



## 2011 Bird Hunting Seasons and Conditions Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex

31 August 2011

Hunting areas at Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge ([see map](#)) and the Northeast Montana Wetland Management District are open to game bird hunting. All bird hunting follows [State of Montana seasons and regulations](#). No additional special permits or licenses are required. Non-toxic shot is required when hunting with shotguns on all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands, including the Medicine Lake Refuge and all Waterfowl Production Areas.

### Gamebird populations:

**Upland Birds:** Spring surveys suggested that severe winter conditions with extended deep snow reduced winter survival for both sharp-tailed grouse and pheasant populations. A cold and record setting wet spring most likely negatively impacted early nesting and therefore production numbers for the year. The wet spring did allow for good summer cover and insect numbers for those chicks that survived. Partridge coveys are widely scattered as is typical for the refuge.

**Waterfowl:** Record high rainfall and a relatively cool summer resulted in full wetlands and good water conditions for area potholes and refuge lakes. Spring surveys resulted in above average waterfowl numbers. Local production of waterfowl was very good in 2011 throughout the prairie pothole region. A large amount of habitat is still available, as ponds that are normally dry this time of year are holding water. Wetland conditions should be good for hunting.

**Swans and cranes:** Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge is closed to sandhill crane and swan hunting. Swan and crane hunting are allowed on Waterfowl Production Areas in NE Montana.

### Season dates:

Sharp-tailed grouse and partridge - September 1, 2011 to January 1, 2012

Youth only waterfowl and pheasant weekend - September 24 and 25, 2011

Regular waterfowl - **Tentatively** open on October 1, 2011. Please verify [State of Montana waterfowl season dates and regulations](#) as they become available in September.

Regular ring-necked pheasant - October 8, 2011 to January 1, 2012

### Areas open to hunting:

Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge

Area 2 of the refuge opens for hunting September 1st. As in years past, the Lake Creek (Area 1) and Homestead (Area 3) units of the Refuge will open for late season ring-necked pheasant & deer hunting beginning November 15 and close at the end of upland bird season on January 1, 2012. See [Refuge Hunting Map](#) for other areas open to hunting.



Montana Wetland Management District

All Waterfowl Production Areas (WPA) in the NE Montana Wetland Management District are open to hunting for the duration of the State of Montana season dates.



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