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**AUGUST
2008**

South Dakota
**Wildlife
Federation**

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OUT OF DOORS

Affiliated with the National Wildlife Federation

VOLUME 48, NUMBER 8

BARCODED FLATS

S.D. Pheasant Counts Up Again

PIERRE, S.D.—Favorable weather conditions and good habitat have once again combined to produce a record pheasant crop in South Dakota.

Brood count surveys conducted by the S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Department tallied pheasant numbers that once again harken back to the days of the Soil Bank era in the 1950s and '60s. Surveys that measure pheasants per mile from brood routes put the 2008 index at 8.56 pheasants per mile, a figure that's 64 percent ahead of the 10-year average and the highest recorded since 1963.

"The survey results show a statewide increase of 9 percent in pheasant numbers," said GFP Secretary Jeff Vonk. "That's amazing considering the record-setting level of last year's brood survey."

The survey estimates are derived from 110 30-mile brood routes across South Dakota. From July 25 through August 15 traditional routes are surveyed each year using standardized methods. The result of the survey is a pheasants-per-mile index that is used to compare estimates year to year and over a 10-year time frame.

"While the statewide estimate is up, hunters should take particular note of the survey results in their local areas," Vonk said. "Unlike last year when pheasant numbers were up all across the state, local survey results were mixed this year."

Survey results show that pheasant production was very good in the central part of the state, as substantial increases were found in the Mobridge, Pierre, Chamberlain, and Winner areas. On the other hand, pheasant counts are down in the eastern regions of

the state while overall counts in east-central regions are largely unchanged from 2007.

"Weather is always a significant factor in the health of the pheasant population and winter was mild and spring precipitation was timely," Vonk said. "We had some concern about cool, wet conditions in late May and early June as the peak hatch approached, fortunately conditions improved and it was generally warm and dry during the brood-rearing season."

The other key factor that determines the size of the pheasant population is habitat. With the drought no longer an issue in much of South Dakota, grasslands were in peak condition to serve as pheasant nesting cover. The abundance of lush grasslands in central SD helped offset the costly loss of habitat that was enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program.

"This state lost just less than 260,000 acres of habitat last year when CRP contracts expired and weren't renewed," Vonk said. "While moist conditions may have spared central SD from feeling the full impact of these losses, the critical nesting habitat lost with expiring CRP contracts certainly impacted survey results in eastern SD. Despite the apparent declines in eastern SD, pheasant numbers in areas such as Brookings and Watertown remain higher than ten-year averages, which will still make for an exciting and successful fall."

South Dakota's regular pheasant season opens at noon on Saturday, Oct. 18 and runs through January 4, 2009. The statewide youth season has been lengthened to five days, Oct. 4 through Oct. 8 and the resident-only season on public land runs Oct. 11 through Oct. 13.

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Raffle Winners Announced

SDWF recently held their 2008 drawings for the Pheasant hunt giveaway and the 2008 Buffalo shoot and the Commemorative gun Give-away;

The winner of the Pheasant hunt is *James Klein from Michigan.*

Buffalo Shoot winner is *George Taylor from Texas.*

Commemorative Gun Giveaway is *Ken Schock from Minnesota.*

THANK YOU to all the winners and all of you who purchased tickets and support SDWF!

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each



Executive Director's Update *by Chris Hesla*

Check out the lucky raffle winners on the front page of this month's paper.

I would like to thank the Jones County Sportsmen's Club of Murdo and their members who hosted the 63rd Annual SDWF Convention. I would also like to thank the local area merchants who donated auction items and our own affiliate clubs for supporting the Federation with donations. THANK YOU!

From all of the surveys and the reports I have read, it looks like it is going to be a record breaking year for pheasant hunting. The pheasant outlook reports showed 8.56 pheasants per mile. That is 64 percent ahead of the 10-year average and the best year for ringnecks since 1963.

From the latest report, the grouse numbers look great. As I have traveled past the Ft. Pierre National Grasslands south of Ft. Pierre all year long, it is unbelievable the amount and quality of the grass this year on the prairie. Actually, most of the state is looking superb. If all reports hold true, we all are in for a barn burner of a hunting season.

At the recent Annual Meeting held in Murdo, SDWF had three drawings which concluded those fundraising raffles. The three lucky winners are named on the front page of this paper. I would like to congratulate them and thank all of those who bought chances on the Pheasant Hunt, Buffalo Shoot and the Commemorative Gun Giveaway.



Thank you to everyone for their support and encouragement during my first year as President.

President's Column *by Rieck Eske*

Another year has gone by, and I might add, very quickly. I just wanted to thank everyone for their support and encouragement during my first year as President.

Thank you to Norm Buxcel, Mike McKeran and Angie Kingley, Club President. You and your members of Jones County Sportsman's Club hosted a great banquet and convention. The meal Friday night was awesome. Saturday afternoon we were taken on a tour of Turner Ranch. Rick Lewis of the Ranch guided the tour. They are doing a wonderful job of conservation and habitat management. Rick also said he guides about 30 youth deer hunts per year. Congratulations Rick. The Saturday night banquet dinner was very tasty also. Silent and live auctions were a big success; they had a wide variety of items to bid on. Jeff, I almost lost out on the Salmon.

