

Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge Complex

2008 Bird Hunting Seasons and Conditions

September 3, 2008

The Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge and the Northeast Montana Wetland Management District opened to upland game bird hunting on September 1. The Youth Only waterfowl and pheasant weekend is September 27-28, and waterfowl hunting opens on October 4. Ring-necked pheasant season opens on October 11 for both residents and non-residents. See Refuge Hunting Map for areas open to hunting. Non-toxic shot is required when hunting with shotguns on U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands, including the Medicine Lake Refuge and all Waterfowl Production Areas. All bird hunting follows State of Montana seasons and regulations. No additional special permits or licenses are required. As in years past, the Lake Creek (Area 1) and Homestead (Area 2) units of the Refuge will open for late season ring-necked pheasant hunting beginning November 15 and run until the end of upland bird season on January 1, 2009.

Upland Birds: Several mild winters have provided good carry-over for upland bird populations, and both pheasant and sharp-tailed grouse spring populations were above average. However, localized drought this spring and summer appears to have had a negative impact on brood survival and size. Partridge coveys remain spotty as usual.

Waterfowl: An extended drought, the most severe in more than 20 years, has left all but the deepest lakes completely dry. As a result of these record low wetland conditions, waterfowl production in northeast Montana was poor this year. Low water and expansive mudflat shorelines will make for challenging field conditions.

Reminder: Medicine Lake National Wildlife Refuge is closed to sandhill crane and swan hunting.

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