



The Second Tier of Pheasant States (In Alphabetical Order)

For Immediate Release
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Overview: While these states don't harvest as many birds as the top six pheasant states, they do offer excellent localized pheasant opportunities. Many have long traditions of pheasant hunting and at one time some even boasted harvest numbers of half a million birds or more. The Pheasants Forever chapters in these states are working hard to create the habitat necessary to bring back the good old days of the Soil Bank era, fence rows, and fields filled with pheasants. The Conservation Reserve Program's CREP component, which focuses on protecting targeted watersheds, has been especially beneficial to wildlife populations in many of these states.

NOTE: ALWAYS CONSULT STATE HUNTING REGULATIONS AND SEASON DATES BEFORE EVER TAKING TO THE FIELD

California: Brood counts were good this year thanks to spring rains that greened things up for nesting. The Sacramento Valley is the state's best pheasant range. **Season: Nov. 12 – Dec. 25**



Colorado: Overall, birds will be up this year due to a mild winter and excellent late spring nesting conditions. Early nesting was hurt by a lack of early rain to green up the wheat for nesting cover.

Yuma County will remain the top pheasant county despite poor spring weather there. The best pheasant range is the triangular area from Sterling to Holyoke to Burlington. Colorado hunters harvested 53,000 birds last year. **Multiple Seasons**

Idaho: With a mild winter and rain at the right times this spring, Idaho expects to improve slightly over last year's 70,000 bird harvest. The Lewiston area and the southern region of the state from Boise to Pocatello hold the most birds. **Multiple Seasons**



Illinois: As recently as the early 1970s, hunters harvested one million roosters in Illinois. CRP helped recover some of those losses in the late '80s into the mid '90s; however, the conversion of CRP lands to agricultural fields has dropped average harvests to below 200,000. Pheasant numbers could be down by as much as 25% this fall. The Illinois pheasant range went through a significant drought this summer, which likely reduced nest success primarily through increased nest abandonment and lower than normal chick survival. This is unfortunate since the pheasant harvest topped 200,000 birds last year for the first time since 1997. **Season: Nov. 5 – Jan. 8 (North)/Jan. 15 (South)**

Indiana: With a milder than normal winter and ideal spring nesting conditions, Indiana will see an increase in pheasants this year. Unfortunately, major losses of habitat have this state's pheasant population at historic lows with an average harvest of 30,000 birds. Biologists are excited about the state's new CREP for creating more pheasant habitat. The northwest part of the state between Lafayette and Merrillville provide the best opportunities with strong PF chapters in the area working to create habitat to help Indiana's roosters.

Season: Nov. 4 – Dec. 18



Michigan: A mild winter and good spring nesting conditions should improve populations. Annually, Michiganders harvest nearly 120,000 roosters a year with the two main areas being in the Lower Peninsula's thumb region and southern Michigan from Lansing to the Ohio/Indiana border. Michigan's CREP has done a tremendous job for creating pheasant habitat and those with access to these CREP lands will enjoy exceptional hunting. **Multiple Seasons**

Missouri: Like Iowa to the north, bird numbers are up in the “Show Me State.” The northern one-third of the state is the pheasant range with the northeast and northwest corners holding the most CRP acres and consequently the most birds. **Season: Nov. 1 – Jan. 15**



Montana: A mild winter and excellent spring cover for nesting has Montana’s bird numbers up slightly overall, but significant increases are expected in the northcentral and northeastern portions of the state. This is welcome news for bird hunters after the severe winter of 2003-2004 reduced pheasant populations to about 30 percent below average. Sheridan, Roosevelt, Richland, and Dawson counties provide good bird numbers, as do areas along the Milk River, Mission Valley, and Yellowstone Valley. **Season: Oct. 8 – Jan. 1**

New York: With a mild winter and ideal spring conditions, New Yorkers are expecting the best year in a long time for wild roosters. The Lakes-Plains region of the state between Buffalo and Syracuse provide the best bird numbers. **Multiple Seasons**



Ohio: Ohio’s 105,000 pheasant hunters generally harvest over 200,000 birds a season. The Lake Erie and Scioto CREP programs are having positive habitat impacts in northwestern and central Ohio. Overall, expect slightly improved bird numbers in 2005 with stable numbers in northern and central Ohio. **Season: Nov. 4 – Jan. 2**

Oklahoma: Like Texas, things are greener than normal in OK. In fact, Oklahomans in the north-central part of the state are so optimistic they are afraid the word is going to spread about their little-known, but big results pheasant state. **Season: Dec. 1 – Jan. 31**



Oregon: The home of pheasants in the U.S. will see a slight increase with the eastern half of the state boasting the most birds. Last year, 13,000 hunters harvested 50,000 birds. The Columbia Basin between Pendleton and The Dalles provides the best bird numbers. However, don’t overlook the nostalgia of visiting Lynn County, where pheasants were first introduced to the U.S.

Season: Oct. 15 – Dec. 11

Pennsylvania: A dry spring kept the insect numbers down, so that probably hindered brood-rearing. Overall, wild bird numbers should be similar to last year. CREP lands are also helping to fight the rampant habitat loss here too. The state’s pheasant range is from York in the southeast up to the south-central part of the state. **Multiple Seasons**



Texas: In the panhandle region of Texas is where you find pheasants and this year hunters should find a lot more than normal. A hot and dry early spring gave way to a wetter summer and things are greener than normal this year. Survey results are not complete, but sources report “gagillions” of chicks this year around CRP fields located near wheat, milo, and/or corn fields. **Multiple Seasons**

Utah: Pheasant populations are very low compared to historic levels. However, in suitable habitats, hunters should find increased bird numbers from 2004. Spring rains stimulated an abundance of good nesting and brood-rearing cover throughout the state. Best pheasants hunting can be found in Box Elder, Cache, Duchesne, Millard, Sevier, and Utah counties. **Multiple Seasons**



Washington: Good spring rains greened up cover and spurred insect growth leading biologists to be optimistic about a good year. Washington hunters harvest nearly 100,000 birds a year with Whitman, Grant, and Yakima counties leading the way. **Multiple Seasons**

Wisconsin: Surveys show a 2% increase from '04, but there is reason to be optimistic for bigger numbers with this year's ideal spring nesting conditions. Overall, Wisconsin's bird numbers will show at least a 22% increase above the long term mean since 1972. Wisconsin hunters generally harvest just over 200,000 birds. The state's best areas are between Madison and Green Bay, as well as in the counties of Polk and St. Croix near the Minnesota border. **Season: Oct. 15 – Dec. 31**



Wyoming: Pheasant numbers have been low the last 4-5 years due to drought and this year appears to follow the same trend. Sharp-tailed grouse lek counts are also down this year. Sage grouse numbers increased as they responded well to summer moisture. Although pheasant numbers are low, birds can still be found near many of the irrigation districts and in agricultural areas of eastern Wyoming. **Multiple Seasons**

Canada: Hunters don't automatically think Canada when talking pheasants, eh. However, southern Alberta does offer some excellent upland opportunities. This year, spring counts were up 35% for pheasants from 2004. Unfortunately, a cold and wet June will prevent Canada from gaining big ground on last year. Nevertheless, pheasant numbers will be up, as will sharp-tailed grouse and Hungarian partridge.

