



# Western Great Lakes Region FAN UPDATE

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## **Let's Go Hunting!!**

It hardly seems possible, but only a few days left until the start of the Wisconsin ruffed grouse season. Am I ready, no not even close but the dogs and I will definitely be visiting the woods this weekend. Check out the latest information below on this fall's populations. The weather has been hot and dry in northern Wisconsin but a recent cool front moved in and has certainly made me thinking about the fall. Prime grouse and woodcock hunting is still several weeks away but the next couple of weeks will help fine tune the dogs and me. Good luck and have a great and safe hunting season. *Gary*

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## **Wisconsin Grouse Brood Counts Show Decline**

MADISON – Annual brood sightings of upland game birds is one measure the Wisconsin wildlife officials use to both to monitor population trends and to give hunters another bit of information for decisions they'll make during fall hunting activities. [Brood production surveys](#) for pheasants, ruffed grouse, and wild turkey are conducted by Department of Natural Resources employees and the public during the months of June, July and August. Biologists stress however that these reports are preliminary and could change.

The Summer Wildlife Inquiry (SWI) questionnaire was sent to approximately 5,000 rural landowners throughout the state in mid August asking if they had any game birds on their property. Rural landowners in Wisconsin's primary turkey range were also sent report cards for reporting turkey broods seen during this time period.

"Brood rearing conditions have a great impact on nesting and rearing success," says Brian Dhuey, DNR wildlife surveys coordinator. "Weather during the early part of June is most critical for turkey, pheasant and grouse populations, as this is when recently hatched chicks are most susceptible to hypothermia if they get wet."

Weather in Wisconsin during the months of June, July and August was two to three degrees warmer than average, with precipitation near normal in the north and 3 to 4 inches below normal for the southern half of the state. Parts of northern Wisconsin had a large rainfall event on the June 18 and 19, with some areas receiving 2 inches of rain. Temperatures were normal to above during this same period.

"It's possible that some brood losses occurred during this rain event," Dhuey said. "Spring phenology was delayed in much of the state prior to the brood rearing season and may have affected nesting and/or brooding efforts. The late spring may have also affected the availability of insects once broods hatched."

The number of rural landowners reporting ruffed grouse on their property was down 2 percent from last year and 31 percent below the long-term mean. DNR personnel reported a downturn in grouse production, with a 15 percent decline in the number of broods seen per hour from 2010 levels. The number of ruffed grouse broods seen per hour was down in both the central (-32 percent) and northern (-8 percent) regions, with only the southwestern region showing an increase (+25 percent). Brood size, as reported by DNR personnel, was up slightly with 4.2 young per brood reported in 2011, from 4.0 reported in 2010. The size of grouse broods observed by the public on the online Game Bird Brood Survey was 5.1, identical to that reported last year.

"This spring's grouse drumming survey showed an upturn of 38 percent in the number of breeding grouse in the state in 2011. Even though our brood count data are down somewhat, it appears that Wisconsin is still at or near the current grouse cycle high," Dhuey said

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## **Cooperative Project Improves Hunter Walking Trails on National Forest in Wisconsin**

The Ruffed Grouse Society and US Forest Service are cooperating on a project to restore 61.8 miles of previously developed hunter walking trails on the Eastern side of the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest in Northern Wisconsin over the next two years. These trail systems are not only used by hunters but are popular trail systems used by hikers, wildlife watchers and berry pickers. Budget and staff shortfalls have prevented the maintenance of

these systems by the Forest Service over the past several years and many downed trees prevented easy access on these systems.

To begin the restoration of these trails the Ruffed Grouse Society conducted three volunteer work days during the spring/summer of 2011. The Northeast Wisconsin Chapter (Green Bay) of RGS conducted two of these works days under the direction of David Bartz, longtime habitat work day coordinator. The other work day was coordinated by the Chain O'Lakes Chapter out of Eagle River, Wisconsin. Approximately seven miles of trail was restored by these crews.

