

14TH MEETING OF THE MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP

IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL WILD PHEASANT CONSERVATION PLAN



HOSTED BY MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

**OCTOBER 1-4, 2012
SHALOM HILL FARM
WINDOM, MN**

**KURT HAROLDSON, CHAIRMAN
BUDD VEERKA, INTERIM CHAIRMAN
NICOLE DAVROS, SECRETARY**

2012 REPORT

14TH MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP MEETING

**THE MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP IS A TECHNICAL WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE
MIDWEST ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES**

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MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP

Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri,
Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

AGENDA 14TH MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP MEETING

Monday, October 1, 2012

- 4:00 pm – 10:00 pm Check-in (\$200 payable to Minnesota DNR)
- 7:00 pm – 10:00 pm Evening Social
(Snacks and beverages provided by Cottonwood Co. Pheasants Forever)

Tuesday, October 2, 2012

- 7:00 am – 8:00 am Breakfast (provided)
- 8:00 am – 12:00 pm ***Morning Session***
- Introduction – *Kurt Haroldson, Minnesota DNR*
- State Status Reports – *Group*
- Spent lead shot ingestion by pheasants
Travis Runia, South Dakota DGFP
- Pheasant & duck nesting in biofuel plots in South Dakota
Alex Solem, South Dakota State University (SDSU)
- 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch (provided)
- 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm ***Afternoon Session***
- Overview of MN DNR's Legacy Funding
Kurt Haroldson & Jesse Roberts, Minnesota DNR
- 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm ***Field Trip – Cottonwood County***
Led by Randy Markl, Area Wildlife Manager Minnesota DNR
- 6:00 pm Dinner (provided)

Wednesday, October 3, 2012

7:30 am – 8:30 am Breakfast (provided)

8:30 am – 12:00 pm ***Morning Session***

Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) and Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs)

Tom Dailey, NBCI

USFWS Grassland Coordinator & Structured Decision Making (SDM) applied to grassland bird conservation east of the Rockies

Tom Dailey, NBCI

National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan: Implementation

Brief History of Plan – *Budd Veverka, Indiana DFW*

Plan Coordinator position: funding & responsibilities – *Group*

Seeking Partners - *Group*

12:00 pm – 1:00 pm Lunch (Provided)

1:00 pm – 5:30 pm ***Afternoon Session***

National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan: Implementation

Plan Coordinator – *Group and Pheasants Forever Reps*

6:00 pm Dinner (provided)

Thursday, October 4, 2012

7:00 am – 8:00 am Breakfast (provided)

8:00 am – 12:00 pm ***Morning Session***

National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan: Next Steps
Plans for 2013 Midwest Pheasant Study Group Meeting
Final thoughts & meeting adjournment



MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP

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MEETING SUMMARY

14TH MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP MEETING

Ten Members (IN, IA, KS, NE, ND, OH, SD, and MI) of the Midwest Pheasant Study Group (MPSG), along with two representatives from Washington and one representative from the National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative (NBCI) arrived on Monday, October 1, 2012 at Shalom Hill Farm. The evening was spent getting acquainted and discussing the next day's agenda.

Tuesday morning began with formal introductions and a review of the meeting agenda. Additional attendees for the day included representatives from Minnesota DNR, South Dakota State University (SDSU), and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (Windom, MN office). Following introductions, state representatives delivered their state reports, summarizing last year's hunting activities, ongoing management activities, and current pheasant research (Appendix 1).

Travis Runia, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, & Parks (SDGFP) presented preliminary results from his research on spent lead shot ingestion by pheasants. To date, data collection has focused on areas with a high level of spent lead shot. Future work might include sites with a lower level of spent shot. For complete details, please contact Travis.

Alex Solem, SDSU, presented results from his Master's thesis work on pheasant and duck nesting in biofuel plots. Alex is in the final stages of writing his thesis and has also recently started working for SDGFP.

Kurt Haroldson and Jesse Roberts, both from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR), led a discussion on MN DNR's Legacy Funding and provided copies of the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council's 2012 Annual Report. (The report can be found at www.isohe.leg.mn/.) From 2009-2034, 3/8ths of 1% of MN's sales and use taxes are dedicated to the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. Thirty-three percent of this Legacy money is then deposited into the Outdoor Heritage Fund and can be spent on restoring, protecting, and enhancing wetlands, prairies, forests, and habitat for fish, game, and other wildlife. The annual report includes a list of recipients and projects funded for 2010, 2011, and 2012. *Many dollars* are going towards prairie and grassland habitat acquisition and restoration projects in Minnesota.

