



Woodcock Splash



www.woodcockminnesota.org

May 2007

National Woodcock Conservation plan unveiled

by David E. Andersen

U.S. Geological Survey, Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Biology, University of Minnesota

On February 9, 2007 Woodcock Minnesota invited top resource managers to meet and discuss the National Woodcock Conservation Plan unveiled last October. In attendance were: David E. Andersen, Minnesota Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit; Randy Havel and Trevor Sumption, Woodcock Minnesota; Jim Kelley, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Norm Moody, Cass County Land Department; Russ Sewell, Ruffed Grouse Society; Dennis Salmela, Finlayson-Giese Sportsman's Club; Terry Petro, woodcock bander; Earl Johnson, Tom Engel, and Mike Larson, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Once again, the Finlayson-Giese Sportsman's Club graciously hosted the meeting in their historic log clubhouse.

After a welcome and introductions, David Andersen, gave an overview of meeting objectives and a brief background of woodcock conservation issues and regulatory responses nationally and in Minnesota. The primary objective of the meeting was to discuss how to prioritize and coordinate woodcock conservation activities in Minnesota.

Concern about woodcock populations led to development of a National Woodcock Conservation Plan. Jim Kelley provided an overview of the national Woodcock Conservation Plan, including a breakdown of habitat objectives for Minnesota. The document includes a stepped-down plan for Minnesota down to the county level (e.g. habitat acreage goals for each county.)

The plan is based on habitat requirements of woodcock, and focused on restoring woodcock densities across their primary breeding range to those observed in the early 1970s. Specific objectives include (1) halting the decline in woodcock abundance as measured by the Singing-ground Survey by 2012, and (2) achieve growth in woodcock populations by 2022.

Some of the factors influencing woodcock abundance related to habitat include fire suppression, negative attitudes toward forest-management practices (e.g., clearcutting) that create early successional habitats, and changes in land ownership patterns (e.g., smaller land holdings with land owners who may not consider forest management on their property). The Woodcock Conservation Plan is based on Bird Conservation Areas (BCA), and evaluating how much woodcock habitat would need to be created and maintained to



Have you ever used this as an excuse? Here is photographic evidence that even the smallest of saplings sometimes get in the way of the perfect shot. Photo courtesy www.littlemoran.com hunt photo pages.

increase current woodcock densities to those observed in the early 1970s. The plan projects habitat acreage goals at the state and BCA levels that could be stepped down to county levels.

Finally, implementation of the Woodcock Conservation Plan is envisioned being integrated with conservation plans for other early successional bird species. Participation from groups like Woodcock Minnesota, could serve to distribute information to land owners, help develop demonstration areas, etc.

Norm Moody presented information about a program to promote forest management on private land in northwest Minnesota. The Gixiibii Resource Conservation & Development Association has a pending application to the Northwest Minnesota Foundation to provide additional funding to a program that aids land owners in finding resources to manage their forested lands. This program is up and running, and helps prepare "quick plans" for forest management that have the potential to produce early successional (i.e., woodcock) habitat on private lands in northwest Minnesota. This program would be a good vehicle for helping implement the Woodcock Conservation Plan in Minnesota, and fit well with the interests of Woodcock Minnesota.

Following the presentations, the group engaged in a wide-ranging discussion regarding woodcock conservation in Minnesota. Topics included:

Need for a Minnesota Woodcock Plan

The group discussed the need and desire to produce a stepped-down version of the national Woodcock Conservation Plan that would be specific to Minnesota. Such a plan might help coordinate conservation activities and provide guidance on a state-wide scale. Mike Larson, Earl Johnson, and Tom Engel indicated that the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources would likely find such a plan useful, in that it would demonstrate a need for consid-

--continued on page 2--

Woodcock Minnesota Officers

President Randy Havel

Vice Presidents: Jim Gerchy, Jim Tertin

Secretary/Treasurer Trevor Sumption

Board of Directors: David Anderson, Steve Grossman, Jim Koehler, Jay Tirpak

See Woodcock Minnesota's web site at www.woodcockminnesota.org

P eent the



Randy Havel
Woodcock Minnesota
President

The Woodcock are on the way North! For the board at Woodcock Minnesota this is the start of our new year. We welcome new members and returning existing members. This newsletter will recap some of our efforts in 2006 and plans for 2007. Please try and join us for dinner during our fall one-day shoot in August. Raffle tickets for the gun drawing will be to you in June. This is an effortless way to donate and if you are lucky, like member Tom Johnson was last year, walking away with a classic Woodcock gun. Our Pine City research effort will have a public reviewing stand positioned for watching sky dancing in May. The Finlyson-Giese Sportsman Club is building the bleachers with Woodcock Minnesota financing the material. Look at our website for location and directions to the study area.

