LONG, HARD WINTERS

Iowa's run of mild winters is gone, buried under a head-high snowdrift and frozen from weeks of negative temperatures. This return to the extreme has some residents wanting to help the now highly visible pheasants and quail and calling the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) about placing corn and other grains out for the birds to eat.

While that sounds like a good idea, Todd Bogenschutz, upland wildlife biologist with the Iowa DNR said what these birds need most is shelter, not food.

"Their survival is not dependent on food supplies," he said. "Virtually all of Iowa's winter pheasant and quail mortality can be attributed to the lack of adequate winter habitat. Without it, the birds are vulnerable to hypothermia and exposure from severe wind chill and blowing snow."

Iowa's recent run of bitterly cold weather, wind and blowing snow highlights the need for winter habitat not only to survive the arctic conditions and avoid predators looking for a meal, but come spring, that habitat becomes important for pheasant and quail chicks to survive.

"Quality habitat and winter cover are really the key to not only surviving a winter like this, but to allow the pheasants and quail that do make it to spring to rebuild the populations," Bogenschutz said. "These birds are amazingly resilient if they have the proper habitat."

For those interested in helping wildlife, Bogenschutz recommended they develop quality habitat on a portion of their land to allow the birds to survive future winters.

"Once winter sets in, it's too late," he said.

The Iowa DNR recommends a minimum of two acres of multi-row conifer/shrub shelterbelts, switchgrass and cattails next to food plots for habitat. Food plots should be between 2-5 acres and at least 100 yards from tall trees. Corn and sorghum provide the best food source in heavy snow.

Landowners interested in developing habitat should contact their local Iowa DNR private lands staff at <https://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/DNR-Staff-Offices> then scroll down to the Private Lands Staff pdf link, Pheasants Forever staff or the NRCS. Cost-share assistance for shelterbelts, switchgrass, and food plot establishment is available from most county Pheasants Forever chapters.

KANSAS

AERIAL SURVEYS TO DOCUMENT LESSER AND GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN POPULATION TRENDS

Aerial surveys conducted by helicopters will begin March 16 and continue through early May in areas of Kansas containing prairie chicken habitat. The surveys are conducted annually by the Western Association of Fish and



From KDWPT

Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism (KDWP) to document population trends and determine how populations are responding to current management strategies.

From sunrise until three hours after sunrise, KDWP biologists will work with a contracted aerial service company to operate three helicopters throughout the state's prairie chicken range (western, northcentral and eastern portions of the state). Surveys will be conducted during the prairie chicken lekking period when the birds are displaying on leks - also called "booming grounds." While surveying, the helicopters will fly pre-determined routes at altitudes less than 50 feet above the ground.

Data collected from the aerial surveys will be used in conjunction with data from KDWP's annual ground surveys to inform future management efforts.

Initial results will be available beginning July 1. For more information on prairie chickens in Kansas, including a map of the species' range, visit ksoutdoors.com/Hunting/Upland-Birds/Greater-Prairie-Chicken.

KENTUCKY

FARMERS CAN EARN \$10,000 IN COOPERATIVE DOVE FIELD PROGRAM

Farmers can earn extra money and support Kentucky's hunting heritage by participating in the Cooperative Dove Field Program offered by the Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. The program leases privately owned and managed fields for public dove hunting in the fall. Enrollment is open through March 1, 2021.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is particularly interested in landowners willing to sow multiple crops. Landowners can receive up to \$10,000 in the program by earning \$300 per acre planted.

Under state law, landowners who allow the public to use their property for outdoor recreation without charging a fee are provided legal protections. These protections extend to those who lease land to the department for public hunting access.

"We want farmers to sow strips or plots of wheat, millet, corn and sunflowers," said Wes Little, a biologist with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife. "Multiple crops

are best because if you have a failure of one crop, you still have three others to attract doves."

Participating fields must be at least 10 acres. Additional lease payments are available for landowners who plant borders around the hunting fields.

