

*Ruff Country News*  
*& Timberdoodle Times*  
**Eastern Great Lakes Region**  
**MI OH IN**

Volume 3, Issue 1

September 2017

---

Greetings!

I would like to introduce myself as the new Wildlife Biologist for the Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society in the Eastern Great Lakes Region. I am a Michigan native who received my Master of Science in Conservation Biology from Central Michigan University, where my research focused on migration ecology and the structural diversity of forested stopover locations. I have been a lifelong bird hunter and am thrilled to serve such a well-respected organization and its members. I began my position with RGS/AWS in January and have really enjoyed the opportunity to travel throughout the region meeting our dedicated members at various events. The passion and enthusiasm that I have already witnessed is the reason that I hope to serve RGS/AWS for many years to come, thank you for all that each of you do for young forest habitat and the wildlife that depend on it. If you have any conservation related questions please feel free to give me a call, send an email, or come introduce yourself at your next RGS event. Please enjoy my first issue of Ruff Country News and have a safe and bountiful hunting season!

Yours in Conservation,

*Heather*



Photo: Jordan Susewitz

## Happy Hunting!

Summer has faded and upland bird season is just around the corner in the Great Lakes region. I am sure each of you welcome the brisk weather in eager anticipation for what bounty fall may bring. As we make our final preparations, I want to wish each of you a safe and enjoyable hunting season. Thank you for your continued support of our mission toward Healthy Forests, Abundant Wildlife, and Sporting Traditions.

In Michigan, we are in line for another great grouse season statewide. Grouse are approximately three years up from the bottom of the cycle so intuitively, we can anticipate better numbers than last year-meaning increased flush rates this fall. We should expect the peak of the cycle near 2025, so now is the time to get that new bird dog pup trained in time to have a seasoned hunter down the road! I took that advice and brought my new pup home this July (photo above).

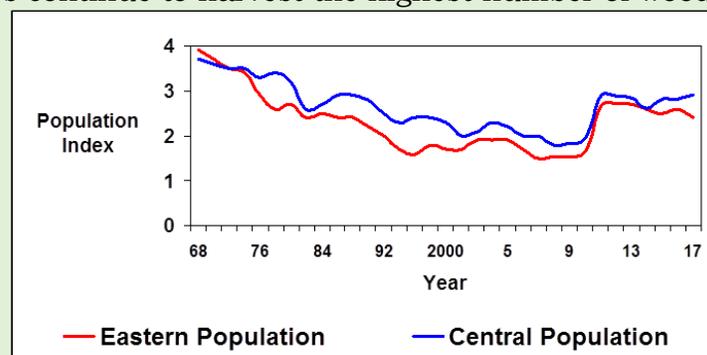
Ohio drumming survey results and flush rates remain near historic lows this year despite increasing science based forest management on state lands. As many of you may know, ODNR staff has requested that anyone heading afield in pursuit of ruffed grouse and/or American woodcock please partake in the ODNR Hunter Diary Program. Contact Mark Wiley (ODNR Wildlife Biologist) at [Mark.Wiley@dnr.state.oh.us](mailto:Mark.Wiley@dnr.state.oh.us) to sign up. Your participation in the diary program is crucial, as it provides a baseline of information for biologists to go by when determining where pockets of ruffed grouse still remain and where woodcock hotspots may be located, allowing management efforts to be more efficiently directed.

---

## American Woodcock Numbers Remain Stable

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has released the 2017 American Woodcock Population Status Report (found here: <https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/surveys-and-data/Population-status/Woodcock/AmericanWoodcockStatusReport17.pdf>).

The report is based upon the spring singing ground survey in which males displaying on their singing grounds are counted along numerous routes within the eastern U.S. and Canada. This information is then used to estimate woodcock abundance within states and regions. The American woodcock population remains stable in the Central Region (which includes the great states of MI, OH, IN) compared to 2016 survey results (below). Based on the Harvest Information Program (H.I.P.), Michigan hunters continue to harvest the highest number of woodcock in the country.



## Indiana Members Engage in Legislative Issues

RGS members supported testimony provided by state foresters and biologists and continued to provide critical information to state representatives regarding House Bill 420, which had the potential to significantly reduce opportunities to reverse important declines in early successional forest habitat on State Forests and across Indiana. Indiana members continue to engage in the public policy arena and have developed initiatives which allow them to support DNR, USFS, and private landowner science-based sustainable habitat management to further the RGS mission and combat anti-forest management interest groups.

---

## RGS Chapters Leverage Funds for Habitat Enhancement in Michigan

The Michigan RGS Habitat Council met in February to review and score 10 MI Drummer Fund proposals submitted by resource management agencies including MDNR, USFS-Huron-Manistee, and the Gratiot County Conservation District. This year the Habitat Council had \$37,788 to apply towards Drummer Fund projects. A total of 8 chapters, multiple RGS Life Members, and other individual donors were able to contribute to the MI Drummer Fund. After matching agency funds were included, over \$160,000 will be utilized to enhance and restore young forest habitat in 2017. Thank you all for your hard work and dedication in making these projects happen!

