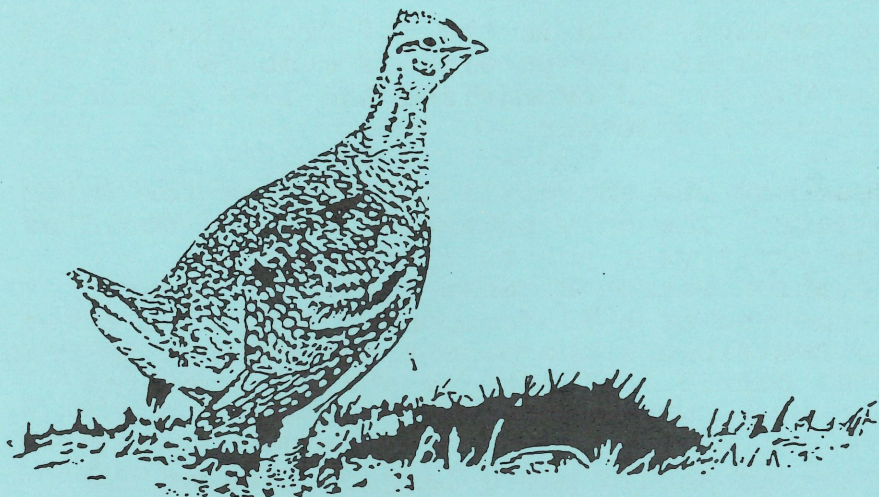


WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Volume 20

Fall, 1997

FIRST SHARPTAIL PERMIT HUNT UNDERWAY

Give yourself a collective pat on the back. After a closed season, Wisconsin once again has a sharptail hunt, thanks in great part to efforts by WSGS.

The applications were low in number as expected. Most applicants received at least one permit. There were 319 applications for 660 permits in five zones. The Natural Resource Board has directed the DNR to include sharptail applications in patron mailings next year, so there will be more applications and likely many unsuccessful applicants next year.

The 1997 numbers are:

Unit 2 - 94 applications for 300 permits
Unit 8 - 88 applications for 80 permits
Unit 9 - 23 applications for 150 permits
Unit 10 - 46 applications for 100 permits
Unit 24 - 57 applications for 30 permits

Successful applicants may have received permits for more than one zone but no more than three in total. There is no daily bag limit. The season limit equals the number of tags issued to the hunter.

The permit levels are based on spring population surveys and the administrative code requirement that not more than 25% of the projected fall population be harvested. Not all zones will be open each year; only zones that can sustain sharptail harvest based on population levels will be opened. Permit levels were set conservatively this year because the DNR does not yet know what the success rates will be. If success rates prove to be low, permit levels may be raised next year, assuming the population is stable or increasing.

1997 WSGS ANNUAL MEETING, SOLON SPRINGS

Saturday, April 26

Business Meeting: The business meeting, held in the St. Croix Inn, was called to order by President Ed Frank at 1:15 pm with 32 members in attendance. Secretary/Treasurer Jim Evrard summarized the 1996 financial report that had appeared in a recent newsletter.

Old Business: Ed Frank discussed the new sharptail hunting law for which the WSGS could claim responsibility. The only potential problem could be oversubscription for permits the first year due to a free permit application provided for Conservation Patron License holders. However, this could be overcome through the use of a \$3 "coupon". Bob Dries asked if the WSGS offered to help the DNR finance the permit system, but Ed Frank answered that revenue from the \$3 permit applications should cover the administrative costs.

Jim Wilson remarked that field trials should pay a larger share of the costs of managing sharptail properties than they do at present (only \$10 for the field trial permit).

Ed Frank told the membership that the WSGS has gone on record in supporting the federal Teaming With Wildlife proposal which would tax outdoor equipment to finance non-game wildlife management much like the Pittman-Robertson tax finances game management.

The WSGS has also agreed to support the upcoming Midwest Oak Savanna Conference in Madison. The support would not exceed \$500 but Ed Frank was assured by Dean Haney of the UWSP that registration should pay the conference costs and a contribution from our group would probably not be needed. We will attempt to set up our WSGS display at the conference.

Ed Frank discussed the requests for funding received during the past year. They included: ruffed grouse radio transmitters for UWSP graduate research; membership in the Wisconsin Stewardship PAC, the lobbying group for the Wisconsin Environmental Decade; Gathering Waters of the Wisconsin Land Trusts; 1,000 Friends of Wisconsin; UWSP-WDNR Career Workshops; Wisconsin Hunter Education Association; Wisconsin Conservation Warden Association; and the Sand County Foundation.

