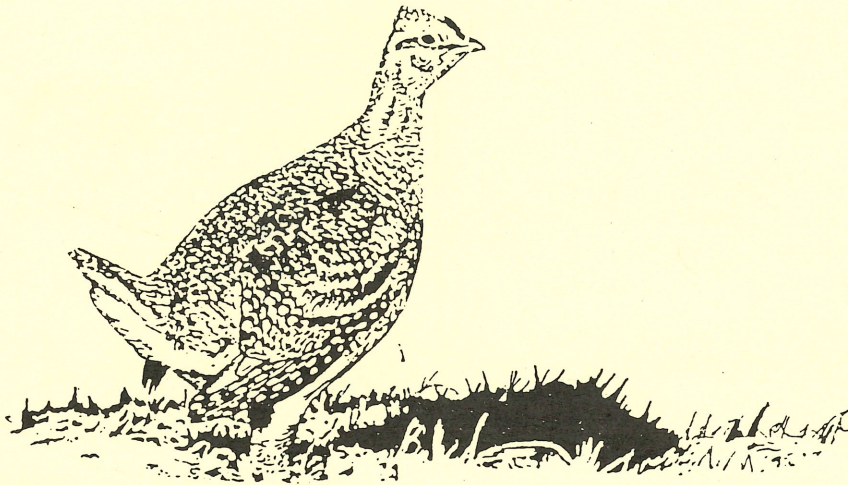


WISCONSIN SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



Volume ~~16~~17

Fall, 1996

UPCOMING HEARINGS ON SHARPTAIL HUNT

During this last legislative session the bill to allow limited sharptail hunting was passed and is subsequently signed by Governor Thompson. With that new authority, the DNR has developed rules to continue sharptail hunting. Under the new rules, hunting by permit will be allowed in 1997. The system will be similar to that for turkeys, with an application (\$3.00), drawing, and permits issued to individuals.

There will be two hearings on the rule proposal, November 13th at 1:00 p.m. at Madison, Room 611B, GEF II, and November 14th at Spooner State Patrol Headquarters at 6:00 p.m. In addition written comments will be received at DNR, Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707.

FIRST NOTICE ANNUAL MEETING

Our annual meeting will be held at Solon Springs in the same place and format as 1995. The likely dates are Saturday/Sunday April 26th and 27th, although it could be the previous weekend depending upon hotel availability. The business meeting will be on Saturday afternoon with a social that evening. On Sunday we will search for sharptails and wrap-up. We had a great time and saw lots of birds in '95. Plan to come in 1997!

Wildlife Art Raffle

Other than dues our wildlife art raffle is our main fund raising effort. Over the last couple of years we've had some great art to raffle and great response from you. In 1997 we will continue this popular event with the top prize being a framed Buzz Balzer print titled The Challenger. Featuring two white tail bucks and a doe, Buzz has depicted an age old scene of fall. Buzz has also remarked this artist proof for us. Buzz is a WSGS member who lives in Cashton.

Also on this raffle we will have a framed sharptail print by Louis Raymer entitled Spring Dance at Crex. This print was commissioned by Friends of Crex to help raise funds for the Interpretive Wildlife Center at Crex. The third print will be Jonathan Wilde's Great Possessions. This print features the famous Aldo Leopold shack in a spring scene of migrating Canada geese. As you may recall, Jonathan, who is a WSGS member, donated us last year's first prize, an original of Sharptails at Riley Lake.

Tickets will be available in the next newsletter. Buy a lot and increase your chances!

Call for Board Members

At the annual meeting we will be electing board members. If you would like to run or would like to nominate someone, please contact President Ed Frank, 1205 Ellen Ave., Madison, WI 53716 (608-222-3386). You can also indicate your interest in being on the board on your dues renewal form. Give it some consideration, we can always use fresh ideas.



