

Scouting Your Fields: Diving Deeper into Habitat & Hunting Strategies to Successfully find Upland Game

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Pheasants Forever/Quail Forever



Road Map

Upland Bird Ecology

Habitat

Hunting Strategies





****Habitat is species specific****



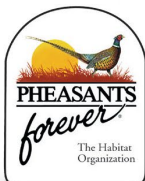


Ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

Ecology

Habitat

Hunting Strategies





Northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)

Ecology

Habitat

Hunting Strategies



Prairie Grouse



Greater prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*)



Sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*)

Ecology

Habitat

Hunting Strategies



Ecology

Ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)



Ecology

Ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

- Nesting
 - Late March – July >> drought, floods can change peak nesting period
 - Clutch size – 10 eggs (avg.)
 - Incubation – 3-4 weeks after last egg laid
- Brood rearing
 - April-August
 - Precocial, leave nest within 1 day of hatching
 - Diet consists mainly of insects during first month
- Fall – Young disperse from hen. Diet consists of seeds, shoots, fruits, grain, and insects
- Winter – diet primarily shifts to waste grain from agriculture



Ecology

Ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*)

- Nest survival – 50%
- Brood Survival – 50%
- Adult male annual survival – 10-20%
- Adult female annual survival – 20-50%

On average, each female will successfully produce 2-3 adult birds. Can be significantly more with high quality habitat and favorable weather.





Habitat

Nesting

Brood-rearing

Loafing/roosting, escape cover,
Winter cover





Habitat



Nesting



Habitat



Brood-rearing





Habitat



Loafing/roosting, escape cover,
Winter cover





Habitat



Loafing/roosting, escape cover,
Winter cover





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?



Organization



Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?



The Habitat Organization



The Habitat Organization





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?



The Humane
Organization

The Humane
Organization





Habitat

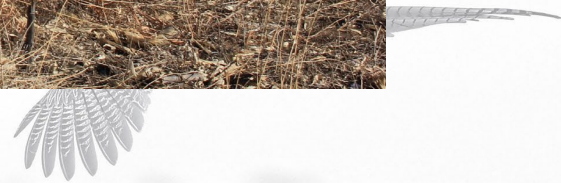
Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

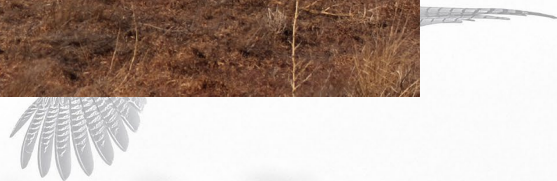
Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat



Hunting Strategies

- Know basic ecology (habitat, behavior, diet)
- Know range of species
- E-scout – use GIS, Call Bios, utilize surveys
- Narrow down
- Road Scout – get WIA atlas and write down notes. Circle good spots, cross out bad ones

- Pattern gun
- Shoot more clays
- Train dog more
- Have appropriate gear. More comfort > hunt longer > more birds > more enjoyable