Discussion from the membership included keeping funding to the scope of our organization (sharptails and their habitat) and allowing the Board to make the funding decisions. A motion by Dave Evenson and seconded by Rod Bahr was supported by the group to inquire as to the availability of the radio transmitters used in the Moquah sharptail translocation project (and paid for by the WSGS) for use in the UWSP ruffed grouse study.

New Business: Bob Dreis presented Ed Bodde's request for a supportive resolution to control Connibear 220 traps set in uplands so that hunting dogs are not killed in them. After some discussion, Don Bronk made a motion, seconded by Bob Dries, and passed by the membership to draft a general resolution to support Bodde's request.

Ed Frank then presented WSGS initiatives for the coming year. The first was the Spread Eagle Barrens in NE Wisconsin. Since there are 6,000 acres now controlled with prospects of adding 2,500 acres to the boundary, there is a possibility of a future sharptail translocation project for that site. Conversations with Mark Martin (WDNR Endangered Resources) indicated the barrens habitat should be restored within 4-5 years. Counselor John Clemetson supports the concept. Dave Evenson will meet with the Sand County Foundation and The Nature Conservancy to discuss the matter. A committee could work on this. Possible members could include Stuart Boren, the WDNR project manager for Spread Eagle, Mark Martin, John Clemetson, and WSGS Board Member from NE Wisconsin, Tom Davis.

A Central Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Initiative was discussed in detail. Counselors Tom Zeigeweid and Tom Jancoski have been involved in the past. Potential partners include the WDNR's Black River State Forest (Dike 17, Bear Bluff), Meadow Valley, Wood County, and Sandhill WAS, Necedah National Wildlife Refuge, Fort McCoy Military Reservation, TNC's Quincy Bluff, and commercial cranberry bogs. The focus would be on barrens habitat, not sharptails, but would naturally include sharptails. Some type of workshop was envisioned where all potential partners could meet.

Tom Jancoski stated that habitat restoration funding would be needed and WSGS member Al O'Leary should be included since he works for the cranberry growers association. Don Bronk stated that we still must define what a barrens is so that common ground can be found among potential partners. He also thought the WSGS could help fund surveys in the area. Mark Boyce stated that the central Wisconsin barrens issue will be a roundtable discussion item at the upcoming Oak Savanna Workshop in Madison.

Election results were announced -- both Bob Dreis and Dan Dessecker were reelected to 3-year terms.

The motion to adjourn made by Bob Dries and seconded by Jim Evrard was passed at 3:30 p.m.

Drawings for door prizes and the framed art prints took place during and after the business meeting. Art print winners were James Robaidek of Shawano, Wisconsin, E. S. Infield of Wooster, Ohio, Mike Vogl of Elm Grove, Wisconsin, and Jerry Kobriger of Dickenson, North Dakota. Due to the generosity of artist Buzz Balzer and framer Dave Evenson, our net profit from the print raffle was \$775.00.

Neal Niemuth distributed the assignments and maps for the sharptail survey scheduled for the following morning.

Dinner: The group reassembled at the field trial headquarters at the Douglas County Wildlife Area at 5 pm. for a social hour followed by dinner at 6 pm. As usual, the steaks provided by Caterer Bob Prevost were excellent. We were privileged to have Bill Berg, furbearer and "feathered" specialist from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources as our after dinner speaker. As usual, Bill did a great job of describing the past and present status of the sharptail in Minnesota.

Members and Guests attending the dinner included: Tom and Julie Ziegeweid, Jim and Shirley Evrard, Lori Edwards, Bob Dreis, Bill and Terry Berg, Don Bronk, Don Johnson, Rod Bahr, Larry and Judy Gregg, John and Pat Zapota, Tom and Pat Jancoski, Ed Frank, Dave and Burnett Hojnacki, Neal and Leann Niemuth, James and Charmaine Robaidek, Tom Soule, Janet Boe, Dave Evenson, Ken and Jan Wallin, Mark Boyce and Evelyn Merrill, Greg Kessler, Gary Dunsmore, and Mary Cahow.