Little said dove field leases usually run from 20 to 30 acres. Payment amounts can vary based on the number of acres enrolled, crop type and fulfillment of the field management agreement with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife is interested in reaching agreements with property owners who have acreage in underserved areas that have significant numbers of dove hunters. In the western part of the state, this includes Caldwell, Calloway, Christian, Daviess, Fulton, Grayson, Hardin, Hart, Hickman, LaRue, Logan, Lyon, Simpson, Todd and Trigg counties. Boyle, Cumberland, Laurel, Lincoln, Pulaski and Wayne counties are areas of interest in southcentral Kentucky.

The department also encourages applications from counties near cities with populations greater than 20,000 for the program. To get the process started, contact your regional Fish and Wildlife private lands biologist or Natural Resources Conservation Service liaison.

For more information, visit www.ky.gov or call 1-800-858-1549 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (EST) on weekdays.

MINNESOTA

LANDOWNER ENROLLMENT SET TO BEGIN FOR WALK-IN ACCESS PROGRAM

Sign-ups are March 15-May 14 at local soil and water conservation district offices

Enrollment opens for Minnesota's Walk-In Access program, which pays private landowners to allow public hunting on their lands, on Monday, March 15. This year, landowners can receive \$18 per acre enrolled. And the program is expanding to include more counties.



From KF&W

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"We're excited to see the program grow," said Troy Dale, interim program supervisor. "Enrollment in the Walk-In Access program will be available for landowners in more than 50 Minnesota counties."

Since 2011, Walk-In Access has enrolled land parcels 40 acres or larger with high-quality natural cover. The program prefers that land also be enrolled in conservation efforts, such as the Conservation Reserve Program or Reinvest in Minnesota, but that is not required.

Hunters must purchase a \$3 permit with a hunting license to access enrolled land. Walk-In Access parcels are marked with highly visible signs posted by DNR staff.

The Walk-In Access program is a win-win for hunters and landowners, Dale said. "For just a few dollars, hunters have access to nearly 30,000 acres of privately-owned land that is enrolled in the program."

Participating hunters can access Walk-In Access land Sept. 1 through May 31. Hunting laws are enforced by DNR conservation officers. Landowners are not required to purchase additional liability insurance.

Recreational use laws provide extra liability protection for acres enrolled in the Walk-In Access program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has provided funding for the Walk-in Access funding through September 2023. Other funding comes from a surcharge on all nonresident hunting licenses and donations from hunters.

Landowners can sign up for the program at their local soil and water conservation district office or by contacting Troy Dale, program coordinator, at 507-537-6616.

More information is available at mnd.gov/walkin (link is external).

ONLINE MEETING TO FOCUS ON 2021 WATERFOWL SEASON REGULATIONS AND DATES

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources will host a virtual town hall meeting from 6-8 p.m. on Thursday, April 1 for people to learn, comment and ask questions about the 2021 waterfowl hunting season and proposed regulatory changes that will be released for public comment on March 29.

"We're evaluating season dates for each duck zone and considering some additional duck and goose hunting opportunities," said Steve Cordts, DNR waterfowl specialist. "We're looking at potential changes such as an experimental teal season based on the public feedback we've received so far."

Every five years the states can adjust the timing of duck seasons. The deadline to communicate changes to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for 2021-2024 is May 1, 2021.



PHOTO CREDIT Dove season kicks off fall migratory game bird seasons and will run Sept. 1 through Nov. 29. MDC

The DNR began seeking input on potential waterfowl season and regulatory changes last fall. An online questionnaire to gather public input on potential changes closed Jan. 31.

Staff are reviewing input collected so far to help determine which regulatory to propose. Those proposals will be available on Monday, March 29, on the DNR's waterfowl management page (link is external). The virtual town hall meeting on April 1 will give the public an opportunity to learn and ask questions about those changes.

