



Photo by Paul Smith

Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

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Let's Go Hunting – and Bring Along a New Grouse Hunter

As Charles Fergus once wrote, “For the hunter, fall is the island and the rest of the year is the swim.” Excitement is in the air, and it looks like cool weather is finally heading to the grouse woods. The time is upon us that many of us have looked forward to for the last 9 months. The shooting eye has been sharpened at trap ranges and sporting clays courses; the dogs have been exercised when the temperatures have allowed it; our equipment is ready and so are we. It's time to hunt the island!!

As you make plans for hunts this fall look for opportunities to bring along a youngster or new person that has never experienced a grouse or woodcock hunt. I can say from experience that the benefits you will receive often outweigh those you can get by hunting alone or with long time grouse hunters. To see the newbie “get it” and start appreciating all that is associated with a quality day in the grouse woods will be a lasting memory. Good luck and have a safe hunt.

Gary

Preliminary Wisconsin Brood Survey Results, 2013

By Brian Dhuey, WI DNR

While most of the winter was normal, a late winter with lingering snow cover into early spring led to a later than normal spring green up. Timing of spring green up can effect game bird survival and physical condition going into the breeding season and in turn effect brood survival. Brood rearing conditions in Wisconsin in 2013 were average for temperature with much of the state seeing temperatures about average for the months of June and July and slightly above for August. Widespread and heavy precipitation was the norm for much of the state for June, with areas in southwestern Wisconsin 4" to 7" inches above normal for the month. Precipitation levels returned to normal or below for the months of July and August and ended about average for the period. Early June weather is the most critical for turkey, pheasant and grouse broods as this is when recently-hatched chicks are most susceptible to hypothermia if they get wet. Large rainfall events in much of Wisconsin could have affected brood survival during June, while much of July and August weather was excellent for brood rearing and survival.

DNR field personnel were asked to report the number and size of game bird broods observed from 9 June through 17 August during their normal working hours. At the end of the survey period, brood reports were then summarized and compiled by the wildlife surveys program. Reports from field staff fell 12% in 2013 from the previous year and are below historic averages.

Wild turkeys saw a decline of 49% in the number of broods seen per observer-hour and a decrease in the size of the broods seen compared to 2012. All 5 DNR regions showed decreases in the observation rate in 2013 from 2012 levels with the largest changes occurring in the southeastern (-76%), south central (-65%), northern (-60%), northeast (-30%), and the west central regions (-8%). The statewide observation rate was 34% below the long-term mean and similar to what was observed in 2011. The average size of a brood seen in 2013 was 4.2 young per brood, down from the 4.9 young per brood seen in 2012. There were many reports of turkeys having broods with small chicks late in the brood observation period, an indication of late nesting or re-nesting due to the harsh nesting and early brood rearing conditions.

The number of pheasant broods seen per observer-hour was down 31% in 2013 compared to last year. Pheasant production was down in both the primary (-19%) and secondary (-57%) pheasant range from the 2012 levels. On the bright side, pheasant brood size was up, with an average of 5.2 young per brood in 2013 vs. 4.2 in 2012. While pheasant brood numbers rebounded in 2012, they went back down again in 2013. Dropping 58% from 2012 levels and are 81% below their long-term average.

Ruffed grouse broods seen per observer hour were down 15% compared to 2012 levels. Ruffed Grouse production was down in 2 of the 3 regions that compose the primary range for ruffed grouse, central (-20%), northern (-20%),

and southwestern (218%). Ruffed grouse brood size fell from 4.3 in 2012 to 3.8 young per brood in 2013. While some areas of the primary ruffed grouse range will be better than others, it appears that ruffed grouse numbers will continue to decline from their cyclic high of a few years ago.

