

Resident Game Bird Working Group Meeting Notes

Chair: Mr. Todd Bishop, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Vice Chair: Mr. Shaun Oldenburger, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

Time and Date: 1PM – 2:30 PM CST, March 09, 2022.

Location: Virtual via Zoom

AFWA Coordinator(s): Ms. Susana Mateos

Presenters: Dr. Scott Taylor, Pheasants Forever; Mr. Mark Hatfield, National Wild Turkey Federation; Mr. Al Eiden, Pheasants Forever, Ms. Kelly Myers, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Mr. Todd Bishop, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Attendance:

Attendees:

Introductions

AFWA Resolution 2019-05-10-Discussion/Update on prioritized list of actions in support of the Small Game R3 Assessment – Dr. Scott Taylor, National Wild Pheasant Conservation Plan Coordinator, Pheasants Forever

- RGBWG continues to work on the resolution passed by the Executive Committee to provide insight and efforts to increase the awareness of small game hunting within the R3 effort.
- Small game hunting has had the steepest decline in the United States, so R3 efforts could utilize this information at a regional or national scale to evaluate effectiveness of R3 programs.
- RGBWG continues nationwide effort to consolidate all the hunter participation and harvest data for upland game birds in the United States (quail, pheasants, grouse, etc.)
 - Limited progress to date but several states have supplied information for this effort and will attempts will be made to consolidate this information prior to the September meeting in Ft. Worth (**Action Item**).
 - Need to find a repository for this information that is available and easily digestible for the state agencies, public, etc. Both methods in R and ArcGIS Dashboards were discussed.

Featured Partner Update: National Wild Turkey Federation – Mr. Mark Hatfield, National Director of Conservation Services, National Wild Turkey Federation

- NWTF had a very successful in-person conference after dealing with COVID restrictions previous years with over 52K attending the event with 314 vendors.
- NWTF surpassed their timeline and goals to conserve or enhance 4 million acres with the “Save the Habitat. Save the Hunt.” Program in 2020. Now at 4.5 million acres.
- NWTF assisted in expanding hunting opportunities to over 670,000 acres in the same period (2012-2020).
- Superfund program was suspended during the first part of COVID, but will become fully operational in September, 2022.

- NWTF restructured their business model and reduced staffing levels due to less income during the pandemic but have not impacted conservation delivery.
- NWTF, along with Mossy Oak as a sponsor, will host the 12th National Wild Turkey Symposium from June 6 – 10, 2022, in Asheville, North Carolina.

Featured Partner Update: Pheasant/Quail Forever – Mr. Al Eiden, Director of Conservation Delivery – West Region, Pheasants Forever

- Reported on mostly issues occurring in the western United States, including hiring 30 new biologists.
- Increasing amount of work conserving wet meadows on private lands in the west for sage grouse conservation.
- Infrastructure bill had a significant amount of funds for forest thinning on USFS lands but working with USFS districts to think about forest grouse in that context.
- Recruiting new candidates for open positions have been more of a struggle since the start of the pandemic with regards (Concurrence among attendees that attracting high quality candidates is becoming more difficult).
- With increasing costs and a booming economy, it has become more difficult to find quality contractors to conduct a lot of the management practices, especially in western states dealing with timber thinning, etc.

Update: Midwest Landscape Initiative - Habitat Inventory/Assessment – Ms. Kelly Myers, Midwest Landscape Initiative Coordinator, United States Fish and Wildlife Service

- MAFWA states have developed a regional plan to better assist conservation on select SGCNs across state boundaries with 200 priority species across 13 taxonomic groups.
- Prioritization was given to habitat systems with input from Joint Ventures and Fish Partnerships.
- Bobwhite quail is an example of an SGCN which habitat conservation can occur across state lines.
- These plans also assist in ecological goods and services, such as water quality, which remains an issue in upper Midwest streams and rivers.
- www.mlimidwest.org

Resident Game Bird Working Group Work Plan – Mr. Todd Bishop, Wildlife Division Administrator, Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Focus Areas and Goals

1. Provide national leadership on issues related to resident game birds.
2. Encourage and coordinate partnerships that integrate the various bird conservation plans, game and nongame, and their delivery via projects on the ground.
3. Serve as a forum for discussion of key issues and policy actions that impact resident game bird management and conservation and provide leadership in consensus and partnership building among bird conservation professionals.
4. Ensure representation of resident game birds in decisions and discussions of the AFWA Bird Conservation Committee, as well as the North American Bird Conservation Initiative (NABCI),

and provide recommendations and guidance on key issues concerning resident game bird management and conservation to the Committee and the NABCI.

5. To promote, protect and enhance the future of resident game bird hunting as part of our hunting heritage, while working to conserve the species-specific resources and their habitats that are under our stewardship.

Expected Actions / Activities

1. Collaborate among agencies, national management plan coordinators and NGO partners through information exchange.
2. Monitor implementation of national species management plans and coordinate future revisions of those plans.
3. In coordination with species-specific management boards and committees, develop recommendations for a system of monitoring of hunter numbers and annual harvests of resident game birds that is consistent among states and can serve as a reliable range-wide index of population status and hunter participation.
4. Since many SGCN species conservation efforts would both directly benefit several species of resident game birds and indirectly benefit their habitats and populations at regional scales, this WG will explore avenues to support the Restoring America's Wildlife Act and other SGCN conservation initiatives.
5. Participate in Bird Conservation Committee's Grassland Work Group.

Adjourn