

RING-NECKED PHEASANTS



In the State of Oregon

The ring-necked pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), an introduced species, is the most important upland game bird in Oregon. In eastern Oregon the ring-neck is usually found closely associated with irrigated farm lands of the Columbia Basin and Snake River Basin. Pheasants are also found in suitable areas of Lake and Klamath counties.

In western Oregon the ring-neck is found throughout the Willamette Valley, Umpqua Valley, and Rogue Valley farm lands. A few birds persist in the larger shoestring valleys of the Oregon coast.

HABITAT NEEDS

Proper interspersion of food, water and cover is important. Pheasant habitat is related to croplands and adjacent edge cover where perennial water is available. Good pheasant populations are seldom found in areas which are much above 3,000 feet in elevation in Oregon.

Pheasants respond very well to habitat improvement measures, particularly when choice foods are provided in abundance by agricultural means. When considering habitat needs for pheasants, it is important to remember that year-round food and cover must be provided.

Food. Pheasants eat a variety of cereal grains, weed seeds, tender plants, fruits and insects.

Cereal grains--barley, corn, proso millet, sudangrass, and wheat--make up over 80 percent of the pheasant's diet. Seeds of knotweed, pigweed, ragweed, smartweed, and sunflower are also eaten. Fruits--hawthorn, rose, Russian olive, and snowberry--are not preferred but may sustain birds through periods of deep snow when other foods are scarce. Pheasant chicks live almost wholly on insects--ants, beetles, caterpillars, and grasshoppers--during early life.

Natural cover. Natural cover is important and is provided in waste ways, sagebrush draws, irrigation canals, along fence rows, swampy

areas, and in unused farm corners. The crop itself often serves as cover. An example of this is the stubblefield. Cover is often short in eastern Oregon during late winter and early spring.

Nesting. Nesting takes place in open areas in fields of grass, alfalfa, or weed patches. Many pheasants are killed and nests are destroyed during the first mowing of alfalfa fields in eastern Oregon.

Water. Water for pheasants is very important; they cannot exist for long where water is not present.

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT

1. Protect cover on ditchbanks, field borders, waterways, odd areas, and around ponds. Units of food cover need not be large. See the attached sample layout.
2. It is important that food, cover and water be developed close together so the birds will not have to travel far to fulfill their daily requirements.
3. Grow cereal grains adjacent to good cover.
4. Leave patches of unharvested grain near good winter cover.
5. Provide water near food and cover by means of farm ponds, spring development, or by constructing self-filling watering devices.

Wildlife Food Crops

Seeding Recommendations

Variety	Seeding Rate Per Acre (lbs.)	Growing Period (days)	Production (lbs/acre)
Sudan Grass (drilled)	6-10	100-130	600-1500
(broadcast)	20-25	100-130	
Field Corn <u>1/</u>	5	140-160	1700-4000
Sweet Corn <u>2/</u>	10-15	75-100	900-2400
Barley and Wheat			
Winter (drilled)	75-100	200+	1200-3600
Spring (drilled)	75-100	80-100	1000-3200
Millet, proso (drilled)	20	90-120	1500-2000
(broadcast)	40	90-120	
Millet, foxtail (drilled)	15-20	80-100	1500-2000
(broadcast)	30	80-100	
Buckwheat, tartary (drilled)	30	70-85	1000-2200
(broadcast)	50	70-85	
Buckwheat, common (drilled)	30	70-85	800-2000
(broadcast)	50	70-85	
Smartweed, pink ladysthumb	10	70-100	800-1200
nodding smartweed	10	70-100	800-1200
Rye, cereal (drilled)			
(fall seeded - Oct. 1)	60-90	200+	1400

Drilled preferred over broadcast. Low yields are associated with poor soils, low fertility, lack of moisture, adverse weather, and poor drainage. Spring seeding applies unless otherwise specified.

