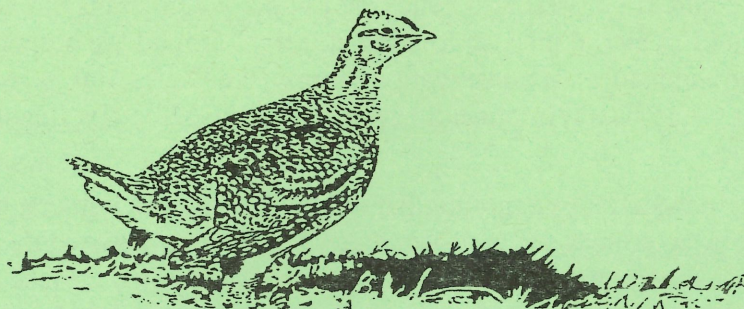


WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Number 59

Spring 2010

Help Celebrate Our 20th Birthday at the Annual Meeting by Jim Evrard

The WSGS is 20 years old this year! Help us celebrate by attending the 2010 Annual Meeting on Saturday and Sunday, April 24 and 25 at the Paradise Shores Resort on Lake Holcombe in Chippewa County and the newly-acquired former Big Rock Shooting Preserve Lodge in the Pershing Wildlife Area in adjacent Taylor County.

The business meeting will begin at 1 p.m. on Saturday in the Big Rock Lodge and will end at 4 p.m. following door prize and art print drawings. We will then journey to the Paradise Shores Resort for a social hour including a cash bar, followed by dinner where we will order from the menu. There is no registration fee for the meeting.

A block of ten rooms has been reserved at the Resort at a cost of \$69.95 per room. You can make reservations for a room by calling (715)595-4227 or emailing paradise@paradiseshores.fatcow.com.

We will travel early Sunday morning to the Pershing Wildlife Area to search for dancing sharptails and for a tour of the wildlife area led by DNR biologists. In mid-morning, we will return to the resort for a joint brunch that will end the annual meeting.

Directions to the lodge at the Pershing Wildlife Area: Drive on State Highway 73 six miles north of Gilman in western Taylor County to the junction with County Highway M in the Village of Hannibal, turn west and drive 3.5 miles to junction with East Loop Road, turn north and drive 1.25 miles to driveway marked with a sign leading to the lodge.

Direction to Paradise Shores Resort: Drive on State Highway 27 six miles north of Cornell in northeast Chippewa County to the junction of County Highway M in the Village of Holcombe, turn west and drive three miles to the roadside sign marking the resort located on the north side of the road. You can also reach Paradise Shores by traveling west on County Highway M from the Pershing Wildlife Area. We hope to see you there!

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From Your President

by Dave Evenson

Twenty years. Twenty years ago I could kid myself into believing I was a young man, and now it doesn't take much to convince me that I'm an old man, or looking at it right around the corner. Twenty years doesn't look like much to the granddaddies of conservation groups like Ducks Unlimited or Audubon Society, but for a fledgling group like Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, twenty years is an accomplishment and a milestone.

In the fall of 1990, I sent a six-page newsletter to a mailing list of known sharptail hunters, blind sitters, wildlife managers and foresters, ecologists and bird-watchers. The first sentence of the first article read "Congratulations- you're a charter member of the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society". Enough people agreed with that assessment and sent in dues to prove it that we scheduled our first annual meeting. In Newsletter 4 we listed the Charter Members, a list of 140 names. In reviewing the list I see many of the names of people who are still our active supporters, and also remember a number who have now passed on.

This year our annual meeting returns to the site of that first meeting, Paradise Shores on Lake Holcombe. (I see the room rate was \$39.60 then- another sign some time has elapsed!) A dozen people braved the blizzard to attend that first meeting, watch some sharptails and work on figuring out who we were. We developed our mission statement and objectives. Actually we mostly plagiarized Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society's work. Tom Ziegeweid was elected our first President, and Jim Shurts our first Vice-president. Twelve volunteers made up the first Board of Directors.

Since then WSGS has become a respected conservation group, sponsoring seminars and workshops, funding sharptail-oriented projects and helping with one land purchase. Especially WSGS has testified and taken positions on County, State and Federal land management plans and decisions.

I hope to see you at the 2nd Annual Brush Cutting Party March 20, and/or at the Return to the Roots Annual Meeting at Paradise Shores, April 24. See you there!