Congratulations to Senator Thune, the 2008 S.D. Conservationist of the Year, for his work on the Sod Saver portion of the Farm Bill. Congratulations to Harvey Malon, the 2008 SDWF Conservationist of the Year, for his habitat work on his ranch. Congratulations to Bill Antonides, 2008 SDWF Communicator Conservationist of the Year, for his writing dealing with Youth, Habitat and Conservation.

Also thank you to DeFoe Bus Co out of Milbank for furnishing bus service to the SDWF Conservation Camp for many years. Thank you to Robert Jacobson, Jr. for your 27 years of dedication to SDWF.

A final thank you to the SDWF Affiliates and members for reelecting me to the office of President. Let's keep moving forward as a leading Outdoor and Conservation Organization in South Dakota.

Carry on the Tradition.



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Dynamics of South Dakota Pheasant Populations

If there's one common denominator in the pheasant hunting forecast business, it's an obsession with the weather. Year after year, when the time comes to start making forecasts for the coming ringneck season, the first factor that gets mentioned is the weather.

Obviously, in South Dakota the weather is always in the forefront. But there's another factor that could be even more important than the weather. That, of course, would be the "H" word. Habitat.

But first we need to understand the dynamics of upland bird populations.

When it comes to pheasant habitat, effort should be focused on two important components: reproduction and survival.

The single most important habitat component needed on the landscape for successful reproduction is undisturbed nesting cover. The most obvious source of nesting habitat is Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres, however other areas like Game Production Areas, Waterfowl Production Areas, hayfields, alfalfa, winter wheat, odd areas, pastures, and roadside ditches all can provide cover for nesting.

Survival habitat would be those that provide shelter during harsh winter conditions, as well as other times of the year when habitat quality is marginal. Woody habitat plantings with dense, low to the ground stems provide exceptional cover during the most trying winter weather, while habitat areas such as cattails sloughs also provide secure shelter from wind and cold temperatures.

We know that past devastating winter weather in the northern half to two-thirds of South Dakota has caused significant winter-related deaths of pheasants. For as long as there have been pheasants in the state, severe winter weather has been one of the primary factors affecting the number of breeding birds available in the spring.

Even in an average winter, 10 to 20 percent of the birds that make it through the hunting season die before spring. If you look at the populations from August through the following spring, normal losses are probably close to 50 percent.

Pheasants can sustain those kinds of losses because, like most prey species, they are capable of producing an astonishing number of offspring. In those "normal" years, a good pheasant hatch will include from 7 to 10 young birds for every adult. In other words, upwards of 80 percent of the birds bagged will only be a few months old. This year, reproduction is again the key to hunting prospects.

SANFORD HEALTH PARTNERS WITH THE SDWF YOUTH CONSERVATION CAMP

This past July Mike Begeman, Vice-President Public Affairs, of Sanford Health met with Charles Rokusek, Assistant Camp Director of the SDWF Youth Conservation Camp, to discuss a possibility of Sanford Health assisting the camp with its transportation budget for 2009 which would benefit all of the students attending the camp.

A multiple of ideas were discussed during the meeting with all of them focusing on helping students from across the state attend this outdoor camp. After the meeting the required Funding Request Forms needed to be completed and returned to Mr. Begeman. These forms were sent to

To estimate how successful reproduction has been, department staff conducts summer brood surveys in early August. The numbers are usually tabulated by Labor Day, and pheasant biologist Tom Kirschenmann uses them to make an estimate of what the population has done since last year.

Understanding this is especially important in a year like 1997. Although we know that northern South Dakota lost plenty of pheasants during the winter of 1996-97, we also know that many survived. That's where habitat comes into the picture.

Even in areas where the winter was most severe, quality winter habitat allowed birds to survive. In most cases what made the difference were windbreaks--trees planted in large enough blocks to prevent them from drifting shut.

But other habitats can be equally effective, even in a bad winter. One conservation officer from northern South Dakota reported finding a cattail slough surrounded by unpicked corn that was doing a fine job even in the late winter. The corn acted as a giant snow fence, keeping the cattails almost free of snow. He said more than a thousand pheasants were making that slough their winter home.

Those birds will have nested in the surrounding area and could provide excellent hunting in the fall. On the other hand, birds trying to survive in the same slough without the protection of the standing corn would have little chance of survival.

As important as winter habitat was in 1996-97 for survival, so was the nesting habitat, CRP in particular, in the years following to allow pheasant numbers to rebound. Without nesting cover and favorable weather conditions, many areas devastated by this particular winter would not be experiencing the pheasant numbers of today.

In most cases, the best person to talk to is the person who owns the land. In the course of doing their spring and summer field work, the farmers get a good idea of how the birds are doing on their land compared to previous years.