Sunday, April 27

Sharp-tailed Grouse Survey: (from a 4/30/97 report by Neal Niemuth) Twenty-seven members surveyed 13 areas of known or potential sharp-tailed grouse habitat in Douglas, Bayfield, and Washburn counties. Most habitat surveyed consisted of large clearcuts created by salvage logging of budworm-infested jack pine; the Bayfield County firebreaks, Deer Print Lake Fire, and an agricultural area.

A total of 291 sharptails were counted. Several fairly large dancing grounds were observed, with counts of 23 (Deer Print Lake Fire/clearcut), 27 (clearcut east of Gordon), 19 (Bayfield County clearcut), and 31 (Highway 27 clearcut). Similar to the 1995 survey results, it appears that a complex of clearcuts and young pine plantations in southeastern Douglas County probably harbors the largest and densest population of sharp-tailed grouse in Wisconsin. This probably represents the minimum number of birds in that area since Neal stated that the area is simply too large to adequately survey in 1 morning with 27 people.

Survey Debriefing and Lunch: A delicious wild rice soup and sandwich lunch was served by Bob Prevost in the St. Croix Inn after survey participants had turned in their maps and data to Neal Niemuth. Following lunch, members returned to their homes with increased anticipation for the 1998 annual meeting. Income from the 1997 annual meeting registrations was \$665.00 while expenses were \$706.49.

Submitted by Jim Evrard

THE MINNESOTA SHARPTAILER

PUBLICATION OF THE MINNESOTA SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY



P.O. BOX 3338

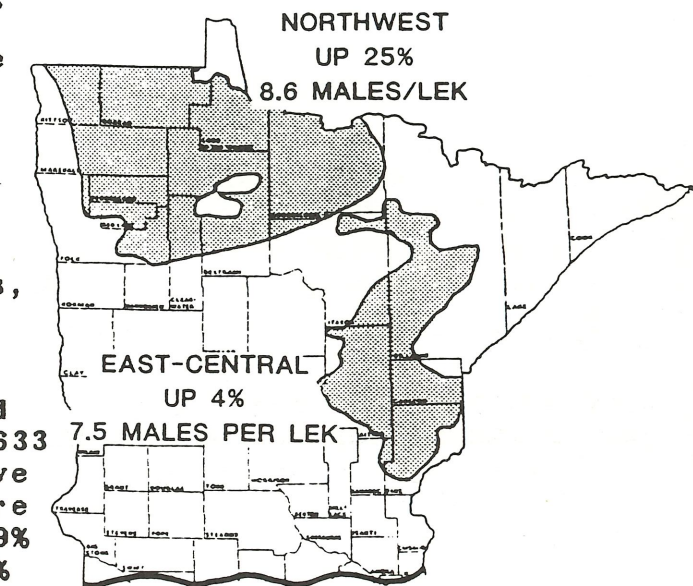
DULUTH, MINNESOTA 55803

SPRING 1997



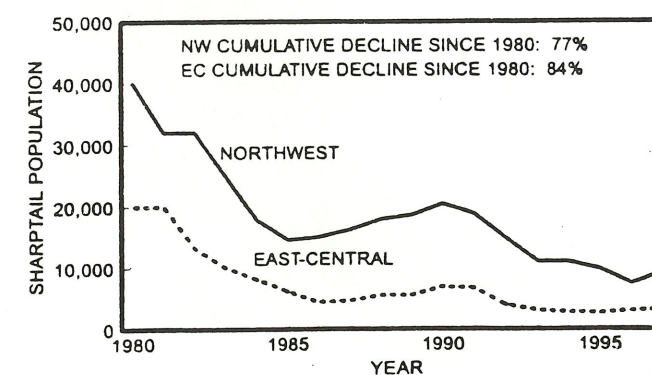
SHARPTAILS UP IN '97

There's some good news for sharptail fans this spring. Bill Berg, DNR Wildlife Biologist, reports that male sharptails present on spring dancing grounds increased 25% in their Northwest range, and 4% in the East-central range. According to Berg, 1997 is the first spring that both ranges have increased since 1990. While this seems like a recovery, Berg cautions that numbers are still 84% and 77% below the 1980 levels. Berg also believes that the East-central birds should have increased more because of excellent summer 1996 nesting and brood-raising factors, and an excellent winter.