Virtual town hall registration details and instructions, as well as proposed season dates and regulations, are available on the DNR's waterfowl management page (link is external). Individuals with a disability who need a reasonable accommodation to participate should contact Liz Scherber at 651-259-5223, elizabeth.scherber@state.mn.us (link sends email) or your preferred telecommunications relay provider by Thursday, March 18.

Participants must pre-register in order to ask questions via the online chat. The DNR will consider input received during the meeting but people also are encouraged to submit their complete comments online beginning Monday, March 29, and concluding Sunday, April 11.

LIGHT GOOSE CONSERVATION HARVEST BEGINS FEB. 18

Hunters can help reduce the population of light geese through a federally authorized spring conservation harvest that runs Feb. 18 through April 30. Light geese are snow geese, blue-phased snow geese and the smaller Ross's goose. Harvest regulations can be found on the DNR website. The conservation action aims to reduce damage from these geese to fragile

ecosystems in Arctic coastal areas and around Hudson Bay.

MISSOURI

MDC SETS MIGRATORY GAME BIRD AND WATERFOWL HUNTING SEASONS

The Missouri Conservation Commission approved recommendations from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) at its March 26 meeting for upcoming 2021 migratory-game-bird-hunting seasons and 2021-2022 waterfowl-hunting seasons.

2021 MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTING

Mourning Doves, Eurasian Collared Doves, and White-Winged Doves: Season: Sept. 1 through Nov. 29 Limits: 15 daily and 45 in possession combined total for all three species Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

American Woodcock: Season: Oct. 15 through Nov. 28, Limits: 3 daily and 9 in possession, Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

2021-2022 WATERFOWL HUNTING

Teal: Season: Sept. 11-26, Limits: 6 daily and 18 in possession, Hours: Sunrise to sunset

Ducks Season:

* North Zone: Oct. 30 through Dec. 28 * Middle Zone: Nov. 6 - 14 and Nov. 20 through Jan. 9, 2022 * South Zone: Nov. 25 - 28 and Dec. 7 through Jan. 31, 2021, Bag Limit: 6 ducks daily with species restrictions of: * 4 mallards (no more than 2 females) * 2 scaup for first 45 days and 1 scaup for last 15 days * 3 wood ducks * 2 redheads * 2 hooded mergansers * 1 pintail * 2 canvasbacks * 2 black ducks * 1 mottled duck, Possession Limit: Three times the daily bag or 18 total, varies by species

Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Snow Geese (White and Blue Phases) and Ross's Geese: Season: Nov. 11 through Feb. 6, 2022, Limits: 20 blue, snow, or Ross's geese daily with no possession limit, Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

White-Fronted Geese: Season: Nov. 11 through Feb. 6, 2022, Limits: 2 daily and 6 in possession, Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Canada Geese and Brant: Season: Oct. 2-10 and Nov. 11 - Feb.

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6, 2022, Limits: 3 Canada geese and Brant in aggregate daily, 9 in possession, Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to sunset

Light Goose Conservation Order: Season: Feb. 7, 2022, through April 30, 2022, Limits: No daily or possession limits, Hours: One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset

Methods: For the taking of blue, snow and Ross's geese, hunters may use shotguns capable of holding more than three shells and recorded or electronically amplified bird calls or sounds or imitations of bird calls or sounds.

YOUTH HUNTING DAYS: North Zone: Oct. 23 and 24, Middle Zone: Oct. 23 and 24, South Zone: Nov. 20 and 21, Limits: Same as during regular waterfowl season, Hours: Same as during regular waterfowl season, Requirements: Any person 15 years of age or younger may participate in youth waterfowl hunting days without permit provided they are in the immediate presence of an adult 18 years of age or older. If the youth hunter is not certified in hunter education, the adult must have the required permits and have in his or her possession proof of hunter education unless exempt. The adult may not hunt ducks but may participate in other seasons that are open on youth hunting days.