On public land it's up to the hunter. Although Game Production Areas and Waterfowl Production Areas are managed for wildlife, the amount and quality of roosting, feeding, and winter cover varies among them. Understanding the time of year, time of day, surrounding habitat and current weather conditions are important to hunter success.

When it comes to pheasant habitat, effort should be focused on two important components: reproduction and survival.

Chris Hesla, Executive Director, for their completion and prompt return to Sanford Health.

On August 15, 2008 Sanford notified Executive Director, Chris Hesla, of the SDWF of their decision on our funding request for 2009. Sanford Health has been a leader in stating that our children are important for our future; therefore, they continue to diversify the areas in which our children have opportunities to explore and learn by investing in the 2009 SDWF Youth Conservation Camp with a donation of \$2500.00.

SDWF holds its 63rd Annual Convention

The SDWF's 63rd Annual Summer Convention was held on August 22-24 in Murdo. The Jones County Sportsmen hosted the event at their new clubhouse and indoor shooting range on the North end of Main Street. Friday night was a BBQ social for people who arrived early for the convention

Saturday morning the convention was started by the Mayor of Murdo welcoming SDWF. After the seating of the delegates, the group focused on SDWF business. Guest speakers were GF&P Wildlife Director Tony Leif and Wildlife Habitat Coordinator Paul Coughlin. They both expressed their appreciation of help and support the SDWF provides them, both during the year and especially during the legislative session. A tour of the Ted Turner Ranch was offered during the afternoon.

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

"South Dakota Conservationist of the Year" was awarded to U.S. Senator John Thune. Senator Thune was recognized

primarily for his work in trying to have a strong "Sodsaver" program in the recently passed Farm Bill. Unfortunately, Sodsaver was watered down in committee by others and it won't be nearly as effective at saving native prairie as the version that Senator Thune worked so hard on

Harvey Malon of Rapid City was honored as "South Dakota Wildlife Conservationist of the Year" for the habitat work that he has placed on his ranch in Meade County. Harvey has planted many thousands of trees, built and restored several water dams and has installed and maintains many food plots.

Bill Antonides of Aberdeen was honored as "South Dakota Communicator Conservationist of the Year". Bill is a retired Conservation Officer from SD Game, Fish and Parks and through his job he educated the public about wildlife and outdoor issues. He continues that same mission today in his retirement by writing monthly articles in several publications.

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

"South Dakota Conservationist of the Year" was awarded to U.S. Senator John Thune.



Mike Mckernan (L) SDWF's Conservation Camp Director is dedicating a plaque for Pat Defea and Defea Bus Company of Milbank, SD. For many years Pat has donated many hours and miles to getting our campers to and from our camp. Dennis Skoog (R) V.Pres of SDWF is shown receiving the plaque for Pat.



SDWF honored three individuals for outstanding conservation in South Dakota. L to R in picture.

Harvey Malon of Rapid City was named "Wildlife Conservationists of the Year" for his work the work and dedication to Wildlife and habitat on his Western South Dakota ranch.

Senator John Thune was named "South Dakota's Conservationist of the Year" for his hard work and dedication to the "sod Saver Provision" in the recently passed Farm Bill.

Bill Antonides of Aberdeen was named "Conservationist Communicator of the Year" for his many years of spreading the conservation message in his duties as a state Conservation officer (recently retired) and his continuing efforts in writing many articles regarding wildlife and conservation issues locally, regionally and nationally.



Just part of the Buffalo heard that roams the Ted Turner Ranch, that members of SDWF got to observe during their tour of the ranch on Saturday afternoon during the convention.

State GFP answers questions about mentored hunt program

Big game licenses for mentored hunters are now available through the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department Web site. The big game licenses allow mentored youth to hunt antlerless deer, antelope and turkey. Available to resident mentors for a \$5 fee, and the licenses are valid during the youth deer season, the archery and firearms antelope seasons and the fall turkey season. The last session of the state Legislature passed a law that allows children as young as 10 years of age to take part in mentored hunts. The availability of mentored hunting licenses for three big game seasons is just the latest step in providing more hunting opportunities for young people.

License applications may be submitted through the Web site at sdgfp.info or by printing out a paper application available on the site and through license dealers. The purchase of a mentored hunting license does not affect the eligibility of the parent or guardian to purchase a license in other deer, antelope or turkey seasons. "However, the purchase of such a license renders the mentored youth hunter ineligible to purchase regular licenses for the youth deer, antelope or fall turkey hunting seasons," said GFP licensing office supervisor Scott Simpson. With the first mentored hunts set to take place this fall, the Game, Fish and Parks Department is seeing plenty of interest and plenty of questions. "The resident mentored hunting pamphlet available online is a good source of information about the requirements and restrictions governing these hunts," said Simpson. Among frequently asked questions about these mentored hunts to the GFP are:

Q: What do I need to do to grant permission to my neighbor to take my child on a mentored hunt? A: Written permission is required. The parent or guardian may write and sign a note as simple as, "I grant permission for (mentor name) to take my child, (child name), on a mentored hunt."