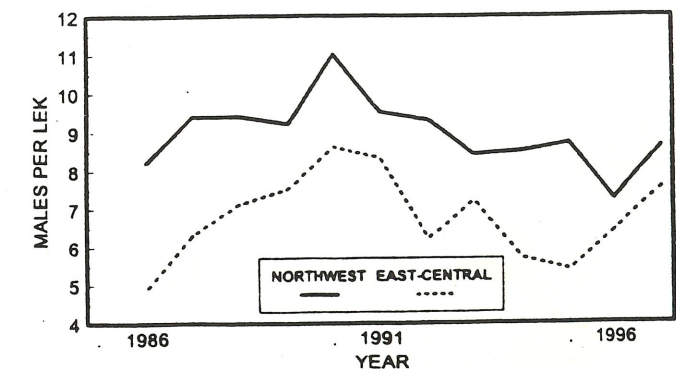


In the East-central range, 162 dancing grounds were checked, and the 85 that contained birds had 633 displaying males (7.5 males/active lek). On the 133 grounds that were checked in both 1996 and 1997, 49% increased, 41% decreased, and 10% were stable. In the Northwest range, 134 grounds were checked, and the 69 that were active had 593 males (8.6 males/lek). There were 111 grounds checked in both 1996 and 1997, and 53% increased, 37% decreased, and 10% were stable. Hunters took about 5,000-6,000 sharptails in 1996. The graphs below (courtesy of DNR) depict the population trends since 1980, and the average number of males per active dancing ground in the Northwest and East-central ranges.

SHARPTAIL POPULATIONS, 1980-1997



SHARPTAIL MALES PER LEK, 1986-1997



dedicated to the management and restoration of sharptails
in Minnesota for the benefit of hunters and non-hunters

SHARPTAILS OBSERVED ON SPREAD EAGLE BARRENS

You have been reading about our north eastern most Wisconsin barrens in past issues of the newsletter. You also have read about WSGS's contribution to the Wisconsin Breeding Bird Atlas project. The two came together this summer in the first brood observation at Spread Eagle in 15 years.

Jean Strelka is an ornithologist working on the Breeding Bird Atlas project. This summer, as she was surveying for birds she spotted a brood of sharptails in and beside a sand road on the Roach's Lane unit of the Spread Eagle Barrens. There have been reports of birds being seen

across the river in Michigan in the past few years, but this is the first verified breeding at Spread Eagle in a long time. Way to go, Jean!

This sighting is probably not so surprising when one considers the new emphasis that has been placed on managing Spread Eagle since it was purchased by the DNR from Florence County in 1995. Last June, DNR crews and cooperators burned 400 acres and 1000 acres are planned for the coming season. Coupled with an aggressive timber sale schedule this bracken grassland is looking better every year. The birds seem to think so.

MIDWEST OAK SAVANNA AND WOODLAND CONFERENCE

Five hundred or more savanna enthusiasts came together in Madison in late July for one of the best conferences ever. This was a midwestern conference with good representation from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, as well as Wisconsin. While the areas where we have sharptails in Wisconsin are on the northern edges of the area in focus, we heard several papers regarding management on Moquah, Northwest Wisconsin Pine Barrens, and Spread Eagle research.

Ziggy helped spread the gospel with the WSGS display one more time, with lots of visitors. At the evening workshop Ed Frank sowed the seeds of managing parts of the Central Wisconsin public land/cranberry bog complex for savanna values including sharptails. You'll be hearing more about this effort as time goes on. All in all an excellent conference.



Wisconsin Sportswoman's Club

SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN SPORTSWOMEN

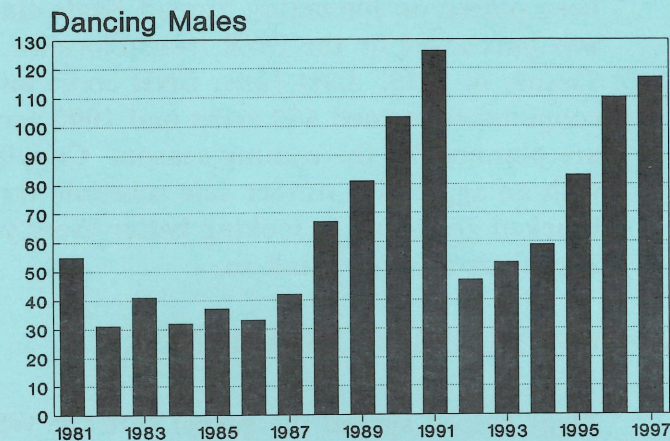
If you are interested in hunting, fishing, trapping and other outdoor activities, come join us! The newly formed Dane County chapter of the Wisconsin Sportswomen's Club meets the fourth Wednesday of every month at 7:00 p.m.

at the Middleton Sportsmen's Clubs, 7910 Airport Rd., Middleton.

