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Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

Volume 8, Issue 5

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Happy Holidays to All

As 2009 fades away, we can sure look back at the past year as a year of positive times in the ruffed grouse and woodcock world. With your help RGS has been very active and making some significant moves forward. It definitely is time to say thanks for the continued support of the many dedicated RGS members who help make all of this possible. As you will see in the following FAN Update there has been a lot happening in this region. Below you will see a summary of some of the things that have been accomplished and have once again provided my annual listing of the Ten Regional Highlights of the Past Year. Just like last year, it certainly was difficult to stop at ten. To all RGS members thank you again for all your support and what you do for the Society and for me. When things are getting tough I can always look to our members for strength and encouragement. I hope the holidays continue to be special to you and your families and may the New Year be a good year for all of us and for the birds we enjoy so much.

Gary Zimmer

2009 SENIOR REGIONAL BIOLOGIST REPORT

Here's a summary of the 2009 Regional accomplishments:

- Attended 60 meetings with resource agency staff/legislators and provided RGS input to 23 public land management projects.
 - Involved in 26 media contacts (includes press releases/television and radio interviews).
 - Conducted 15 reviews of existing or proposed Management Area Projects.
 - Conducted 9 on-site habitat consultations.
 - Participated in 18 chapter meetings, 2 youth events, 4 outdoor shows and 9 field events.
 - Attended 9 chapter banquets.
 - Participated in 22 external outreach events that included about 2000 individuals.
 - Responded to approximately 1,500 individual requests for information.
 - Produced four FAN Update newsletters to nearly 700 members.
 - Prepared four grant applications for habitat and educational projects. Grants generated \$101,326 for habitat projects.
 - Represented RGS on Michigan and Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative Councils, Lake States Resource Alliance, Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association and the National Forest Support Coalition.
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Michigan 2009 Early Season Grouse and Woodcock Hunting Report

Early season reports from ruffed grouse and American woodcock cooperators allow biologists to quickly assess hunter success and local field conditions across the state of Michigan at the beginning of the grouse season. This report is a summary of their responses for September 15-18, 2009.

Cooperators returned 81 useable surveys. They hunted 468 hours in 45 counties during the survey period. Respondents hunted most in Zone 2, followed by Zone 1, and Zone 3. Hunters reported the highest average flush rates for grouse in Zones 2 and 1, respectively. Individual counties having at least 10 hours of hunting with the highest flush rates for grouse were Grand Traverse, Benzie, Kalkaska, Wexford, and Oscoda. Although the woodcock season was not open during the survey period, cooperators were asked to also count woodcock flushes. Individual counties having at least 10 hours of hunting with the highest flush rates for woodcock were Gladwin, Roscommon, Kalkaska, Grand Traverse, and Wexford.

About 33% of the respondents thought grouse populations were up or slightly up from last year in the areas they hunted, with 34% reporting populations about the same as the previous year and 33% describing them as down or slightly down. About 18% of the respondents thought woodcock populations were up or slightly up from last year while about 36% thought they were the same as last year and 46% thought they were down or slightly down.

The best grouse and woodcock hunting opportunities will continue to be in areas of young early forest successional habitat. Many hunters commented on the warm and dry weather conditions for the opening of the grouse season. Hunters also commented on good food availability for grouse. Some hunters said that they would prefer that grouse season open later in the season when there is less foliage. More information is available on the Michigan DNR website at

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/dnr/RG_early_coop_2008_251858_7.pdf

Videos Offer Info on Ridding Wooded Areas of Invasives

Four online videos can help landowners and others identify and control three of Wisconsin's most common and problematic invasive plants. The videos, all of which are under 3 minutes in length, can be found on the Take Action on

Invasive Species webpage at http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/action_woodlot.htm. In addition to a general video, 3 other videos focus on buckthorn, garlic mustard, and honeysuckle -- invasives that are considered particularly problematic in Wisconsin. These invasive plants compete for water and nutrients with trees and native plants, often crowding out desirable growth and negatively affecting wildlife. The videos help viewers identify the invasives and demonstrate the safe use of herbicides to rid an area of the invasive plants.

RGS Develops State Drummer Fund Program

Beginning in 2010, RGS chapters with successful events will be able to place a portion of what they raise in state "Drummer Funds" for habitat projects within their state. This new program was recently approved by the RGS Board of Directors and is in response to a call by chapters to locally fund additional habitat projects. Contact your local RGS Regional Director for more information on this important program.

Two Wisconsin COVERTS Workshops Planned for 2010

Building on last years success, the Wisconsin Coverts Project will again conduct two workshops in 2010. The workshops for private forest landowners will be held either August 12 - 15 or August 26 - 29 at Kemp Natural Resources Station near Woodruff, WI. These 3-day sessions have had rave reviews from past attendees that have become Covert Cooperators through past workshops.