Wisconsin Sharp-tailed Grouse Society Finances as of 9/10/96
(These figures do not balance)

Checkbook Balance as of 4/19/96.....	\$4,114.76
Petty Cash Balance as of 4/19/96.....	\$15.15
Total.....	\$4,129.91
(reported at annual meeting)	

INCOME:	
Deposit (income from annual meeting, etc.).....	\$616.50
Memberships - 12 regular @ \$10.....	\$120.00
3 supporting @ \$25.....	\$75.00
Total Memberships.....	\$195.00
Sales - Stickers.....	\$3.00
Caps.....	\$14.00
Total Sales.....	\$17.00
Interest on Checking Account.....	\$15.69
<hr/>	
Total Income.....	\$844.19

EXPENDITURES:	
Projects - FOC Crex Wildlife Education Center.....	\$500.00
(first of 3 annual donations)	
WSO Breeding Bird Atlas.....	\$100.00
(second of 5 annual donations)	
Total Projects.....	\$600.00
Correspondence - Postage.....	\$6.86
Office supplies.....	\$3.14
Total Membership Service.....	\$10.00
UPS charge to send brochures to Wis. State Fair	\$4.50
Raffle expenses.....	\$25.00
<hr/>	
Total Expenditures.....	\$639.50

Checkbook Balance as of 9/10/96.....	\$4,290.95
Petty Cash Balance as of 9/10/96.....	\$10.98
Total.....	\$4,301.94

Submitted by James O. Evrard, Secretary/Treasurer, 9/10/96

1996 Wisconsin Sharptail Status

Larry Gregg, Northern Wildlife Research Group
DNR, Park Falls, WI 54552

The 1996 dancing ground survey indicated little change in overall sharptail numbers on managed sites in Wisconsin, with 273 males counted this spring compared to 259 observed last year (Table 1). But even though our total count was relatively unchanged, the number of dancing males on several properties changed substantially. The count on Crex Meadows was 110 males, an increase of more than 30% from last year and approaching the level recorded during the previous population peak. The Namekagon Barrens count also increased from 1995 and established a new population benchmark for the property. The dancing male count on Pershing also increased slightly this spring, while counts on the six remaining managed tracts declined this year. Counts on Riley Lake, Wood County and Dike Seventeen dipped only slightly, but counts on Douglas County, Kimberly-Clark and Moquah Barrens all declined at least 25% from 1995 levels.

Why sharptail populations on some tracts increased while flocks in other location declined is unknown, but hunting mortality can be excluded as a possible cause. In 1995, sharptail hunting was permitted only on Crex Meadows, Namekagon Barrens and Riley Lake while all other sites were closed to sharptail hunting. Mandatory report cards issued to prospective sharptail hunters revealed that hunters took 54 birds on Namekagon Barrens, 19 on Crex Meadows and 4 on Riley Lake during the 1995 hunting season. Despite those losses, breeding populations remained stable or increased on hunted properties while they declined on nearly all of the unhunted tracts.

Little survey effort was expended in wildland sharptail habitats this spring due to phenological and fiscal constraints. Twenty birds were observed on 3 dancing grounds in Price and Rusk Counties this spring where 22 birds had been found in 1995. One morning of survey effort in Sawyer County produced no sharptail sightings. Although the survey was conducted primarily for sandhill cranes, it was carried out within sites where sharptails had been found in previous years.

Table 1. Sharptail Population Trends on Managed Lands

Property	Number of Dancing Males								
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Crex Meadows W.A.	67	81	103	126	47	53	59	83	110
Douglas County W.A.	10+	7	3	5	4	2	8	12	9
Kimberly-Clark W.A.	15	25	40	56	32	20	20	28	20
Moquah Barrens W.M.A.	2	-	3	6	9	6	7	21	14
Namekagon Barrens W.A.	15	15+	33	37	25	16	25	44	48
Pershing W.A.	39	43	23	37	34	24	16	26	30
Riley Lake W.M.A.	30	20+	20	25	8	5	7	18	17
Wood County W.A.	-	32	-	54	13	11	16	19	18
Dike Seventeen W.A.	-	-	-	16	10	9	9	8	7
Totals				362	182	146	167	259	273

