



MINNESOTA PRAIRIE CHICKEN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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www.prairiechicken.org



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Gathering the Flock-- MPCS 33rd Annual Meeting

by Brian Winter

The chickens aren't the only ones that flock up in the spring, the 33rd Annual Meeting of the Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society will be held on April 29, 2006 near Glyndon, MN. Please note that the date has changed from what we announced at last years annual meeting because of conflicts with the Easter weekend. We will be celebrating spring at the Minnesota State University, Moorhead Regional Science Center which is adjacent to the Buffalo River State Park and The Nature Conservancy's Bluestem Prairie Scientific and Natural Area. Early morning field trips and the opportunity to watch prairie chickens up close and personal from viewing blinds located on Bluestem Prairie will be available. A good program of speakers is also being lined up for the daytime program. As always, we hope to have many fine door and other prizes. Details and donations for this years meeting are still being organized.

Expect more information and the pre-registration form in the next newsletter. Please plan to come boom and cackle with us on the Bluestem Prairie!

Prairie Chicken DVD

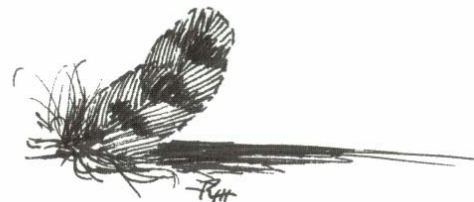
by Brian Winter

Many of you may have seen the Prairie Chicken in Minnesota slide program with a cassette tape for narration that MPCS sponsored about 30 years ago. I know I used the program many times early on in my career to talk with local conservation enthusiasts about the Greater Prairie Chicken in Minnesota. As with most great products (including ME), age has caught up with it and technology advancements have passed the slide program by. The MPCS board has been discussing for many years the need to update this educational tool for the modern world.

Last year MPCS applied for a grant from the Minnesota DNR Conservation Partners and Environmental Partnership Grant Program with the purpose of using the funds to create a new video to tell the story of chickens in Minnesota. Funding for this grant program is provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. The goal is to create a video that inspires and educates the public on the conservation needs of the Greater Prairie Chicken and other grassland birds. When finished, the video will be provided to libraries, science centers, environmental learning centers, local schools and government offices across the prairie chicken range in Minnesota.

MPCS joined forces with an award winning photographer, Steve Furman, and are excited he will be working with us on this project. Plans are underway to start filming this spring. Some of you may have seen one of his films titled "The Ride of the Merganser", a very clever and great show on the hooded merganser that Steve completed. MPCS looks forward to a similar product focused on the Greater Prairie Chicken.

The project will cost \$38,000 with \$19,000 coming from the grant, \$5,000 from MPCS member contributions and the remaining cost will be covered by equipment and time donations from the photographer. The project runs through December of 2007.



Spring 2006 Blind Information

By: Sonia Winter

Cool, early mornings on the prairie set a very nice stage for a most unusual “dance”. The spring courtship ritual of the greater prairie chicken on their booming grounds is a dance that was mimicked by the Native Americans and is quite the site to see. With the increase in the greater prairie chicken population in northwestern Minnesota, viewing this ancient ritual has become a popular spring past-time.

Reservations to watch the prairie chickens from viewing blinds can be made for any day from early April through the middle to end of May. This is the peak of breeding activity and the best time to observe the birds.

To catch the early morning activity, viewers should be seated in the blinds about 45 minutes before sunrise. The birds will arrive and began their courtship dance before it is light enough to see them. Each blind seats three to five people. There is no cost.

Blinds are available at the following locations in Minnesota:

Glyndon: The Nature Conservancy

Bluestem Prairie, two blinds, contact Sonia

Winter at (218) 498-2679 or swinter@tnc.org .

Twin Valley: Twin Valley Heritage and Art Center, two blinds (one handicap accessible), (218) 584-5658

Audubon: Hamden Slough National Wildlife Refuge, one blind, (218) 439-6319

Fertile: The Nature Conservancy Glacial Ridge Project, and Rydell National Wildlife Refuge.

Reservations are being taken by crookstonevb@rrv.net or calling 218-281-4320 or 1-800-809-5997;

Reservations may be made Monday thru Friday 8:00am – 5:00pm.

Crookston: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, one blind, contact Ross Hier at (218) 281-6063

Rothsay: The DNR office will be handling the reservations for one blind. Contact Mary at (218) 739-7576 ext 238.

Rothsay: Bud Halbakken (218-867-2433) will also be taking reservations for his blind.

Request to Members & Enthusiasts

Door prize items, Art work, Prints and monetary donations are needed for the 33rd Annual MPCS meeting in Glyndon April 29th, 2006. The many unique items in our silent auction have always made our annual meetings a success. Please send your items to Earl Johnson or bring them with you. Your dedication to the society is greatly appreciated.



These Abstracts were presented at the 26th meeting of the Prairie Grouse Technical council meeting September 19-22, 2005 in Valentine, Nebraska.

RESTORING GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKENS TO WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA – PROGRESS REPORT

J. E. TOEPFER, Society Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, Plover, WI 54467 USA.
D. R. TRAUBA*, Minnesota Dept. Natural Resources, Watson, MN 56295 USA.
S. C. VACEK, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Morris, MN 56267 USA.