- Have FUN

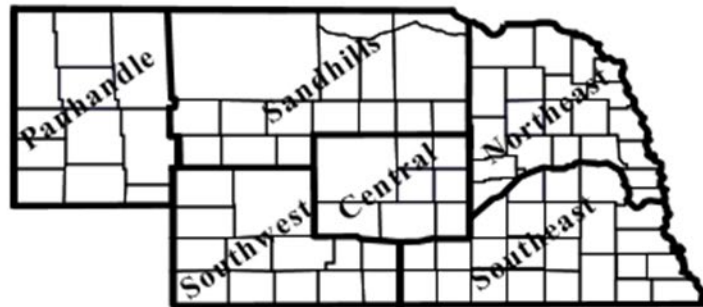


Hunting Strategies



2019 Upland Gamebird Survey Results

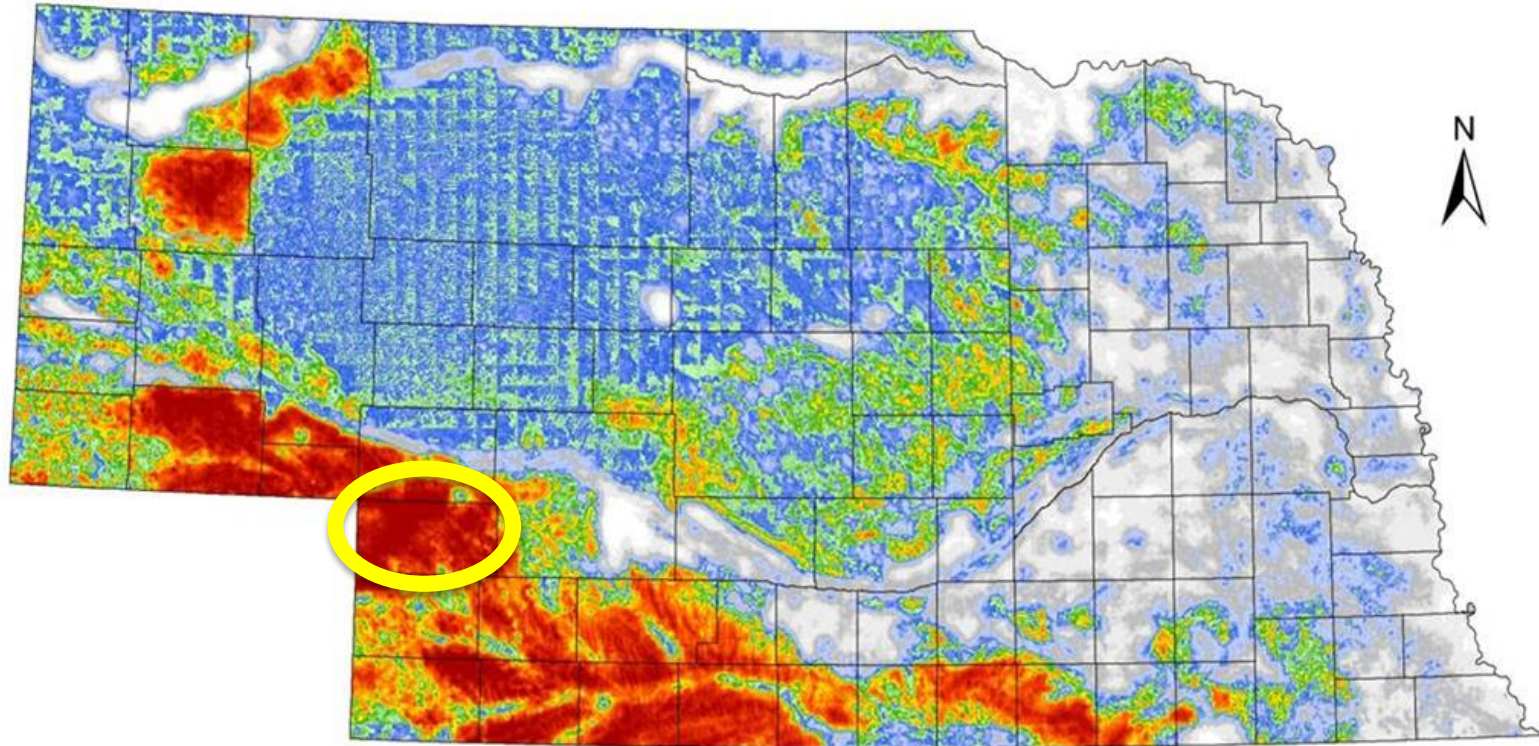
Ring-Necked Pheasant Surveys:



Region	% Change from*:		OVERALL Abundance Rank (1 = Best)	Top Counties (Based on July Rural Mail Carrier Survey)
	2018 July Rural Mail Carrier Survey	2014-2018 July RMCS Average		
Central	83	6	4	Sherman, Greeley, Howard
Northeast	-2	-17	3	Burt, Pierce, Boone, Madison, Platte
Panhandle	-50	-44	2	Cheyenne, Box Butte, Dawes, Morrill, Deuel
Sandhills	-38	-26	5	Blaine, Grant, Cherry
Southeast	-6	-32	6	Hamilton, Clay, Thayer, York
Southwest	-13	-17	1	Hitchcock, Perkins, Chase, Hayes, Keith
Statewide	-14	-19		