THE MINNESOTA SHARPTAILER

PUBLICATION OF THE MINNESOTA SHARP-TAILED GROUSE SOCIETY



P.O. BOX 3338

DULUTH, MINNESOTA 55803

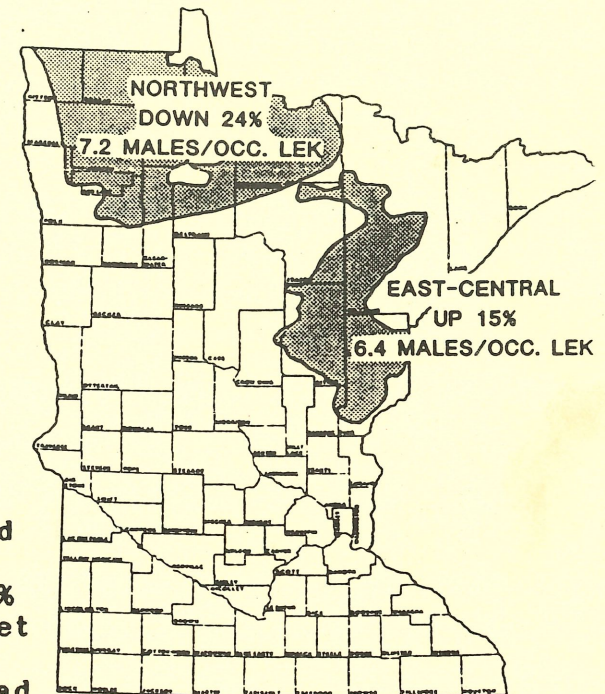
SUMMER 1996



SPRING 1996 SHARPTAILS

Spring dancing ground reports from DNR's Bill Berg (who coordinates all grouse population surveys state-wide) indicated a little hope for the east-central range, and disaster in northwestern Minnesota. Sharptail counts were done by DNR Wildlife, Agassiz and Rice Lake National Wildlife Refuges, and by volunteers from MSGS.

In the Northwest, 113 dancing grounds were checked, and only 62 contained male sharptails. A total of 447 males were seen. On the 83 dancing grounds that were also checked in 1995, 42 had fewer birds, 8 were stable, and 23 increased. Uniform declines of 15%-40% were noted in each survey area. The net decrease from 1995 was 24%, about the largest that the Northwest has ever had.



The East-Central range saw its first increase (although slight) in several years. A total of 127 dancing grounds were checked, and the 67 active grounds contained 427 displaying males. On the 68 grounds that were also counted in 1995, 35 increased, 6 were stable, and 27 decreased. The net increase from 1995 was 15%, which we hope is a result of DNR's brushland management efforts.

Often, we view the northwest sharptail range as the most secure. It's much larger, and succession and tree planting in open lands are not viewed as being so threatening as in the East-Central range. Actually, both ranges are very similar ecologically and geologically, and have almost identical management problems. In fact, both ranges have experienced identical declines in sharptail numbers--77%--since 1981. About 6,000 sharptails were harvested in 1995. Berg predicts that figure might rise a bit this autumn, given good nesting and brood conditions.

dedicated to the management and restoration of sharptails

in Minnesota for the benefit of hunters and non-hunters

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

a natural investment for

HUNTERS AND ANGLERS



The Initiative would allow other Americans who enjoy wildlife—hikers, birdwatchers, canoeists and more—to join anglers and hunters in contributing to fish and wildlife conservation—
CHARLES F. GAUVIN, PRESIDENT, TROUT UNLIMITED ■

Hunters and anglers can point to over a half century record of game species conservation. Other wildlife enthusiasts have benefited



Teaming with Wildlife, also known as the *Fish & Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative*, is critical to the future of conserving a full array of wildlife species and habitats, and meeting increasing demands for outdoor recreation and education ■

greatly from the state agency programs funded by sportsmen and sportswomen.

