

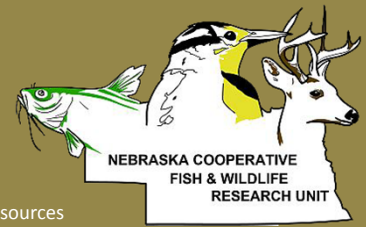


Public access in the Southwest Focus on Pheasants Area

L.N. Messinger¹, A. Engel¹, J.J. Fontaine²

¹Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, University of Nebraska—Lincoln, School of Natural Resources

²U.S. Geological Survey, Nebraska Cooperative Fish & Wildlife Research Unit, University of Nebraska—Lincoln



A new model of hunting access

Hunting has a long tradition in the United States, but participation has declined significantly over the last 40 years.

A lack of access is often cited as a reason for non-participation.

To increase participation, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission offers incentives to landowners to allow public access to nearly 250,000 acres of private land annually.

Are open access sites valued?

Researchers with the Nebraska Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit are examining public access sites to:

1. Quantify use and assess the relative value of sites to hunters.
2. Understand the demographics of participating hunters.
3. Estimate hunter movement among sites, across Nebraska, and around the country.



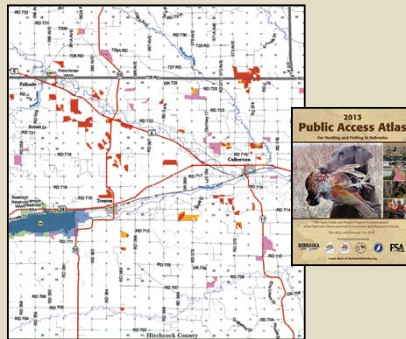
What we are doing

- Using time-lapse photography, we estimated pheasant hunting pressure on three open access sites.
- In person interviews are allowing us to gather important demographic information, assess attitudes toward the access program, map the movements of hunters, and check harvest.



Where we are working

Southwest Nebraska has a high density of public access sites (colored polygons).



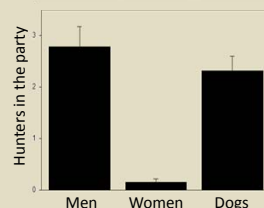
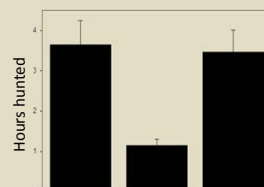
How heavily hunted are open access lands?

- 109,664 pictures recorded 164 hunters with 18 dogs, or roughly one hunter at each site every two days



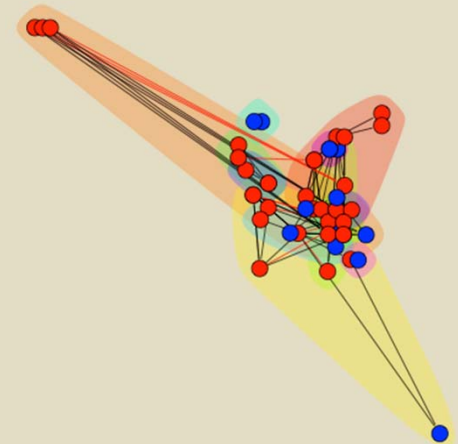
Who are the hunters?

- In 2012, we interviewed 34 hunting parties.
- 94% of adult hunters were white males
- 90% of hunting parties had dogs, but only 9% included youth hunters



Hunters moving across the landscape

- The average hunting party traveled over 360 miles to hunt southwest Nebraska with 55% arriving from other states
- 52% of parties hunted multiple fields in a day



- Hunters used 38 sites as indicated by this virtual map of the study area. (Red dots = public, blue dots = private)
- Movement was not random, there were thirteen distinct hunting 'neighborhoods' indicated by different background shades. (Lines represent movement, red between neighborhoods, black within.)

Where we are going

With the start of the 2013 field season upon us, we intend to increase our survey effort and deploy more cameras on more properties.



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