#

Send in your renewals....

Woodcock Minnesota is a mem-

bership funded organization. The annual memberships expire December 31 each year. If you have not renewed, the form is on page 8. Fill it out and send it in. Or visit www.woodcockminnesota.org and renew using our secure online renewal form by clicking the join button. The woodcock need you!

Please consider upgrading your annual membership to a life membership. 100% of our profits go on the ground in Minnesota for projects that directly benefit woodcock, and indirectly benefit hundreds of game and non-game species.

#

The shoot date is Aug 25, 2007

Last year's event was a great success. This year once again we are making it a one-day event with both the Scattergun Tune-up and Side by Side Challenge held on the same day. The now famous 'woodcock walk' shooting challenge will be back along with the other shooting games.

The meal served by Rice Creek was fabulous. Just about everyone at the award banquet went home with a prize.

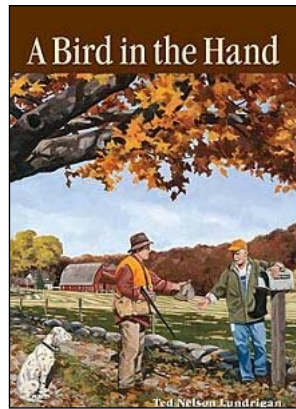
Please mark August 25, 2007 off on your calendar today.

A Minnesota Author...

We all have plans one day of putting our outdoor experiences on paper to pass along those memories to future generations to be shared.

Ted, a member of Woodcock Minnesota, and a respected outdoor author has put his upland memories in "A Bird In The Hand." He writes about his years of upland hunting about places we can only dream about, of guns we wish we'd have owned and dogs that put ours to shame.

Ted's writing style is as relaxed as the smoke from his ever present pipe. My Advice to the reader is not devour it in one sitting but rather savor it a chapter at a time! If you are an upland hunter this book begs you to place yourself in his boots.



"A Bird In The Hand"
by Ted Lundrigan



This should keep you thinking about what is less than 107 days away. Photo courtesy www.littlemoran.com hunt photo pages.

WOODCOCK HUNTERS-- from page One

ering woodcock in planning and conservation activities. Jim Kelley indicated that it would be relatively straightforward to prepare such a plan, and that he would be willing to take the lead in producing a draft of a Minnesota plan. David Andersen offered to assist in that effort.

Make Woodcock a feature or focus species

The group discussed the opportunities to use woodcock singing activities as a "hook" to educate the public about wildlife and forests. Woodcock potentially interest to a wide range of people including; birders, environmentalists, school groups, hunters, and the general public. It may be desirable to make woodcock part of existing activities (e.g., Minnesota Deer Hunters

Association, Detroit Lakes Bird Festival) and look for additional opportunities (e.g., highlighting woodcock in outdoor activities near the Twin Cities).

Interested parties

Potential partners and interested parties who might wish to work to implement a Minnesota Woodcock Conservation Plan include private landowners, the timber industry, and non-governmental conservation organizations (e.g., Woodcock Minnesota and the Ruffed Grouse Society). Potential cooperators include the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, counties, the timber industry, etc. Overall, the group thought that there were a wide range of potential collaborators and interested parties. One area in particular that was emphasized as being particularly effective, was working

with local landowners and encouraging landowner to landowner communication.