Additional work was conducted by a RGS contract crew, US Forest Service personnel and the RGS forestry loader located in Wisconsin. A total of 33 miles of trail are targeted for work in 2011; the majority of that work has already been completed. Trail systems to be restored in 2011 include the Mainline Lake and portions of the McDonald Creek Trail Systems on the Eagle River/Florence Ranger District and the Burnt Bridge, Colburn Creek, Bear Lake/Kufner, and Hiles Tower Trail Systems on the Lakewood/Laona Ranger Districts. Maps of these systems are available from the respective Forest Service offices or online at the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forest website (once on the site click on recreation, then hunting, then small game hunting).

Funding for this project was obtained through a proposal submitted by the Ruffed Grouse Society to the Nicolet Resource Advisory Committee. RGS Wisconsin Drummer Funds as well as the volunteer time put in by the habitat work crews was used as matching funds for the proposal.

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## **Minnesota Records First Death from Tick-borne Powassan Virus**

A woman from northern Minnesota has died from a brain infection due to Powassan (POW) virus. This is the first death in the state attributed to the disease. One other POW case has been identified this year in Minnesota, in an Anoka County man who was hospitalized with a brain infection and is now recovering. POW virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. Both 2011 cases became ill in May after spending time outdoors and noticing tick bites. The fatal case was likely exposed to ticks near her home. The case from Anoka County might have been exposed near his home or at a cabin in northern Minnesota.

Health officials say this death serves as a reminder of the vital importance of preventing tick bites. "Although Powassan cases are rarely identified, it is a severe disease which is fatal in about 10 percent of cases nationwide, and survivors may have long-term neurological problems" said Dr. Ruth Lynfield, state epidemiologist with the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH).

"Powassan disease is caused by a virus and is not treatable with antibiotics, so preventing tick bites is crucial."

In Minnesota, POW virus can be transmitted by the blacklegged tick (also called the deer tick), which can also carry Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, and babesiosis. The blacklegged tick is abundant during our warm weather months in hardwood and mixed-hardwood forests of Minnesota. When a tick infected with POW virus attaches to a person, it might take only minutes of tick attachment for the virus to be transmitted.

POW was first detected in Minnesota in 2008, in a Cass County child who was exposed near home. In 2009-2010, five additional POW cases were identified in Minnesota. These cases were likely exposed to infected ticks in north-central or east-central counties (Cass, Carlton, Hubbard, Itasca, or Kanabec). In addition to these human cases, MDH has found POW-infected ticks in northern counties (Cass, Clearwater, and Pine) and in southeastern Minnesota (Houston County).

POW virus was first described in 1958 in Powassan, Ontario. Since then, about 60 cases have been identified in North America. Most of these cases were from eastern Canada and the northeastern U.S. until the last decade, when cases began to be reported from Michigan, Wisconsin, and now Minnesota.

POW virus is related to West Nile virus (WNV). Like WNV, POW virus can cause severe disease of the central nervous system, involving inflammation of the brain (encephalitis) or the lining of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis). People with POW may have fever, headache, vomiting, weakness, confusion, loss of coordination, speech difficulties, and memory loss. Signs and symptoms occur within one to five weeks of an infectious tick bite.

To prevent tick-borne diseases, always use tick repellents containing DEET (up to 30 percent concentration) or permethrin when spending time in tick habitat. Products with DEET can be used on the skin or clothing. Permethrin-based products, which are only applied to clothing, are highly effective and can last through several washings and wearings. Also, wear long pants and light-colored clothing to help detect and remove ticks before they've had time to bite. People with homes or cabins near the woods can also use landscape management and targeted pesticide applications to reduce exposure to disease-carrying ticks.