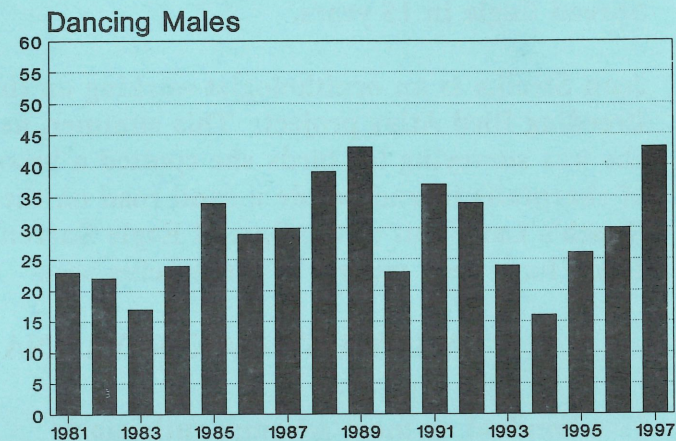
For more information, call Karen Phillips at 608-845-7412.

Numbers of sharp-tailed grouse males on managed areas, 1981 - 1997.

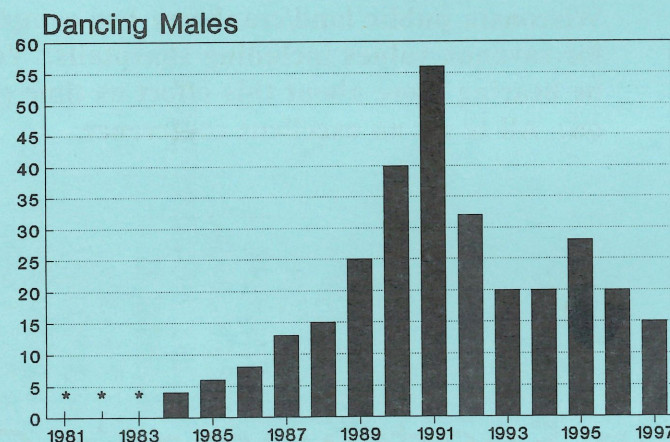
CREX MEADOWS W. A.



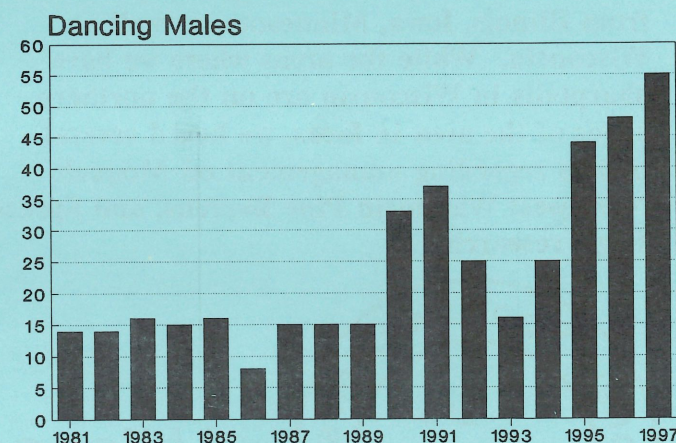
PERSHING W. A.



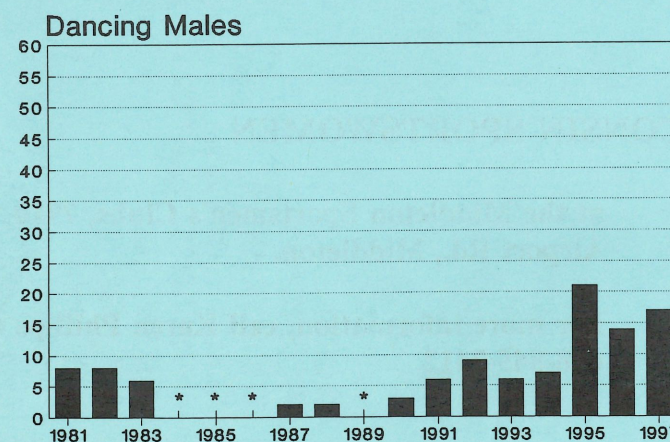
KIMBERLY-CLARK W. A.