Q: Can an adult mentor carry a gun on a mentored big game hunt? A: One firearm may be carried between the mentored hunter and the adult mentor. Only the youth may shoot the gun under this mentored season. However, if there is a concurrent season in progress (for example, East River Deer) and the adult mentor is legally licensed, the adult mentor may have possession of the firearm and shoot an animal he/she is licensed to take. Any adult or mentor who possesses a valid concealed pistol permit may possess a pistol.

Q: What do you define as immediate control between the adult and mentored hunter? A: Immediate control is most appropriately described as within arm's length.

Q: Does my child need to take the HuntSAFE class to participate in a mentored hunt? A: No. The intent of the mentored program is to expose youth to the sport of hunting. We believe that once a youth has participated in a mentored hunt that the experience will spark their interest in hunting and they'll make the decision to enroll in a HuntSAFE class at the appropriate time.

Q: Since the mentored hunt big game license is issued to the parent and the parent may assign the responsibility of mentorship to another adult, may the parent also assign another mentored hunter to use the license? A: The mentored hunter license is not transferable, and is specific to the mentored hunter named on the license.

Q: How many people can hunt in this mentor situation? A: The maximum party size is six individuals. There can be two mentors, two mentored hunters, and two observers; or there can be as many as three mentors and three mentored hunters. The ratio of mentors to mentored hunters must remain one-to-one and there can be no more than six people total in the group.

Q: My child is 9 years old but will turn 10 during the hunting season. May I apply for a mentored hunting big game license? A: Yes, you may apply and receive a license for

the mentored hunt. The license will not be valid until your child's 10th birthday.

Q: I took the hunter education course many years ago but I don't have my certification card. May I still mentor a hunter? A: The adult mentor must have the hunter education certificate/card in their possession while hunting. If you took a South Dakota course, you may check the Game, Fish and Parks Web site at sdgfp.info about getting a replacement card or call the GFP office at (605) 773-7154.

Q: How many big game mentor licenses can be purchased for a mentored hunter? A: For each mentored hunter a parent or guardian can purchase one mentored deer license, one mentored antelope license, one mentored fall turkey license, and one mentored spring turkey license.

Q: How do I apply for a mentored big game license? A: Mentored big game license applications can be found at all GFP offices, license agents throughout the state, or you can apply online.

Q: As a parent who does not hunt but would like my son/daughter to learn to hunt, am I restricted to designating only one person to serve as a mentor to my child? A: As the parent of the mentored hunter, you can grant permission to multiple individuals to serve as a mentor, as long as they have written permission from you and they meet the requirements to be a mentor.

Q: If I purchase a mentored hunt deer license for my son/daughter, why can't they also purchase a license for the regular youth deer season? A: The idea behind the mentored hunting program is to provide the experience and exposure to a young person who is interested and just getting started in hunting. The emphasis of the mentored hunt should be to have fun, learn and become more knowledgeable about hunting, not to harvest as many animals as possible.

Q: If I want to take my 10-year-old son on a mentored waterfowl hunt, what license does he need? What license do I as the mentor need? A: Your son would need no license. As the mentor, you would need to have the proper South Dakota hunting license, Federal Waterfowl Stamp, and Migratory Bird Certification.

Q: As a mentor, do I need to carry my hunter certification with me in the field? A: Yes. It is required that the mentor possess their hunter education certification.

Q: Can a mentored hunter use a bow and arrow to harvest a deer or antelope? A: Yes, bow and arrow may be used to hunt during firearms seasons. If a bow is used to harvest deer or antelope, it must meet all equipment restrictions currently in place for big game hunting.

Q: If a mentored hunter chooses to hunt with a bow, do the National Bowhunter Archery Education requirements also apply? A: No, the bowhunter education requirements apply only to archery-only hunting licenses.

Q: If a mentored hunter is accompanied in the field by an adult mentor who is not the parent or guardian, who should sign the big game tag once the animal is harvested? A: Because a mentor was granted permission by the parent/guardian, the mentor will sign the tag once the animal is harvested.

Q: What is the limit for the mentor while small game hunting, for example pheasants? A: The mentor does not have a separate limit from the mentored hunter. Between the mentor and mentored hunter, only three pheasants can be harvested. For example, if the mentored hunter harvests two roosters, the mentor would only be allowed one additional rooster the remainder of that same day.

The purchase of a mentored hunting license does not affect the eligibility of the parent or guardian to purchase a license in other deer, antelope or turkey seasons.

South Dakota Wildlife Federation Donors

At the recent Winter Board Meeting the SDWF Board created the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. The Council was created to allow recognition of the 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.