Grant funds were also awarded to RGS by the MDNR Wildlife Habitat Grant Program for 2017 and 2018 for a GEMS Improvement Project with MDNR enhancing grouse and woodcock habitat on LeGrande, Mark Knee and Garden Grade GEMS and MI Drummer Funds were leveraged as match toward this large scale project.

### 2017 MI Drummer Fund Projects:

1. Roger Moore Pigeon River Country Project- MI DNR + Flint/Roger Moore RGS Chapter
2. RGS Habitat Blitz on state land with multiple RGS chapters:  
Imlay City, Kalamazoo, Muskegon, Southeast, South Central, Traverse City, Harbor Springs, Lakeside, Ironwood, Marquette
3. LeGrande Grouse Enhanced Management Systems (GEMS) Improvement Phase I
4. Garden Grade Grouse Enhanced Management Systems (GEMS) Improvement Phase I
5. Mark Knee Grouse Enhanced Management Systems (GEMS) Improvement Phase I
6. Backus Creek Grouse Enhanced Management Systems (*NEW* GEMS in Roscommon Co.)
7. Lake County State Forest Land Improvement – Meadowbrook Project- MI DNR +Grand Rapids RGS Chapter
8. Saginaw State Game Area – Phase II-Gratiot County Conservation District + MI DNR + Andy Amman RGS Chapter
9. Baldwin Young Forest Restoration-Manistee National Forest- US Forest Service
10. Lake Mitchell Road Alder Regeneration-Manistee National Forest- US Forest Service



Kalamazoo RGS Chapter Habitat Dedication to James Arnold Fish, Sr.

---

## AWS Collaborates with OH DNR on Forestry Equipment Purchase

The Northeast Ohio chapter of AWS, Ohio Hills RGS, the Vadas family and funds from the OH Drummer Fund recently assisted in the purchase of a CAT 415C forestry mulching head for the OH DNR, District 3 Wildlife Division and their recently purchased CAT 299D2 XHP skid steer. This machine will be used within 5 work units covering over 90,000 acres of state land in Northeast OH. The machine will allow the District to restore and create substantial young forest habitat which has been lost to succession over the past 25 years, as well as the control of invasive species and maintenance of wildlife openings. The increased management capability in this area will greatly enhance habitat for young forest dependent wildlife.

---

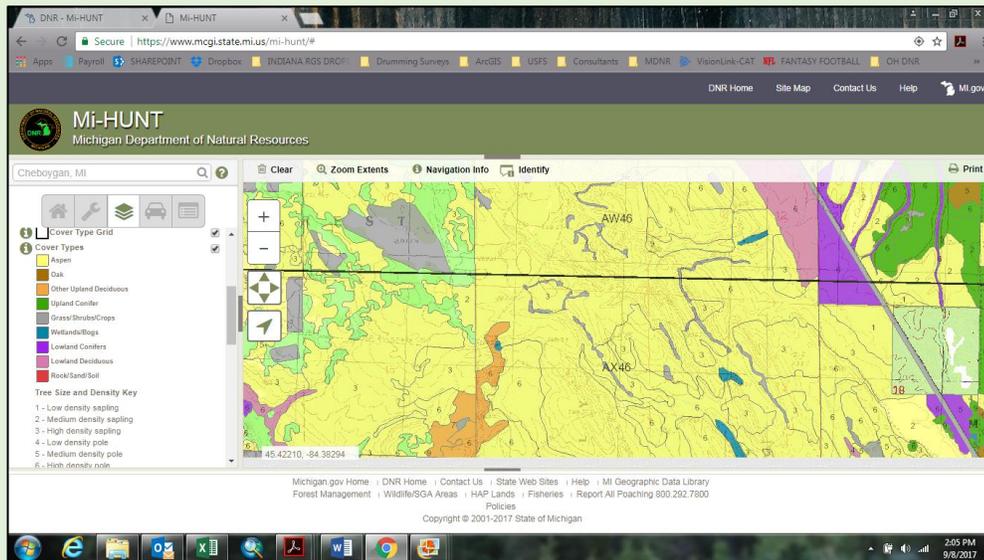
## Assistance Available for Landowners to Enhance Young Forest Habitat

Through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, the Ruffed Grouse Society and American Woodcock Society as well as the American Bird Conservancy, have partnered together to improve forest health for wildlife in the Great Lakes region. In Michigan, our goal is to implement over 1,700 acres of young forest best management practices for nonindustrial private landowners by 2019. This will provide important habitat for 19 at-risk wildlife species including the golden-winged warbler, American woodcock, blackbilled cuckoo as well as ruffed grouse. We will implement these practices through sustainable forest management and thoughtful shrub management within wetland systems. The result will be healthier forests and abundant wildlife that will conserve sporting and birding traditions and help reverse the decline of the near-threatened golden-winged warbler. The ABC forester will assist landowners through all phases of the project which include general forest assessment, wildlife habitat evaluation, conservation program application, conservation plan development, treatment layout, contractor referrals, and post-treatment certification. Due to the size of the area, Chad is currently focusing his efforts on the priority counties below for 2016. Work will begin in 2017 for approved contracts. If you are a forest landowner who owns 40 acres or more in a priority county, please contact Chad Carlin, ABC Private Lands Forester at [ccarlin@abcbirds.org](mailto:ccarlin@abcbirds.org).