Need for a Minnesota Woodcock Working Group

The group agreed that it would be useful to form a formal working group to help address issues related to a Minnesota Woodcock Conservation Plan. The general plan proposed was to work to develop a draft Minnesota Woodcock Conservation Plan, and to then formalize a working group based around that plan. Once that plan was developed, it would be appropriate to invite other groups to participate in a formal way. There are other models from which we might learn regarding woodcock conservation. The Wildlife Management Institute Woodcock Initiative is working to promote and foster woodcock habi-

tat management in the Northeast. There are also several other woodcock conservation groups, including the Nova Scotia-based Woodcock Conservation Society and the Connecticut Woodcock Council.

The Next Steps

- Development of a Minnesota Woodcock Conservation Plan
- Establishing a formal Minnesota Woodcock Working Group
- After developing a clearer plan, invite a wider group of participants
- Consider ways to track progress toward conservation goals
- Consider ways to promote enthusiasm for woodcock

The challenges outlined in the National Woodcock Conservation Plan are daunting. Woodcock Minnesota is committed to taking a leadership role in implementing this plan in Minnesota.

Proper field care, pre-hunt maintenance will pay off in longer service life, value for your firearm

by Jim Tertin,

Woodcock Minnesota Resident Gunsmith

Woodcock hunting is a physically demanding sport. Where woodcock are typically found it is very thick and often loaded with early fall dew hanging on all of the twigs and branches. This type of hunting will soak your shotgun with water on a clear day, as well as scratch it up fairly well if you are not extremely careful.

Over the years I have come up with a formula that works quite well to help preserve your shotgun's finish and keep it functioning in the field.

BLUING WEAR

Wear a soft leather glove on the hand you carry your gun in. Color case hardening is extremely fragile and can be worn off in one season of hard use. The soft glove definitely helps. When selecting a shotgun, choose a blued or silver nitride finished receiver. It will hold up much longer.

BARREL BULGES

During the hunt regularly "crack" your barrels to make sure that no small twigs or seeds have fallen into the muzzles. Even the smallest twig or bit of snow can make a bulge when the gun is fired.

METAL

Before the hunt I always put a light coat of Birchwood Casey's synthetic gun oil on all exposed metal surfaces. It is an excellent rust preventing oil. Even though it will appear to dry on the surface of the gun, it is still present. Water will literally bead up on it. I also quickly dry the gun off and wipe it down again after the hunt.

CASES

They are not all created equal. Stay away from foam or anything synthetic. The old canvas case with felt liner is still the best. They offer good protection and more importantly they breathe. Moisture in the case can wick away without damaging your gun. Most rusted guns I have seen have been carried or stored in a huge foam padded

case. Open cell foam is the worst case you can purchase and they are very common, very popular and very cheap.

STOCKS

They are easy to scratch, especially with the new built-up lacquer type finishes found on most guns. Wood is porous by nature and impossible to completely seal so we have to do the best we can.

A properly applied oil finish that is in the wood will definitely hold up better than the soft spray finishes. And an oil finish is much easier to repair. To prevent scratching, I always carry my gun with my arms extended in front of me and with them bent at the elbows keep my forearms straight up. This creates a safe way to carry your shotgun and your arms then act as a brush guard.

The downside of this is that you will wear out the underside of your arms between the elbow and cuff.

Also make sure the butt of the gunstock is sealed as well as it can be. The end grain on the end of a stock will soak up water like a sponge and swell the wood permanently. A tight fitting pad or buttplate will also help protect the stock when you have to set it



Just a few relaxing minutes a day is all it takes for proper gun maintenance.

down to attend to your dog.

When purchasing a new gun, look for an oil finish and seal the butt with stock oil prior to hunting with it. Also select a vest or jacket without metal buttons or zippers. They will dent your stocks as bad as hanging dog whistles will.

CLEANING

Break action guns, doubles or over/unders will stay much cleaner internally during the hunt. They are "sealed" and will not allow debris to enter the action. Traditional pumps and

autos have a lot of openings in the receiver and allow weed seeds and dirt to freely drop into them. My personal record is 51 sumac seeds in one Remington 1100 receiver. Also it is very common for lead shot to become lodged in an auto or pump receiver causing a malfunction.

Some simple pre-hunt maintenance and wardrobe selection will keep you and your gun going longer and looking better.



CUT HERE AND MAIL

Submit this form online at www.woodcockminnesota.org

Join Woodcock Minnesota!