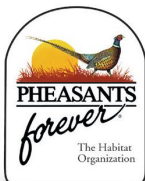
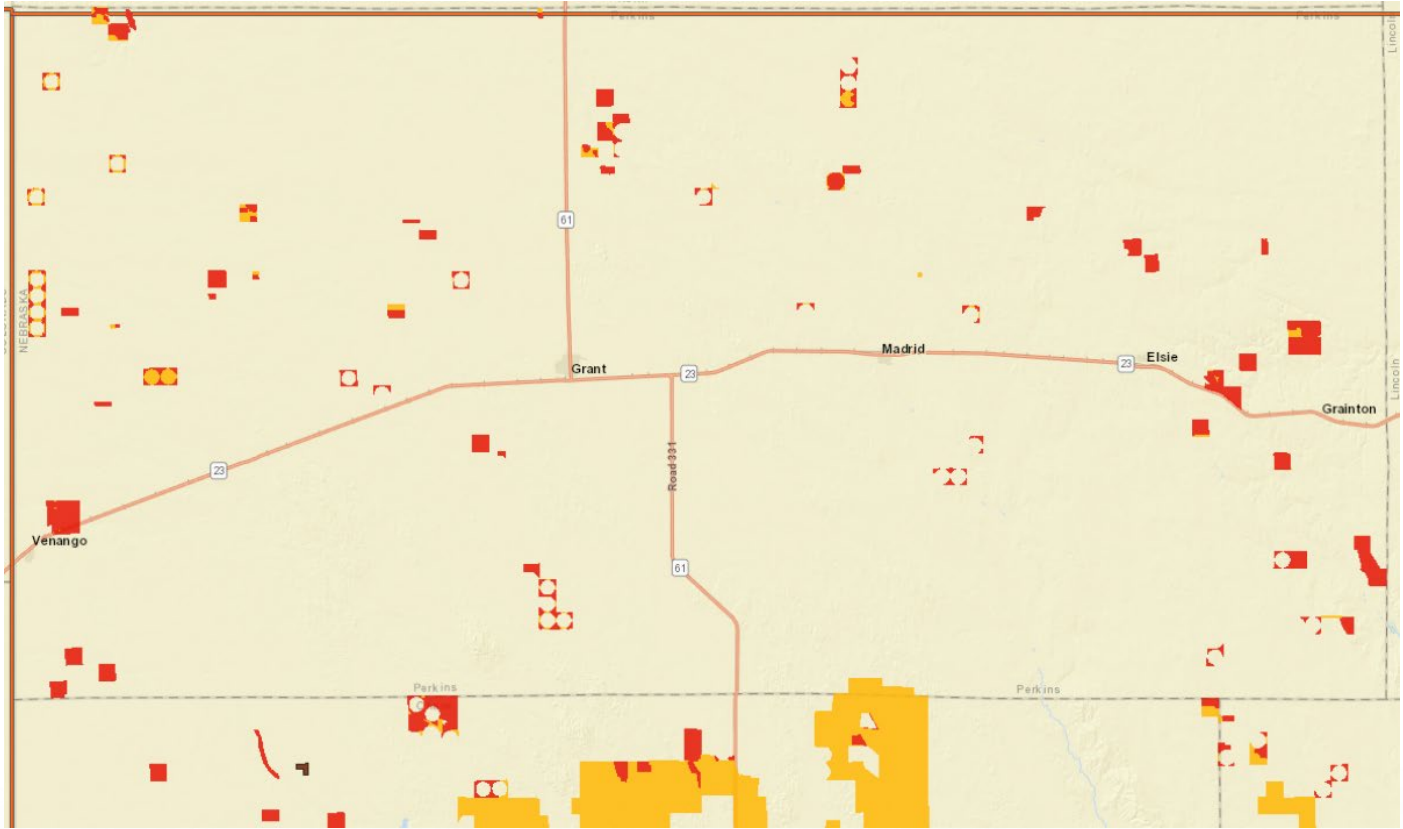


