

# *North Dakota Wildlife Federation*

## *Flickertales*

*Summer 2022*



*Advocating for the conservation of wildlife, habitat, and access for North Dakota's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users.*

# *North Dakota Wildlife Federation*

*The North Dakota Wildlife Federation (NDWF) is North Dakota's oldest, largest, and most effective conservation organization. NDWF was founded in 1935 by hunters, anglers, landowners, and other conservationists : who advocated for the conservation of wildlife, habitat, and access for North Dakota's hunters, anglers, and other outdoor users. Our dedicated affiliates, volunteers, and staff maintain this legacy.*

## **Affiliates**

Barnes County Wildlife Federation  
Cass County Wildlife Club  
Central Morton Sportsmen's Club  
Eddy County Rod & Gun Club  
Hannaford Conservation & Wildlife Club  
Hiddenwoods Sportsmen's Club  
Kindred Wildlife Club  
Lewis and Clark Wildlife Club  
Missouri Valley Shooting Sports Association  
North Dakota Hunters Education Association  
North Dakota Houndsmen Association  
North Dakota Fur Hunters & Trappers Association  
Red River Area Sportsmen's Club  
Richland County Wildlife  
Stutsman County Wildlife Federation  
Tri-County Trap & Wildlife Club

## **Executive Board Members**

Kerry Whipp, President, Pingree  
Greg Gerou, Vice President, Wahpeton  
Rod O'Clair, Treasurer Jamestown  
Mike McEnroe, Secretary, Fargo  
Dave Brandt, NWF Representative, Buchanan  
Dave Dewald, Past President, Bismarck

## **At Large Board Members**

Josh Holm, Director 1, Valley City  
Courtney Wilhelm, Director 2, Williston  
Mike McEnroe, Director 3, Fargo  
Paulette Scherr, Director 4, Kensal  
Terry Allbee, Director 5, Bismarck  
Nick Simonson, Director 6, Bismarck  
Daryl Simmons, Director 7 Garrison  
Derrick Rogers, Director 8, Valley City  
Joe Keller, Director 9, Wahpeton

Photos: Mike LaLonde, Matt Patrias, Nick Simonson, John Bradley



## *From the Executive Director*

Summer has been a blur here at the Federation, from implementing the strategic plan and board meetings to grant writing and legislative calls the Federation office has had its foot on the gas. When the work is non-stop, it's important to remember why we need to do it - our wildlife, access, and outdoor traditions are at stake. We see critical habitat disappearing at an alarming rate, we see the impacts of climate change, and we see America's hunters and anglers having a harder time finding access to America's lands and waters.

It's not all doom and gloom, we know that conservation is still a uniting force. There are major bills for wildlife, climate, habitat and access making moves right now.

On the federal side, Recovering America's Wildlife Act is still waiting for a vote on the Senate floor. If you haven't contacted Senators Hoeven and Cramer, now is the time! The passage of RAWA would be the most significant conservation bills passed in decades!

The Senate also passed this past week the Inflation Reduction Act, and while there are a ton of different things in the bill, there are some really positive things to address climate change and help for our wildlife, including \$20 billion in climate smart agricultural practices and funding for wildlife recovery plans in the National Wildlife Refuge System and State Wildlife Management Areas.

Lastly, the North American Grasslands Conservation Act was introduced in the Senate. The Act, which answers the call of NDWF's 2019 resolution on grasslands, will help farmers, ranchers, tribal nations, and others work to collaboratively address the immense challenges facing North America's grasslands and prairies — one of the fastest disappearing ecosystems in the world. The legislation will invest \$290 million in voluntary initiatives to collaboratively conserve and restore native grasslands to support working ranch lands and to help recover wildlife like Western meadowlark and monarch butterflies and safeguard this vital habitat for future generations.

I'll leave you with this quote from Teddy Roosevelt, *"Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing."* Let's get to work.