Now starting its 17th year, 427 cooperators have attended these workshops. Sharing with others what they have learned these Coverts Cooperators have influenced the management of over 700,000 acres of land in Wisconsin. This workshop is highly recommended for those landowners interested in better understanding their role as stewards of their property. For additional information on the workshop contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or by email at jlneck@wisc.edu. Attendance is limited. More information is available on the Coverts Project website at http://forestandwildlifeecology.wisc.edu/wl_extension/wicovertsproject.html. Deadline for applications is June 15th.

Don't Miss Out!
Enter the 2009/2010 RGS National Raffle Today

Baby Frame 28-Gauge Shotgun with 28 inch barrels

Made Famous by Winchester

(approx. retail value \$32,000)

Straight English Stock, Walnut

Beavertail forend

Gold RGS Logo Engraving on bottom of receiver

Visit www.ruffedgrousesociety.org to see a picture (it's a beauty) of this one-of-a-kind shotgun

To Purchase Tickets Contact: Gary Zimmer

at 715-674-7505 or rgzimm@newnorth.net or mail the following to:

RGS P.O. Box 116 Laona, WI 54541

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____

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

CHECK (Payable to RGS) CASH CREDIT CARD

CC # _____ Exp. Date _____

Billing Address _____ Billing Zip _____

Signature _____

Ten Regional Highlights from 2009

(not ranked in order of importance and not a complete list)

1. Continue to work with outstanding RGS chapters, committees and volunteers who remain passionate about the RGS mission. Five habitat work days were conducted in the region including first time one's by the Flambeau River Chapter near Park Falls, WI and the Chain'O'Lakes Chapter near Eagle River, WI along with the three annual work days sponsored by the NE Wisconsin Chapter (Green Bay) in NE Wisconsin.
2. Attending two successful RGS sponsored youth field days including the huge event put on each April by the West Central Wisconsin Chapter near Marshfield and one put on by the T. Stanton Armour Chapter north of Chicago.
3. Having one of the highest number of on-going RGS sponsored habitat projects in this region since RGS project work began in the mid 1980's.
4. Putting two ASV forestry loaders with mulching heads on the ground in the region. Already in Michigan and Wisconsin hundreds of acres of work has been conducted due in large part to the dedication of a number of RGS members who have helped acquire the ASV's, trucks, trailers and other supporting equipment as well as finding and coordinating work efforts.
5. Seeing the continued success of the Wisconsin Coverts Project that recently completed its 16th year and 17 workshops and working with Coverts Project Staff Jamie Nack, Scott Craven and David Drake. The popularity of these program led to the development of a second workshop in 2009.
6. In 2009, the Iowa DNR, with the support of RGS and other NGO's, received a \$190,000 grant to be used to support forest habitat management on private lands in NE Iowa. RGS members from the Iowa Chapter along with Iowa DNR personnel have worked for many years to promote habitat management programs on the ground that will have a greater effect on forest wildlife populations.
7. Watching the continued development of the River Hills Forest Habitat Project in Missouri and seeing the farsighted efforts of the Mid-Missouri RGS Chapter members in insuring that this

project occurred and was successful. Since the onset of the River Hills Project in 2003, \$190,000 has been raised to support young forest management activities on approximately 3,200 acres in the project area.

8. RGS being invited to speak to a congressional hearing in Appleton, WI on management activities on the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest.
9. Seeing the success of the continuing effect that RGS members and staff are having on land management decisions by Federal and state agencies.
10. Seeing an increase in public awareness of RGS and its mission. Using a variety of media outlets, RGS has been more and more in the public eye with each passing year. Over 20 articles, interviews and press releases were completed or conducted in this region in 2009.

Upcoming RGS “Habitat” Events in the Region

March 11 - NE Wisconsin Wildlife Seminar with Dan Eklund, US Forest Service Forest Biologist, 7 PM at the Rock Garden Supper Club, Green Bay. Contact Dave Bartz at 920-743-6004 for more info.

March 20 to 21 - Stop by the RGS booth at the Wisconsin Sport Show at the Eau Claire Indoor Sports Center in Eau Claire. To help with the booth contact Gary Zimmer at 715-674-7505 or by email at rgszimm@newnorth.net.

April 9 to 11 - Stop by the RGS booth at the Wisconsin Deer/Turkey Expo at the Alliant Energy Center in Madison. To help with the booth contact Gary Zimmer at 715-674-7505 or by email at rgszimm@newnorth.net.

August 12 to 15 - First 2010 WI Coverts Workshop, Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at jlnack@wisc.edu.

August 26 to 29 - Second 2010 WI Coverts Workshop, Contact Jamie Nack at 608-265-8264 or email at jlnack@wisc.edu.

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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The Ruffed Grouse Society is the one international wildlife conservation organization dedicated to promoting conditions suitable for ruffed grouse, American woodcock and related wildlife to sustain our sport 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.