MDC AND TNC OFFER FREE VIRTUAL PRAIRIE-CHICKEN WEBINAR APRIL 9

Greater prairie-chickens are links to Missouri's once vast native grasslands, and though state endangered, they still dance and "boom" on Harrison County hilltops thanks to conservation partnerships. The males' noble struts and stomps on hilltop leks to attract hens for mating will be offered via an online webcam this spring. Prairie-chicken conservation is a partnership between the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and private landowners in the Grand River Grasslands. A free webinar about prairie-chickens will take people virtually to the prairie from 7 to 8 a.m. on Friday, April 9, with live video from a TNC camera focused on a lek at Dunn Ranch Prairie.

Featured speakers for the webinar will be Steve Buback, MDC natural history biologist, and Kent Wamsley, TNC grasslands and sustainable agriculture strategy manager in Missouri. They will discuss the history of prairie-chickens on Missouri's native grasslands and the challenges the relatively small flocks of endangered birds face today. During the webinar, there will also be live video from an active prairie-chicken lek at TNC's Dunn Ranch Prairie.

"Prairie-chickens are natural and iconic representatives of the tall-grass prairie," Buback said. "Their leks are an ancient, hardwired part of these birds, demonstrated by the fact that even birds trapped elsewhere and reintroduced to a grassland will use the same ancestral lek sites. Having never seen a landscape prior to release, they choose the same sites for courtship

as prior prairie-chickens did for thousands of years."

To connect with the webinar and live lek cam: * Register and RSVP link for webinar - <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZDQ>.

* View lek on live camera anytime www.nature.org/dunnranchlive.

In-person viewing of the lek will not be offered this year due to COVID-19 precautions and to reduce disturbance on the lek. But the lek camera will remain available to the public for virtual viewing online through May. The camera will switch to bison calves when prairie-chickens are done booming.



PHOTO: Arise early, pour coffee, and learn about prairie-chickens and this spring's online web lek cam when MDC and TNC host a free webinar about these iconic grassland birds from 7 to 8 a.m. on Friday, April 9. MDC

The prairie-chicken flocks in the Grand River Grasslands benefit from native grassland habitat improvements by MDC, TNC, private landowners, and conservation efforts in neighboring Iowa. TNC's Dunn Ranch and MDC's private land conservation experts are showing how healthy native grasslands can be part of profitable ranching and farming operations. The Grand River Grasslands are an MDC priority geography for enhancing native habitats for all grassland birds, butterflies, and wildlife.

For information on incorporating healthy grassland and stream management into plans for your property, visit Your Property | Missouri Department of Conservation (mo.gov). To learn more about greater prairie-chickens, visit <https://short.mdc.mo.gov/ZG>.

MONTANA

APPLICATIONS FOR OPEN FIELDS PROGRAM DUE APRIL 16

The deadline to apply for the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks' Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters is April 16. Open Fields is offered through FWP's Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program and is available to private landowners with existing Conservation Reserve Program contracts with at least two years remaining on the contract. Landowners applying for enrollment in the 2021 general CRP sign-up are encouraged to apply for Open Fields.

Up to 320 CRP acres per landowner may be enrolled. In cases where landowners have CRP on

different properties separated by more than a quarter mile, they may be able enroll up to 320 acres of CRP on each property. Participants receive a one-time payment based on \$5 per CRP-acre each year the CRP is enrolled in the federal program.

In addition to rental payments, landowners may also qualify for financial incentives to conduct specific mid-contract management activities, such as light disking, with prior approval through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Landowners who elect to participate in Open Fields and conduct those specified mid-contract management activities on up to

320 CRP acres may receive an additional one-year bonus of \$20 per acre, up to 320 acres.

All enrollments must be on private land that is legally accessible. Landowners must agree to allow free walk-in game bird hunting without further permission. Open Fields leases allow for haying or grazing once in five years when pre-approved by the USDA Farm Services Agency.

Enrolled lands will be clearly signed to allow for walk-in game bird hunting. Because this program is intended to expand areas open to the public for game bird hunting, lands that are already enrolled in FWP's Block Management Program or the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program do not qualify. Landowners already enrolled in those programs are encouraged to contact FWP for other CRP-related habitat improvement and incentive options, including Habitat Management Leases and CRP Seed Cost-shares.