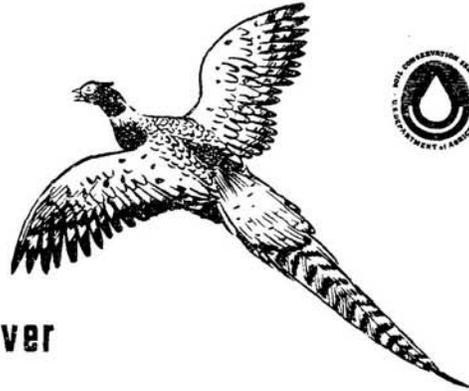
1/ Field corn varieties - KE 497; Ore 355; Pioneer 3859; Pioneer 3862.

2/ Sweet corn varieties - Queen Anne; Golden Jubilee; Spancras; Marcras; Morning sun; MK-75.

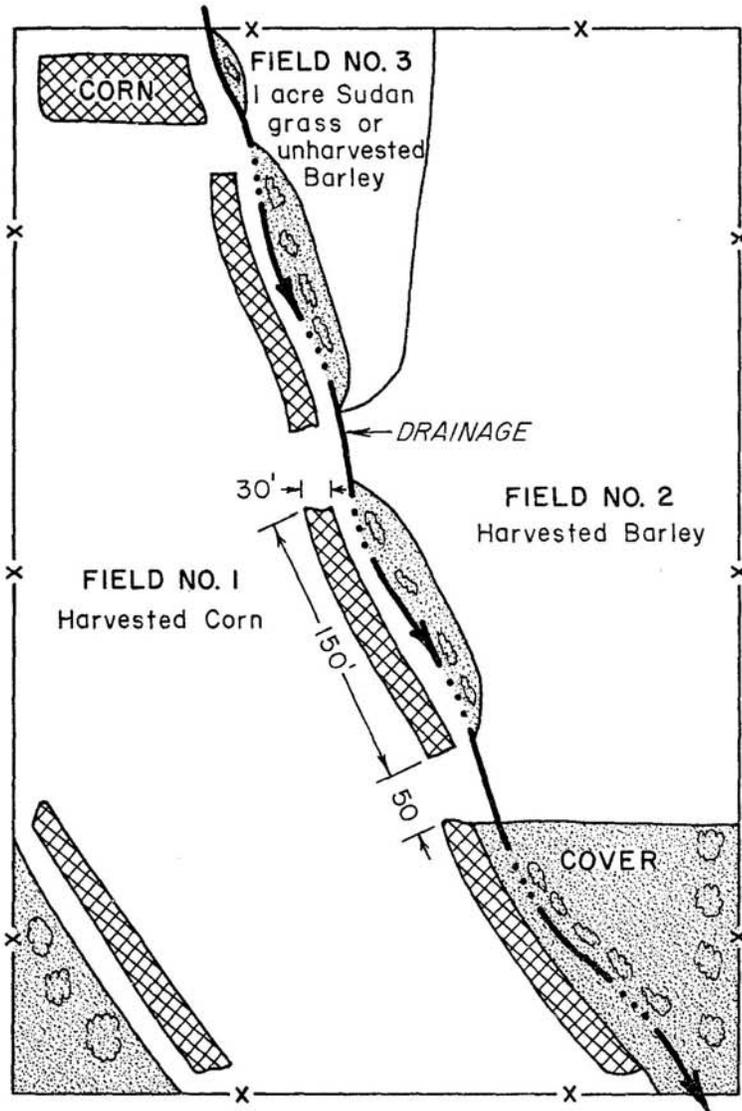
These foods are primarily grown for waterfowl and upland birds.

Sample Layout for

PHEASANT HUNTING



Featuring choice foods managed with cover



- One hundred acre field, with field number one in corn (sweet or field), and field number two in alfalfa, barley or seed grass from which crop has been removed. Field number three is one acre of sudan grass which is left standing for birds.
- When corn is harvested, portions of crop are left standing as indicated to provide winter food for birds. Corn strips are thirty feet wide.
- Along drainage and lower corners a permanent cover of shrubs, grasses and a few trees provides winter home for birds. If field is grazed, cover should be fenced to protect it. When cover is too thick it may be grazed by livestock until it is acceptable.

THIS PLAN FEATURES UNITS WHICH ARE LARGE ENOUGH TO HUNT INDIVIDUALLY. FIFTY FOOT SPACES BETWEEN CORN AND COVER ARE LEFT OPEN FOR EASE OF HUNTING.