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FAN UPDATE

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Midwest Floods

Understandably the big news throughout much of this region right now is related to the heavy rainfall followed by record flooding. While our thoughts and concerns are with those folks affected directly or indirectly by these events it can and will have an effect on area wildlife as well. Obviously any animals that can not move quickly away from the rising waters will perish. Coming in the midst of the breeding season for ground nesting birds like ruffed grouse, the outlook is not very good in areas where the water has risen and remained for several days. The prolonged spell of rain also was detrimental for young birds that recently hatched either affected by the cool, wet weather or unable to obtain sufficient food to survive. However, while part of the region has been seriously affected other parts have not and there is some optimism for a fine fall hunting season in parts of this region. See the state outlooks below for your area of interest.

Regional Grouse and Woodcock Report

Iowa -

No report available at this time.

Michigan -

DNR Eastern Upper Peninsula Region Wildlife Biologist Terry Minzey reports, "In 2008, 14 drumming routes were surveyed in the EUP. Two hundred and fifty-four drums were heard for an average of 1.8 drums per sample point. This is a 6% increase over the 1.7 drums per sample point heard in 2007 and a 151% increase over the 2005 level. It is fairly evident that the ruffed grouse cycle bottomed out in 2005 and is in the increasing phase in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. If historical cycles hold true, we can expect grouse numbers to continue to increase for one or two more years. Given the current levels, it is possible the peak of this cycle may even surpass that of the 2000 cycle."

In terms of woodcock, Minzey reports, "The 2008 survey produced an average of 8.0 peenting woodcock/route in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. This is the highest number of peenting woodcock heard since 1999 and represents a 7% increase over the 2007 level (7.5 peenting woodcock/route). Clearly, this index suggests that woodcock numbers may be in a continued long-term increase in the Eastern Upper Peninsula. If this is true, then woodcock are faring better in the Eastern Upper Peninsula than in other portions of Michigan and the Central Flyway which both show long-term population declines."

Flush rates for ruffed grouse reported for the 2007 early fall hunting season showed a statewide increase from the 2006 season. In 2007, 2.5 ruffed grouse were reported flushed per hour of hunting across the state while in 2006 only 2.1 ruffed grouse were flushed per hour by hunters. Individual counties with the highest flush rates for grouse were Missaukee, Houghton, Ontonagon, Oscoda, and Roscommon while Gladwin, Houghton, Lake, and Crawford Counties had the highest flush rates for woodcock.

Weather for ruffed grouse and woodcock nesting and brood rearing in the Upper Peninsula and northern Lower Michigan has been favorable this spring.

Missouri -

Andrew Forbes, Missouri Department of Conservation Wildlife Biologist reported, "Grouse populations remain low, with a few scattered, small pockets of birds in patches of suitable forested habitat, with most reports of birds coming from the River Hills Focus Area in Central Missouri. This spring has not been a good one for ground nesters thus far, very rainy and wet, with lots of flooding in certain areas."

Wisconsin -

Brian Dhuey, Wisconsin DNR Wildlife Researcher reports, "Statewide ruffed grouse drumming counts increased 7 % over 2007 levels. Final tallies show .91 drums per stop across the state." The southeast and northern regions showed the greatest increase in drumming activity over last year with 33 percent and 12 percent increases, respectively. The southwest region showed a decrease of 20 percent while the central region showed a

slight decline of 3 percent fewer drums than in 2007. Drummer densities on the Sandhill Wildlife research census area in Wood County increased 8%, while drummers on the Stone Lake Experimental Area in Oneida County increased 4% from 2007 levels. Dhuey goes on to say that, "This is the third increase in the ruffed grouse index in the last 3 years. It would appear that Wisconsin is still on the upswing of the current grouse cycle."

Unfortunately record rainfall and flooding in southern and central Wisconsin during the first part of June has not been favorable for grouse broods. Fortunately, northern Wisconsin, the primary grouse range, has been spared much of the rainfall and conditions have been favorable for broods there.

A late spring and lingering snow delayed woodcock arrival this spring in northern Wisconsin. However, once the birds arrived, conditions remained favorable for nesting and brood rearing.

It is likely that ruffed grouse populations in northern Wisconsin this fall will be higher than in 2007 with woodcock populations similar to last year if not slightly higher. Populations of both species will most likely be down from last year in central and southern Wisconsin.

Additional information on the 2008 Wisconsin drumming count is available at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/harvest/reports/08finaldrum.pdf>.