## Hunting Tip

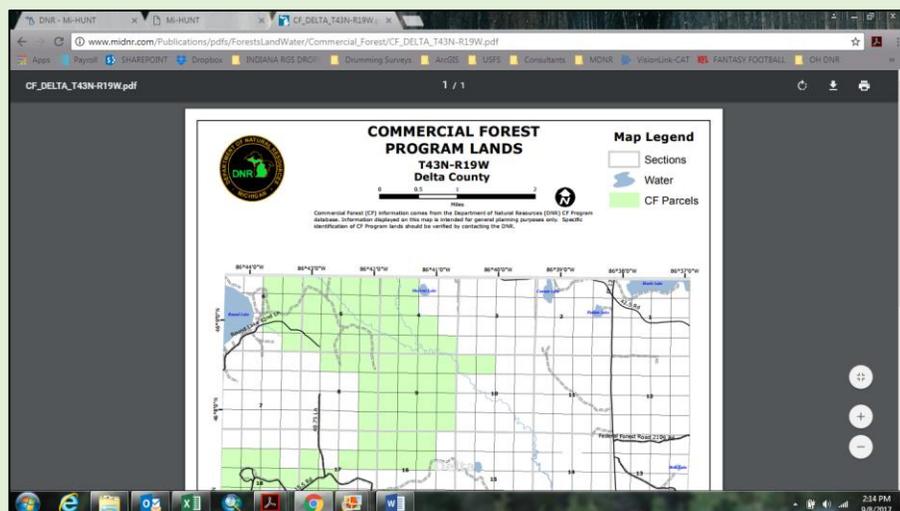
Whether you are a novice hunter looking to find the perfect spot to pursue upland game in, or a seasoned pro wanting to explore new covers and get away from the crowd, the MI HUNT mapping application has just what you need. This application is also available on your mobile device and has the most up to date information to help you find public hunting land anywhere in Michigan. You can also transfer GPS waypoints from the application to your GPS device to route your location the next time that you hit the woods. Take a look at the following link to give it a test run: <https://www.mcgi.state.mi.us/mi-hunt/#>



If you would prefer to focus on other land ownership, I might recommend taking a look at the commercial forest lands throughout the state-most are open to public hunting and provide a trail system for access. This link provides a map of all CF lands in MI-click your county of interest, then click CF County Map and more detail is provided:

[http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301\\_39170-178808--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,4570,7-153-30301_39170-178808--,00.html)

If you use OnXMaps, these layers are also available on your mobile device or GPS.



## Upcoming RGS Events in the Region

For detailed information on these events go to the [RGS events page](#) on our website.

9/8/2017	Traverse City	MI	40th Annual Le Grand Traverse Chapter Banquet
9/9/2017	Indianapolis	IN	20 <sup>th</sup> Annual Indianapolis Banquet
9/9/2017	Lewiston (Gaylord)	MI	Inaugural Jim Foote Chapter Fun Shoot
9/9/2017	Cross Villiage (St. Ignace)	MI	11th Annual Youth Hunt & Sporting Clays Shoot
9/9/2017-9/10/2017	Jackson (Lansing)	MI	Field and Fun Trials
9/13/2017	Lansing	MI	Fall Dinner with Guest Speaker Glen Blackwood
9/16/2017	Somerville (Cincinnati)	OH	Gilbert R. Symons Chapter Dog Day
9/22/2017	West Branch	MI	5th Annual North Central Michigan Chapter Banquet
9/29/2017	Novelty (Middlefield)	OH	American Woodcock Society 3rd Annual Northern Ohio Chapter Banquet

**Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions and notify me of any email address changes. I also welcome any ideas for future Ruff Country News or RGS magazine articles:**

Heather Shaw  
Eastern Great Lakes Regional Wildlife Biologist  
Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society  
Phone: (989) 330-0034  
Email: [HeatherS@ruffedgrousesociety.org](mailto:HeatherS@ruffedgrousesociety.org)

*The Ruffed Grouse Society is North America's foremost conservation organization dedicated to preserving our sporting traditions by creating healthy forest habitat for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and other wildlife. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society/American Woodcock Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at [www.ruffedgrousesociety.org](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).*

### Connect with RGS on:

Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/RuffedGrouseSociety>

MI RGS Facebook (new!)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/244230332757866/>

YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/user/RuffedGrouseSociety>