Habitat loss and fragmentation are serious threats to prairie grouse throughout North America. As managers work toward re-connecting isolated greater prairie chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido pinnatus*) populations, a better understanding of the techniques to re-establish populations is needed. From 1999-2005, 521 wild greater prairie chickens were released at 15 different sites within a 2,757-km² (1,064 mi²) project area. Overall, 16 booming grounds were established with 11 still active in 2005. Initial summer releases, 1999-2002 (188 birds), established 6 booming grounds. Past research indicates dispersal away from release sites is the main reason why many prairie chicken translocation projects have failed. Movement data from April released prairie chickens indicated an establishment rate at their release sites of 52.4% (45-55% cocks, 50-57% hens). Of 24 cocks released within 0.8 km of 4 permanent booming grounds in late November, 79.1% established at their release site or on an adjacent booming ground. These high localization rates indicate translocated prairie chickens are attracted to resident birds. One approach to reestablishing greater prairie chickens is to first establish booming grounds 3-5 miles apart via a summer release. Second, simulate recruitment and limit dispersal by supplementing the existing booming grounds with birds released over 2-3 years during the breeding season or fall/winter.

PARASITISM OF PRAIRIE CHICKEN NESTS BY PHEASANTS IN MINNESOTA.

J. E. TOEPFER, and A. PRATT, Society Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, Ltd., 3755 Jackson, Plover, WI 54467 USA.
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It was thought the problem of nest parasitism by ring-necked pheasants was unique to Illinois prairie chickens because their small amount of grassland habitat did not permit the two species to spread out during nesting. This paper presents information on nest parasitism by pheasants on radio-marked prairie chickens in a grassland complex with over 16,187 ha (40,000 acres) of grassland habitat. Between 2003-05, 86 prairie chicken nests have been located and 30.2% have been parasitized with at least one pheasant egg (1-15 eggs). The incidence of pheasant eggs in prairie chicken nests increased with the "density" of crowing pheasants. The parasitism rate ranged from zero with < 25 crows per 3 minutes to 66.7% with 100 crows per 3 minutes. Nest success of 9 parasitized nests was 44.4% in 2005 with 3 of these nests hatching at least one pheasant egg. Parasitized nests contained 67 prairie chicken eggs of which 46 (68.6%) did not hatch. No prairie chicken renests have been parasitized even in areas of high pheasant density. In over 200 hours of observing booming grounds we have documented two interactions between pheasants and prairie chickens and in both cock prairie chickens chased cock pheasants off the booming ground.



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A little Rothsay history from the Volume 10, No. 1 Newsletter of March 1984

CAPITAL NEWSLINE

Greetings from Rothsay, Prairie Chicken Capital of Minnesota. As many of you know, we celebrated a very successful centennial in Rothsay in 1983. As part of the centennial, the community built a prairie Chicken float, measuring 6 ft. by 8 ft.. During the summer months it appeared in 11 area parades. It has proved to be a very successful means of advertising our town and the prairie chicken. We hope to continue this promotion in 1984. Anyone wishing to have the chicken in their parade, please contact us and every effort will be made to comply.

BOOMING PRARIE CHICKEN

Prairie chickens moved ahead of the settlers to inhabit the prairies of Minnesota. A large concentration of this protected bird can still be seen on prairie chicken meadows of the Rothsay area. In the early spring, the male prairie chicken performs his ritual, booming; he spread his wings and tail feathers, inflates the orange wind sacs and struts while making the booming sound.

On June 10, 1975, Rothsay was designated "Prairie Chicken Capital of Minnesota" This statute of a booming prairie chicken was designed and built by Art Fosse with assistance and funds from the community. The statue stands 13 x 18 feet and weighs 9,000 pounds. It was placed on this site and unveiled, June 15, 1976.

The objective of this project is to alert area visitors and remind local residents of the beauty to be found on the native prairie grasslands

Rothsay Centennial Committee - 1983

THE ADVENTURES OF TYMPIE NUCHUS

By ROSS HIER



Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society Membership

Your gift membership will help! Any tax deductible contribution or donation will bring you the MPCS Newsletter and supports the Society's efforts to save Minnesota's prairie chickens and their habitats. The number in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label shows the year of your most recent membership. Renew your membership today!

The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization exempt from Federal Income tax as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions made to the Society are deductible by donors as provided in Section 170 of the Code. The Society's Federal Identification number is #41-1327954.

- _____ I would like to make a membership contribution.
 _____ I would like to contribute to the Prairie Chicken Restoration Project.
 _____ I would like to receive a MPCS embroidered shirt for my contribution

MPCS	T-Shirt	Natural ONLY	MED-XXL	\$10	Size_____	_____
Shirts	Henley	Black ONLY	L-XL	\$20	Size_____	_____
	Button Down	Natural ONLY	L-XL	\$25	Size_____	_____
				Add \$5.00 Shipping & Handling		_____
				Total		_____

**Changing addresses?
 Please keep in touch!
 Send your new address to:
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