-John Bradley, Executive Director, [jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com](mailto:jbradley.ndwf@gmail.com)





## Message from our President

I have a single shot .22 rifle that was made by Sears and Roebuck – a model AC Higgins 10318-22. It's a very humdrum rifle. A true single shot, meaning you manually load one bullet at a time, then you must pull a knob rearward of the chamber to cock the firing pin. There is a very audible "click" when you cock the rifle. It has open sights and a heavy trigger. The average person would overlook this rifle and consider it valueless. But then they don't know the story behind this gun. For one thing it was my Grandpa Everett's. It was the first gun I ever got to shoot, and it's part of a favorite story my dad likes to tell every chance he gets. It's a story our family got to hear once again while we were all home for the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday.



I was around 10 years old. It was a cool crisp autumn day in Southwest Iowa. The tree leaves had long changed color and had already begun to drop from the trees. After a day of working around the farm, Dad told me to go grab the .22, some bullets, and tell your Mom we are going rabbit hunting. I went tearing into the house with excitement doing just as Dad had said, only my sister heard me and now she wanted to go...blah. Before long the entire family (Dad, Mom, Me, my bratty sister, and my baby sister) were loaded into the old ford pickup and putzing down the dirt road to the Graham place (It's a wooded old farmstead my grandpa owned and farmed). We were idling along the old dirt road when Dad spotted a rabbit. Dad stopped the truck, and we quietly worked our way through the brushy tangled ditch and over the barbed wire fence. Mom and my two sisters stayed in the pickup and watched from a distance.

We could all see the rabbit sitting at the base of an oak tree from the road, but Dad wanted to get off the road and closer to our query so I could get a good shot. As we got into position Dad instructed me to load up, aim carefully and gently squeeze the trigger. I did as instructed but I was nervous with all the attention focused on me.

BANG...there the rabbit sets munching on grass. Dad declares that I rushed the shot and flinched, try again but take your time.

BANG...I missed again. The rabbit doesn't even flinch.

Dad asks, "are you aiming like I taught you? Try again but don't pull the trigger until you're ready. This rabbit isn't going to give you another chance."

I load once again, sure that I won't get another opportunity. By this time my bratty sister has the window of the pickup down, she's crying and yelling out the pickup window, "RUN RABBIT, RUN!" BANG...another miss.

By this time my Dad is getting visibly frustrated, as am I. My sister is still yelling out the window at the rabbit, begging it to run. My baby sister is crying because of all the commotion. Yet the rabbit continues to set at the base of the tree casually chewing grass apparently oblivious to the family circus ensuing around him.

Dad asks me, "How many bullets did you bring?" I reach into my pocket and have only two left. He takes a deep breath, gives me a little pep talk. "I want you to ignore your sister. Just focus on the sights of the rifle and center them on the rabbit. Then squeeze the trigger." I settle in, concentrating, afraid to pull the trigger. BANG...a fourth miss.

My sister is triumphantly applauding the rabbits good fortune and my failure as I miss a fourth time. My baby sister has had enough and is impatiently wailing. My Mom has also had enough and calls for us to come along.

Dad, disheartened, tells me to take the last shot so we can go. He turns to walk away as I load the last bullet. I very carefully take aim. I think I may have even closed my eyes as I pulled the trigger for the fifth and final time. Just after the final BANG, I hear my Dad joyously yell, "YOU GOT HIM!"

The drive home was a collage of emotion inside that pickup. My Dad is booming with pride as if he forgot about the 4 previous misses. My Mom is trying to quiet my crying baby sister. My traitorous sister is sulking with her arms crossed staring at her feet. I'm riding along in shock that I killed the rabbit.

We had rabbit and fried potatoes for supper that night, or at least everyone but my sulking sister. She refused to eat rabbit and chose to dine on a peanut butter sandwich instead. I've eaten countless rabbits since that day, but I'm pretty sure that was the best tasting rabbit I've ever had.

I had many more adventures with that old Sears .22 over my younger years. I even got to be a pretty good shot with that rifle. What I hope you take away from this story is, take someone on an outdoor adventure with you. Whether it's a child, a senior that hasn't been out in a while, or someone that has never gone before. You never know what impact you may have, or the lifetime memories you may create.