Hunting Strategies





Hunting Strategies



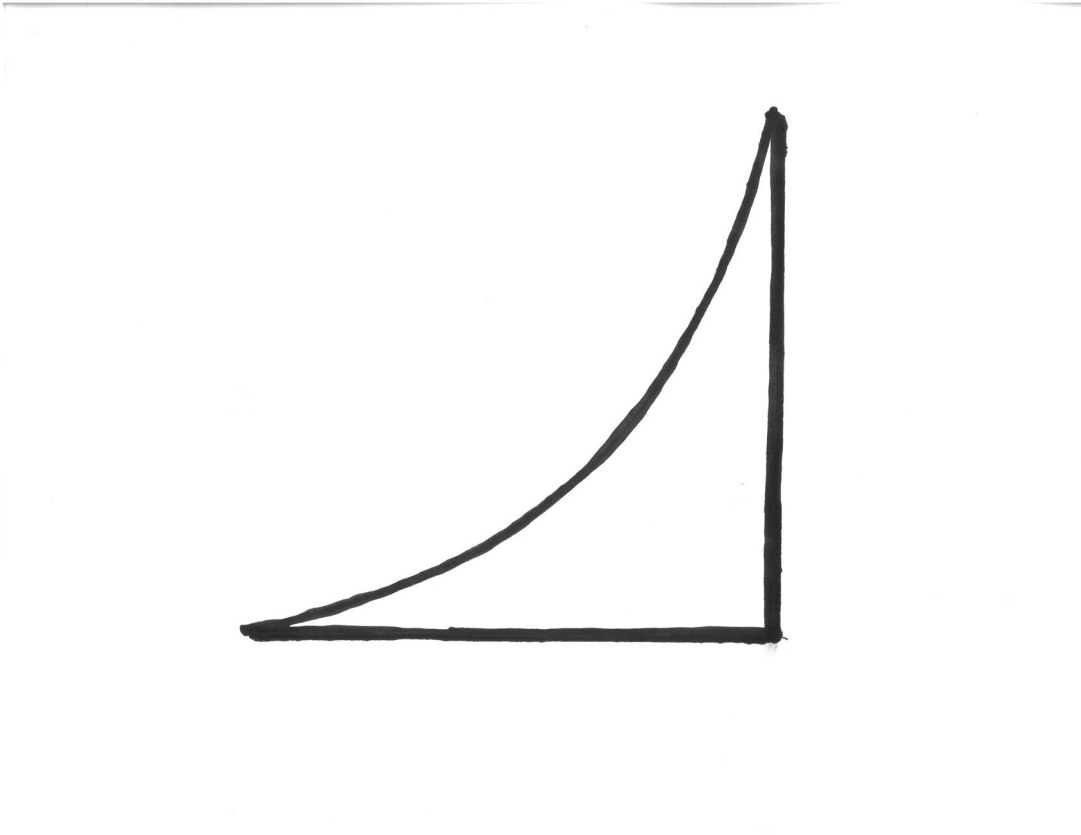


Hunting Strategies





Hunting Strategies





Hunting Strategies

A large, empty rectangular frame with a thick black border. Inside the frame, two large, identical circles are stacked vertically, touching each other at their top and bottom points. The circles are also outlined with a thick black border, creating a template for notes or diagrams.



Hunting Strategies





Ecology

Northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)



Ecology

Northern bobwhite

- Nesting
 - April – July >> drought, precipitation/floods can change peak nesting period
 - Clutch size – 12-14 eggs, ~40% will raise more than 1 brood
 - Incubation – 3 weeks after last egg laid
- Brood rearing
 - May - August
 - Precocial, leave nest within 1 day of hatching
 - Diet consists mainly of insects during first two months of life
- Fall – Summer – Young typically remain with adults through Winter. Adjacent broods begin to form coveys and migrate (<1 mile) towards Winter range. Diet consists of seeds, shoots, fruits, grain, and insects
- Winter – diet shifts to primarily seeds of weeds (forbs, legumes) and ag crops (milo > corn)



Ecology

Northern bobwhite (*Colinus virginianus*)

- Nest survival – 30%
- Brood Survival – 40%
- Percent that raise ≥ 1 brood – 40%
- Adult annual survival – 20%

On average, each female will successfully produce 3-4 adult birds. Can be significantly more with high quality habitat and favorable weather.