The proposed Teaming with Wildlife funding mechanism represents a tried and true solution—modest user fees on outdoor recreation equipment and supplies as a way to fuel conservation. For more than half a century, hunters and anglers have willingly paid such user fees on their gear with impressive success stories:

- Restoration of sport fish and game populations that were once critically low—such as the wood duck, antelope, white-tailed deer and striped bass;
- Conservation of millions of acres of habitat;
- Countless hours of recreation on our lands and waterways.

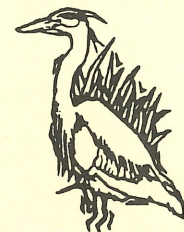
The proposal is simple: expand user fees from hunting and angling gear to a broader range of products used by all outdoor recreationists who enjoy wildlife. The result?

Teaming with Wildlife will provide \$350 million annually to states for conservation, recreation and education purposes.

It's time to enlarge the team! Here are just a few ways that Teaming with Wildlife will benefit hunters and anglers:

Take a leadership role in establishing a program that will benefit wildlife for generations to come. Some wildlife enthusiasts do not realize that hunters and anglers have made large contributions to wildlife conservation during the past 50 years. Support of Teaming with Wildlife by hunters and anglers will clearly show other conservationists that we all share some important values.

Create a broader coalition with more political influence. Hunters and anglers have a long record as active, effective conservationists. When all wildlife enthusiasts team up for wildlife, we can expect even more conservation successes.



Please join your state coalition now! Work for passage of the Teaming with Wildlife initiative and let your conservation, recreation, and education priorities be known ■

Wildlife watchers can help pay for conservation. This growing group of users currently lacks the means to effectively contribute to wildlife conservation, recreation and education. Instead of cutting the existing pie into smaller pieces for different users, Teaming with Wildlife offers a way to create a bigger pie for all.

Secure and protect more wildlife habitat. Most state wildlife lands are purchased and managed with funds from state hunting and fishing license fees and equipment user fees. Teaming with Wildlife will offer a regular source of funding from other recreationists, resulting in more lands and waters conserved for wildlife and people.

Meet needs of game species through habitat protection and restoration. Managing lands to benefit species that are not hunted or fished for will improve the populations of many game species. For decades, songbirds, raptors, small mammals, minnows and other species have benefited from management practices designed for game species. With new funding, the reverse can happen.

Assist private landowners in managing lands for wildlife. From backyards to large tracts of timberlands, private lands shelter wildlife. States will be better able to help interested landowners enhance their lands for wildlife.

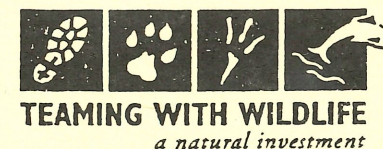
Supply grants to universities, conservation groups, and state and federal agencies. These funds can make the crucial difference in helping worthwhile projects get started. In some cases, the dollars can provide matching money for challenge grants.

Teaming with Wildlife will provide \$350 million annually to states for conservation, recreation and education purposes ■

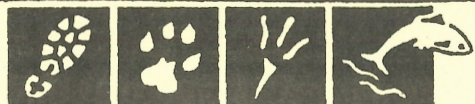
Complete a national network of wildlife viewing areas. More than 20 states have some 2,000 sites designated, from wayside pullouts to large preserves.

Funding would allow states to develop visitor facilities, trails, observation platforms, interpretive signs and to hire on-site naturalists. Viewing areas can play an important role as outdoor learning centers to pass on a land stewardship ethic.

Nurture the next generation of conservationists. The times are gone when most Americans learned first-hand about the need to conserve wildlife habitat as they learned to hunt and fish. We live in an era of cities, shopping malls and computer games. Teaming with Wildlife will provide a much-needed source of funds for conservation education programs.



Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
 2200 N. 33rd St. ■ PO Box 30370 ■ Lincoln, NE 68503-0370
 Phone: 402-471-5438 ■ Fax: 402-471-5528 ■ e-mail: rlock@ngpsun.ngpc.state.ne.us
in cooperation with the
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies



a natural investment

TEAMING WITH WILDLIFE

Conservationists have invested generations of hard work to protect our wild heritage. Today, the pressures on wild lands and wildlife are greater than ever. The proposed Teaming With Wildlife funding mechanism represents a tried and true solution - modest fees on outdoor recreation equipment and supplies as a way to fuel conservation.

For more than half a century, hunters and anglers have willingly paid such user fees on their gear with impressive success stories: 1.—Restoration of sport fish and game populations that were once critically low; 2.—Conservation of millions of acres of habitat; 3.—Countless hours of recreation on our lands and waterways.

The new proposal is simple: expand user fees from hunting and angling gear to a broader range of products used by all outdoor recreationists who enjoy wildlife. The result? Teaming With Wildlife will provide \$350 million annually to states for conservation, recreation and education purposes.

We need several major outdoor-related companies to endorse the initiative in order to proceed and succeed legislatively. Many of these businesses fear that you, their customers, may not be willing to pay this user fee. During the next several months, we want to generate a substantial number of support letters from customers to these top companies convincing them that their customers do support Teaming With Wildlife.

SAMPLE CUSTOMER LETTER

[Use the following as a guideline but please personalize the letter with your own expressions, ideas, and experiences!]

Today's Date.

XYZ Outdoor Equipment Manufacturing
1100 Road
Anywhere, US 00000

Dear Company President,

I am asking for your support of the Fish & Wildlife Diversity Funding Initiative, also known as Teaming With Wildlife. I am an outdoor recreationist and a buyer of outdoor supplies and gear.

By Teaming With Wildlife, I realize I would be paying a little extra on products such as yours. I'm delighted to do that for the purpose of funding wildlife conservation, recreation and education projects.

Wildlife and their habitats together are what make the outdoors alive. The money raised by small user fees on products will be used to sustain both the natural environment and your marketing environment. It's a win-win situation.

If outdoor enthusiasts and industry do not team up, we may both lose the resources so vital to us. I hope to see your name added to the growing list of coalition members for Teaming With Wildlife.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Address
City, State, Zip

Top 11 companies to write letters to:

The goal is to let these companies know that you, as a consumer of their product(s), support paying a small user fee added to their product that will be dedicated to wildlife conservation, outdoor recreation, and conservation education. Please address your letters to the CEO of the company.

L.L. Bean, Inc.
1 Casco Street
Freeport, ME 04033
Attn: Mr. Leon A. Gorman, President
(207) 865-4761

Recreational Equipment Inc. (REI)
6750 South 228th Street
Kent, WA 98032
Attn: Mr. Wally Smith, President
(206) 395-3780

Coleman Outdoor Products Inc.
1526 Cole Blvd.
Suite 300
Golden, CO 80401
Attn: Mr. Michael Hammes, CEO
(303) 202-2400

Johnson Camping (Worldwide Assoc.)
(owns Eureka, Camp Trails, Old Town
Canoes, Carlisle Paddles, Silva
Compasses, etc.)
1326 Willow Road
Spartanburg, WI 53177
Attn: Mr. John Crabb, CEO
(414) 884-1500

Bushnell Sports Optics Worldwide
(distributor of Bushnell, Jason, and
Bausch & Lomb brands)
9200 Cody
Overland Park, KS 66214
Attn: No new CEO as of 12/01/95
Mr. Joseph B. Messner, former President
(913) 888-0220

Eastman Kodak Co.
343 State Street
Rochester, NY 14650
Attn: Mr. George M.C. Fisher,
Chairman, CEO and President
(716) 724-4000

Nikon
1300 Walt Whitman Rd.
Melville, NY 11747
Attn: Mr. H. Nakayama, CEO
(516) 547-4200

Pentax
35 Iverness Dr., East
Englewood, CO 80112
Attn: Mr. Masa Tanaka, CEO
(303) 799-8000

The Nature Company
750 Hearst Avenue
Berkeley, CA 94710
Attn: Mr. Ed Strobins, CEO
(510) 644-1337