RGS Receives Conservation Award

The Ruffed Grouse Society was one of 21 recipients nationwide to receive the Department of the Interior's Cooperative Conservation Award for its part in the Northern Forest Woodcock Initiative (NFWI). The NFWI was created to increase early successional habitats at a landscape level for the benefit of woodcock and other wildlife species, both hunted and non-hunted. The approach of the initiative is a linked set of strategies that includes development of best management practices, establishment of habitat demonstration areas, monitoring of woodcock populations and outreach to private landowners. NFWI is a group of New England and New York partners including 5 state fish and wildlife agencies, federal agencies, non-profit conservation groups as well as timber companies, utilities and environmental consultants. The Award recognizes the work of groups and individuals who achieve excellence in conservation through collaboration and partnerships.

In a letter addressed to RGS Executive Director and CEO Michael Zagata, thanking RGS for its exemplary efforts to restore and protect important fish and wildlife resources in the Northeast, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Acting Regional Director, Marvin E. Moriarty wrote, "We were not surprised to learn that this well-organized partnership was selected to receive this competitive award, because your agency's participation in this conservation initiative is a prime example of how, together, we can achieve higher success by rallying our expertise and resources than we ever could by working as independent organizations."

Upon learning of the award, Zagata stated, "This award represents positive recognition for the work RGS and its partners do on behalf of the American woodcock. RGS would not have been in a position to be a partner, and leader, on this initiative had it not been for our team of dedicated, professional and competent biologists. On their behalf, I am proud to accept this distinguished acknowledgement. The next step is to make sure programs are put in place that will assure that something happens on the ground – that means money

for wildlife agencies and incentives for landowners to manage for wildlife."

RGS Recipient of Bird Conservation Grant in Missouri

The Ruffed Grouse Society has been selected to receive one of the 2008 Missouri Bird Conservation Grants to continue work on the River Hills Forest Habitat Project. Located across a three county area in east central Missouri, this important wildlife habitat improvement project will benefit ruffed grouse and other wildlife species dependent on young forest habitats. This \$20,000 grant is being matched by funds and in-kind services from the Ruffed Grouse Society, Audubon Missouri and others to benefit species in this area. The River Hills Project began in 2003 and promotes the regeneration of oak/hickory forests and is helping reverse a trend of declining young forest habitat. Approximately 2000 acres of habitat improvements have occurred in the project area so far. Songbird populations are responding to improved habitat conditions in the project area and we anticipate grouse populations to soon follow.

Kirtland's Warblers in Wisconsin - An Update

In recent years Kirtland's Warblers, a Federal Endangered bird species dependent on young jack pine forest habitats, have been expanding their range outward from the traditional breeding area in central Lower Michigan. Populations expanded initially to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and in the past few years the species has been recorded in nearby Wisconsin. Monitoring efforts coordinated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service are ongoing in this expanded range. Joel Trick, US Fish and Wildlife Service Biologist reports that so far in 2008, researchers have banded and released 7 male Kirtland's warblers in Wisconsin, six in central Wisconsin (Adams County) and one in northeastern Wisconsin (Marinette County). In addition, two Kirtland Warbler nests have been located at this time.

Niagara Mill to Remain Open Longer

NewPage Corporation recently announced that it will continue running both paper machines at its Niagara, Wisconsin facility until the fall of 2008. An unusually high demand for coated groundwood paper that the facility puts out prompted officials to keep the machines running. NewPage had announced in January 2008 that it was permanently closing the Niagara facility. NewPage is currently exploring and evaluating prospective firms interested in purchasing the facility that would not directly compete with the type of papers offered by NewPage. The Niagara facility has been an important buyer of wood materials from the Upper Peninsula and Northeastern Wisconsin.

New RGS Travel Site Up and Running

Use the new Ruffed Grouse Society travel site to book your next vacation or business trip, rent a car, book a room or order flowers. Just go online at <http://www.rgsttravel.org> and your transactions can be easily handled. I have used this site and it is quite easy to use. Use of the site is another way to support RGS efforts. To link your business website to this

site contact Ron Burkert at RonB@RuffedGrouseSociety.Org .

Upcoming RGS Events in the Region

June 28 - Habitat Work Day on the Cheq/Nicolet National Forest near Laona, WI. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for info.

August 14 to 17 - WI Coverts Workshop, Woodruff, WI Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at jlnack@wisc.edu . (Workshop is full but openings are available in 2009)

August 14 - Annual John Keener Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet, Madison, WI. Contact Jim Shurts at 608-233-2269 for info.

August 23 - Iowa Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet, Dubuque, IA. Contact Bill Volz at 563-767-4009 for info.

September 4 - NE Wisconsin Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet, Green Bay. Contact Jim Schuettpelz at 920-469-0751 for info.

September 4-6 - Stop by the RGS booth at the Lake States Logging Congress, Fairgrounds, Green Bay, WI.

Reminder

To insure that you continue to receive timely FAN updates please notify me of changes in your email or mailing addresses.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions:
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The Ruffed Grouse Society is an international non-profit conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our hunting tradition and outdoor heritage. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org