Don't Forget the WSGS-USFS Brush Cutting Project

The second annual WSGS-U.S. Forest Service brush-cutting project will be held on Saturday, March 20, at the Riley Lake Wildlife Area in the Chequamegon National Forest, east of Fifiel. Plan to meet at the Country Café in Fifiel at 8 a.m. for a lumberjack breakfast provided by the WSGS. We will caravan to the work site following breakfast. Participants should bring lopping shears or Sandvik brush axes, but no power tools. Dress for the weather. We will be cutting small, scattered trees or brush in areas where fire or machines can't reach. At noon, WSGS Vice President Tom Ziegeweid will provide a field lunch for the group. After a few more hours of brush cutting, the project will be completed and we'll be on way home.

For more information and to volunteer for the project, contact Dave Evenson WSGS, at 715-822-3397 dave3397@centurytel.net or Susanne Adams USFS, at 715-748-4875 ext. 36 smadams@fs.fed.us or Mike Bablick USFS, at 715-762-2461 or Dan Eklund USFS, at 715-762-5194.

THE WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY

The Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society (WSGS) is a private, nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the sharp-tailed grouse and its habitat in Wisconsin. Questions about the WSGS should be directed to the Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, 102 East Crex Avenue, Grantsburg, WI 54840

WSGS OFFICERS

President: Dave Evenson
Vice President: Tom Ziegeweid
Secretary/Treasurer: Jim Evrard

Board Members: Ed Frank John Zatopa
Dave Clausen John Probst
Blair Klein Paul Kooiker

Newsletter Editor: Jim Evrard

Sharptail Research Fund

An article in the last newsletter described the sharptailed grouse research project slated to begin this year in the Crex Meadows and Namekagon Barrens wildlife areas. About \$160,000 of the total cost of the three-year study has been secured, leaving approximately \$100,000 in funding to be raised. The WSGS pledged \$4,100 in existing moneys and began a fund-raising campaign to help pay for some of the remaining balance.

As a result of Dave Evenson making a direct fund-raising appeal to WSGS members in his President's newsletter column, the following contributions have been received at the time of this newsletter's printing.

Jim Evrard, Grantsburg	\$100	Jay O'Connell, Hillpoint	\$25
Paul Kooiker, Grantsburg	\$50	Al O'Leary, Wisconsin Rapids	\$25
Chet Anderson, St. Croix Falls	\$50	Larry Thompson, Barneveld	\$20
Dana Olson, Grantsburg	\$50	Jodie Provist, Aitkin, MN	\$10
Jim Shurts, Madison	\$40	Paul Petersen, Luck	\$5
Mike Cole, Grantsburg	\$30		

Sharp-tailed Grouse Research Project Progress

by Jim Evrard

The new sharp-tailed grouse research project was described in last WSGS newsletter (Winter 2010 No. 58). The joint project between the DNR and the University of Wisconsin – Madison, was initiated with the hiring of Dr. Matt Reetz to head the project. In January, John Severson was hired to do the field research associated with the study.

John is stationed at the Crex Meadows Headquarters in Grantsburg and will be working for the next two years on the project. A seasonal technician will assist him during the two field seasons.

Severson is a native of Wisconsin, raised in Taylor located between Eau Claire and La Crosse. He earned a BS in wildlife from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point and a MS in zoology with a wildlife emphasis from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

John has worked for the Wisconsin DNR in the Black River State Forest. He has also worked for the U.S. Geological Service in Wyoming and Colorado, for the Illinois Natural History Survey, and for the Colorado State University on military bases in Alaska and Fort McCoy. He has a broad range of experience with birds ranging from sage grouse and mallards to songbirds and with other animals and habitats.

If you would like to make a special contribution to the research and translocation projects, please use the form on the last page of the newsletter to send the funds to WSGS Treasurer Jim Evrard and you will be sent a receipt. The donation is completely tax deductible.

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Check the date on your mailing label and please renew your membership if it has expired or is about to expire. The WSGS is a small organization and depends heavily upon membership fees to continue the fight for the sharp-tailed grouse and its habitat in Wisconsin. Our membership fee is low compared to most conservation groups and supports all-volunteer members who serve as your board of directors and do the work of the society.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
Tympanuchus phasianellus



WSGS Board Election

The terms of Board Members Dave Evenson, Tom Ziegeweid, and Dave Clausen expire this year and nominations were sought for three-year terms for the three positions. Only the nominations of Evenson, Ziegeweid, and Clausen were received at the time of this newsletter.

Retired DNR wildlife biologist **Dave Evenson** is our current President and was responsible for the creation of the WSGS. Dave is one the premier goose hunters in the Cumberland area where he lives. Dave plays a mean guitar and is a thespian active in community theater.