Wild Birds Unlimited
11711 N. College Avenue, Suite 146
Carmel, IN 46036
Attn: Mr. Jim Carpenter, CEO
(317) 571-2100

Cabela's Inc.
812 13th Ave.
Sidney, NE 69160-0001
Attn: Mr. Dick Cabela, CEO
(308) 254-2619

SHARPTAIL PERMITS: HISTORY AND RECOGNITION

WSGS has played a vital role in protecting our sharptail populations, while still allowing some limited hunting. In 1994 it became obvious to the DNR that unlimited hunting as we had then could not continue. They opted to close the season until legislation allowing hunting by permit could be enacted. While many members of WSGS helped on this effort, two people especially should be given recognition.

Jim Shurts, WSGS Vice President at the time, really was a main player in this action. Jim led discussion within WSGS and coordinated chapter decisions with the DNR. He wrote up the draft legislation that eventually was accepted by the legislature, and continued to bird-dog the issue all the way through the process. A big thank you to Jim!

Ed Bodde, who doesn't happen to be a member of WSGS (we should make him a lifetime member) is a Washburn County Conservation Congress delegate who has as a main love hunting coyotes on the Namekagon Barrens and elsewhere. He doesn't hunt sharptails, but happened to mention to Pat Savage, then property manager, that there were lots of birds on the barrens. Pat agreed, and mentioned that the hunting season would be closed pending legislation. With that, Ed swung into action, contacted local assembly persons Mary Hubler and Frank Boyle and Senator Bob Jauch and lined them up as sponsors. And the rest is history. Both houses passed the bill unanimously and Governor Thompson signed it into law. Thank you, Ed, for seeing a need and filling it.



**Minutes - WSGS Annual Meeting, Sandhill Outdoors Skills Center,
April 20, 1996, 1:30 p.m.**

Present: President Tom Ziegeweid, Vice-President Jim Shurtz, Secretary/Treasurer Jim Evrard, Board Member Shane Walstrom, and 23 WSGS members and guests.

Absent: Board members Bob Dreis, Dan Dessecker, and Tom Davis.

The meeting was called to order by out-going President Tom Ziegeweid. The Treasurer's Report by Jim Evrard was accepted as presented (a copy is attached for Dreis, Dessecker and Davis).

Ziegeweid read a letter by Larry Gregg asking for WSGS support (in the form of an endorsement letter) for the proposed federal wildlife diversity funding initiative, an excise tax on non-hunting and fishing outdoor equipment to be used for non-game wildlife management. By motion, Evrard was instructed to write and send the endorsement letter. Members were urged to write to affected businesses requesting their support.

Shurtz reported that the sharptail hunting legislation (AB 815) was passed by the Assembly 90 to 0 and awaits Senate approval in the special session in May. Vander Zowen reported that a senate hearing was held last week with no opposition and expects the bill to be passed and the Governor to sign it. Shurtz thought there was a possibility to reopen sharptail hunting this fall or in 1997 while Vander Zowen thought it would be 1997 or 1998 due to the slowness of the bureaucratic rules-making process. **Members are urged to contact their Senators now to pass AB 815 during the special session.**

WSGS projects were discussed with Evrard's idea of the possibility of funding a translocation of sharptails from Crex Meadows to the Fish Lake Wildlife Area tabled for further study. Ziegeweid discussed the same concept for Quincy Bluff, Spread Eagle Barrens, Ackley Wildlife Area, and other potential sharptail habitat in Wisconsin. Evrard finally suggested developing a formal procedure (complete with forms) for WSGS project funding proposals.

Don Bronk suggested investigating the possibility of creating cloth WSGS shoulder patches for a sale item.

Jim Hale suggested converting some of the funds in the checking account to a CD that earns higher interest and calling the CD an endowment fund.

Evrard presented a funding request of \$1,000 over 3 years for the Crex Meadows Wildlife Education Center. After some discussion, it was decided to donate \$1,500 over 3 years to the project.