- Kerry Whipp, NDWF President



# Spring Grouse Counts Strong Predictor for Season

By: Nick Simonson



North Dakota's recently released sharptailed grouse counts are a strong predictor of what hunters will encounter each fall in the field. This year's tally of birds seen on spring mating grounds, called leks, showed an overall decline across the Roughrider state and early nesting attempts were likely hampered by late April blizzards across the birds' western range, along with colder and damper conditions statewide into the month of May. On top of the decreased counts, this combination of challenging conditions likely thwarted early nesting attempts and could possibly blunt recruitment of new grouse into the population, according to Jesse Kolar, Upland Game Supervisor with the North Dakota Game & Fish Department (NDG&F).

"For grouse, I'd say our spring counts are a little more reliable than for pheasants. For pheasants it seems like it's 100 percent related to reproduction. Grouse are a little bit slower to have their boom

years, so usually the spring counts are a little more predictive," he advises about the dip in observed birds, adding, "we were down 13 percent statewide and that varied; [there were] a little bit stronger declines in the southwest. There were noticeable declines the further east you went and most of that corresponded with what we saw last year on our brood route index for reproduction in upland game. We saw quite a few broods with fewer chicks than normal."

Last year's drought impacted the number of observed broods and the sizes of those seen by NDG&F agents surveying upland game on routes throughout the state in late summer. The dry conditions, which limited cover and reduced the production of insects required for young grouse to

grow and survive, likely halved the number of birds normally brought into the population during the summer of 2021.

“That was confirmed with all the wings that hunters sent us in the fall. Again, normally we see two-to-one juveniles-to-adults, and [in 2021] we saw one-to-one, so lower reproduction last year led us to this year’s slight declines,” Kolar explains.

One bright spot for this season is the regrowth of the drought-hampered grasses on the landscape, as the spring snow storms, and notable rain events have helped habitat recover from the dry conditions of 2021. In turn, this has increased production of insect forage for grouse chicks and allowed vegetation to grow thicker and taller to provide broods with the needed cover to avoid avian predators such as hawks and to hide from ground predators as well. While sparse early grass conditions in hayed areas and those spaces where drought simply halted growth were not good for grouse nests, later attempts will likely be more successful where that vegetation grew back.

“They’ll be on nests from late-April all the way through, sometimes into early August. So, a lot of the early nesting season probably was a wash. First of all, some of the very early nests were during those April snow storms and then the storms and wet weather was pretty tough on incubating birds, especially in the beginning of the season when we didn’t have as much cover,” Kolar states of this year’s grouse nesting cycle, continuing, “early nesting was probably a loss here, and unfortunately that’s usually when nests have the most eggs. Their second and third nesting attempts will have fewer eggs each time.

They might lay 12-to-15 eggs the first nest and then ten or eight in the next nest. We’ll see what that means, hopefully this additional cover will protect the chicks and the nests that are out there late this summer and give us some reproduction this year.”

NDG&F employees and agents are currently conducting roadside surveys for pheasants, grouse, and partridge to get a handle on where populations of those species and others such as mourning doves are at heading into fall. The survey began on July 20 and runs until August 31, with results published by the agency in early September. The North Dakota sharptailed grouse hunting season opens on Sept. 10, along with ruffed grouse, Hungarian partridge, and tree squirrels.



# *A Return to What?!*

By John Bradley



Most hunters and anglers understand the important role they play in conserving the habitat of the fish and wildlife they pursue. Most know the phrase “hunting is conservation” made popular by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation and other hunting groups over the years. Sportsmen and women know it’s more than just the license fees they pay to hunt and fish, their role is an enduring agreement— a percentage of the cost of firearms, ammunition, fishing tackle, boat fuel, and other equipment used in the field is utilized by every state in the nation to fund conservation of fish and wildlife resources. Hunters and anglers are proud of this “pay to play” system that they created and the wildlife legacy that followed. That’s why it’s no surprise that hunters and anglers denounced recent legislation, known as the RETURN Act, which would dismantle the nation’s most successful wildlife conservation funding program that has raised billions of dollars for wildlife over the past 85 years.

