

Ruffed Grouse Society

Northeast Region



Forest Action Network (F.A.N.) Newsletter ~ Winter 2011-12

Happy New Year!!

With the holidays just behind us and the new year at hand, it's a time to reflect on what was and to look ahead to what will be. For many of us, bird season has come to an end until next fall. Trusty shotguns have been cleaned and oiled, and faithful dogs are recuperating from the wear and tear of the woods. Empty shotshells and hopefully a few grouse and woodcock feathers have been cleaned out of the vest.

I've heard from many of you over the past couple months, and I'd say many if not most had a satisfying hunting season. Our local woodcock numbers across the Northeast seem to have been down as predicted, but the migrants passing through our local coverts provided plenty of opportunity for memorable dog work, and shotgunning - whether it be memorable or forgettable! The additional 15 days of woodcock hunting this year really "made" the season for



some, as that's when some of the best flights occurred – not those one-day-20-flushes-an-hour flights, but rather a more dispersed “trickle migration” that lasted a week or two.

Grouse, on the other hand, were abundant in some locales, such as northern New Hampshire, Maine and New Brunswick, and “not so much” in some other areas. In many areas, including where I live in upstate New York, grouse appeared in bunches late in the season as they switched to foods that were concentrated in patches, or at least in my case, a patch that was near my deer stand. I think early on, in areas that have beech trees, the birds were focused on beech nuts and not

until after that favorite food supply was exhausted did they show up in any numbers in the usual haunts.

Winter is also a time of timber harvest for habitat renewal for grouse, woodcock, and other young-forest-dependant wildlife. The Green Mountain National Forest in Vermont just prior to the new year completed an RGS-partner habitat project, which I believe is going to produce some really nice habitat. I'm also excited about an RGS project on the Downeast Lakes Land Trust in eastern Maine; we've hit an economic bump in the road on that one, but I'm confident we'll find a way to begin cutting this winter on what is planned to be a long term grouse and woodcock management area. With financial help from Orvis, we partnered with the state of Connecticut on a habitat improvement project at Housatonic River WMA. Presently we have plans in the works for habitat improvement projects with most of the state wildlife agencies and with the Finger Lakes and Green Mountain National Forests. And I know that many of the land-owning membership with whom I've worked over the past year or so are implementing some timber harvests on their own lands. My



chainsaw is tuned-up, ready to start on a firewood patch cut this winter as well (I can almost hear the drumming of a future inhabitant!).

The end of the year is also time for me to thank my fellow RGS members who passionately support our efforts to improve the environment for our wonderful game birds and other wildlife. It's an honor to work with you and our regional director (Northeast) Tripp Way, and RGS Canada director John Lockerbie. Our dedicated chapters in the Northeast continue to have successful banquets, shoots, youth events, and habitat work days, and represent RGS impressively at fairs and sportsmen shows in support of the RGS mission. This year we've had new chapters start up in Maine and New Hampshire. There's a lot of enthusiasm among the RGS community, and I look forward to an even better year in 2012. Your support has enabled us to accomplish a lot in this region in 2011 and I've summarized some of that below.

Of course, the beginning of the new year is a time to look ahead, make plans, and, for some, make resolutions.

- ❖ If you've never served on a chapter committee, maybe this is the year you start.
- ❖ If you already are active on a committee, bring along someone new. Situations change, people move away, etc. so it's important to recruit new committee members. And hopefully it will lighten the load for everyone.
- ❖ Get out hunting more – life is short, so smell the roses. Maybe this is the year you start your own “grouse camp” tradition.
- ❖ Get that new pup you've been thinking about. Or that finished grouse dog...
- ❖ Bring someone bird hunting.
- ❖ Get someone started in hunting, fishing, or trapping (in addition to your own kids). Doesn't matter if it's squirrels or stocked trout; become a mentor. If we all did this, hunter numbers would double over night!
- ❖ Your kids may already be hunting and fishing, but I bet they've got friends who don't have the same opportunity – invite one along.
- ❖ This spring, watch a grouse drumming, and a woodcock doing his courtship display. And bring along someone else to watch it, too.
- ❖ Pull the trigger on improving habitat on your land – the sooner you do it the earlier you'll realize the benefits. And act now while there still is Farm Bill funding to help pay for management activities.
- ❖ And get out hunting more (did I mention that?) – you owe it to yourself, and to your dog!