The back end of the adult female blacklegged tick is reddish-orange in appearance and teardrop-shaped. The nymph, or immature, stage of the blacklegged tick is about the size of a poppy seed and dark-colored. It is so small that it often goes unnoticed. When the nymph is noticed, it is easily mistaken for a speck of dirt or small freckle on people's skin. Blacklegged ticks are smaller and darker in color than American dog ticks (also known as wood ticks). They also lack the dog tick's characteristic white markings. To remove a tick, use tweezers to grasp it by its head close to the skin and pull it out gently and steadily.

More information about Minnesota's tick-borne diseases, including details on tick-borne disease prevention and pictures of ticks, is available on the MDH Web site at [www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/tickborne/index.html](http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/idepc/dtopics/tickborne/index.html) or by calling MDH at 651-201-5414.

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## **July Storms Damage Over 130,000 Forested Acres in NW Wisconsin**

Severe storms crossed into Northwest Wisconsin in early July resulting in hundreds of thousands of acres of damage. To view the areas damaged, a map is available from the Wisconsin DNR at

<http://dnr.wi.gov/forestry/stormrecovery/pdf/july2011stormdamage.pdf>

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### **Iowa Dove Hunting Begins but with Non-toxic Shot**

The hunting of mourning doves in Iowa began on September 1 but with the requirement passed by the Iowa Natural Resources Commission that hunters use non-toxic shot.

The non-toxic shot requirement follows several discussions by the commission during the past year concerning the impacts of lead shot to the environment and on wildlife. Lead – or toxic – shot used in hunting can be ingested by wildlife. There has been a national ban on the use of lead shot for waterfowl hunting since 1991 with non-toxic shot for waterfowl being in place in Iowa since 1987.

The rules approved by the commission allow for a dove season starting Sept. 1st and ending Nov. 9th. The final rule allows the harvest of 15 doves a day and can be either mourning or Eurasian collared-doves. The possession limit is 30 and the season is open state-wide.

The decision to ban toxic shot for dove hunting was based largely on the fact that much of the hunting occurs over a small area which would increase the likelihood of lead concentrations being created.

“There will be a number of hunters who will be opposed to this decision, but at the end of the day, this action by the commission will help protect Iowa’s environment and wildlife from the adverse affects of lead,” said DNR Director Roger Lande.

### **Remember RGS's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!!**

In 2011, the Ruffed Grouse Society celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as one of the longest running conservation organizations. Special items commemorating the anniversary will include a collector's knife, belt buckle, several unique shotguns, a unique lost-wax process cast of a ruffed grouse, carved woodcock and apparel with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary RGS logo. These items will be at our 2011 banquets in limited quantities, and available through the **RGS-Mart** at

<http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/shoppingcart/magento/>.

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## **RGS Wins Award for 50th Anniversary Publication**

RGS received a 2011 Grand Award from Awards for Publication Excellence (APEX) for its 50th anniversary publication. What makes the award even more special is that it was selected from more than 247 entries in the One-of-a Kind publication category. (A total of 100 APEX Grand Awards were presented in 11 major categories). As the only conservation group to receive a Grand Award for a magazine, RGS was honored to be selected. Nearly 3,300 entries in total were submitted to the award competition.

Now in its 23rd year, the APEX awards are based on excellence in graphic design, editorial content and the success of the entry in achieving overall communications effectiveness and excellence. In announcing the Ruffed Grouse Society (RGS) winning entry, the published comment from the panel of judges read: "Top-drawer coffee table material. The photo spreads, illustrations and type all blend together to create a visual feast."

"That's quite an acclamation," stated RGS President and CEO Mike Zagata when learning of the presentation. We are honored to receive this prestigious award, and I want to thank everyone who had a hand in making this one-of-a-kind publication memorable. Along with uncovering the rich history of RGS, the 50th Anniversary limited edition contains articles and photographs on grouse; American woodcock and the dog's hunters use to seek them out. It is in a nutshell a definitive guide to grouse hunting and more, with stories written by renowned outdoor writers on shotgunning, bird dogs and hunting -- everything you need to know to take your hunt to the next level, including expert field advice from our biologists that will certainly help you put more of these legendary game birds on the ground and on the table."