At 2:00 pm on Tuesday, the group left Shalom Hill Farm for a field trip of Cottonwood county. Randy Markl, an Area Wildlife Manager (based out of Windom, MN) for MN DNR,

led much of the tour. We toured various Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and saw a range of sites, including ones that had been recently burned, areas with woody encroachment, and examples of good pheasant winter cover (including both shelterbelts and cattail marshes) with nearby food plots. A short discussion was had over different techniques and timing of seeding activities across different regions (e.g., MN vs. WA). Marty Baker (USFWS, Windom) and Randy discussed partnerships between MN DNR and USFWS and how they can work effectively together in MN. For example, our last stop included a state-owned WMA to the north and a federally-owned Waterfowl Production Area (WPA) to the south. An active wetland project was underway, with the wetland being temporarily tiled and drained for management purposes. A smaller parcel of land in-between the WMA and WPA was recently purchased by Pheasants Forever and, once restored, will provide grassland habitat to connect the WMA to the WPA. At least three pheasants made fly-by appearances during our tour!

Wednesday morning began with two presentations by Tom Dailey, NBCI. The first was on Strategic Habitat Conservation (SHC) and the USFWS's plan for Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCCs). Tom provided some brief examples of how these can work, and showed the basic model that is used:

Research & Monitoring (Learning) →
Biological Planning & Conservation Design (Planning) →
Conservation Delivery (Doing)

Tom's second presentation was on the Structured Decision Making (SDM) process, and application of SDM for grassland bird conservation in the Midwest/East of the Rockies. Cooperative grassland bird conservation (using the LCC model) takes a landscape-scale framework to accomplish goals. He mentioned that Katie Koch (USFWS – Division of Migratory Birds) is the Midwest Bird Monitoring Coordinator. She's located in Marquette, MI/Green Bay, WI.

The rest of the morning was spent discussing the National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan (hereafter, the Plan). States represented included: KS, IA, IN, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, and WA. Due to several new members being in attendance, Budd Veverka, Indiana DFW, first gave a brief history of how the Plan has developed since 2006. Next, Mark McInroy, Iowa DNR, provided Todd Bogenschutz's update on the AFWA meeting that was held in September 2012, including the Directors' comments and critiques of the Plan. The discussion then opened up to the group for thoughts on the Plan's implementation. The coordinator position was discussed (e.g., how funded, where located, etc...). Tom Dailey provided insights into how funding for the NBCI SE/SW Coordinator position was sought. It was through a Multi-State Conservation Funding Grant, which, if funded, typically lasts 3 yrs. Potential redundancies and opportunities for collaborating/sharing positions (e.g., Grassland Coordinator) down the road between the NBCI Plan and Pheasant Plan were also discussed.

Just before lunch, Matt Holland, Senior Field Coordinator for Pheasants Forever (PF), joined us for the remaining discussion. At lunchtime, Howard Vincent (PF's President & CEO) and Dave Nomsen (PF's Vice-President of Government Affairs) also joined us.

After lunch, the group called Ollie Torgerson to follow up on some items. Ollie offered some guidance on potential avenues of support for the Plan Coordinator position and procedures

for making changes to the group's Bylaws. Following the phone call, Howard Vincent inquired about what type of budget we are looking at for the Plan Coordinator position. Tom Dailey suggested we look to the NBCI plan as a guide, as the NBCI Coordinator salary is listed somewhere in the plan. Howard and Dave Nomsen explained PFs very tight budget, and said much of what is done is paid for through help from the local chapters. Howard said that PF could potentially offer some sort of in-kind money in terms of housing and/or space, but primary funding would need to come from elsewhere. After the PF representatives left, the group further discussed the Plan Coordinator's responsibilities and top priorities upon hiring. A constructive conversation on where to house the Plan Coordinator and how to continue to garner support from AFWA, MAFWA, the Directors, and partners concluded the day's meeting.

Thursday morning's discussion began with outlining the next steps in the Plan's implementation process. The group discussed the bylaws and potential changes that need to be made to move from a Midwest to a National group in concordance with our National Plan, timelines for funding opportunities for a Plan Coordinator, and tasks & deadlines for group members to follow in order to meet our goals.

Because we are still in the important early stages of Plan implementation, the decision to continue to meet annually was made. However, the time and place of our next meeting has yet to be determined.

Director Action Items – Determine when the group should expand to incorporate states across the range, and rework bylaws, create a new structure (National Pheasant Technical Committee and Management Board).

Director Information Items – Update letter on plan status, multi-state grant/state buy-in for Coordinator, group bylaws revision, and meeting locations.