Dedication of New Ruffed Grouse Management Area Set for October 21st in NE Wisconsin

The Ruffed Grouse Society has been working closely with the Forest County Forestry Department to develop a new ruffed grouse management area in NE Wisconsin in memory of the late David V. Uihlein Sr, a long time RGS supporter and conservationist. Our RGS Chapter in the Milwaukee area is named after Mr. Uihlein. A dedication ceremony will take place at the management area on Monday, October 21st at 1 PM. The site of the dedication ceremony is approximately 4 miles southeast of Crandon, WI. From Hwy. 8/32 east of Crandon, take County Highway W four miles to Keith Siding Road. Turn west (right) on Keith Siding Road for 1 mile to the parking area. Please join us, along with the Uihlein Family, local dignitaries and other RGS members and staff, at this event.

Michigan DNR Invites Public Input on Forest Plans for Dickinson and Iron Counties

The Department of Natural Resources will host an open house on Sept. 24 in Crystal Falls to provide information and receive public comment on proposed forest management treatments for 2015 in the Crystal Falls management unit, which includes Dickinson and Iron counties. The open house is set for **Tuesday, Sept. 24, 3 to 7 p.m. (CDT)**, Crystal Falls Field Office, 1420 Highway US-2 West, Crystal Falls.

Each year, DNR personnel evaluate one-tenth of the state forest. The inventory provides key decision-making information for foresters and wildlife, fisheries and other resource managers. The age, health, quality and quantity of trees and other vegetation are assessed to enable DNR staff to make informed decisions. Timber management, wildlife and fisheries habitat, minerals, archeological sites, recreational use, wildfire potential and social concerns are just some of the topics taken into consideration during this review.

Because the forest is inventoried approximately two years in advance, a year of entry is assigned to indicate when treatments will be prepared. Information currently under review has a 2015 year of entry. This means that treatment activities on lands being reviewed this year will actually begin in 2015.

Proposed treatments, which may include timber harvesting, replanting and other management activities, are designed to ensure the sustainability of all forest resources.

Bill O'Neill, chief of the DNR's Forest Resources Division, said "This is an excellent opportunity for the public to weigh in on what the DNR is doing to

sustainably manage Michigan's state forest land. Interested folks can take a look at proposed management plans and talk face-to-face with foresters and biologists about their questions and concerns. Having active partners in the management of our state forests is crucial to meeting the recreation, economic and conservation needs of current and future generations."

To more easily and efficiently oversee the forest resources, the DNR divides each management unit into smaller units or "compartments." This year, the compartments under review are in Felch, Norway, Sagola, Waucedah and West Branch townships (Dickinson County); and Bates, Crystal Falls, Hematite, Mansfield, Mastodon and Stambaugh townships (Iron County).

Maps and information regarding proposed treatments will be available at the open house. The information can also be found at www.michigan.gov/forestplan. Compartment review packets for the 2015 year of entry can be found by selecting the shown map and clicking on the "Crystal Falls" button. Records of decisions, recorded timber harvests and other treatments for past years are available on this page.

On Oct. 15, the DNR will complete its formal compartment review to decide on final treatment plans for these areas. That review will take place on **Tuesday, Oct. 15, 8 a.m. (CDT)**, Bay College West, lecture room 231 (side A), 2801 North US-2, Iron Mountain.

This is a good opportunity for ruffed grouse/woodcock hunters to express their interests in maintaining habitat for their favorite birds on these public lands.

Michigan DNR Invites Public Input on Forest Plans for Chippewa and Mackinac Counties

The Department of Natural Resources will host a formal compartment review on **Thursday, October 3** at 9 AM at the Quality Inn, 561 Boulevard Drive, in St. Ignace, MI to decide on final treatment plans for 2015 in the Sault Ste. Marie management unit, which includes Chippewa and Mackinac counties.

This year, the compartments under review are in Raber, Rudyard, Pickford, Kinross and Drummond townships (Chippewa County); and Hendricks, Moran, Hudson, Garfield, Portage and Newton townships (Mackinac County).

Maps and information regarding proposed treatments will be available at the open house. The information can also be found at www.michigan.gov/forestplan. Compartment review packets for the 2015 year of entry can be found by selecting the shown map and clicking on the "Sault Ste. Marie" button. Records of decisions, recorded timber harvests and other treatments for past years are available on this page.

