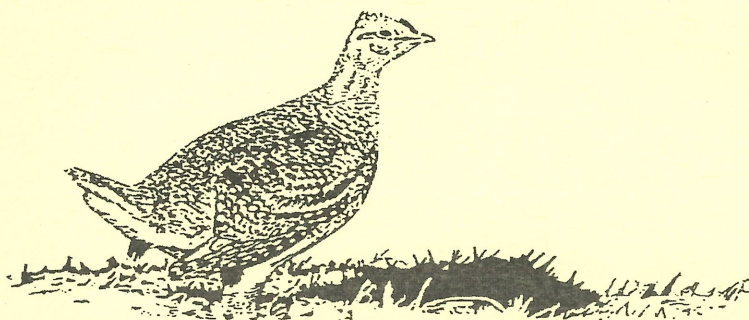


# WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Number 50

Spring 2007

## ANNUAL MEETING REMINDER

### CONTENTS

Annual Meeting	
Membership Renewal	
Page 1	
President's Corner	
Page 2	
Art Raffle	
Board Election	
Page 3	
Financial Statement	
Page 4	
Sharptail Survey	
Research Notes	
Page 5	
Afield with Ziggy	
Page 6 -7	
Membership Application	
Page 8	

This is a reminder to attend the 2007 WSGS annual meeting on Saturday and Sunday, April 21 and 22, in Park Falls. This will be the first time we will meet in Park Falls and will be an opportunity for members and their guests to see the Riley Lake Wildlife Area in the Chequamegon National Forest and Wisconsin's Kimberly-Clark Wildlife Area.

There will be a short business meeting beginning at 1 p.m. in A & J's Bar and Dining in downtown Park Falls on Saturday followed by drawings for door prizes and the annual art raffle. A social hour and dinner will follow the meeting. We will order dinner off the menu.

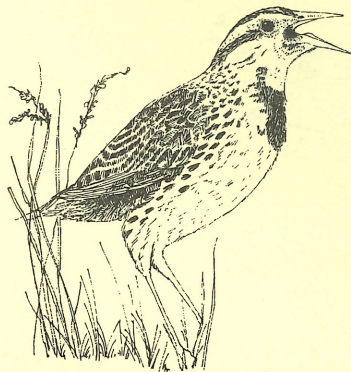
Early the following morning, Sunday, we will spread out in the area to census sharptails, as we have done in past years. Another possibility is a bus tour of sharptail habitat in the Park Falls area. Following the sharptail census or bus tour, we will gather for a group breakfast before ending the meeting and heading home.

A block of rooms have been reserved until April 16 at the Super 8 Motel on the southern end of Park Falls on Highway 13. You must make your own room reservation (715-762-3383) and ask for the WSGS block of rooms.

No registration is required to attend the annual meeting.  
See you there!

## 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.





# FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

By Dave Evenson

The Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society (WSGS) is a fairly small conservation organization, but we have a lot of friends. Other groups such as Friends of Crex, Friends of the Bird Sanctuary, the newly formed Friends of The Namekagon Barrens and the Society of Tympanuchus Cupido share many of our goals. The Minnesota Sharp-tailed Grouse Society is our forerunner and inspiration, and we attend each other's meetings and learn from each other.

WSGS also is one of the affiliate groups of The Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF), along with over 150 other conservation groups. Through our affiliation we learned about the third annual Conservation Lobby Day at the State Capitol on February 21. The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters along with WWF and a few other statewide conservation groups spearheaded this effort. Your Secretary/Treasurer Jim Evrard and I made the trip down to lobby our legislators, along with several hundred other diverse conservationists. Jim and I attended as interested individuals, not as official WSGS representatives.

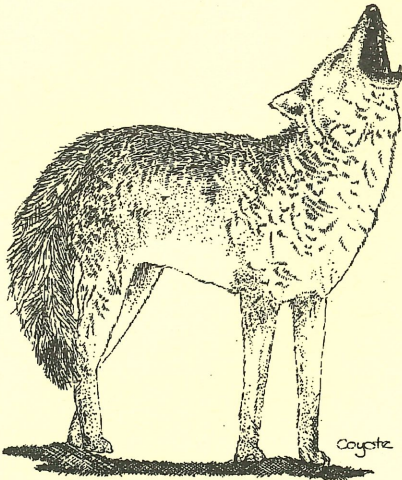
- The four messages we carried to legislators were:
- Keeping Great Lakes water in the Great Lakes
  - Clean Energy- creating good jobs through new energy technologies
  - Protecting conservation stamp (e.g. turkey stamp) funds and the NRB appointment of DNR Secretary
  - Re-authorizing Stewardship Program