Location and Time of Next Meeting – *Iowa (September 30 – October 3).*

PARTICIPANT CONTACT LIST
14TH MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP MEETING

Kansas

David Dahlgren
Small Game Specialist
Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks
1426 Alt. Hwy 83
Hays, KS 67601
435-881-1910
Dave.Dahlgren@ksoutdoors.com

Iowa

Mark McInroy
Wildlife Biologist
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Wildlife Research Station
1436 255th St
Boone, IA 50036
515-432-2823 x 111
Mark.McInroy@dnr.iowa.gov

Indiana

Budd Veverka
Farmland Game Research Biologist
Indiana Division of Fish & Wildlife
5596 E State Road 46
Bloomington, IN 47404
812-675-1559
bveverka@dnr.in.gov

Michigan

Al Stewart
Upland Game Bird Specialist & Program Leader
Michigan Department of Natural Resources
Stevens T. Mason Building
P.O. Box 30444
560 W. Allegan St
Lansing, MI 48909
517-241-3101
stewartal@michigan.gov

Minnesota

Nicole Davros

Upland Game Project Leader
Farmland Wildlife Populations & Research Group
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
35365 800th Avenue
Madelia, MN 56062
507-642-8478 x 225
Nicole.Davros@state.mn.us

Kurt Haroldson

Assistant Regional Wildlife Manager
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
261 Hwy 15 South
New Ulm, MN 56073
507-359-6031
Kurt.Haroldson@state.mn.us

Nebraska

Jeff Lusk

Upland Game Program Manager
Research, Analysis, and Inventory Section
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
2200 N. 33rd St
Lincoln, NE 68503
402-471-1756
Jeff.Lusk@nebraska.gov

North Dakota

Stan Kohn

Upland Game Management Supervisor
North Dakota Game & Fish Department
100 North Bismarck Expressway
Bismarck, ND 58501
701-328-6339
skohn@nd.gov

Ohio

Mark Wiley

Wildlife Biologist
Olentangy Wildlife Research Station
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
8589 Horseshoe Road
Ashley, OH 43003
740-747-2525 x 28
Mark.Wiley@dnr.state.oh.us

South Dakota

Travis Runia

Senior Upland Game Biologist
South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks
895 3rd St. SW
Huron, SD 57350
605-353-8477
Travis.Runia@state.sd.us

Washington

Joey McCanna

Upland Game Bird Specialist
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
2315 North Discovery Place
Spokane Valley, WA 99216-1566
509-648-3632
Joe.McCanna@dfw.wa.gov

Brian Calkins

Small Game/Furbearer Section Manager
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
600 Capitol Way North
Olympia, WA 98501-1091
360-902-2691
Brian.Calkins@dfw.wa.gov

NBCI

Tom Dailey

Assistant Director/Science Coordinator
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
University of Tennessee – Knoxville
3661 E. Doe Brook Lane
Columbia, MO 65202
573-881-1782
tdailey7@utk.edu

ORGANIZATIONAL GUIDELINES OF THE MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP

OBJECTIVES:

1. Provide an informal forum for common management problems concerning the pheasant and associated upland game (where applicable) in Midwest upland/farmland habitats.
2. Stimulate an exchange of information between states on survey techniques, harvest regulations, research, and habitat management.
3. Provide an opportunity to define and set priorities for common research needs and to minimize duplication of efforts among member states.
4. Provide an opportunity to develop cooperative research projects that one state could not address by itself.
5. Act as a source of detailed information on pheasants in the Midwest (and other applicable states) for the public and other resource agencies.

ORGANIZATION:

The Midwest Pheasant Study Group shall consist of representatives from the member states who, as wildlife biologists, are directly responsible for research and management of pheasants and associated upland game birds. States invited to join the Group are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. Other states are encouraged to participate. The Midwest Pheasant Study Group is sanctioned by the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA)^a.

OFFICERS:

The offices of chairperson and secretary shall be filled by biologists from the state selected to host the next meeting. Their term of office shall be from their selection until completion of all responsibilities for their Group meeting. Officers will be selected by the host state with recommendations made by the group. Their responsibilities will include organizing the meeting to be held in their state, selecting a meeting site and dates, arranging for lodging and meeting rooms, formulating an informal program, publicity and meeting announcements to member states, and publication of a meeting summary and updated biologist directory.

COMMITTEES:

Committees may be selected to investigate specific problems and make recommendations to the entire group. Committees will be selected by the chairperson after reviewing requests for committee action submitted by the membership.

MEETINGS:

At each group meeting the date and host state for the next meeting will be decided. Meeting sites will be rotated among member states on a volunteer basis. If no volunteer comes forward, the first member state (proceeding alphabetically) that has not yet hosted a meeting, or the member state with the longest elapsed time period since it last hosted a meeting, will be chosen if agreeable to that state. Meetings will generally be 2-3 days in duration with meeting costs kept to an absolute minimum. A general theme shall be selected for each meeting; site chosen should enhance the selected topic. Field trips are encouraged to investigate management practices and/or research projects.

Notice of arrangements for the meeting shall be distributed to member states at least 4 months in advance to allow time for securing out-of-state travel authority and preparation of presentations/status reports.