Applications for enrollment in Open Fields for Game Bird Hunters may be submitted through April 16, 2021. For more information and an application, visit FWP online at fwp.mt.gov; and then click "Open Fields Application."

NEBRASKA

NEBRASKA DUCK AND COOT SEASON CLARIFIED

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's release of duck and coot season dates was unclear after being approved at a March 17 meeting.

To clarify, the 2021-2022 Nebraska duck and coot hunting season

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is: Zone 1: Oct. 16-Dec. 28; Zone 2: Oct. 9-Dec. 21 in Low Plains zone; Oct. 9-Dec. 21 and Jan. 5-26 in High Plains zone; Zone 3: Oct. 23-Jan. 4 and Jan. 5-26 in High Plains zone; Zone 4: Oct. 30-Jan. 11; Daily bag: Tier 1: six ducks, with restrictions; Tier II: three ducks, any species, any sex; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

COMMISSIONERS APPROVE WATERFOWL RECOMMENDATIONS, TWO-TIER DUCK BAG LIMIT

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission approved 2021-2022 waterfowl hunting season recommendations at its March 17 meeting in Norfolk.

Among the recommendations was a “two-tier” duck bag limit option a hunter will choose from for the season.

Nationally, duck hunter numbers have fallen nearly 44% since 1990, and Nebraska has lost, on average, 464 duck hunters per year since 1990. A recent survey conducted by Game and Parks; South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks; and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has determined that duck identification skills are a major factor preventing potential hunters from picking up the sport.

Nebraska has been given federal authority to implement an experimental system related to bag limits. The new season options are an effort to make getting into hunting easier for novice duck hunters.

When hunters register for their Harvest Information Program number, they will choose between two options. Tier I is the current traditional six-duck limit with species and sex restrictions. Tier II allows hunters to harvest three ducks of any kind. Once a tier is selected, it may not be changed during the season.

Nebraska is joined by South Dakota, which approved two-tier regulations earlier this month, in the five-year pilot program.

The full approved 2021-2022 waterfowl orders are:

Early Teal – Low Plains: Sept. 4-19; High Plains: Sept. 4-12; Daily bag limit: six; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

Youth Hunt – Zone 1: Oct. 9-10; Zone 2: Oct. 2-3; Zone 3: Oct. 16-17; Zone 4: Oct. 23-24; Daily bag: Tier 1: six ducks, with restrictions; Tier II: three ducks, any species, any sex; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

Duck and Coot – Zone 1: Oct. 16-Dec. 28; Zone 2: Oct. 9-Dec. 21 and Jan. 5-26; Zone 3: Oct. 23-Jan. 4 and Jan. 5-26; Zone 4: Oct. 30-Jan. 11; Daily bag: Tier 1: six ducks, with restrictions; Tier II: three ducks, any species, any sex; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

Dark Goose – Platte River Unit: Oct. 28-Feb. 9; Niobrara Unit: Oct. 28-Feb. 9; North Central Unit: Oct. 11-Jan. 23; Daily bag limit: five; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

White-fronted Goose – Statewide: Oct. 9-Dec. 19 and Jan. 25-

Feb. 9; Daily bag limit: two; Possession limit: Three times the daily bag limit

Light Goose Regular Season – Statewide: Oct. 9-Jan. 5 and Jan. 25-Feb. 9; Daily bag limit: 50; Possession limit: none

Light Goose Conservation Order – East Zone: Feb. 10-April 15; West Zone: Feb. 10-April 5; Rainwater Basin Zone: Feb. 10-April 5; Daily bag and possession limits: none

Crow – Statewide: Oct. 15-Dec. 15 and Jan. 13-March 14

Falconry – Concurrent with teal, youth and regular duck season dates, plus, Zone 1: Feb. 25-March 10; Zone 2: Low Plains: Feb. 25-March 10; High Plains: Concurrent with all duck season dates in High Plains Zone; Zone 3: Low Plains: Feb. 25-March 10; High Plains: Concurrent with all duck season dates in High Plains Zone; Zone 4: Feb. 25-March 10