All of these are important to Wisconsin residents as we consider our quality of life. Certainly from a sharptail standpoint Stewardship re-authorization is the most important. Governor Doyle has forwarded an authorization level of \$105 million, which is a boost over the \$60 million present authorization. Unfortunately the Republican platform of a year ago called for ending Stewardship outright. Conservation and land acquisition once were bipartisan issues, and I hope they can be again. The Natural Resources Board recently approved a new Master Plan for the Brule River State Forest. The new plan includes boundary changes with an increase of about 25,000 acres to the acquisition goal for the southern part of the Forest. This area is in the Northwest Sands and would be beneficial to sharptails if the State can purchase the land. There still is private land within most of the other sharptail properties that the State should also buy. Having the recognition that acquisition is warranted is a valuable step, but would prove hollow if a willing seller steps forward and the DNR has no money to purchase. We will continue to watch the progress of stewardship, and encourage you to do so as well.

**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.

**WSGS OFFICERS**

President:	Dave Evenson
Vice President:	Tom Ziegeweid
Secretary/Treasurer:	Jim Evrard
Board Members:	Dave Biegel
	Ed Frank
	Blair Klein
	Dave Clausen
Newsletter Editor:	Jim Evrard



# 2007 ART RAFFLE

Just a reminder to buy your tickets for the 2007 art raffle, featuring three framed, ready-to-hang-on-your-wall, colored prints depicting sharp-tailed grouse.

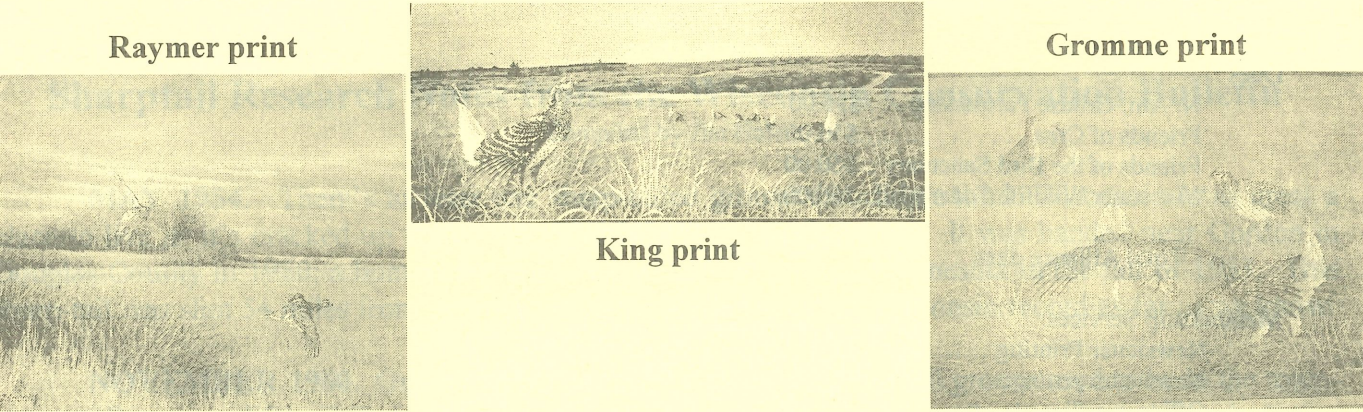
New this year is an artwork by Wisconsin's Ruth King depicting sharptails displaying on a dancing ground or lek in the Namekagon Barrens Wildlife Area.

We are also offering a print of a sold-out edition by the late Owen Gromme. The beautiful colored print is titled, *Sharptails on the Rise*, and features two sharptails in an aspen parkland.

The final framed print is a colorful artwork by Minnesota artist Louie Raymer titled, *Spring Dance at Crex*. Several sharptails are shown dancing on a thinly vegetated lek in the brush prairie of Crex Meadows.

Those wanting tickets for the raffle should contact Jim Evrard, 630 N. Pine St., Grantsburg, WI 54840, (715)463-2446, or [evrardsc@grantsburgtelcom.net](mailto:evrardsc@grantsburgtelcom.net). The suggested donation is \$10 per ticket or \$20 for three tickets.

Other than memberships, the art raffle is the biggest source of income for the WSGS.



# WSGS BOARD ELECTION

The terms of Dave Evenson and Tom Ziegeweid expired this year. Both have decided to run for reelection.

**Dave Evenson** is the current WSGS President and was responsible for the creation of the group. Dave is a retired DNR biologist living in Cumberland.

**Tom Ziegeweid** is currently the WSGS Vice-President and owns his own business in Eau Claire. Tom was a charter member of the WSGS and the group's first president.

