Find land near you with FFLIGHT – The Fields & Forest Lands Interactive Gamebird Hunting Tool (FFLIGHT): This interactive mapping tool allows hunters to locate properties stocked with pheasants along with managed dove fields and suitable habitat for ruffed grouse and woodcock. FFLIGHT also allows hunters to use aerial maps, topography and measuring tools to easily navigate and identify areas of interest to make their trips more productive and enjoyable.

Buy your license in the DNR’s Go Wild Licensing System at gowild.wi.gov or at a license dealer near you.
Each year, the Department of Natural Resources stocks approximately 75,000 pheasants on 90 DNR-managed properties. The pheasant stocking program is in place to supplement hunting opportunities in areas of the state where wild pheasants are not abundant. The state game farm also provides additional hunting opportunities through the Day-Old Chick (DOC) program. In the DOC program, conservation clubs raise about 35,000 pheasant chicks annually to be released on approved DNR-managed or private property open to public hunting. To find properties stocked with pheasants near you, visit dnr.wi.gov and search FFLIGHT or use the DNR’s Hunt Wild App on the App Store or Google Play.

During the 2018-19 season, an estimated 50,831 hunters pursued pheasants, spending 485,815 days afield and harvesting 403,766 pheasants. Kenosha, Jefferson and Waukesha counties harvested the most pheasants. The number of hunters, days afield and harvest totals are all up from 2017-18.

Survey results indicated .64 pheasants per stop in 2019, a 7.82% increase from 2018. The counties with the highest numbers of pheasants seen per 100 miles driven were highest in the northwestern counties including Polk, Barron, St. Croix, Dunn, Pierce, Pepin and Eau Claire counties.
RUFFED GROUSE

*Zone A: Sept. 14 - Jan. 31, 2020
*Zones B: Oct. 19 - Dec. 8

HARVEST

173,347

During the 2018-19 season, 69,090 hunters reported spending 552,293 days in the field hunting grouse, with approximately 173,347 grouse harvested. Highest harvests were reported by hunters in Price, Douglas and Marinette counties. Hunters may need to scout different sites in order to find pockets of birds.

SURVEY RESULTS

41%

Between 2018 and 2019, statewide ruffed grouse drumming activity increased 41% based on the roadside survey used to monitor breeding grouse activity. Changes in indices to breeding grouse populations varied by region.

The increase follows a year where the survey results showed a 34 percent drop. Ruffed grouse populations are known to rise and fall over a nine to 11-year cycle.

Counts of grouse drumming activity heard along roadsides were conducted on 73 transects throughout the state. The roadside survey has been conducted annually since 1964 by DNR wildlife managers, foresters, tribal biologists, law enforcement, U.S. Forest Service staff and Ruffed Grouse Society volunteers.

HABITAT

Ruffed grouse rely on dense, young forest cover resulting from disturbances such as fire and logging.

Beyond managing state-owned lands, the DNR is working to provide young forest cover through an extensive collaborative effort known as the Wisconsin Young Forest Partnership. This partnership provides technical assistance to private landowners interested in managing for young forest. The program is helping to create habitat for ruffed grouse and other wildlife species and helping maintain healthy and diverse forest communities.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The DNR initiated a public review process to collect comments and input regarding the draft ruffed grouse management plan, which was developed by the DNR Ruffed Grouse Advisory Committee for 2020 to 2030.

Public comment on the document was accepted through Aug. 26. The DNR is compiling public comments and drafting a final version of the document.

CONTACT

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*The Wisconsin Natural Resources Board is considering an early closure to the ruffed grouse season. Check online regulations for updates.
During the 2018 fall turkey hunting season, permitted hunters harvested 3,782 turkeys. While the fall season isn’t as popular as the spring season, when 38,886 birds were harvested, 73,915 total permits were issued in the first year with no drawing for the fall turkey harvest. The fall turkey harvest has declined over the past decade, largely due to a decline in hunter effort rather than a reduction in turkey numbers.

The 2018 harvest success rate, uncorrected for non-participation, was 5.12 percent, less than the 5.9 percent recorded during the 2017 fall season. During the 2018 fall turkey hunting questionnaire, 52% of all fall turkey hunters receiving a harvest permit hunted turkeys during the 2017 season. Statewide, the average number of days spent hunting for fall turkeys was 6.5 days. Hunting pressure was highest on weekends. Many fall turkey hunters (35.5%) are hunting fall turkeys incidental to archery hunting. Statewide success rate for the 2018 spring season was 18.3%.

As recently as the 1970s, turkeys were extinct in the state of Wisconsin. Turkeys have made a surging comeback today, with over 350,000 now living in the state.

Turkey brood production can affect the number of birds available for harvest in the fall. Brood conditions this spring were favorable, with temperatures at or above average and precipitation amounts above to slightly above normal.