Thank you all so much. – *Andy*

2011 REGIONAL BIOLOGIST REPORT

Here's a summary of the 2011 Regional accomplishments:

- Attended 26 meetings with resource agency staff/legislators and provided RGS input to 15 public land management projects.
 - Provided written comments to National Park Service on the Draft Atchafalaya National Heritage Area Management Plan (Louisiana) supporting improved woodcock habitat management and hunting opportunities in a globally significant woodcock wintering area.
 - Conducted 15 reviews of existing or proposed Management Area Projects.
 - Conducted 24 on-site habitat consultations.
 - Participated in 6 chapter meetings and 1 outdoor show.
 - Attended 7 chapter banquets.
 - Responded to approximately 350 individual requests for information.
 - Completed revision and printing of *A Woodcock in the Hand* booklet (available online at <http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/shoppingcart/magento/books-videos.html>).
 - Represented RGS on Northeast States Habitat Technical Committee, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service state advisory committees (NY, VT, CT, MA, ME, NH), CT New England Cottontail Working Group, Upper Susquehanna Conservation Alliance, Otselic Corridor Working Group, NYS DEC Upland Game Bird Committee, Central New York Woodcock Habitat Management Group, and the annual U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Woodcock Wing Bee.
 - Gave habitat presentations or seminars at 2 sportsmen shows, 2 fish and game clubs, 5 COVERTS workshops, 2 other landowner workshops, and 1 arborist conference.
 - Presented grouse hunting seminar with NH Fish and Game.
 - Supported NH Fish and Game grouse tail survey (shotgun drawing).
 - Co-sponsored workshop and gave 3 presentations on implementing management for young forest wildlife on private lands, with Cornell University at Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY.
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Webinar on Ruffed Grouse and American Woodcock Habitat

I'll be giving a presentation for Vermont COVERTS; here are the details:

Thursday January 12, 7:00pm – 8:00pm EST Reserve your Webinar seat now at <https://www2.gotomeeting.com/register/122521154> Space is limited. This seminar will cover managing habitat for wildlife that require young or early successional forests. A focal species approach to management is used in which ruffed grouse and American woodcock habitat requirements form the basis for management, and adjustments to management are made to accommodate other species and landowner objectives.

Presenter, Andy Weik is a regional wildlife biologist with the Ruffed Grouse Society. He is responsible for implementing on-the-ground forest management and landowner and land manager education programs throughout New York, New England, and eastern Canada.

This webinar is a joint activity by Vermont Coverts and the Vermont Woodlands

Association and is sponsored by www.propertymappingsoftware.com. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the Webinar. System Requirements: PC-based attendees require: Windows® 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server; Macintosh®-based attendees Require: Mac OS® X 10.5 or newer



If you didn't see the webinar on ruffed grouse presented by RGS Director of Policy Dan Dessecker back on December 1, 2011, you can view the archived presentation on the American Tree Farm System's website:

<http://www.treefarmssystem.org/ruffed-grouse-ecology-and-habitat-management>.

RGS on *Focus Outdoors* TV Series

RGS recently completed 13 segments with the TV series *Focus Outdoors*. These segments explain to viewers what RGS is all about and provides information about our mission. RGS will be sending each Chapter President a DVD of the 13 segments that can be used to recruit new members at sporting shows or other Chapter events.

Vote Online to Raise Money for RGS and Win Prizes

Cast your vote daily for RGS on <http://truckvaultcares.com> and earn funding to support ruffed grouse management while also entering into random drawings for fantastic prizes including a Truck vault, a Fausti DEA SL shotgun, Filson apparel and TriTronics training collars. A pool of \$10,000 has been provided by TruckVault, Scott Linden's Wingshooting USA and other sponsors. Your vote is worth at least ten cents, maybe more, as every dollar will be allocated to beneficiary groups on a proportional basis. Everyone wins! Your vote turns into cash for your favorite group. Track votes by watching the puppy's bowl fill up. Currently RGS is in fourth place but with your help we can quickly move up before the voting ends on March 31. Pass the link on to your friends and raise even more money for RGS.