Tom Ziegeweid is our Vice President and owns his own business in Eau Claire. Tom is a charter member of the WSGS and the group’s first president. He is renowned for his hunting and fishing skills that provide him with a wide variety and large quantity of prime food.

Dave Clausen is a veterinarian who works and lives in Amery. Dave is an avid hunter and angler and has been a member of the WSGS Board since 2006. Dave is currently serving his second term on the Natural Resources Board, having been appointed by Governor Doyle.

(Detach and mail to: WSGS, 102 E. Crex Ave., Grantsburg, WI 54880 or bring to annual meeting)

BALLOT – WSGS BOARD
(Vote for three)

Dave Evenson _____
Tom Ziegeweid _____
Dave Clausen _____
Write-in Candidate _____

Sharptail Romance
by Jim Evrard

The late Don Johnson, an award-winning outdoor writer for the Milwaukee Sentinel, penned a couple of interesting paragraphs about sharp-tailed grouse mating habits in his book, Summer’s Song and other Essays, published in 2005 by the Hackmatack Hollow Press. Johnson ‘romantically’ described the mating ritual of sharptails, a species that has a lek or dancing ground breeding strategy.

“Sharptailed grouse go romancing quite differently [than pheasants]. The boys invite the girls to a hoedown. Then each hen makes her choice of one of the fast-stepping specimens on the dancing grounds. She takes her time about it too.”

“The hen may attend those dawn dances for several days, remaining a spectator. When she finally does curtsy to a partner, her participation is brief. She soon flies off to prepare a nest, while her beau remains to dance on and enchant another if he can.”

If you have a chance, get out in late April to one of the sharp-tailed grouse management areas and watch this very colorful breeding behavior. Observation blinds are usually set up on leks at the Crex Meadows, Namekagon Barrens, Douglas County, Moquah Barrens, Pershing, and Riley Lake wildlife areas plus at a couple of other locations in the northwest part of the state. Some of the blinds rent for a modest fee. To make a reservation for a blind, contact the federal or state agencies responsible for the management of these special areas.

For more involvement, you could volunteer to count displaying sharptails under the direction of state and federal biologists and even receive a small per diem stipend to help pay some of your costs. Contact Dave Evenson or me for more information.



Annual Art Print Raffle

The WSGS in again conducting a raffle for three, framed, ready-to-hang-on-your-wall, limited edition, art prints depicting sharp-tailed grouse. The annual art print raffle has been the major fundraiser for the WSGS. Income from memberships covers the costs of the newsletter and basic WSGS administration, but raffle income provides the money for special projects.

This year we are featuring three prints, the first by Wisconsin’s Ruth Maslowski King depicting a sharptail dancing grounds in the Namekagon Barrens Wildlife Area; the secondis by the late Owen Gromme, considered to be the Dean of Wisconsin wildlife artists; and third by Louie Raymer, a Minnesota artist that lived in Wisconsin for a period of time.

The raffle ticket is printed on the insert to this newsletter. This raffle will be conducted at our annual meeting at 3 p.m., April 24, 2010 at East Loop Road, Hannibal, Wisconsin. Ticket holders need not be present to win.

WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1/1/09 through 12/31/09

Checkbook Balance as of 01/01/09	\$10,387.48
Certificate of Deposit as of 01/01/09	\$2,415.04
Total cash assets as of 01/01/09	\$12,802.52

INCOME:

Memberships and sales	\$3,243.86
Art Raffle	\$393.62
Sharptail Print sales (3)	\$185.00
DNR grant for sharptail surveys	\$1,500.00
Annual meeting	\$50.00
Interest on Checking Account	\$1.00
Interest on Certificate of Deposit	\$72.52
	\$5,446.00

EXPENDITURES:

Projects –	Riley Lake Brush Cutting	\$251.70
	Volunteer sharptail censusers	\$770.00
	Sharptail genetic research	\$2,550.00
	Total Projects	\$3,571.70

Dues –	N. Am. Grouse Partnership	\$35.00
	Friends of Crex Meadows	\$55.00
	Friends of the Bird Sanctuary	\$50.00
	Friends of the Nam. Barrens	\$30.00
	Wisconsin Wildlife Federation	\$60.00
	Total Alliance dues	\$230.00

Membership Services -

	Newsletter	\$1,081.72
	Office supplies	\$24.29
	Meeting costs	\$43.39
	Total Membership Services	\$1,149.40

Sales Items -

	24 embroidered WSGS caps	\$235.45
	4 Gromme prints	\$175.73
	Produce King prints	\$634.40
	Total Sales Items	\$1,045.58