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Please choose one:

Life Membership - \$300 (Includes Woodcock Minnesota Hat and Decal)

Yearly Membership - \$25 (Includes Woodcock Minnesota Decal)

Total Amount Enclosed: _____ Check # _____

Credit Card Type: Visa MasterCard Discover American Express

Credit Card Number: _____

Exp Date: _____ Cardholder's Name: _____

Woodcock Minnesota, 8136 Cty Rd 123, Brainerd, MN 56401

Woodcock Minnesota continues its efforts to put donated funds directly into projects

by Trevor Sumption Woodcock MN Secretary

Here is an abbreviated progress report for the projects that Woodcock Minnesota funded over the past year:

Cass County Small Woodland Management Program

·18 Private Consulting Foresters were identified to assist landowners

·2 pilot townships were identified in cooperation with the Cass County Land Department. County Forester, Josh Stevenson, analyzed GIS private land timber stand information and developed a list of landowners.

·657 letters were sent out to landowners in the pilot townships. The letters introduced the concept of forest management for timber harvest and wildlife habitat, noting Woodcock Minnesota as a sponsor and inviting people to a free forest management workshop at the Deep Portage Conservation Reserve.

·Conducted a Small Woodlot Workshop for 17 landowners at Deep Portage on 10/7/07

·Completed 1 forest management plan with a second in the works.

Pine County Singing Ground Study

Dr. David Anderson has selected sites on which to conduct the singing ground study. He and his team of University of Minnesota Students are identifying needed habitat modifications. This will likely involve brushcutting, burning, and



scrapping which Woodcock Minnesota will pay local contractors to perform.

The Finlayson-Giese Sportsmen's Club will conduct singing ground demonstrations with funding from Woodcock Minnesota in the future.

Woodcock Minnesota presents

1st Annual Great Northern
SIDE BY SIDE
AUGUST 25 2007 CHALLENGE

150 CLAY
PRE-SEASON EVENT

Events for SxS shotguns

Rice Creek Hunting & Recreation
Little Falls, MN



A 150-bird fundraising shoot for the nonprofit organizations Woodcock Minnesota held at Rice Creek Hunting and Recreation near Little Falls, Minnesota. Your targets will include 50 birds on the Driven Grouse Flurry, where you will shoot at birds flushed every two seconds. A round of Sporting Clays with 50 targets, and a 25 target five-stand and a 25 target pigeon ring will finish off your score sheet. This one-day event will be held Saturday, August 25, 2007. Your \$150 participation fee covers your targets, continental breakfast, lunch and banquet dinner ticket on Saturday evening. You must shoot a side-by-side in this event, although side games are open to all guns.

Funds support Woodcock Minnesota (501c3) education and research projects.

Woodcock Minnesota is a 501c3 organization whose main goal is to fund woodcock field research in the State of Minnesota. Contact Woodcock Minnesota President Randy Havel at 763-263-8999.

Neglected eye issues in hunting dogs may lead to vision problems, sidelined dogs

Looking outside we are starting to see the green coming back to lawn and trees. Our four legged hunting companions have had a good winter of relaxing on the couch and recovering from a very successful hunting season. With this change of seasons we as hunters start to become excited for the upcoming season and so do our dogs. In the next few newsletters I will be talking about common issues that could affect your hunting dogs

A good hunting dog is the key for a good day in the field (most of the time) and if there is an issue with their eyes, well you might just as well go home. Most eye issues that we see in our hunting breeds occur in the field, but there are some issues that can be seen early on from a good physical exam by your veterinarian.

A cataract is an opacity of the lens of the eye which can have many causes, but most are inherited. Many of our common bird dogs have the potential of forming a cataract within the first two years of the dogs life. (pointers, springers, goldens and labs to name a few).

What is typically seen by the pet owner is a white area of varying sizes within the eye and it may even be in both eyes. Early on with small cataract(s) the dogs hunting ability is typically not affected, but if the cataract(s) matures (gets larger) the pets vision may be affected as well as the pets ability to hunt.

Unfortunately there is nothing that we can do to stop the progression. We have to allow the cataract(s) to mature fully (the entire lens is affected) and then be removed surgically. This is typically done by an veterinary ophthalmologist. A good way to prevent

this is to
re ally
check out
your breeder
before
you purchase
a dog. Ask if
they have
had any
issues in
past litters.