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 Bill Rund, IN
 Terry Sampson, SD
 Ron Sather, SD
 John Schmid, CO
 James Schmidt, SD
 Robert Simmet, MN
 Darrel Simon, SD
 Orv Smidt, SD
 Jim Snyder, SD
 Mike Spielmann, NE
 Howard Stanley, TX
 John Strandell, MN
 Billy Strickland, SD
 Gregg Styles, FL
 Joe Swenson, SD
 Michael Thomas, SD
 Charles Tibbals, FL
 Kenneth Tibble, MI
 Henry Travers, SD
 Bob Turner, IN
 Spencer Vaa, SD
 Cecil Van Tuyl, KS
 Stan Wahl, SD
 Jim Walker, ID
 Robert Weisenburger, MI
 Stephen J Wheeler, SD
 Herbert Whetstone, MN
 Dan O'Keefe, MN
 Mark Widman, SD
 Dan Winger, SD
 Mark Wismer, SD
 Walter Wolf, IL

Level II Deer \$100-\$249

Mel Adams, TN
 Andrew Anderson, GA
 Edwin Anderson, SD
 Lelan Anderson, SD
 Rich Andresen, SD
 Animal Medical, AL
 Robert Bealka, WI
 Harry Bell, MS
 Curt Bisgard, SD
 Steve Block, WA
 W. Harold Boring, GA
 Carl Brakebush, WI
 Richard Brick, CA
 Brown Co. Whitetails Unlimited
 Dick Brown, SD
 Everett Buckner, AR
 John Burrows, NV
 Norm Buxcell, SD
 Manny Buzzell, TN
 Stuart Cambell, SD
 Chuck Clayton, SD
 Craig Connell, SD
 Gary Cowles, AL
 Dennis Darrington, SD
 Larry Denison, VA
 John Dennis, NV
 John Dillon, UT

Brian Dressing, SD
 Mark Duda, CO
 Thomas Eaney, KS
 Dennis Eckert, SD
 Dave Eisenbeisz, CO
 Kenton Eisenbeisz, SD
 Larry Eisenbeisz, MN
 Robert Elbe, WI
 Raymon Epp, SD
 Kurt Forman, SD
 Robert Foxworthy, KY
 Miles Gannon, IL
 Fred Garland, SD
 Jim Gilbert, CA
 Ken Greenwood, OK
 Dean Fitzler, SD
 Forrest Flint, MN
 Cy Haatvedt, SD
 Carl Hall, KY
 Howard Hanson, MN
 Jerry & Mary Hay, WI
 Roger Heedum, NE
 Jim Hellebusch, MO
 Alene Hix, MO
 Ron Island, SD
 F. Lee Jackson, AL
 Darell Johnson, SD
 Jarrod Johnson, SD

Roger Johnson, MN
 Virgil Johnson, SD
 James Juckette, MO
 Larry Kieft, MI
 Robert Knode, MD
 Frank Kocvara, NV
 John Kunze, MN
 James LaMaack, CA
 Dan Lewis, MN
 Ron Lindner, SD
 Jerome Loucks, AZ
 Jerome Lulewicz, SD
 Patrick Lyons, SD
 Jon Madland, SD
 Harvey Malon, SD
 Marshall Co Sportsmens Club
 Pat McGarry, SD
 Leigh McMasters, SD
 Loyal Messerschmidt, SD
 Larry Mette, SD
 Bill Meyers, SD
 Gerald Mohs, ND
 William Mudd, KY
 Karlton Nagel, NE
 Karlton Nagel, NE
 Norm Neilan, SD
 Gerald Nelson, MN
 David Nordby, CA
 Jeff Olson, SD

Larry O'Reilly, MO
 Gary Palmer, SD
 Joe Pualetto, Jr., WA
 CJ Pete Pedersen, NC
 Ron Pesek, SD
 Peter Prokop, MI
 Timothy Raver, WY
 Dan Roach, SD
 Tom Roberts, SD
 Troy Ryan, MN
 Arnold Sattler, SD
 Donald Sattler, SD
 Carey Schave, SD
 Bruce Schuerenbrand, SD
 Bob Schluter, MN
 David Schubauer, SD
 Terry Schupp, AZ
 Ken Schroeder, SD
 Steven Shoemaker, NE
 John Simpson, SD
 Carl Stonecipher, SD
 Curt Tesch, SD
 Paul Vinatieri, SD
 Gary Wald, SD
 Harvey Welch, IL
 Winter Brothers, SD
 Brian Wiswall, SD
 Jerry Worsham, WA

Level III Elk \$250-\$499

Mel Adams, TN
 29-90 Sportsmen's Club, SD
 Thomas Flesher III, OK
 G. John Gilbertson, MN
 Kenneth Halstrom, SD
 Eric Johnson, MN

Virgil Johnson, SD
 James Juckette, MO
 Karl O. Lee, SD
 Jim Lemonds, SD
 Herb McClellan, SD
 Mike Myers, FL

Jan Nicolay, SD
 Mark Parr, SD
 Pheasants Forever Northern Oahe Chapter
 Tim Rainey, MN
 Chuck & Ginger Scalet, SD
 Jeff Scherschlight, SD
 Gary Seeley, KS

Craig Stadtfeld, SD
 Marlin Stammer, CA
 Vic Toscano, SD
 Ilo Vanderboom, SD
 Rich Widman, SD
 Dale Wilms, CA
 Yankton Area Pheasants Forever, SD

Level IV Buffalo \$500-\$999

Black Hills Sportsmens Club
 Richard Dillon, MN

Dennis Hullinger, UT
 Harry Mansheim, SD

Max & Stephanie Sandlin, SD
 Sportsman's Club of Brown Co.

