

Pheasant Harvest Near 1.7 Million in 2009

The Game, Fish and Parks Department estimates that South Dakota's pheasant harvest in 2009 was just short of 1.7 million roosters.

"We complete a science-based random survey of hunters each year at the end of the hunting seasons," said Corey Huxoll, GFP harvest surveys coordinator. "Thanks to the overwhelming response these hunters provide us, we are able to get an accurate picture of their success."

A survey of those who hunt upland birds – pheasants, grouse and partridge – indicates that more than 70,000 South Dakota residents and nearly 98,000 non-residents hunted as least one of those species last year.

Hunters harvested an average of 10 birds. The 1.7 million birds was the 6th highest in the past 40 years.

In addition to the pheasant harvest, hunters took more than 39,000 sharp-tailed grouse and prairie chickens during the 2009 hunting season, and 8,500 partridge.

TEXAS

TPWD to Wrap up Dove Lethality Study

A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department officials are content with the 1,360 birds collected during two years of field research comparing lead and non-lead ammunition effectiveness for doves.

Public concern about the incidence of lead in the environment is growing. This issue has been

discussed by the Central Flyway for the past five years. It is conceivable that non-lead shot requirements could be proposed for the hunting of all migratory game birds, including doves at some future date. This could have considerable impact in Texas, which boasts the nation's largest dove population at an estimated 20-25 million breeding birds and a rich hunting tradition that sees from 300,000 to 350,000 hunters take to the field each fall. Texas hunters harvest about 6.4 million doves annually or roughly 30 percent of all doves taken nationally.

There is also an economic consideration. Based on a 2005 survey conducted for the U. S. Census Bureau and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service by Southwick and Associates, Texas dove hunting has an economic impact of \$316 million annually. Texas dove hunting produces 3,145 jobs in the private sector and \$21 million in sales tax revenue.

Given the popularity of dove hunting in Texas, TPWD is conducting a study to determine the effectiveness of lead versus non-lead shot on dove under real Texas hunting conditions. This study was designed by an internationally recognized shotgun ballistics expert, who has designed over a dozen similar studies involving waterfowl and upland game birds. This research is supported by many organizations, including the Central Flyway Council, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Wildlife Management Institute.

The goal of the dove lethality study was to collect between 1,050 and 1,500 one-shot-kill doves under real hunting conditions. Wildlife officials need fewer than 200 samples to reach the 1,500 bench-

mark, but say they will forego a third collection effort this year after preliminary statistical evaluations and discussions with ballistic and university consultants.

"Statistical analysis of the existing data indicates that one more year of dove collection will not significantly enhance our understanding derived from the data collected thus far. Additionally, given the cost and effort needed to obtain a couple hundred more samples, we feel that further collections are not warranted" said Corey Mason, TPWD Dove Program Leader.

The study parameters call for between 5,000 and 7,000 shots fired. After two years of collection, TPWD has recorded about 6,300 shots taken by 58 volunteer shooters.

Currently, 500 dove are being processed (x-ray and necropsy) and approximately 360 previously collected birds will be processed in 2011. TPWD Program Staff anticipates producing publications on the study findings in the summer of 2011.

WISCONSIN 2011 Wisconsin waterfowl, turkey and pheasant stamp design contests open

All three contests to be judged together for first time at new venue

Artists entering designs in the 2011 Wisconsin waterfowl, turkey or pheasants stamp contests will enjoy a new and highly appropriate change of venue for the judging competition: the Aldo Leopold Legacy Center in Baraboo. And for the first time, the judging for all three contests will be held together.