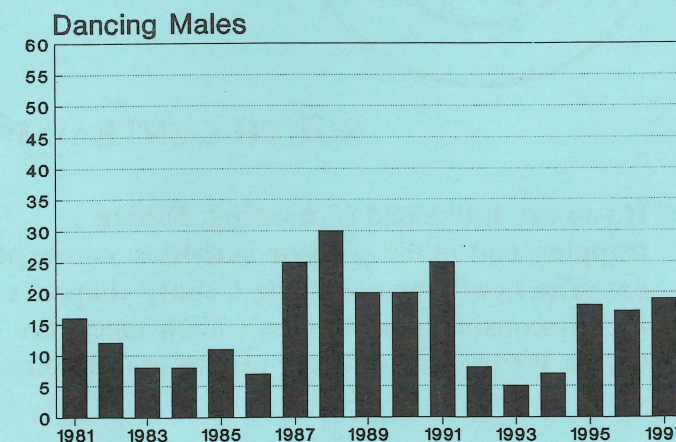
NAMEKAGON BARRENS W. A.



MOQUAH BARRENS W. M. A.



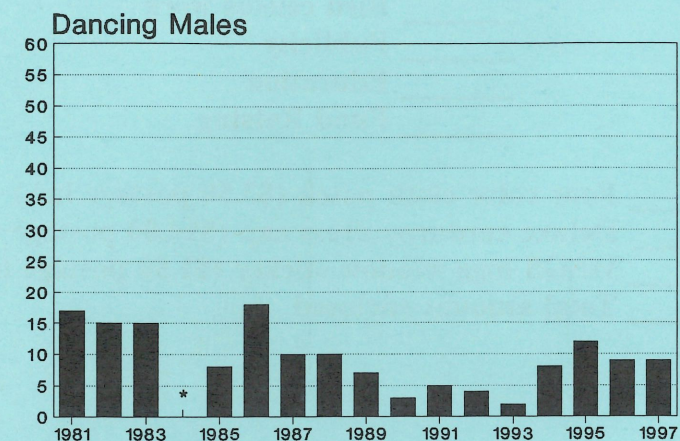
RILEY LAKE W. M. A.



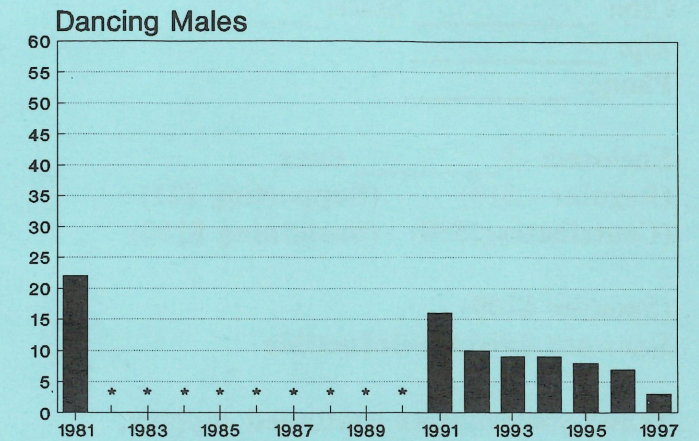
* No data available

Numbers of sharp-tailed grouse males on managed areas, 1981 - 1997.

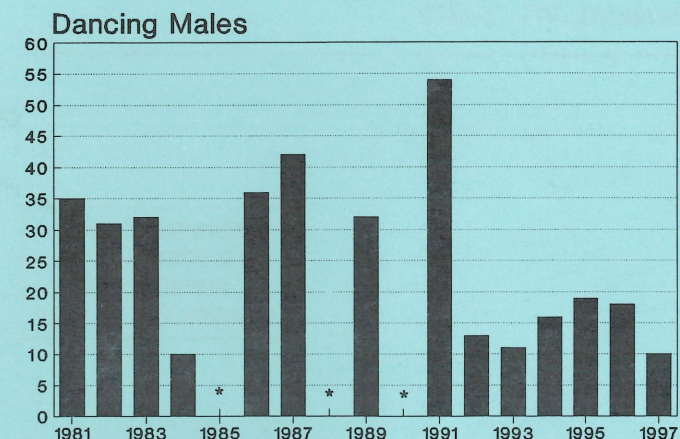
DOUGLAS COUNTY W. A.