SD Walleyes Unlimited, SD
 Roger Steinberg, MN

Level V Eagle - \$1000 and above

Beadle Co. Sportsmans Club
 John Chapman, PA

Dakota Sportsmen Inc., SD
 Richard Dillon, MN

High Plains Wildlife, SD
 Kenneth Michalek, WA
 Republic National Distributing Company, SD

Steve Roberts, MN
 Gary Seeley, KS
 SD Chapter of NWTF, SD

These tax-deductible contributions will speak volumes for the future of the SDWF's Wildlife Legacy Council! Please consider your donation today. Names in ARIAL indicate that the Legacy Member has made their 2007 contribution to the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council. Names in ITALICS indicate that the Legacy Member has made their 2008 contribution to the SDWF Wildlife Legacy Council.

Questions Answered... continued from page 5

Q: Can a mentor take out more than one mentored hunter in a given day? A: Yes. However, the ratio of mentor to mentored hunter must be one-to-one. Also, if a mentor were to hunt with two different mentored hunters in one day, the daily limit would apply to both hunts. For example, if a mentor takes out 2 mentored hunters, between the two groups only three pheasants could be harvested in one day.

Q: If I want to mentor a hunter but have never taken a hunter education class, how can I get my hunter education certification? A: You may check for a class near you by going to sdgfp.info.

Q: Does becoming a mentor affect my ability to hunt other seasons during the time I am a mentor? A: Being a mentor does not affect the eligibility of the parent/guardian or mentor for any other hunting license.

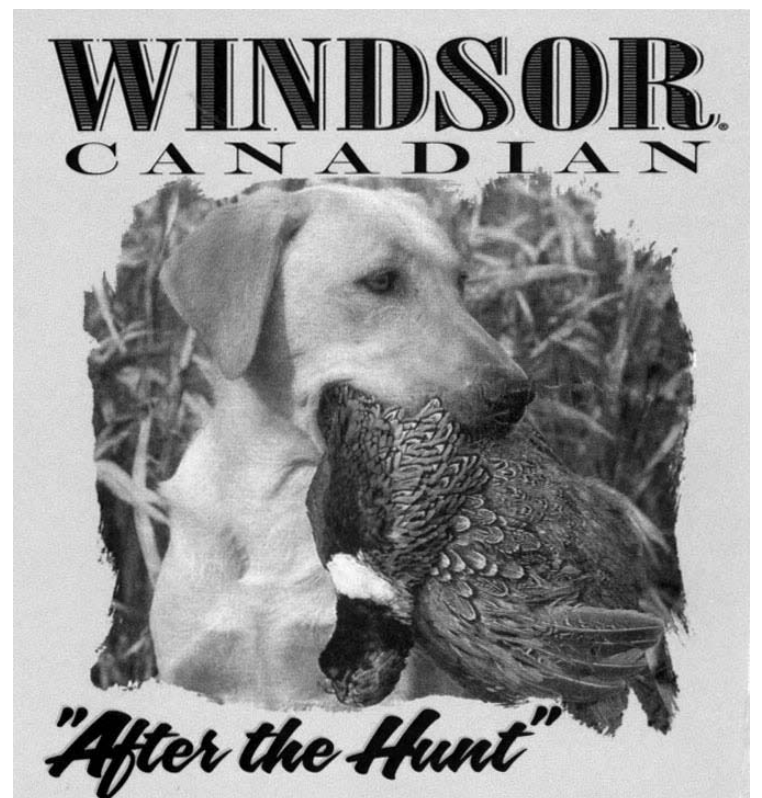
Pheasants Per Mile (PPM) index values comparing 2008 to 2007 and 10-year averages.

Local Area	Routes	Pheasants per mile (PPM)			Difference of 2008 PPM with	
		2008	2007	10 year average	2007	10 year average
Chamberlain	10	22.56	16.64	14.11	36%*	60%*
Winner	8	10.61	7.76	6.43	37% ^{ns}	65% ^{ns}
Pierre	13	13.58	8.82	5.27	54%*	158%*
Mobridge	8	12.29	7.61	4.37	61%*	181%*
Aberdeen	14	8.84	9.38	5.50	-6% ^{ns}	61%*
Huron	17	11.39	10.61	7.78	7% ^{ns}	46%*
Mitchell	16	7.61	9.22	7.23	-17%*	5% ^{ns}
Yankton	10	1.78	2.31	1.64	-23% ^{ns}	9% ^{ns}
Sioux Falls	13	2.55	3.99	2.33	-36%*	9% ^{ns}
Brookings	11	4.85	6.89	4.16	-30%*	17% ^{ns}
Watertown	12	5.93	8.84	4.00	-33%*	48%*
Sisseton	5	1.90	3.61	1.59	-47%*	19% ^{ns}
Western SD	5	1.96	2.37	2.67	-17% ^{ns}	-27% ^{ns}
STATEWIDE	110	8.56	7.85	5.22	9% ^{ns}	64%*

^{ns} Results of Wilcoxon signed-rank test not significant ($P > 0.10$)

* Results of Wilcoxon signed-rank test significant ($P < 0.10$)

NOTE: Comparisons are valid only between years within each local area.