Upcoming Banquets

The next RGS fund-raising event in the Northeast is the **Sixth Annual New York City Dinner** this Wednesday, January 11, 2012 at *Aretsky's Patroon*, 160 East 46th Street, New York City, NY. Cocktails and silent auction begin 6:15 p.m., dinner is served at 7:30 p.m., with a live auction to follow. A sample of auction and raffle items includes fine sporting arms by Beretta, Caesar Guerini, Churchill, Connecticut Shotgun Manufacturing Co., and Holland and Holland; tackle by Abel, Otto Beck, Dave Brandt, and Orvis; superb trips afield and astream, and a selection of wildlife art. Tickets are \$750 per plate. For tickets and more information please contact Tripp Way at 607-743-0760 or trippway@gmail.com.

RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY



1961 - 2011
50 Years of
Managing Forest Habitat

DESIGNED BY JOHN C. CLEVER

2011 - 2012

NATIONAL RAFFLE

THREE WINNERS DRAWN JUNE 29, 2012

CONNECTICUT SHOTGUN A-10 AMERICAN DELUXE

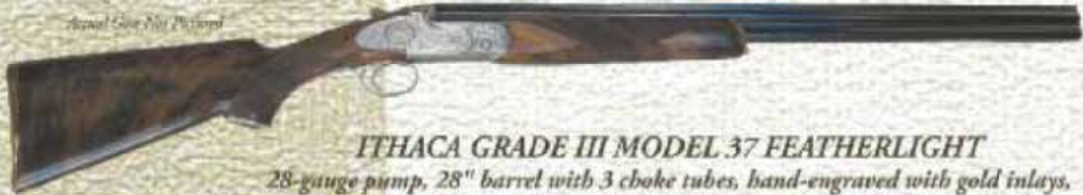
Over-and-under, 20-gauge, 28" barrels with 5 choke tubes, shallow frame, full sidelock with engraved game scenes, straight stock with exhibition grade wood and field forend. Includes combination and key locking case. Retail Value: \$9,400



CAESAR GUERINI RGS UNIQUE APEX GRADE

Over-and-under 28-gauge, 28" barrels with 5 choke tubes, one of a kind, hand-engraved grouse and woodcock design, Prince of Wales stock with exhibition grade wood. "RGS" on trigger guard. Retail Value: \$8,495

Original Grouse and Woodcock



ITHACA GRADE III MODEL 37 FEATHERLIGHT

28-gauge pump, 28" barrel with 3 choke tubes, hand-engraved with gold inlays, gold trigger, fancy AAA grade black walnut stock. Retail Value: \$3,500



Donation for each ticket is \$100. Up to 1,000 tickets to be sold.
Drawing on June 29, 2012 at RGS HQ in Coraopolis, PA. First ticket wins Connecticut.
Second ticket wins Guerini. Third ticket wins Ithaca. Winners responsible for applicable taxes.

To purchase raffle tickets, mail coupon to: Andy Weik, Regional Biologist
Ruffed Grouse Society - 794 Adams Road - Dryden, NY 13053
or call 607-844-9656 or e-mail: rgsweik@gmail.com

Name _____ Phone # _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

____ Tickets @ \$100.00 Each = \$ _____ Total Enclosed Signature _____

Billing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

CHECK (Payable to RGS) CREDIT CARD # _____ Exp. Date _____

A Woodcock in the Hand Available Again!



We've revised *A Woodcock in the Hand* by Greg Sepik, and it's available again through the RGS-Mart, the RGS webstore, just \$4 to cover our expenses (free shipping). This 12-page booklet will help you determine the age, sex and other facts about your woodcock before you place it in your game bag. The artwork is all new, by Chris Smith of Michigan. It's a "must have" for the upland bird hunter, and makes a great gift for all your hunting buddies. While you're at it, pick up the companion booklet *A Grouse in the Hand*.

<http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/shoppingcart/magento/books-videos/a-woodcock-in-the-hand-2.html>

And Don't Forget...

- ✓ to ensure that you continue to receive timely FAN updates please notify me of changes in your email address.
- ✓ check out the RGS website for all things grouse and woodcock at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org , and
- ✓ check out www.timberdoodle.org for a great summary and description of many RGS and other woodcock projects in the Eastern U.S. The website keeps growing as the Wildlife Management Institute (via Chuck Fergus) continues to compile info about woodcock, grouse and songbird habitat.

Thanks for your generosity, enthusiasm, and support! If you have any questions or ideas you want to discuss, please don't hesitate to contact me
- *Andy*

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