No other nominations were received.

(detach and mail to WSGS, PO Box 367, Grantsburg, WI 54840 or bring to annual meeting)

# BALLOT - WSGS BOARD

(vote for two)

Dave Evenson \_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Ziegeweid \_\_\_\_\_  
Write-in Candidate \_\_\_\_\_



# WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1/1/06 through 12/31/06

Checkbook Balance as of 01/01/06 .....\$5,788.87  
Certificate of Deposits as of 01/01/06 .....\$2,191.13

Total cash assets as of 01/01/06. .... \$7,980.00

## INCOME

Memberships and sales ..... \$2,200.21  
Art Raffle .....\$632.00  
Interest on Checking Account .....\$3.24  
Interest on Certificates of Deposit .....\$65.79

Total Income .....\$2,901.24

## EXPENDITURES:

### Dues :

N. Am. Grouse Partnership ... \$35.00  
Friends of Crex .....\$50.00  
Friends of the Bird Sanctuary ..\$50.00  
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation ..\$60.00

Total Alliance dues .....\$195.00

### Membership Services:

Newsletter Printing .....\$737.00  
Newsletter postage. .... \$255.58  
Office supplies .....\$12.50

Total Membership Services. .... \$1,005.08

### Miscellaneous:

Plaque for outgoing director ..... \$50.77  
Director Training .....\$85.00  
Non-profit report to Wis. Sec. State. ..\$10.00

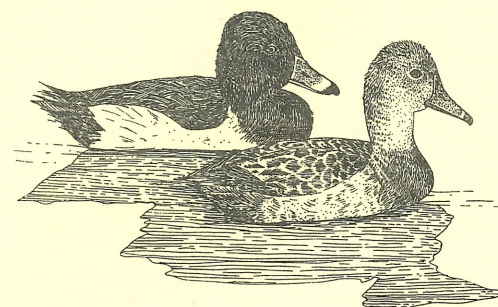
Total Miscellaneous.....\$145.77

Total Expenditures. ....\$1,345.85

Checkbook Balance as of 12/31/06. .... \$7,277.87  
Certificate of Deposit as of 12/31/06 ..... \$2,256.92

Total Cash Assets as of 12/31/06 ..... \$9,534.79

Submitted by James O. Evrard, Sec./Treas., 12/31/06



# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ANNUAL SHARPTAIL SURVEY

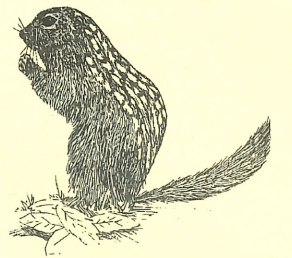
By Jim Evrard

As in the past, volunteers are needed to help DNR biologists count sharptails in managed properties and in areas not covered by the DNR. The need for volunteers remains high due to limited DNR manpower.

The census period is from early April to mid-May. The biologists provide maps of census areas and the forms and instructions for the survey. The WSGS recruits volunteers and helps in the survey where possible. The information is used to determine the distribution and numbers of displaying sharp-tails and to set the number of hunting permits available in the fall.

I've been counting spring sharptails since 1970 when I began working for the DNR and continued as a volunteer following my retirement in 2000. I really enjoy spending spring mornings roaming sharptail country, enjoying the sights of sharptails and other wildlife in the wilds of Wisconsin.

If you're interested in volunteering for this worthy effort, contact your DNR biologist if you surveyed in the past or if you would like to do this for the first time, contact Jim Evrard at 715-463-2446 or "evrardsc@grantsburgtelcom.net".



## Sharptail Research Notes from the Wisconsin Conservation Bulletin

Compiled by Jim Hale

**MAY 1954.** There's at least one sharp-tailed grouse that didn't think Wisconsin is as great a place to live as it's cracked up to be. The bird left us for another state. It was banded near Gordon in Douglas County in 1950; a hunter shot it 25 miles north of Duluth, Minnesota in the fall of 1953. This sharp-tail was shot 54 miles from the place where it was banded—a Wisconsin record as far as we know.

**NOVEMBER 1960.** One of the better hunting areas for sharp-tail grouse used to be in the townships of Dewey and Big Falls in Rusk County. But the number of sharptails there have been declining since 1950. A change toward habitat of poor quality seems to be the answer. Aerial photos taken in 1938 were compared with aerial photos dated 1952 and with field inspections in 1959.

On the area presently used by sharptails, the acreage of openings declined only 9 percent in 21 years. However, on forest land where there used to be low brush and scattered trees (and therefore ideal sharptail country) there now are poor quality aspen stands with trees of 3 to 5 inches in diameter. Brushy edges along the woods have disappeared and the aspen is too big for the grouse to use. Sharp-tails on this area will continue to decline as long as forest growth continues at its present rate.