Most bobwhites (80%) live < 1 yr



Habitat



Nesting



Habitat



Brood-rearing



Habitat



Loafing/roosting, escape cover,
Winter cover





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?





Habitat

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Habitat

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Habitat

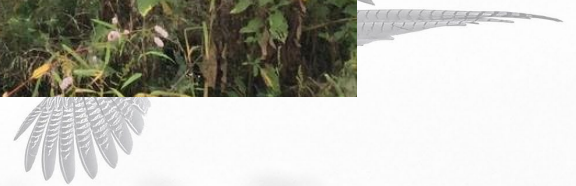
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Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?



Hunting Strategies



“Okay, I guess it was a little hard to see the birds through these tall weeds.”





Habitat

Great, fair, or poor?



MN CP25 Mix



Ecology

Prairie grouse



Greater prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus cupido*)



Sharp-tailed grouse (*Tympanuchus phasianellus*)



Ecology

Greater prairie-chicken & Sharp-tailed grouse

- Lek > “Spring Boom” – Mid-March – May
- Nesting
 - 1st (only) brood: April – June
 - Clutch size – 8-12 eggs, Incubation – 3-4 weeks
- Brood rearing
 - 2-3 weeks after hatching
 - Precocial, leave nest 24 hours of hatching
 - Diet consists mainly of insects during first month
 - Brood remain with hen for 2-3 months before becoming independent
- Fall – begin to migrate towards Fall/Winter range.
- Winter – diet shifts to largely waste grain where available – GPC
 - STG - fruits, grain, buds and catkins,



Ecology

Greater prairie-chicken & Sharp-tailed grouse

- Nest survival – >80%
- Brood Survival – 50%
- Adult annual survival – 20-50%

On average, each female will successfully produce 2-3 adult birds. Can be significantly more with high quality habitat and favorable weather.





Habitat



Nesting



Habitat



Nesting



Habitat



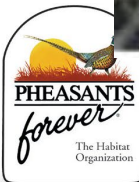
Nesting



Habitat



Nesting





Habitat



Brood-rearing





Habitat



Loafing/roosting, escape cover,
Winter cover





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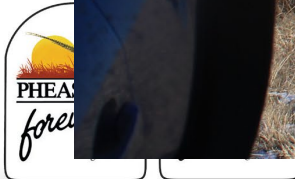
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Habitat

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“About the time a man learns to
hunt grouse, he dies.”

“Guns and dogs don’t kill grouse,
legs do.”





Hunting Strategies

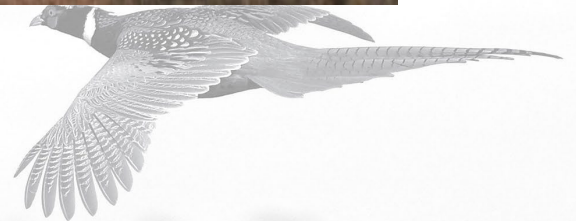


"How about pointing them while they're still on the ground?"





Hunting Strategies



Summary of Hunting Strategies

- Know basic ecology (habitat, behavior, diet)
- Know range of species
- E-scout – use GIS, Call Bios, utilize surveys
- Narrow down
- Road Scout – get WIA atlas and write down notes. Circle good spots, cross out bad ones
- Work fields efficiently

- Pattern gun
- Shoot more clays
- Train dog more
- Have appropriate gear. More comfort > hunt longer > more birds > more enjoyable

- Have FUN



Summary of cover types

- Pheasants
 - Waist high and above
 - Warm season bunchgrasses and forbs i.e. weeds!
 - Proximity to ag fields
- Bobwhite
 - Same as pheasants but more shrub and woody cover
 - Ag fields not as important (milo > corn)
- Prairie grouse
 - Ankle-calf high
 - Native rangeland (No CRP)
 - Prairie-chickens = Sandhills with interspersed corn circles
 - Sharp-tailed grouse = Sandhills, native rangelands with interspersed woody cover



Thank you!