In the 1930s, at a time when millions of Americans were struggling just to get by and politicians were focused on reviving economically depressed communities, the idea of restoring depleted populations of game and fish seemed like a long shot. But hunters and anglers came together to pass legislation to restore wildlife and secure their outdoor heritage. The Pittman-Robertson Act (PR Act) and, a decade later, the Dingell-Johnson Act (DJ Act), put an excise tax on sales of firearms, ammunition, archery equipment, fishing equipment, boats, and marine fuel. This revenue is distributed to state governments for wildlife and fisheries projects, habitat management, game and fish surveys, species reintroduction, and hunter education and R3 programs. This approach to conservation was revolutionary at the time and the dedicated funding from the Acts helped to recover whitetail deer, elk, turkeys, and many more species that are abundant today.

The partisan RETURN Act, introduced by Congressman Andrew Clyde (R-Ga.) and co-sponsored by 57 other House Republicans claims that the PR Act and the taxes it collects, infringes on the Second Amendment. Even though Pittman-Robertson is supported by the NRA and NSSF and the outdoor industry, the bill and its sponsors aim to gut the PR and DJ excise taxes, which last year alone provided over \$1.5 billion in funding for state wildlife agencies. In addition, the RETURN Act eliminates all federal funding for game management, hunter education, and shooting range safety programs by repealing the Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Fund. The RETURN Act guts the excise taxes on sporting equipment without replacing a funding source for fish and wildlife



management. Without this funding, state game and fish agencies would no longer be able to properly manage wildlife and habitat. Wildlife would suffer and hunters and anglers would lose our outdoor heritage.

Hunters and anglers have had a long tradition of being good stewards of our nation's lands and wildlife. For 85 years, Pittman-Robertson has generated funding to pay for the acquisition and restoration of critical wildlife habitat, and directly recovered wildlife populations. From bison and elk to turkeys and whitetails, and hundreds of non-game species that share the habitat, the PR and DJ Acts are the chief reason North America has maintained its hunting and fishing heritage. It has also helped with hunter training and recruitment and expanded opportunities for outdoor recreation.

We need the source of conservation funding in the U.S. to be expanded, not gutted, so that all Americans contribute to the conservation of the wildlife and natural resources on which makes our nation special. Hunters and anglers should be proud of this tradition and do everything in their power to push back against the RETURN Act and any other attacks on our outdoor heritage.

# *Inflation Reduction Act a Win for Climate, Wildlife*

By: Meshal DeSantis



WASHINGTON — The Inflation Reduction Act will reduce emissions, protect wildlife, and reduce harmful pollutants in the most significant ever legislation to combat the climate crisis. The National Wildlife Federation heralded the Senate's passage of the legislation and urged the U.S. House of Representatives to swiftly follow suit.

“Every zip code across America will benefit from the good jobs, lower costs, and reduced pollution from the historic Inflation Reduction Act. This bill demonstrates how taking bold action on climate and building a cleaner economy will address the root causes of inflation and revitalize frontline and legacy energy communities alike,” said Collin O’Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. “Thank you to Senators Schumer, Senator Manchin, the entire Democratic caucus, and the millions of grassroots activists who have made this historic agreement possible. We look forward to working with the House, the Biden Administration, and climate activists across America to build upon this incredible achievement, because the climate, wildlife, and communities cannot wait.”

The Inflation Reduction Act includes provisions to take immediate action on the climate crisis, including:

- Over \$20 billion for climate-smart agriculture and conservation, providing funding for farmers and ranchers to put towards proven practices that reduce emissions, greenhouse gasses, and improve soil carbon management.
- \$2.6 billion for the conservation, restoration, and protection of coastal and marine habitats that would create jobs and better help coastal communities become more resilient to worsening storms.
- \$3 billion in funding to address harmful pollution and emissions and improve air quality, particularly in disproportionately impacted Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color
- Investments to lower costs for families including tax credits towards a clean energy economy. This includes tax credits for families to make electric vehicles and solar panels more affordable and accessible along with investments to shift the energy grid to more sustainable sources.
- Funding for managing forests and reducing wildfire risk on National Forest lands and investments in private and publicly owned forests as tools to absorb carbon and help mitigate the climate crisis.
- Funding for wildlife recovery plans to support endangered species act recovery plans along with investments in projects that support habitat and infrastructure in the National Wildlife Refuge System and State Wildlife Management Areas.
- Common sense oil and gas leasing reforms that will reduce reckless speculation on lands with little potential for production, including charging fair rates for leasing on public lands.