The commissioners also:

- amended Administration Regulations relating to permit fees. The changes include establishing a special season landowner deer permit for residents and nonresidents, establishing fees for big game and paddlefish preference/bonus point purchases in lieu of draw, removing the resident aquatic invasive species registration fee and increasing the boat registration fees, and eliminating the duplicate/replacement fee on all permits except deer, antelope, elk, turkey, mountain lion and paddlefish;

- renamed Looking Glass Creek Wildlife Management Area in Platte County to the Lee Rupp Wildlife Management Area;

- adopted Phase II of the Lake McConaughy/Lake Ogallala Master Plan; and
- adopted fee increases for select state park area activities, lodging and rental facilities.

The commissioners also watched a video presentation on a project in western Nebraska in which 80 antelope were captured and fitted with GPS collars. Researchers will follow the collars to learn about the movement, habitat use and survival of antelope in Nebraska.

They also heard a presentation about aquatic invasive species and the agency’s efforts to combat them.

News Channel Nebraska, represented by reporter Andy Classen, and Farm Focused, represented by owner Ben Evers, presented the commissioners with a \$1,500 donation to the Hunters Helping the Hungry Program.

NORTH DAKOTA

R3 GRANT APPLICATION TO ASSIST HUNTERS

Wildlife, shooting, fraternal and nonprofit civic organizations are urged to submit an application for the Encouraging Tomorrow’s Hunters program, a North Dakota Game and Fish Department grant program developed to assist in the recruitment, retention and reactivation of hunters.

The maximum grant allowed is \$3,000. The program currently helps fund approximately 40 club and organizational events and projects each year, with an average grant of \$1,550.

Grant funds help cover event expenses, including promotional printing; event memorabilia such as shirts, caps or vests; ammunition and targets; and eye and ear protection.

Past funding has enabled groups to conduct pheasant and waterfowl hunts, or sponsor trap and other shooting events, including archery and rifle shooting. Game and Fish has a separate grant program that supports new high school trapshooting teams.

Any club or organization interested in conducting a hunting or shooting event can get more information, including a grant application, from the Game and Fish Department website, gf.nd.gov, or by contacting outreach biologist Pat Lothspeich at 701-328-6332. The deadline to apply for a 2021 grant is April 27.

SOUTH DAKOTA

NEST PREDATOR BOUNTY PROGRAM APPROVED FOR 2021 AND 2022

At their March meeting, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission approved a resolution to authorize the Nest Predator Bounty Program for 2021 and 2022. The resolution specifies that the 2021 and 2022 program will include a payment of \$10/predator with a maximum of \$500,000 in bounty payments each year. The Commission amended their January resolution, modifying the dates of when the program will start and end. The GFP Commission unanimously agreed to run the 2021 program from April 1 through July 1, unless the \$500,000 maximum is reached.

In 2022, the program will begin on March 1 for youth under 18, then open to all South Dakota residents beginning April 1 and running through July 1, unless the \$500,000 maximum is reached.

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“This program enhances pheasant and duck nest success at localized levels and encourages families to get involved in wildlife management,” said interim GFP department secretary Kevin Robling. “We have rich trapping traditions here in South Dakota and this program is designed to encourage youth and families to step outside and enjoy our incredible outdoor resources.”

As soon as the program launches on April 1, GFP will provide a weekly giveaway for all youth (under the age of 18) who participate in the program. The giveaway will consist of a GFP-sponsored trapping package that includes three live traps, knife and the National Trappers Association Trapping Handbook. Follow our GFP Facebook page for more details.

GFP will also enhance the ETHICS SD program, which doubled in size in 2020 reaching 110 new students in 11 counties. ETHICS SD is a partnership between trapping organizations, GFP and 4H where youth learn trapping skills, fur handling techniques, and elements of wildlife management.

