

Alberta Conservation Association 2010/11 Project Summary Report

Project Name: *Habitat Legacy Partnership*

Wildlife Program Manager: Doug Manzer

Project Leader: Jen Carpenter

Primary ACA staff on project:

Jen Carpenter, Leda Kozak, Doug Manzer, Layne Seward, Robb Stavne, Mike Uchikura and Mike Verhage

Partnerships

Cooperating landowners
Pheasants Forever – Chinook Chapter and Calgary Chapter

Key Findings

- Assisted landowners to complete five major habitat enhancement projects.
- Collected baseline inventory data at enhancement sites.

Introduction

Alberta Conservation Association (ACA) and Pheasants Forever formed a partnership to improve upland bird habitats in southern Alberta. This newly titled ‘Habitat Legacy Partnership’ is now identifying and supporting opportunities to enhance and create key habitat components that upland game birds require for nesting, brood rearing, travel and surviving harsh Alberta winters.

Methods

Informational materials are effective tools that help to engage private landowners and raise the profile of pheasants and habitat enhancement opportunities. To support enhancement activities on private land, we conducted site visits and used aerial photography to map the amount of pheasant nesting, brood rearing and winter cover available on properties and surrounding areas. On an individual basis, we prepared property habitat plans and discussed potential enhancement opportunities to improve nesting and brood-rearing cover, facilitate gamebird movement by enhancing corridor habitat and create new hunting opportunities. We inventoried and mapped potential corridors using a geographic information system (GIS) and developed and tested monitoring protocols to gauge the success of improving wildlife habitat through enhancement activities.

Results

The partnership completed several major habitat enhancement projects this year. We assisted with the development of an offsite watering system, provided two landowners with seed to develop permanent nesting cover in upland areas and planted 6,500 shrubs adjacent to wetland areas that also created winter cover. The partnership also assisted in implementing a 600 metre irrigation waterline and creating a 4 hectare food plot.

Conclusions

We will continue to foster long-term partnerships and develop relationships with key members of the agricultural community, work with private landowners on property habitat plans, host habitat enhancement landowner events, run pilots to assess wildlife monitoring protocols, and actively work with partners to support enhancement projects in southern Alberta.

Communications

- Designed signs for landowners that participate in HLP and two roll-away, stand-up banners for use at community events, ACA workshops and tradeshow.
- Delivered *Through the Seasons* booklets to landowners and assisted in novice (youth) shoots giving presentations on upland game bird habitat needs to young and first time hunters.
- Hosted ‘Winter Cover for Upland Game Birds’, the first of a series of landowner workshops – 10 landowners attended on December 3.

Captions

Ring-necked pheasants have been part of Alberta’s landscape for over 100 years. (Photo: Jeff Gilham)

Alberta Conservation Association staff member, Leda Kozak, monitors enhancement sites for changes in wildlife. (Photo: Jen Carpenter)

Coulees with thick cover support many kinds of wildlife, including upland game birds. (Photo: Jen Carpenter)

Alberta Conservation Association staff member, Mike Uchikura, assists in designing and implementing habitat enhancements including planting shelterbelts to help develop winter cover for upland game birds. (Photo: Jen Carpenter)