



News From North Dakota PF

May 2011

THE FIELD REPORT

The west-central part of the state has gotten above average rainfall and cooler than average temperatures for the month of April combined with above average snow melt. These wet and cold conditions have prevented many farmers from getting into the fields on time, but the birds seem to be handling it well. We have had some tough spring storms that have brought mixes of rain, snow, and sleet but the birds came through these events well based on observations from the field. Because of our northern latitude pheasants aren't on nests at this time, so as long as May doesn't see extremely wet or cold conditions, I expect average to good nesting conditions. When compared to other regions of the pheasant range, west-central North Dakota is generally dry. It is uncommon to have an issue with too much rain during the nesting season here. The concern here is habitat. With an average reduction of only 17% of the CRP acreage across the counties of Billings, Dunn, Golden Valley, Hettinger, McKenzie, Mercer, and Stark after CRP sign-up 39, the birds should have ample nesting cover—**Jeff Potts, Dickinson ND**



The SW corner of the state is pretty wet as well; but everyone already knows that, especially they farmers and ranchers in the area. The cool weather will likely have an impact on things if it continues; the birds might be a little 'behind' this year. We are possibly already seeing this in sage grouse, as few birds have been seen during lek counts that have been going on this week. This is all very speculative since counts are still going on and final numbers are not in. Interest in Sign-up 41 picked up towards the end of the sign-up period; however the FSA offices are keeping a lock on the # of contracts and acres offered at this point—**Megan Moore, Hettinger ND**

In the SE part of ND, very wet conditions have persisted due to runoff, flooding, and rain. Seems like temperatures are a little cooler than what they should be for good nesting. As for CRP on the landscape, I would say it has remained fairly consistent. Many landowners are signing acres into various habitat programs—**Matt Olson, Forman ND**

In the east-central part of ND, I have been seeing few birds north of the Highway 200 line. But in speaking with landowners around the Valley City/Jamestown areas, overall numbers are holding strong. This cold and wet spring will hopefully break soon and allow for good nesting conditions. Many birds can be lost during and after the hatch due to the weather. Chicks are vulnerable to temperature variances, and the hen can only protect so many of her chicks—**Jesse Beckers, Valley City ND**



SPRING MIGRATION

Spring is finally here and many species of birds are coming back up North. Geese, ducks, and song birds are all coming back to their summer homes. There are several things we can do to increase the amount of birds and other wildlife in our area. One of the easiest ways to increase small song birds in the yard is to hang bird feeders on our trees. We can also make our own bird feeder by covering a pine cone in peanut butter and rolling that in bird feed. Then attach fishing line to the top and hang from a tree. This is a great youth project. This is a great way to get the youth active and involved in the observation and participation of increasing food and habitat for local birds. Planting legumes will also help increase the number of birds in our yards. Flowers attract many insects for younger birds to eat. Geese and ducks like to be near water, which again is in great abundance this year. They also like the pheasant need a place to nest. Good nesting cover includes cattail sloughs and tall bunch grasses. As we all know legumes, sweet clover and alfalfa are great for pheasants. Wildlife of any size and shape can always use more food source in their habitat.

Shawna Pantzke—ND Youth Leadership Representative

WANT TO DO MORE FOR OUR YOUTH HUNTERS?

Help Introduce a Youngster to the Outdoors!



Text **PF** to **27222***
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Your donation will directly fund Pheasants Forever's Youth Education Programs & No Child Left Indoors initiative!

FOOD PLOTS—HERE IS THE DEAL

The importance of food plots oftentimes overshadows the real need on the landscape - nesting and winter cover, especially in ND. That being said, food plots do have a role in pheasant management because of the relationship between food, winter cover, movement and mortality. Winter food is usually in abundant supply and starvation of wild pheasants is practically unheard of, so the principle objective of food and cover plots is to help carry female birds through the winter in good condition. This is accomplished by establishing safe foraging patterns, providing a dependable source of food and restricting unnecessary movements.



The two critical design factors for food plots are location and size. Food plots should be located next to heavy winter cover and other shelter (shelterbelts, cattail sloughs, etc). This will eliminate the time pheasants and wildlife are exposed to the elements and to predators. If there is no winter cover available, food plots must either be very large or not installed at all. Wildlife populations can actually be hurt more if food plots are not located adjacent to winter cover.