2008 Hunting Handbook, Hunting Atlas Now Available

PIERRE, S.D.—Two of the S.D. Game, Fish and Parks Department's most popular publications are now available to the public.

The 2008 Hunting Handbook and the 2008 Hunting Atlas are available at GFP regional offices as well as from license agents. The books may also be accessed in PDF form on the GFP Web site at www.sdgifp.info or requested from the GFP information office at (605) 773-3485.

"Having those two publications on the Web site makes them easy to reference," said GFP Communications Manager Chuck Schlueter, "but having hard copies along in the field is important, too."

The Hunting Handbook offers details about the state's hunting seasons as well as information about licensing and hunting regulations. The Hunting Atlas contains maps and information about the state's Walk-In Areas, Game Production Areas, Waterfowl Production Areas, and select areas that belong to School and Public Lands and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. Something new this year is the addition of waterfowl refuges.

Users need to be aware of two Black Hills area maps in the Hunting Atlas that depict bluish colored areas that are not public land. On Map Sheet 4 south and west of Lead, two areas of dark blue are not public hunting areas and should not be on the map. One larger section is at the intersection of U.S. Highways 14 and 85 and a smaller area is just east of there.

On Map Sheet 12 there are two small areas of dark blue on S.D. Highway 79 just south of Rapid City that are not public hunting areas and should not be on the map. One is at the intersection of S.D. Highway 79 and U.S. Highway 16B. The other area incorrectly shaded blue is to the south and just north of Spring Creek Road.

"We want to make sure that the users of these map sheets in the Black Hills are aware that these dark blue areas should not be on the maps and do not represent public hunting areas," Schlueter said. "We are working closely with the printing contractor to find out the cause of this problem to ensure that it does not occur in the future." The online versions of these maps correctly depict Map Sheets 4 and 12.

Something new this year to the Hunting Atlas is the addition of waterfowl refuges.

Captive hunting ban fails to get on N.D. ballot

BISMARCK — There won't be a hunting measure on the November ballot in North Dakota.

Sponsors and opponents alike predicted the issue will be revived for a future election.

"There's no way we're going to let this slide," said the sponsors' chairman, Roger Kaseman, Linton, N.D. Secretary of State Al Jaeger said Monday that he had to disqualify 164 signatures on the petitions that had been turned in last Tuesday because they were on incomplete petitions. That dropped the total signatures down to 12,751.

Sponsors needed 12,844.

Missing papers

Jaeger explained that each petition, while being circulated for signatures, needs several top pages containing the measure's complete ballot language, a brief description of what the measure would do and a list of everyone on the sponsoring committee. He said seven petitions were missing the list of sponsors.

"Somebody (collecting signatures) must have thought they didn't need it," he said.

The sponsoring group, North Dakota Hunters for Fair Chase, will wait until after the Nov. 4 election and then re-group and try again, Kaseman said, even though any future effort would not be slated for another election until 2010.

The sponsors oppose the hunting of game animals enclosed in a fence, which they often refer to as "canned hunting," and their measure would have banned the practice.

Opponents of the measure, under the name Citizens to Preserve North Dakota Property Rights, defend their industry and refer to the practice as high-fence hunting.

Co-chairman Wayne Laaveg, Park River, N.D., who raises elk, said high-fence hunting is not the shooting of caged animals, as measure backers imply. The game animals are on acreage large enough to escape hunters.

Laaveg also said his group is willing to propose changes in the practice to satisfy the objections of the hunters' group.

"We're willing to compromise, but the other side said they absolutely weren't willing to compromise," he said.

Kaseman and Laaveg each accused the other group of spreading false information, and Kaseman said his group will pursue civil legal action against the property rights group for false advertising.

"They've been running ads against us, and the ads are outright deceptive and false," Kaseman said.

Countered Laaveg, "Roger Kaseman brought up a lot of misinformation that, to me, they're outright lies, to get people to sign."

Jaeger is still reviewing three other initiative petitions on income taxes, smoking and workers compensation

The sponsors oppose the hunting of game animals enclosed in a fence, which they often refer to as "canned hunting," and their measure would have banned the practice.



Elk management under review

RAPID CITY, S.D. - A draft elk management plan for Wind Cave National Park includes a proposal to use hunting pressure outside the park's boundaries to reduce the herd size.