# Artemis Georgia Hunt Camp Leads to the Retention of Women Hunters

*Artemis Sportswomen aims to engage more women in sporting conservation.*

By: Bre Bashford, Georgia R3 Coordinator



Artemis Georgia focuses on establishing strong community bonds among women to ensure continuation amongst our female hunters and anglers. Over the Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend, six women gathered for adventure and to encourage one another in our outdoor pursuits.

The wildlife conservation community has seen a decrease in hunting participation over the last few decades. Programs have tried to recruit new participants into the activity, but long-term license buying behavior has not been demonstrated as desired. Within the last 10 years or so, new emphasis has been placed on the retention (increased participation) of existing or newer hunters. Efforts to take hunters from self-identification of being a new hunter to an intermediate hunter have become a priority. These efforts are especially essential for women hunters as women have a higher likelihood of reducing participation due to a variety of reasons an example being family obligations.

This hunt camp was focused on duck hunting, but as duck hunting typically concludes by 9 AM, there was plenty of hog, rabbit and squirrel hunting to be had as well. Most importantly there was an opportunity to sit around a campfire, chop wood, laugh, tell stories, eat game meat and develop

friendships. Participant Olivia Menard told her fellow ladies she had every intention on developing a new hobby of backpacking this last year, but once she found Artemis Georgia and women who enjoyed hunting as much as she did, it was an easy decision to explore new species and empower other ladies who were interested in the activity.

Participant Jenni Durban lives temporarily in Georgia for a work assignment. She was really disappointed to be missing hunting season back home in Montana, but was pleasantly surprised to find Artemis Georgia and hunt with local women. She has attended two deer camps, a duck camp and multiple virtual Fireside Chats.



Hunting is hard to learn, it's especially hard to keep at it. A social support network such as Artemis Georgia can make all of the difference. If you or a woman in your life is interested in joining the Artemis Georgia Community, connect with us on [Facebook](#), or email Georgia's R3 Coordinator, Bre Bashford at [Bre@gwf.org](mailto:Bre@gwf.org).





*This program was made possible by the Artemis Leadership Alliance volunteers; support from [Artemis Sportswomen of National Wildlife Federation Outdoors](#); and the members of the Georgia R3 Initiative: [Georgia Wildlife Federation](#), [Georgia Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Resources Division](#), [National Wild Turkey Federation](#), [National Deer Association](#), and [Georgia Chapter of Safari Club International](#).*



# North America Grasslands Conservation Act

*Grasslands Conservation Legislation Introduced Will Strengthen Collaboration,  
Save Endangered Landscapes*



WASHINGTON, D.C. (July 27, 2022) — The North American Grasslands Conservation Act will help farmers, ranchers, Tribal Nations, and others work to collaboratively address the immense challenges facing North America's grasslands and prairies — one of the fastest disappearing ecosystems in the world. The legislation, introduced by U.S. Senators Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), will invest \$290 million in voluntary initiatives to collaboratively conserve and restore native grasslands to support working ranch lands and to help recover wildlife like Western meadowlark and monarch butterflies and safeguard this vital habitat for future generations.

"Our prairies help define who we are as North Dakotans," said John Bradley, executive director for the North Dakota Wildlife Federation. "There is a strength and austerity to their beauty. They are central to our economy, they are where ranching thrives, where wildlife species are still abundant, and they are where thousands of hunters go each fall. Unfortunately, we are losing more and more intact grasslands every year. This grasslands bill is an important step towards conserving this important part of our heritage. We hope the Senate moves this bill soon."