“Educating youth on the importance of the trapline and wildlife management are key to ensuring our outdoor traditions remain strong for future generations,” said Robling. “Trapping provides an experience to explore the outdoors and create lasting stories and memories while making a difference for managing wildlife in South Dakota.”

With help from mother nature, resulting in a mild winter, enhanced efforts on habitat management and the continuation of the nest predator bounty program we should expect to see fantastic bird numbers for the 2021 pheasant season, Robling added.

Individuals are encouraged to share their trapping and outdoor

“The 2020 waterfowl seasons will be based on the 2019 continental waterfowl population estimates, which were at near-record estimates since U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) surveys began 64 years ago. With above-average precipitation last fall and this winter in Wisconsin, we expect populations to remain high in 2020. If we have favorable conditions this fall, hunters can expect good waterfowl hunting opportunities,” said Taylor Finger, DNR migratory game bird ecologist.

Fall Waterfowl Hunting Season Public Hearing Schedule:

* Monday, March 9, 7 p.m., La Crosse. - State Office Building, Rooms B-19 and B-20, 3550 Mormon Coulee Rd.;

* Tuesday, March 10, 7 p.m., Rice Lake - AmeriVu Inn, 1710 South Main Street;

* Wednesday, March 11, 7 p.m., Appleton - Fox Valley Technical College, D.J. Bordini Center, Room BC14L., 5 N. Systems Dr.; and

* Thursday, March 12, 7 p.m., Pewaukee - Wildwood Lodge, N14 W24121 Tower Place.

The department will accept public comments on the proposed waterfowl season structure at each public hearing. If you would like to provide input directly or are unable to attend a hearing, comments will be accepted through midnight Friday, March 13.

Written comments can be sent to Taylor Finger or Jeff Williams, Wisconsin DNR, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707, via email to Taylor.Finger or Jeff.Williams or by calling 608-266-8841 or 608-261-6458.

To view and provide input for the 2020 waterfowl season options online, visit the DNR website here.

memories by using #SDintheField on social media. For more details on the 2021 program guidelines, visit <https://gfp.sd.gov/bounty-program/>.

WISCONSIN

Fall Waterfowl Hunting Season Public Hearing Schedule Available Now

Public hearings for Wisconsin’s proposed 2020 waterfowl season structure will be held March 9-12. After public comments have been collected, the final season structure will be set by the Natural Resources Board at its Apr. 9-10 meeting in Madison.



PHOTO Waterfowl hunters are encouraged to participate in season structure hearings this spring Photo credit: Matt Gross

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Last Laugh

Hey Boss: you won't believe this BUT!

Actual excuses for missing work

I had to attend the funeral of his wife's cousin's pet, because I was an uncle & pall bearer.

I thought today was Saturday.

I have a head ache after going to too many garage sales.

I need a few hours to get the alcohol in my blood down to a legal level.

I don't know where I am.

I'm stuck in the blood pressure machine at the grocery store

My wife found out I was cheating and I had to get all my things out of the dumpster.

Someone glued my doors & windows shut, I can't get out.

My false teeth flew out the window on the drive in.

I'm at the Casino, I still have money left.

I'm stressed out from a spider found in my home.

I had to mow the lawn to avoid a fine by the Home owners Association

I hurt my back chasing a beaver.

I'm blocked in by police raiding my home.

My llama would not stop barfing!

I woke up in a good mood and did not want to ruin it by coming into work.

My girlfriend threw a pot of hot grits in my face when I asked her if she was gaining weight.

I have to watch the Brits play soccer in Spain today.

I thought FLAG DAY was a legal holiday.

I oover slept because the kids changed all the clocks in the house.

My coffee is too hot and I can't leave until it cools down.

I'm in the parking lot but fell a sleep, thanks for waking me.

My new girlfriend went to the store and she has the key to the handcuffs.

The universe was telling me to take the day off.

I QUIT!

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That's it for this issue we'll talk again in two months!

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