The park in southwest South Dakota has a target elk population of 230 to 475. Last winter, it was 650 to 700. Because that's more than the park habitat can sustain, elk move outside the park where they draw complaints from some private landowners that they damage fences and eat livestock feed and grain. Hunting is not allowed in the 28,000-acre park, and surplus elk can't be trapped and shipped elsewhere because they might carry chronic wasting disease.

The use of hunters outside the park would require cooperation from adjoining landowners, since the elk will migrate to private and public land. Hunting pressure will be directed by the state Game, Fish & Parks Department, which issues licenses through its appointed commission. Dan Foster,

Wind Cave's chief of resource management, said the park would prepare for the hunts by rebuilding the fence around the park to a uniform height of 7 feet. Some sections of fence are now shorter, allowing elk to freely move in and out of the park. The rebuilt fence would include sections of 7-foot "gated" fence which could be lowered 2 to 3 feet on the top to allow elk to leave the park. Under the preferred alternative, when park officials determine through observation and cameras that enough elk are outside the fence, the top portion of the fence would be raised, making it difficult for the elk to get back in. The top portion of the fence would be maintained during the hunting season, while elk were being hunted on private property and Black Hills National Forest land. Foster said he expects elk to move out naturally as they typically do. If they don't, the animals could be "encouraged" to migrate out. If the draft version of the plan is adopted, it probably wouldn't take effect before 2010, Foster said.

Under the preferred alternative, when park officials determine through observation and cameras that enough elk are outside the fence, the top portion of the fence would be raised, making it difficult for the elk to get back in.

GFP Biologists Optimistic About Prairie Grouse Hunting Forecast

PIERRE, S.D. - With increased spring and summer rains experienced across much of the grouse range in South Dakota, biologists are optimistic about the outlook for grouse hunting in 2008.

According to Game, Fish and Parks Regional Wildlife Manager Andy Lindbloom of Pierre, sharp-tailed grouse and prairie chicken populations in South Dakota are monitored using information from spring lek surveys, harvest report cards and wing collections from hunters. Leks are areas where grouse traditionally congregate during the breeding season and compete for breeding opportunities. Lek surveys completed in 2008 indicate that the prairie chicken breeding population has increased since 2007, while the sharp-tailed grouse breeding population has increased only slightly.

Grouse age ratios, determined by examining harvested bird wings, were higher in 2007 than in 2006 which suggest better reproductive success in 2007. Interestingly, based on harvest report cards, hunters in 2007 harvested about 34,000 grouse, which was lower than the projected 41,000 in 2006.

Lindbloom pointed out that grouse surveys conducted by GFP are important in monitoring population trends but do not provide sufficient information to accurately predict fall hunting. Similar to many upland game birds, a majority of harvested birds are young-of-year birds, and a good brood

survey would allow for decent predictions about the fall hunting season. Unfortunately, grouse behavior does not lend itself well to accurate brood surveys.

"We expect grouse populations had good over-winter survival this past year, an increase in breeding stock this spring and improved habitat conditions because of increased precipitation," said Lindbloom. "Based on how birds responded in previous years with similar conditions we anticipate that more grouse will be available to hunters in many areas of the state."

"We also encourage hunters to visit with landowners in areas they intend to hunt," Lindbloom said. "Landowners are on the land on a daily basis and often have a good perspective on how their local grouse populations are doing."

Lindbloom reminds hunters that pheasants may appear in some areas normally hunted for grouse. "Hen pheasants, young pheasants and grouse can appear very similar in color and size," he said, "so be sure that your target is in fact a grouse before you shoot." Hunters also need to remember that they will be required to use nontoxic shot for grouse/prairie chicken and other small game hunting on most public lands.

The 2008 grouse season opens Saturday, Sept. 20, for prairie chicken, sharp-tailed grouse and ruffed grouse.

GFP Web Site Offers Interactive Maps of Public Lands

PIERRE, S.D.—Maps of South Dakota's public lands have gone interactive on the Game, Fish and Parks Department Web site. Users interested in finding public lands for hunting, fishing or outdoor recreation will find a wealth of information at www.sdgifp.info/Wildlife/PublicLands/PubLand.htm.

"This Web site serves a dual purpose," according to Chris Marsh, habitat biologist/GIS specialist for GFP. "It works as a tool for the department's land managers and it also provides valuable information for citizens who are interested in the state's public lands."

At the Web site, users can view maps of South Dakota's public lands, zooming in to the point where an aerial photo

is displayed. A variety of tools are available to help visitors use the maps as well as an extensive tutorial on how to use the site.

"Hunters will be particularly interested in the detailed information available about the state's Game Production Areas," Marsh said, "A user can select a GPA and learn about the size of the area, the type of wildlife typically found there as well as the habitat in that particular GPA."

Maps on the site can offer a variety of specific information about the location of highways, roads, railroads, cities, waterways, township and county lines, sections and lakes. The maps also delineate federal and state lands as well as state hunting units and Walk-In Areas.

"Hunters will be particularly interested in the detailed information available about the state's Game Production Areas," Marsh said.