"Grasslands are North America's most imperiled ecosystem and without urgent, collaborative, conservation efforts, this essential habitat and the lives and livelihoods it supports are at risk. Just as we've restored millions of acres of wetlands through the North American Wetlands Conservation Act and the Duck Stamp, the North American Grasslands Conservation Act will mark a sea change in how we conserve, restore, and revitalize our prairies for ranchers, hunters, and wildlife alike," said Collin O'Mara, president and CEO of the National Wildlife Federation. "Thank you to Senator Wyden for this landmark legislation that brings long overdue and much needed resources to what remains of this great American landscape that holds such importance for the future of both ranchers and wildlife. Congress should take up this landmark bill as soon as possible."

Grasslands and sagebrush shrub-steppe systems are some of the most threatened ecosystems in the world. More than 70 percent of America's tallgrass, mixed grass, and shortgrass prairies have vanished. According to recent research, the United States lost 1.1 million acres of grasslands every year from 2008 through 2016. North Dakota lost an average of 120,475 acres every year during the same period. This is the second most lost acres of any state in the country after South Dakota.

Additionally, on average, about 1.2 million acres of sagebrush burn each year due to invasive annual grasses that fuel catastrophic wildfire.

This habitat loss has caused total grassland bird populations to decline by more than 40 percent since 1966. Some species, such as the Western meadowlark, teeter at the edge of extinction. Species that had been economically significant throughout American history, like the bobwhite quail, have seen declines of nearly 85 percent in the last half century.

Grasslands are a natural climate solution, and healthy working grasslands not only provide soil, water, and wildlife benefits, but they sequester a significant amount of carbon. Researchers have found that the loss of carbon when grasslands are converted to cropland is equivalent to the greenhouse gas emissions from around 27 million cars on the road every year.

The \$290 million from the North American Grasslands Conservation Act would directly invest in voluntary grassland and sagebrush restoration and conservation projects, such as incentivizing prescribed burns, managing invasive species, grazing management training and grassland conservation easements. Additionally, the bill would provide at least \$29 million in dedicated funding opportunities for tribal nations to engage in grasslands conservation and include tribal representation on the program's governing council.

This legislation would create, for the first time, a North American Grasslands conservation Strategy to identify key areas of grasslands at risk of degradation, establish goals for increasing grasslands acreage and develop baseline inventories of wildlife species throughout grasslands habitat.

*Join us for a*

# **WILD WEEKEND FOR WILDLIFE**

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**August 27 - 28, 2022**

**Sheyenne Riverbend Farm**

3716 117th Ave SE, Valley City, ND 58072

## **SCHEDULE**

### **SATURDAY, AUG 27**

Fish Hatchery Tour, Seminars, & Yard Games  
Catered Dinner and Bonfire Social  
Raffles, Door Prizes and Silent Auction

### **SUNDAY, AUG 28**

Morning campfire church and pastry breakfast

## **RSVP ONLINE**

[NorthDakotaWildlifeFederation.org](http://NorthDakotaWildlifeFederation.org)





## NDWF Events

NDWF and our affiliates host educational and social events throughout the year. Check out our Facebook events page for details. Visit [www.northdakotawildlife.org](http://www.northdakotawildlife.org) for upcoming board meetings information.

**NDWF Affiliate Appreciation Event** - Sheyenne Riverbend Farm - August 26 - 28th, 2022

**NDWF Board Meeting** - Missouri Basin Bowmen's Archery Range, Williston - October 13th, 2022

## Make an Impact

For over 80 years, the North Dakota Wildlife Federation has depended on donations from conservationists like you to support our work to protect North Dakota's abundant wildlife, our natural lands and waters, and our unmatched public access to the outdoors for future generations to enjoy. We are able to do so much to protect North Dakota's outdoor heritage because people like you decide to support our work. Your financial support is crucial to our ability to stand up to well-funded special interest groups at the North Dakota Capitol and in Congress. We need everyone who values North Dakota's outdoor heritage to get involved.



### NDWF Membership Form

Individual Membership: \$15 - Associate/Business Membership: \$25 - Educational Organization: Free

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

#### Make Checks Payable To:

North Dakota Wildlife Federation  
PO Box 1091  
Bismarck, ND 58502-1091