Michigan Legislature Passes Bill Restructuring State's Hunting and Fishing Licenses

[House Bill 4668](#), which outlines the restructuring of Michigan's hunting, and fishing licenses has passed the Legislature and is on its way to Gov. Snyder for his approval. When the governor signs the Bill, the hunting and fishing license restructuring will become law. Many conservation organizations and partners helped to forge and support this Bill. If signed, the new license/pricing structure will take effect March 1, 2014. To learn more about these new options, please visit the [license restructuring](#) page on the MI DNR website.

Costs for the coming fall and winter seasons will remain unchanged. When the new structure does take effect, hunters and anglers will have a smaller, simpler set of licensing options to choose from – an 82-percent reduction in license types – including a new “base” license, with resident, non-resident, junior and senior price points. With the estimated \$18.1 million in additional annual revenue generated by this new license package, the DNR will be able to improve fish and wildlife habitat, hire more conservation officers, and provide better outreach and education to hunters and anglers – important steps in Michigan's ability to offer Pure Michigan outdoor recreation to residents and visitors.

Additionally, the Legislature has added \$1 to the cost of each base hunting and fishing license, which will generate approximately \$1.6 million annually. These dollars will be used to create and promote more positive messaging about the value of hunting, fishing and natural resources to audiences that don't participate in those activities. This will build support for conservation and natural resource management among the general public.

Aside from bringing Michigan more in line with hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation license pricing in other Great Lakes states, there are four main “deliverables” this restructured package brings with it:

- A more simple, fair and efficient license structure
 - Better and more outdoor recreation opportunities through enhanced wildlife and fisheries habitat
 - Improved safety, education and protection for our natural resources and the people who enjoy them
 - Stronger conservation efforts with partners
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Tickets Available for the RGS 2013 Fall National Raffle

Entry tickets are now available for the 2013 RGS Fall National Raffle. This raffle is covering a short time span as the three winners will be drawn on December 31, 2013 so enter early. Please help support RGS and maybe win one of the three fantastic prizes, each of which would make a great surprise Christmas present for anyone. Purchase tickets by calling RGS HQ at (888) 564-6747 or contacting Gary Zimmer at 715-674-7505 or garyz@ruffedgrousesociety.org. The donation is \$20.00 per ticket. Winners are responsible for applicable taxes.

Three chances to win. WINNER'S CHOICE! - First winner selects choice of 3 prizes, second winner selects from remaining 2, and the third winner gets the remaining prize.

Prizes include:

First prize: Orvis Endorsed Northern Maine Grouse Hunt for Two in the 2014/15 hunting season at Libby Camps; includes 4 nights, 3 days of hunting. \$3,350 value. **Libby Camps, Donor.**

Second prize: Grand Traverse, Michigan Fishing, Golf and Wine Tour for Four; includes 4 nights, 5 days in Traverse City, Michigan during 2014. \$2,400 value, **Fairfield Inn & Suites, Traverse City, Fish Hunter Charters, LochenHeath Golf Club, Celtic Shuttle & Tours, Donors.**

Third prize: Northern Minnesota Fishing and Resort Stay for Two. One week stay at Driftwood Lodge Resort and Boat Rental on Lake Kabetogama during 2014/2015. \$2,000 value, **Driftwood Lodge Resort, Donor.**

9th Circuit Resuscitates Legal Quagmire on Forest Roads

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in an [order](#) issued August 30th in *Northwest Environmental Defense Center (NEDC) v. Decker* gave litigators another chance to seek federal Clean Water Act (CWA) permits on forest roads through a new round of litigation. The court essentially breathed fresh life into the legal quagmire.

This all began in 2006 when NEDC sued the Oregon state forester claiming that logging roads in Oregon's Tillamook State Forest were point sources of pollution requiring federal CWA permits. Not accepting the outcome of the Oregon court upholding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) 37-year successful regulations that these roads are nonpoint sources that should be regulated through state best management practices, NEDC appealed to the Ninth Circuit, which sided with the litigators in 2010. The Supreme Court overturned the Ninth Circuit last March. In typical form, the Supreme Court upheld EPA's rule that forest roads don't require permits without opining on whether they were point sources. Quite simply, the Court did not rule on the point source

question because it didn't have to. Once the Court overturned the permit decision, it considered its work done.