Scott Jacobson
Doctor of Vet. Medicine

Most good breeders will remove both parents from their breeding stock if the issue has been seen.

Common issues that we see here at the clinic with our seasoned hunting dogs typically occur in the field. There is very little that can be done to stop it. The two common issues we see are corneal ulcers and trauma to the tissue around the eyes.

Corneal ulcers are where trauma has occurred to the outer portion of the eye. The cornea is the clear and composed of many thin layers stacked up on each other. Typically what happens is foreign material either hits the cornea or gets in the eye. Every time the pet blinks it rubs on the cornea. Corneal damage also can be self-induced by the dog rubbing at the eye trying to get foreign material out. Typical clinical signs are excessive tear production, sensitivity to light, not opening the eye all the way and scratching at the eye.

This is an issue that you should not take lightly. Your dog needs to see a veterinarian as soon as possible. If this is not addressed promptly your dog could potentially loose vision or even an eye.

Also do not use the medication your buddy got from the vet for some eye issue. If the wrong medications are used you can make the ulcer worse. Typically if caught



Rusty holds tight on a woodcock. Since the pointing instinct preferably relies on scent, vision problems can hinder your canine partners ability to navigate the woods while on their way to their next bird find.

early, foreign material removed, and proper medications applied the eye should heal up and the dog will be ready to hunt again in 7-10 days. There are some cases of corneal injury that may require more attention than just medication, but that will be determined by your veterinarian.

If you are in the field and suspect that there is something in your dogs eye, stop and take a look. If you see something try and flush it out with sterile saline (the same saline we use in our eyes) and get the dog into your veterinarian's office as soon as you can.

General trauma to the tissue around the eyes is also a very common problem seen in hunting dogs. Most dogs will bust through any type of cover in order to try and find us a bird. In doing so they sacrifice

themselves. Scratches, puncture wounds and bruises around the eyes are very common and typically will heal with proper cleanings, medication and time.

Even if you believe the dog will be fine, I encourage the pet be seen by the vet before issues worsen.

Now I am just touching the surface of eye issues. I wanted to briefly discuss common eye problems that you may see in our trusty hunting companion. I will say that eye issues in general are very serious and you should not postpone taking your pet to a veterinarian.

If you do it could lead to loss of vision or even an eye and that could severely affect your pets ability to hunt.

Scott Jacobson DVM
Monticello - Big Lake Pet Hospital
763-295-3410
www.montipet.com

"In my heart I have great respect for woodcock and the folks that hunt them, especially the ones who know there whereabouts throughout the hunting season and when they arrive... To me the serious woodcock hunter is a cut above most other upland bird hunters."

Ben O'Williams
pointing Dog Journal Nov/Dec 2006

Summer training tips will prepare your dog for the fast approaching season

by Trevor Sumption Woodcock MN Secretary

Most gun dog owners understand that their dogs need to be kept in top physical and mental shape during the off season. Understanding the need versus actually doing it are often separate things. The combination of: baseball games, graduations, swimming lessons, yard work, a job, family vacation, and hopefully some fishing; make summer a busy season, despite longer days and best intentions.

The following six tips were provided by Morgan Haglin, professional trainer at Orvis endorsed Pine Shadows located in Brainerd, MN and the Wednesday night group that gathers there to train. Pine Shadows specializes in field bred springers, but these tips apply to all breeds:

Swimming is great exercise for pup; they stay cool while building cardio capacity. Take pup's swimming lessons a step further -- bring him to a river. Toss a bumper or dead bird upstream and send pup on the retrieve. He should quickly figure out the proper intercept angle. This builds confidence and the extra resistance provided by the current is a great workout.

There are only ten Saturdays between July Fourth and the woodcock opener, make the most of them! Set aside a few of those Saturdays for training. Make it a family affair, or find a group affiliated with your breed that trains together. Hunting season will be here before you know it.

Plant four bumpers or dead birds in a field or patch of woods, then take pup for a 20-minute walk through the area. This keeps the association between you, birds, and fun, fresh in pup's mind. If pup has not had a bird in a few months, don't expect much on opening day.