"We're proud recipients of the APEX Grand Award, not only because it honors our 50th Anniversary Publication – which was quite a milestone for our organization – but also because it recognizes the importance of the mission to which we are all dedicated, the creation of young forest habitat," says Anna Stubna, Editor.

The limited edition 50 Anniversary publication is available for \$14.95 on the RGS website at:

<http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org/shoppingcart/magento/books-videos/rgs-50th-anniversary-publication.html>. All major credit cards accepted.

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## **Email Address Has Changed**

Just a reminder that my email address has changed to [rgszimm@gmail.com](mailto:rgszimm@gmail.com) so if you are wondering why I haven't answered your request make sure you sent it to my correct address.

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## **Upcoming RGS Events in the Region**

September 15 – 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Marinette County Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet at Trillium in the Woods, Crivitz, WI. Contact Bob Zutter at 715-735-7311 for info.

September 17 – Third Annual Wilderness Wings Chapter Hunt, Shoot & Sportsmen's Banquet at Summit Lake Game Farm, Stone Lake, WI. Contact Dave Reardon at 715-634-2674 for info.

September 22 – 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Superior Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet at Liberty Bell Chalet, Hurley, WI. Contact Will Corcoran at 906-932-0257 for more info.

September 27 – 21<sup>st</sup> Annual David Uihlein Chapter Fall Sportsmen's Banquet at the Red Circle Inn, Nashotah, WI. Contact Paul Seul at 414-254-1861 for info.

October 6 – 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Northwoods Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet at Pine Mountain Golf and Ski Resort, Iron Mountain, MI. Contact Russ Hagberg at 906-774-5915 for info.

October 6 – 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Flambeau River Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet at Northwoods Supper Club, Fifield, WI. Contact Tony Blattler at 715-332-5121 for info.

October 18 -25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary West Central Wisconsin Chapter Sportsmen's Banquet at Holms River Edge Golf Course, Marshfield, WI. Contact Jamie Kuhn at 715-829-5759 for info.

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### **Reminder**

**To insure that you continue to receive timely FAN updates, please notify me of changes in your email address.**

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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](http://www.ruffedgrousesociety.org).

**RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY**



1961 - 2011  
50 Years of  
Managing Forest Habitat

2011 - 2012

**NATIONAL RAFFLE**

THREE WINNERS DRAWN JUNE 29, 2012

**CONNECTICUT SHOTGUN A-10 AMERICAN DELUXE**

Over-and-under, 20-gauge, 28" barrels with 5 choke tubes, shallow frame, full sidelock with engraved game scenes, straight stock with exhibition grade wood and field forend. Includes combination and key locking case. Retail Value: \$9,400

DONATED BY JOHN C. OSWALD



**CAESAR GUERINI RGS UNIQUE APEX GRADE**

Over-and-under 28-gauge, 28" barrels with 5 choke tubes, one of a kind, hand-engraved grouse and woodcock design, Prince of Wales stock with exhibition grade wood, "RGS" on trigger guard. Retail Value: \$8,495

Actual Gun Size Winner



**ITHACA GRADE III MODEL 37 FEATHERLIGHT**

28-gauge pump, 28" barrel with 3 choke tubes, hand-engraved with gold inlays, gold trigger, fancy AAA grade black walnut stock. Retail Value: \$3,500



Donation for each ticket is \$100. Up to 1,000 tickets to be sold. Drawing on June 29, 2012 at RGS HQ in Coraopolis, PA. First ticket wins Connecticut. Second ticket wins Guerini. Third ticket wins Ithaca. Winners responsible for applicable taxes.

To purchase raffle tickets, mail coupon to: Gary Zimmer, Coordinating Biologist  
Ruffed Grouse Society - P.O. Box 116, Laona, WI 54541  
or call 715-674-7505 or e-mail: rgszimm@gmail.com

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Tickets @ \$100.00 Each = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Enclosed Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

CHECK (Payable to RGS)  CREDIT CARD # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_