Grain-based Food Plots

High energy, grain-based food plots (including corn, sorghum, millets, etc.) are an essential wildlife management practice for game birds and other wildlife on private lands. Regardless of winter severity, it makes good sense to provide additional food and cover for crisis situations, to use food plots to increase habitat diversity, and to create habitat for hunting and wildlife viewing. Where primary winter cover is limited, planting grain-based mixes (like sorghums) will provide great cover structure in addition to food, and creating larger plots will improve shelter for your birds. That will help you achieve your primary objective—to bring your hens through the winter in peak condition for breeding, where improved spring body weight helps maximize chick production.

Browse Mixes

The Bird and Buck Line of green browse mixes from Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever provide forage that will help attract big game to your farm and that, in some cases, can also provide high quality brood habitat for upland birds. These mixes are a magnet for wildlife and will attract whitetails and other species to your property and hold them there. PF/QF browse mixes are comprised of specially developed protein and energy rich forage that deer and turkey find irresistible. In addition, Bird and Buck forage mixes create a leafy, insect rich structure that is important for game bird chicks. [Find out more about Pheasants Forever Signature Series Food and Cover Mixes.](#)

Perennial Food Plots

As a biologist, I prefer these plots over the single grain based plots. Diversity in perennial food plots will provide wildlife benefits throughout the year by acting as nesting cover, brood-rearing cover, a food source, and winter cover. There are different levels of vegetation in these plots providing greater benefits for more wildlife species. The downside is that perennial food plots are more difficult to establish and maintain than grain based plots.

Focus on Forever 2011 Conference July 22-24, 2011

Eagle Bluff
Environmental
Learning Center
Lanesboro, MN
28097 Goodview Drive,
Lanesboro, MN 55949
www.eagle-bluff.org

Presented by Minnesota's Northwest Suburban PF Chapter

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever's No Child Left Indoors initiative is dedicated to working with members, chapters and our conservation partners to provide opportunities for youth and their families to share our outdoor traditions and develop a conservation ethic.

The 2011 Focus on Forever Conference will provide participants with best practices for a variety of outdoor programs. Registration is open to all who share our goal and are passionate about providing outdoor opportunities to kids and their families. *Here are just a few examples of sessions that will be offered at the 2011 Focus on Forever Conference:*

- How to Teach Wingshooting Skills
- Starting a Youth PF or QF Chapter
- Leopold Education Project (LEP) Activities
- Outdoor Adventure Clubs for Families
- Young Guns – Using Shooting Sports to Build Stronger Chapters
- Providing a QUALITY Mentored Hunting Experience
- Habitat Projects for Kids
- Instructor Basics – Building Your Confidence as an Instructor
- Catching Kids on Angling
- Field First-Aid

If those of us who truly care about wildlife conservation and the future of hunting don't take the time to introduce others to our outdoor traditions, WHO WILL?



The 2011 Focus on Forever Conference is scheduled for July 22 – 24 at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, 28097 Goodview Drive, Lanesboro, MN 55949. Conference registration fee is \$250 if received by July 1, 2011 and \$275 if received after July 1.

Your registration fee includes conference registration, conference materials, lodging and meals. Lodging at Eagle Bluff is dormitory style lodging (please see lodging information below). Space in the conference is limited so take advantage of the reduced rate and register early.

Register for the conference by completing the registration form below and submit it with payment to: FOF Registration, Attn: Rich Wissink, 704 Surrey Lane, Merrill, WI 54452. Make checks payable to **PHEASANTS FOREVER** or **QUAIL FOREVER**.

Lodging

Registration includes two nights dormitory style lodging at Eagle Bluff. Dorm rooms have four sets of bunk beds and one full bathroom. We will do our best to limit each dorm room to four people. Linen service in the dorms includes sheets, pillow, blanket, washcloth and towel. Offsite lodging information is available at www.lanesboro.com and then “click” the Lodging tab at the top. Offsite lodging costs are not included in the registration fee.

Air Transportation

If you will be flying into Minnesota for the 2011 Focus on Forever Conference you should consider flying into one of the following international airports:

- Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport (~117 miles from Eagle Bluff)
- Rochester, MN International Airport (44 miles from Eagle Bluff)

If you have questions regarding conference registration, lodging or transportation please feel free to contact Rich Wissink at 715-722-0286 or email Rich at rwissink@pheasantsforever.org.

REGISTER NOW! PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Organization Name _____ Chapter _____
Name of Participant _____ Day Phone # _____
Participant Mailing Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
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No, I would not like to receive emails with special information, offers & promotions

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