**MAY 1963.** Most hunters believe that sharp-tailed grouse area strictly birds of the brush and woodlands the year around. This is not so. The misconception comes from the fact that sharptails are most often seen in fall and early winter when they do live mainly in woody cover. Grouse hunters find their birds mostly in thickets, brush patches and the edges of woods; deer hunters and pulp cutters see them deep in young hardwood stands, especially when there is snow on the ground.

By contrast, sharptails are seldom seen in summer and their whereabouts are known to few people. A study of sharptail broods in northwest Wisconsin has shown that open cover such as cropland, old fields and meadows, and savannahs are most important as brood habitat. It is important that this distinction between open cover for brood production and the woody cover for the hunting season and winter be clearly followed in the management of sharptails.





## AFIELD WITH ZIGGY

By Thomas C. Ziegeweid



This just recently completed upland game bird season may well go down in my lifetime as the best hatch and survival year ever! I have never bagged more upland game birds than ducks in my life until 2006. In past seasons when upland birds were scarce, I always knew I could bag a respectable number of ducks over the course of a season. Due to the warmer, dryer winters we have had, and the warm dry spring and summer, with a lack of severe storms to boot, upland game bird populations have literally exploded in some areas.

**Ruffed Grouse:** The past few seasons on my annual journey to Thief Lake WMA in northwestern Minnesota, I have been lucky to just see or hear a ruffie. Ruffies were incredibly abundant here in October, with birds observed in even marginal habitat.

I keep mental notes on highs and lows from place to place, birds flushed, seen, bagged, etc. The largest "high" I had was seeing eighteen birds in one day in central Wisconsin, in the Meadow Valley/Necedah NWR area.

Four years ago I saw sixteen birds on one day. These

birds generally don't cycle strong like their northern cousins. The past two seasons they were down considerably in central Wisconsin. They appear to have rebounded well.

The old 10-year cycle is a year or two late on the upswing, but if we continue to have open winters like the present, we should have lots of ruffies come September.

**Sharp-tailed Grouse:** This fall I and other friends I camp with at Thief Lake observed birds in places they haven't been seen for many years. Many single birds were spotted in "aging" CRP, usually adjacent to heavier cover. CRP is wonderful, but it has taken a good decade to really get the brush and willow component up to snuff for sharptails.

I hunted with my good friends from the Minnesota [Sharp-tailed Grouse] Society in a number of prime places in Aitkin County, finding birds in most areas. You just have to walk and tromp enough miles to find them. The only exception I found in Minnesota to sharptail numbers increasing, was in the Caribou WMA. I saw one bird this season. In 2005 I didn't see a bird. Recent large habitat expansions by the Nature Conservancy may have caused the sharptails to move their lek to better (recently burned) cover. Caribou can only get better in the future.

I ended up my sharptail hunting for the fall with a trip to Zone 2 in Douglas County, Wisconsin with two friends on our opener. Birds were seen in the three areas I hunted. These birds are doing well, and probably will into the future, as long as large block tree cuts continue.

One interesting observation this past fall in Zone 2 was the large number of sharptails utilizing the oats that were planted in the right-of-way on repaved Highway 27. I watched a large number out of my van for quite a while, before they flew away (like 30 feet away!).

**Bobwhites Anyone?** Are bobwhite quail Wisconsin's other neglected game bird? Perhaps. I would bet there are more acres of quality sharptail habitat left in Wisconsin than quail habitat.

The highlight of my hunting fall had to be my bagging my first Wisconsin bobwhite. I was hunting near Meridean, WI on Xcel Energy's Tyrone property late in turkey season when I bagged one bird of a pair I saw.

Back in the 1970s there were still an average number of bobwhites around the Eau Claire area south to Durand in the lower Chippewa River basin. We are on the very northern edge of their range. Hard winters and the destruction of hedgerows pretty well did them in. They are hanging on and my bounce back to some degree with the mild winters we are having.

Since I saw those two birds, I have heard numerous anecdotal reports of quail being sighted along the bike trail between Eau Claire and Durand.

See you at the annual meeting, *Tommy*

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## Notes:



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street/PO Box \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Enclosed:

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

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ WSGS Logo Decal (\$1.50)

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

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Deluxe Green Corduroy Cap with Logo (\$14.00)

(all prices include postage and handling)

Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AND RETURN THIS APPLICATION TO:**

Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society, PO Box 367, Grantsburg, WI 54840

WSGS  
Box 367  
Grantsburg, WI 54840

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