Ziegeweid discussed the formation of a "Steering Committee" composed of past board members (Dave Evenson, Ziegeweid, and Shurtz)

and other interested individuals (John Klementson and Tom Jankowski). The group would advise the Board but have no voting powers. Evrard thought the term "Counselors" was more appropriate than Steering Committee.

Evrard mentioned that the WSGS is in the process of developing plaques for outgoing officers Ziegeweid and Shurtz in recognition of their service to the organization.

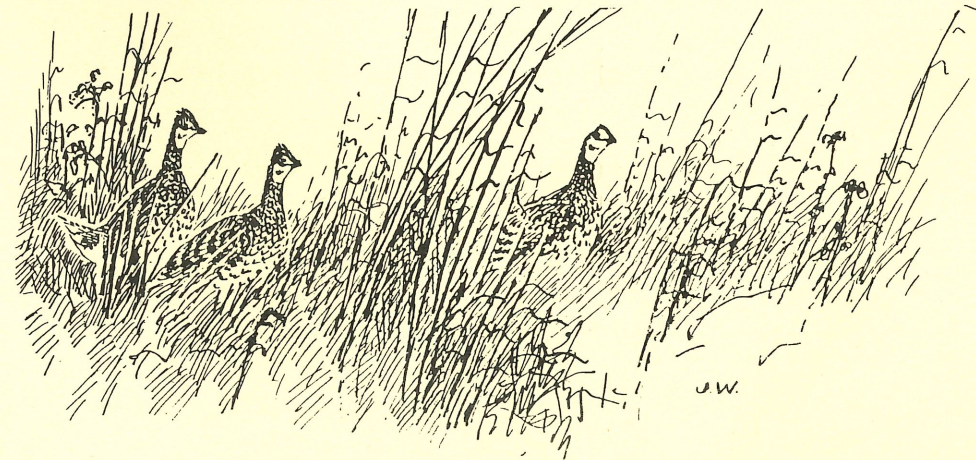
Ziegeweid also discussed the "division of labor" for the group. Evenson will continue to be the newsletter editor and publisher, Ziegeweid will continue to distribute caps and decals and Shurtz will continue to be legislative liaison (and perhaps legal counsel). We need a volunteer, probably centrally located in Wisconsin) to store and maintain the WSGS display board which is presently at Ziegeweid's home.

Jim Shurtz won the drawing for the donated Jonathon Wilde oil painting. The artwork depicts a flushing flock of sharptails at the Riley Lake management area on the Chequamegon National Forest east of Fifield. Shurtz was actually speechless for a minute. A total of 178 raffle tickets were sold yielding a gross income of \$1,260. After expenses (\$182.78) were deducted, a net income of \$1,077.22 was added to our treasury. Many thanks to all who were involved in this effort including the artist, Davis, Chet Botwinski, Ron Eckstein, Mike Zeckmeister, Evenson, Dreis, Ziegeweid, and Evrard.

Election results were reported -- new board members are Ed Frank and Don Bronk with Jim Evrard reelected. The Board will elect officers (President, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer).

Following the meeting we enjoyed a great cheese-venison sausage-smoked salmon-crackers-nuts-chips-beer-salad-grilled venison loin-buffalo burger-turkey breast-wild mushroom-apple and cherry cobbler-gourmet coffee dinner prepared by Chef John Kubisiak. Zeckmeister then briefed the group and made assignments for the sharptail survey scheduled for Sunday morning.

The weather cooperated and the group saw/heard approximately 19 sharptails from Dike 17 to Bear Bluff to the Wood County Wildlife Area the following morning. After debriefing, the group left at 11:00 am for their homes.



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

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL
(1996 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

_____ Newsletter Writing

_____ Bird census work

_____ Publicity

_____ Education

_____ Fund Raising

_____ Other

Yes! Please send me:

_____ Deluxe corduroy dress cap (\$14.00 postage incl.)

_____ WSGS Logo Window Sticker (\$1.50 postage incl.)

_____ 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