High temperatures and humidity are dangerous for pup, use those days as an opportunity to work on basic obedience. Pup easily forgets commands like heel, whoa, and hup over the summer. Work early in the morning, late in the day, or inside on fundamentals. You will see a difference in the control you have in the field on opening day.

Create a summer training goal for you and pup to work towards. Depending on the breed, that may be steadying to wing and shot, blind retrieves, better bird handling, whatever. Personally, I set a training benchmark to assess my own develop-



ment as a handler.

Call a professional trainer one-week (ten days maximum) before the hunting season opens and ask that they have your dog finished by opener. Make sure they get the dog re-steadied after a summer of chasing chipmunks and take off that extra seven pounds gained by stealing hot dogs off the grill.

The sarcasm should be obvious. If you plan on enlisting the services of a professional trainer contact them now and come up with a time table that works for both of you.

We are seeking your

*F*avorite
*R*ecipe
wild game
for

Woodcock Minnesota's Cookbook

Woodcock, venison, waterfowl,
upland game birds,
fish are all welcome subjects

Please include a short bio -
not everyone knows you're really a chef!

email your recipes to:
recipe@woodcockminnesota.org

Please place the words "Woodcock Recipe" in the subject line

Side by side shooting events for everyone, tweeds and knickers not required

by Trevor Sumption Woodcock MN Secretary

Upscale, expensive, pretentious, even snobby. These are words that are sometimes associated with shooting events for double guns only. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Events like Woodcock Minnesota's Side by Side Challenge and the event recently held at Deep Portage, are great venues for camaraderie and gun gazing for those that appreciate both vintage and modern shotguns. Interested but don't own a side by side? No problem. Chances are you will meet several individuals who would love to tell you about their guns and possibly even let you put a few rounds through one. I have personally been the benefactor of such graciousness and have had the opportunity to shoot guns that I can only dream of owning.

What should I expect? -- Expect to see a wide variety of guns; everything from your grandmother's .410 Stevens to a Purdey Best may be present. European and venerable American makers like Parker and Fox are usually well represented.

Expect a lack of serious competition -- shooters participate to look at and talk about guns. Scores are not a priority for most shooters. The courses are set up for hunters - no 50-yard screaming crossers that are all too common at certified sporting clays events. In addition to the main event, expect a number of side games that test a shooters skill in a fun filled atmosphere.

Expect to meet people -- that are passionate about bird hunting, bird dogs, and bird guns. I have met numerous people that I'd like to walk a cover with someday. I've also met a few that I would not let into one of 'my' covers because they are far too proficient with their weapon of choice!

Some events have vendors present. Often times they are specialty vendors whose wares are not found in your local big box sporting goods stores. In Woodcock Minnesota's case, we wel-



come the opportunity to support the vendors that support us.

Expect to see shooters dressed in jeans and t-shirts, shorts and sandals, and occasionally traditional period dress. The perception of tweeds and knickers intimidates some people and keeps them from participating.

You can find more information about upcoming side by side events in this newsletter. We hope to see all of you at our event in August.

Announcing the 2007 *Woodcock Minnesota Gun Raffle*



Featuring the CZ Ringneck 20 Gauge

This year we are raffling a new CZ Ringneck 20 ga. This is a single trigger, extractor gun, with choke tubes, and case colored receiver. The Ringneck has won critical acclaim recently as a well made, value priced double.

Tickets are only \$5 ea. and are available now by e-mailing trevorsumption@msn.com. Woodcock Minnesota members will receive a ticket pack in the mail. You can also see the gun and purchase tickets at upcoming Woodcock Minnesota events. We will draw for the gun at our SxS shoot in August.

This is a great opportunity to add another double to your gunsafe, just ask Woodcock MN Volunteer Tom Johnson who won last years raffle (his first SxS!)

Renew
membership today
or upgrade to
Life member.



Important News
Inside From

Woodcock Minnesota

See Woodcock Minnesota's web site at www.woodcockminnesota.org

Woodcock Minnesota
8136 Cty Rd 123,
Brainerd, MN 56401



NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ST. CLOUD, MN
PERMIT NO. 1425