Checkbook Balance as of 12/31/09	\$ 9,729.28
Certificate of Deposit as of 10/16/09	\$2,487.56
Total Cash Assets as of 12/31/08	\$12,216.84

Non-profit report to Wis. Sec. State	\$10.00
Raffle License	\$25.00
Total Expenditures	\$6,031.68

Submitted by James O. Evrard, Sec./Treas., 12/31/09

Afield With Ziggy

By Tom Ziegeweid

The 2009 Hunting Season in Review: It's been a white meat winter for us at the Ziegeweid household. The ruffed grouse and fall turkey hunting were exceptional - I even bagged four ruffs in Burnett County in early November.

If I had to pick the "Fall Turkey Hunting Capital" in Wisconsin, it would definitely be Mather, in southern Juneau County. Mather sits in the lower end of the 90-square-mile Meadow Valley state wildlife area. During the five or so trips I took there, I saw in excess of 150 turkeys, bagging four, including my second bearded hen which had a nice beard about the size of a "fall jake". An interesting note is all the turkeys I saw down there were hens and poults with the exception of one flock of four bearded toms and the bearded hen which was in a flock of a dozen or so hens and juveniles.

I noticed a substantial spike upward in the number of ruffed grouse in central Wisconsin from the previous three seasons. The last two winters, and this winter, will be three good deep snow winters for snow roosting. Last fall I really took a liking to the Pershing Wildlife Area. This property, where by the way, we will be having our WSGS annual meeting, is a real "sleeper" in my opinion. Although it is only an hour from Eau Claire, very few hunters around here even know about it. My deceased friend's son, Chris Gowin and I hunted at Pershing two consecutive Mondays and bagged five ruffies, one turkey, and I also lost my first turkey (cripple).

The turkey I bagged was an old boss hen that was tough as hell until I let it cook slowly for an extra hour. She weighed 14 pounds and was by herself, no poults. I walked this bird up in a deep reed canary grass swale, jumped it and dumped it at about 25 to 30 yards on a crossing shot (Please use discretion when shooting a flying turkey!).

There were an exceptional number (in the thousands) of Canada geese at Pershing using the Shoulder Creek Flowage as a resting pool. I haven't seen this many geese in western Wisconsin for years and suspect many were "interiors", migrants from Canada.

The sharp-tailed grouse season last fall was tough for me as I didn't get out as much as I would have liked. My friends from Minnesota and I opened their season in September and each bagged a bird around McGregor. I never got to Thief Lake to hunt in the northwest zone. Wisconsin's Zone 2 in Douglas County was subscribed heavily by hunters on opening weekend. I talked to hunters who seemed to have limited success. The big challenge for me in the coming years is that I am going to have to "re-learn" this area. There are still good numbers of birds here. They are not in their old haunts, I had to do a lot of walking to just see birds. I believe I saw nine birds while hunting in Zone 2 last fall. I bagged none.



For you waterfowl (namely duck) hunters reading this article, wondering where all the ducks went last fall, let me enlighten you. Last October it was almost winter-like from the get-go. When I watched an evening weather report about the first week of October, I saw this huge arctic cold blast push into the whole central prairie area of the U.S. and Canada. This occurred around the second weekend in October. I had a hunch that there would be a big flight going east! In about a 48 hour span there was a massive bailout of ducks that went through Wisconsin mostly unscathed. Various anecdotal reports I received from my contacts reinforced my suspicion. Mother Nature kicked us in the seat-of-the-pants!

Nine of the ten ducks I bagged were from Crex Meadows. Most of the ducks in central Wisconsin were gone by the second opener.

Enjoy, Ziggy

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name: _____
Street/PO Box _____
City: _____ State: _____
Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Would you like to volunteer for:
_____ Board of Directors
_____ Bird Censusing
_____ Newsletter articles
_____ Annual Meeting
Other: _____

Enclosed:

\$ _____ Dues (Regular - \$10, Supporting - \$25, Contributing - \$50, \$100 Sustaining, \$200 Sponsor)
(Dues are fully tax-deductible)

\$ _____ **Donation of Sharptail Research/Translocation Projects**

\$ _____ WSGS Logo Decal (\$1.50)

\$ _____ Four-color Cloth Patch (\$3.50)

\$ _____ Tan or blaze orange Cap (\$15 – indicate color choice)

(all prices include postage and handling)

Total Enclosed: \$ _____

PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AND RETURN THIS APPLICATION TO:

Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, 102 East Crex Avenue, Grantsburg, WI 54840

4/1/2011

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