

# Welcome

Welcome to the Northwest Kansas Hunting Guide, brought to you by the Nor'West Newspapers group, including the *Bird City Times*, *Colby Free Press*, *The Goodland Star-News*, *The Norton Telegram*, *The Oberlin Herald* and *The Saint Francis Herald*.

The newspapers and the advertisers listed below want to welcome you to our area and provide you with the merchandise and services you need for an enjoyable stay.

Please hunt safely and enjoy the great outdoors.

We welcome you this year and hope you will return many more times in the years to come to enjoy our hospitality and our wildlife.

The photo on the front cover was taken by Paul Cummings and shows Darren McMullen with son, Andrew, hunting on Norton County CRP land enjoying a day of hunting.



A cock pheasant walks on the edge of a field.

— File photo

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# Pheasant and quail numbers are up

By Kimberly Davis

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The Oberlin Herald

Good news: Northwest Kansas has a lot of birds to hunt this fall.

Both pheasant and quail numbers are up in northwest Kansas this season, with the ringneck count up 55 percent according to a brood survey done during the summer.

Jim Pitman, small game coordinator with the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, said northwest Kansas had a fairly decent winter last year, so there was good carryover into the spring. In June and July, parts of the area that were hit by hail and heavy rains. It wasn't really widespread, he said, but Cheyenne, Thomas and Sherman counties has some storms that affected the bird population.

Even with that, said Mr. Pitman, the counts are up quite a bit for pheasants. The brood-count numbers for northwest Kansas are the highest they have been since 1986, when the program began.

"Overall," he said, "it should be an outstanding year."

For six weeks in the summer, from the middle of July to the middle of August, every Wildlife and Parks employee is asked to keep track of the number of pheasant and quail they see during working hours, said Mr. Pitman. Each week, those numbers are turned in to him, and at the end of the survey, the numbers are compiled.

The figures are taken, he said, and standardized, then compared to what was seen the previous day. The survey also looks at the young per hen.

During the survey this year, observers counted 13.8 pheasants per day, he said. That's up from last year, when the average was 8.9 birds per day.

Pheasant numbers, he said, have actually been increasing every year since 2007 in northwest Kansas.

Quail numbers are also up compared to last year, he said, although the northwest part of the state is really on the edge of the quail region. The numbers won't ever be really high for those birds, he said.

Numbers from the brood survey, said Mr. Pitman, show that 1.12 birds were seen each day. Those numbers though are actually for all of western Kansas. That is the same number of birds seen in that region last year, he said.

When the numbers are broken down, though, the population in just northwest Kansas is actually up from last year.

Actually, he said, pheasant and quail numbers aren't the only ones that are up. The turkey population has shown an increase. The department had a Wildlife Commission meeting recently in Goodland and some area people came in and asked about increasing the number of turkey permits allowed each year.

Mr. Pitman said he suspects that from these



Bruce Sloan poses with his shotguns, hunting dogs and his take from a day on a pheasant hunt at Rader Hunting Lodge in Glen Elder.

numbers, the increases shown in the upland bird population mean more people from out of state are coming into northwest Kansas to hunt, which means more money for businesses and farmers here. Pheasant hunters mean millions of dollars for the Kansas economy each year, he said, and "We are expecting a great year."

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