Now the litigators are trying to revive their argument for permits by arguing that forest roads are still point sources and that there *must* be some new basis out there for requiring a permit. The Ninth Circuit helped them do that by remanding the case back to the district court after restating its ruling that forest roads must be treated as point sources. The litigation wheels are turning again and it is only a matter of time before the legal quagmire thickens.

It was a long and costly seven years leading up to the Supreme Court's decision. Now, notwithstanding opposition to the litigation from a broad spectrum of interests including the National Governors Association; Attorneys General from 31 states; the National Association of Counties; EPA; forestry, agriculture, business, academic and non-profit organizations including the Ruffed Grouse Society; and, most recently, the U.S. House of Representatives that passed by a *voice vote* an amendment to the Farm Bill declaring that forest roads are nonpoint sources, the litigators are at it again. They simply won't quit so long as they have a legal theory to pursue. In the meantime, economic recovery and jobs in the forestry sector nationwide will continue to hang in the balance while the next case winds its way to the Ninth Circuit. All this in pursuit of a permit requirement that experts, including the Chief Forester of the United States, have said won't improve water quality.

Congress must now complete the work on legislation and end the forest roads legal quagmire once and for all. The support is there and the end is in sight. Seven years is enough. It's time to focus on policies to preserve working forests and not get stuck again in the mire of litigation.

Database Yields Insight into Bird Movement Patterns

Ithaca, NY--For centuries people have marveled at the migratory abilities of birds, but new research is now putting numbers on those seasonal feats--for more than a hundred species at a time--using data contributed by thousands of amateur bird watchers.

In all, more than 2.3 million sightings were summarized to reveal migratory routes of 102 species in North America, in a paper published August 1 in *Ecology* magazine. The results provide a fascinating glimpse at an astonishing range of species: for instance, the tiny Calliope Hummingbird crosses the continent almost three times as fast as the Northern Shoveler, which outweighs it more than 300 times. They also highlight the scientific value to be gained from bird watchers' sightings when they can be combined into a single database.

"Up to this point, migration theory has really only been examined at the individual level," said Frank La Sorte, a research associate at the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and lead author of the new study. "But in the end, you want to conserve populations--you want to maintain their migration corridors, flyways, or stopover

habitats. And that's why there's so much potential here."

The new study plots the average route and speed of each species as it moves north and south each year. "Where the speeds slow down, the population is likely at a stopover location," La Sorte said. "That's a valuable patch of habitat where migrating birds can rest and refuel. With results from a study like ours, we can start to make very specific recommendations that we can be confident will impact a large component of the population."

The researchers also tested basic aspects of migration theory that have proven nearly impossible to address until now. The typical method was to use expensive satellite tracking devices. But most birds are too small to carry these, forcing researchers to study larger species just a few individuals at a time, rather than learning about the behavior of a whole population.

With a single study, La Sorte's team learned that larger-bodied birds tend to migrate more slowly than smaller species, confirming a long-held but untested idea. They also found that species migrating longer distances tend to travel faster. Birds also tend to migrate faster in spring than they do in fall.

La Sorte and his colleagues did no field work at all to arrive at their results; instead, they analyzed the sightings of thousands of bird watchers who contribute to an online checklist program called eBird, run by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Using some 2.3 million records from 2007-2011, the researchers calculated an average location for each species on each day of the year.

Though the resulting measurements of speed and direction are coarser than for individuals tracked by satellite, they represent major shifts by thousands or millions of birds that would be impossible for any one scientist or bird watcher to detect on their own. For example, they found that the population of Bobolinks moves across North America at about 43 miles per day; Black-billed Cuckoos are similarly fast; whereas Rock Wrens (the slowest of all) shift their distribution at a comparatively glacial 5 miles per day.

The continental scale of the analysis revealed another intriguing pattern: many species make looping migrations that take them on a more easterly route in fall than in spring. Some species, such as the Blackpoll Warbler and the Black-billed Cuckoo, leave land altogether-launching themselves out over the Atlantic Ocean for their southward migration. The finding suggests that environmental factors such as wind patterns may have played a role in the evolution of migratory routes. They also yield important insights for conservation planners striving to maintain habitat for migrants.