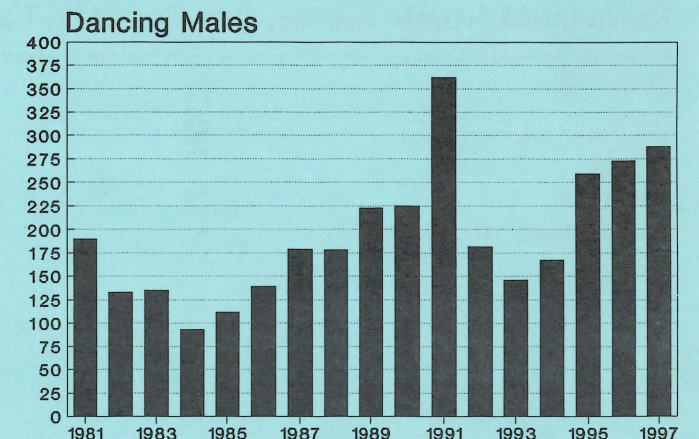
DIKE 17 W. A.



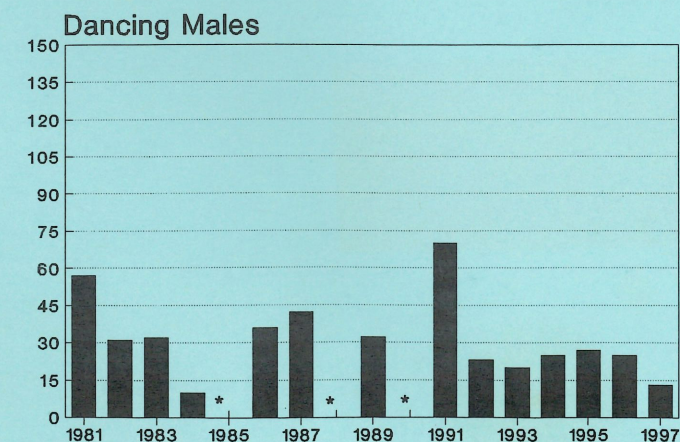
WOOD COUNTY W. A.



ALL WI MANAGED AREAS

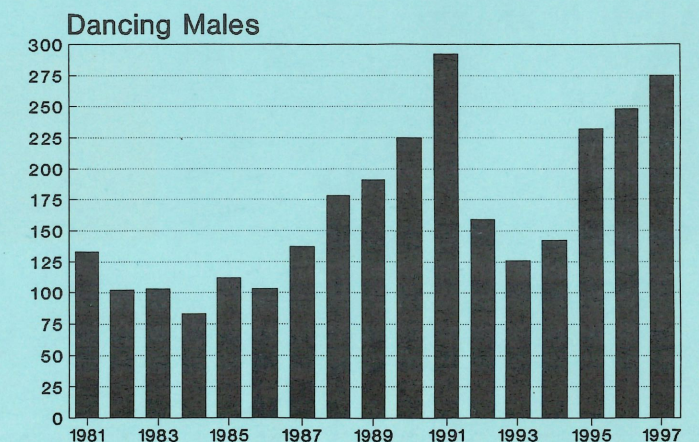


CENTRAL WI MANAGED AREAS



* No data available

NORTH WI MANAGED AREAS



PLEASE CHECK THE DATE ON YOUR MAILING LABEL BELOW TO DETERMINE IF YOU ARE PAID UP

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL
(1997 Annual Dues \$10.00)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____
Phone: _____

Enclosed: \$ _____ dues
(Regular - \$10) (Supporting \$25)
(Contributing \$50) (Sustaining \$100)

(Sponsor \$200)
Dues are fully tax-deductible

Volunteer Activities

_____ Board of Directors Address:
_____ Newsletter Writing
_____ Bird census work
_____ Publicity
_____ Education
_____ Fund Raising

_____ Four color cloth patch (\$3.50 postage inc.)
_____ Deluxe corduroy dress cap (\$14.00 postage inc.)
_____ WSGS logo window sticker (\$1.50 postage inc.)
_____ Total amount enclosed

Thank you for your continued support,
Board of Directors

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AND RETURN THIS APPLICATION TO: Wisconsin
Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, P.O. Box 1115, Cumberland, WI 54829

WSGS
Box 1115
Cumberland, WI 54829

NONPROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID PERMIT NO. 83 CUMBERLAND, WI 54829
--

03 98

54840