MEETING AGENDA:

The program shall be informal with ample time for open discussion. Each state shall submit a written report on hunting regulations and harvest, population surveys and trends, new research and management projects, university research, and any other topic that the state representatives deem important. Also, the chairperson may invite guest speakers to present reports on the selected theme of the meeting or other topics that may be of interest to the group. Short field trips may be utilized to point out areas of special interest to the group.

ATTENDANCE:

To enhance an atmosphere of total participation and exchange of ideas, the attendance shall be limited to 40 persons. The chairperson will be responsible for limiting the size of the meeting to that number. Forty seats will be allocated in a manner that allows the 11 non-host states to send a maximum of 3 individuals apiece, the host state is allowed 5 seats, and 2 seats will be available for national-group representatives such as Pheasants Forever and Quail Unlimited. If pre-meeting registration indicates that some states will not send their full allotment, the chairperson can delegate unfilled seats to the host state or to states requesting extra attendance. Persons invited by the host state to participate in the program would not be counted toward the allotment.

BUSINESS MEETING:

The agenda will include a short business meeting. Topic of discussion will include selection of the next host state, date of the next meeting, future topic(s) of interest, selection of officers, committee reports, and any other information pertinent to the operation of the group.

MEETING SUMMARY AND MINUTES:

The secretary of the group shall be responsible for preparing a summary of topics discussed at the meeting to persons attending and any other organization or agency making a request. The meeting summary shall contain a synopsis of information presented and items covered at the business meeting, including committee reports. Any written reports submitted at the meeting shall be included as well as a list of persons attending the meeting and their addresses. Group chair will provide a copy of the meeting summary to the president of the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies^b. Duplication of status reports and related material to be placed in the meeting summary shall be the responsibility of member state representatives and adequate copies must be turned in at the meeting. Funds for distribution of the meeting summary and other materials will be furnished by the host state.

^a Revised at the 2004 meeting by unanimous vote.

^b Revised at the 1996 meeting by unanimous vote.
Previously revised at the 1993 meeting.



MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP

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APPENDIX 1 – UPDATE LETTER TO DIRECTORS 14TH MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP MEETING

Attached.



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The Midwest Pheasant Study Group (MPSG) meeting was held in Windom, MN from October 1st through October 4th. We are currently compiling our annual meeting report for the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA), but the group felt a status update and exploratory request was necessary as the National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan (NWPCP) moves toward final approval and publication. During the annual meeting, the MPSG discussed the first steps in the implementation process to move the conservation plan forward as quickly as possible.

The primary discussion surrounded the need for a full-time national coordinator (*see attached coordinator responsibilities document*). It is well documented that national conservation planning for any species has had little success without a full-time coordinator. To fund this extremely important position, the MPSG will submit a National Conservation Need (NCN) to MAFWA. With MAFWA's support and submission of our NCN, we will submit a letter of intent and multi-state grant proposal to fund the national coordinator position.

If the multi-state grant effort fails in 2014, the MPSG would like the opinion of the MAFWA Directors regarding a national "buy-in". This "buy-in" would be a financial commitment similar in method to the way funds are currently solicited for the coordinator of the National Bobwhite Quail Initiative. Again, the "buy-in" is not our first option, but may be necessary, to fund the coordinator position. Few national plans have had success without a dedicated national coordinator.

With the creation of the NWPCP, the MPSG has worked to bring together 29 states across the pheasant range to cooperate on pheasant conservation. With this expanded focus, along with pursuing a coordinator position, we would also like the permission of the MAFWA Directors to begin restructuring our bylaws to encompass our national effort. We offer two options for your consideration: 1) to only update the bylaws to allow for additional state participation and to expand our ability to meet in additional states in the pheasant range, or 2) restructure the bylaws (over next 1-1.5 years), reorganizing the MPSG into the National Wild Pheasant Technical Committee, overseen by a national pheasant management board, similar in form to the National Bobwhite Technical Committee. The NWPCP's implementation section calls for the establishment of a management board and technical committee, but we want the opinion of the MAFWA Directors on how they would like us to move to change our current structure as this will be a topic of discussion at our 2013 meeting. The management board, technical committee, and coordinator are needed to successfully begin implementation of the NWPCP.

Again, the MPSG would like to thank the MAFWA Directors for their continued support of range-wide pheasant conservation and the National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan. Please send all comments/concerns to MPSG chair Budd Veverka (bveverka@dnr.in.gov). We look forward to your feedback.

Best Regards,

N. Budd Veverka

N. Budd Veverka
2012 Chair, Midwest Pheasant Study Group
Indiana Division of Fish and Wildlife



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APPENDIX 1 – STATE REPORTS 14TH MIDWEST PHEASANT STUDY GROUP MEETING

State Reports to be sent as PDF.