The study was funded by the Leon Levy Foundation, Wolf Creek Foundation, and National Science Foundation. A PDF copy of the paper are available from Pat Leonard, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, [607-254-2137](tel:607-254-2137), pel27@cornell.edu

Ruffed Grouse Society Magazine Wins 2013 APEX Award For Publication Excellence

Coraopolis, PA – The *Ruffed Grouse Society* magazine has been awarded a 2013 APEX Award of Excellence in the "Magazines & Journals – Print Over 32 Pages" category for the Spring 2013 issue. This issue was the first for Editor Matt Soberg and was constructed with the help from Paul Carson, a prior editor of the magazine. The design and layout was created by Brittney LaCoste of Campbell LaCoste, Inc. in Black Earth, Wisconsin. The Apex Awards included over 2,400 total entries this year.

The Spring 2013 magazine cover highlighted *The Fall Shuffle*, a painting by Chris Smith that was the RGS Print of the Year. The issue featured a woodcock sky dance article by Tim Flanigan and other features from longtime RGS contributors Art Wheaton, Nick Sisley, Lisa Price, Bob West, and Doug Forsythe. RGS President and CEO John Eichinger provided a message about the Drummer Fund, and RGS Director of Conservation Policy Dan Dessecker included an article about working lands for wildlife.

“We are honored to be awarded a 2013 APEX Award. The Society works hard to create a quality magazine that effectively communicates our mission and provides engaging articles and beautiful photographs for our members,” said Eichinger. RGS won the APEX Grand Award in 2011 for its 50th Anniversary Issue and two APEX Awards in 2012.

In its 25th year, the APEX Awards for Publication Excellence is an international competition open to writers, editors, publications staff, and business and nonprofit communicators. The awards are based on excellence in graphic design, editorial content and the ability to achieve overall communications excellence. The Apex Awards are sponsored by Communications Concepts, Inc., a leading publisher of business communication reports.

RGS to Once Again Provide Woodcock Migration Mapping

The Ruffed Grouse Society is pleased to once again provide the American woodcock migration mapping system. Accessible on the Society's website at <http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/migration-map> . The site, used by hunters and bird watchers to monitor the woodcock migrations will be active from September 2013 through April 30, 2014.

This page displays current month prior daily and weekly maps, which when compared will show the general movement of the birds during migration.

TruckVault Supports RGS – Vote Daily and Win Prizes!

Seven groups will share in the funds and national publicity provided via Scott Linden's Wingshooting USA television series in the fourth annual "TruckVault Cares ... for conservation, canines & kids" initiative.

Lead sponsor TruckVault is joined in the effort by co-sponsors Filson, Kent Cartridge, Happy Jack, Webley & Scott, Royal Flush Adventures, Scott Linden's Signature Series of dog gear and Pursuit Channel television network.

Wingshooting USA viewers are urged to vote online at <https://www.truckvaultcares.com/> for their favorite organization.

Each vote directs funds on a proportional basis so that all organizations receive dollars for their treasury. This year's beneficiary groups include: AKC Canine Health Foundation, Scholastic Shooting Sports Foundation, American Brittany Rescue, Ruffed Grouse Society, National 4H Shooting Sports, International Hunter Education Association, and the U.S. Sportsman's Alliance Foundation Trailblazer Adventure program.

New this year will be a voting component on the TruckVault Cares Facebook page in addition to the <https://www.truckvaultcares.com> web page. Voting ends on December 31, 2013. Voters can win prizes throughout the effort, ranging from a South Dakota hunting trip to a "sport utility building," Webley & Scott shotgun, Filson apparel, Happy Jack dog care products, Kent ammo, Scott Linden dog training gear and the grand prize, a TruckVault.

REMINDER

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

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions:

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Established in 1961, 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. RGS works with landowners and government agencies to develop critical habitat utilizing scientific management practices. For information on the Ruffed Grouse Society, please call 888-564-6747 or check out the RGS website at www.ruffedgrousesociety.org.