

Pheasant Brood Survey – Summer 2013

Website Summary

Pheasant indices are up substantially over figures from 2012! We walked more than 60 km with trained pointing dogs to locate and flush birds at 15 sites spread over several Wildlife Management Units in southern Alberta (Figure 1). We counted the number of individuals at each flush, and where possible gathered age and sex information for each individual. The survey was focused in some of the best habitats we could find including shrubby coulees, vegetated irrigation canals, wetland margins, and shelterbelt habitats. We flushed 1.9 times more pheasants per hour compared to 2012 with 2.59 flushes per hour. The encounter rate for partridges (1.59 flushes/hr) was only slightly higher than 2012 (1.37/hr). When translated to distance walked, we encountered 1.07 pheasant and 0.66 partridge flushes for each km walked by the handler. The dogs of course covered much greater distances! Reproductive success was also up with roughly 1.4 times more chicks per pheasant hen compared to 2012 (3.75:1 vs. 2.72:1). All together we flushed 215 pheasants and 420 partridges over 25 hours of survey effort. It promises to be good upland bird hunting season in southern Alberta!

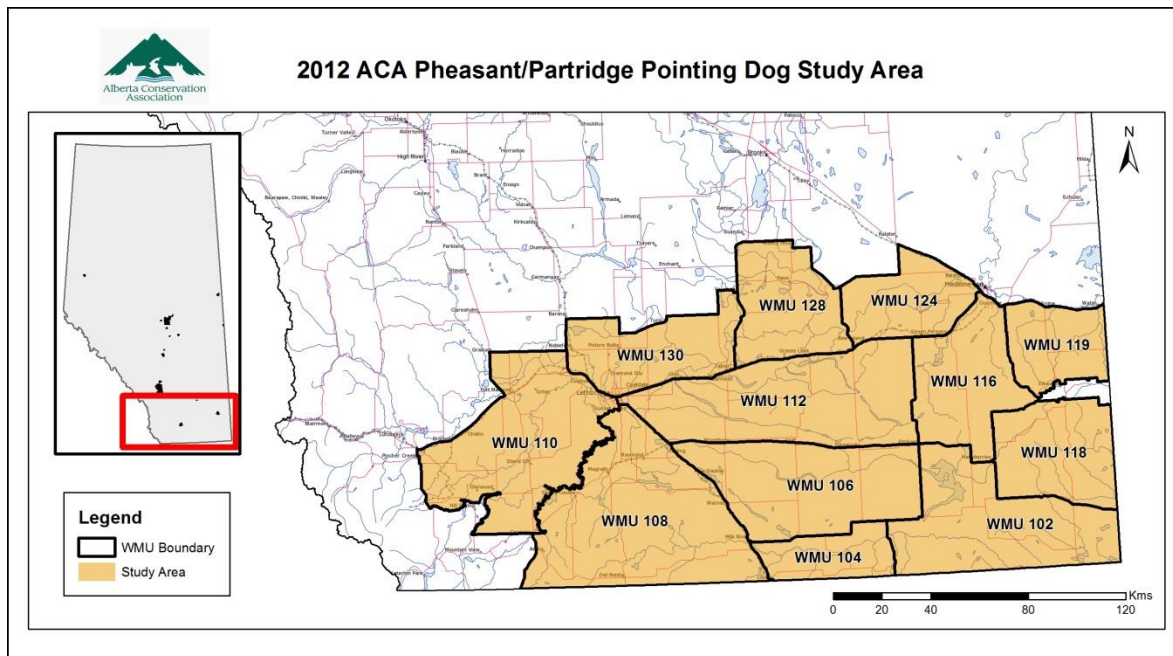


Figure 1. General study area of pointing dog transect surveys.

Survey Details

Survey type conducted: Pointing Dog Transect Survey
Survey Dates: August 13-31, 2012
 August 19-30, 2013

Total Distance Surveyed:
2012 53.6 km
2013 61 km

Total Distance Travelled by Pointing Dog:
2012 151.7 km
2013 149.3 km

Survey Results	Ring-necked Pheasant		Gray Partridge	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
Survey Year	2012	2013	2012	2013
Total Encounters	34	65	34	40
Total Count	111 3 males, 29 females, 79 young of the year	215 6 males, 44 females, 165 young of the year	354 39 adults, 31 young of the year, 284 unknown age	420 420 unknown age
Encounter rates				
<i>Flushes/hour</i>	1.37	2.59	1.37	1.59
<i>Flushes/kilometer walked - person</i>	0.63	1.07	0.63	0.66
<i>Flushes/kilometer walked – pointing dog</i>	0.22	0.44	0.22	0.27
Chick:hen ratio	2.72:1	3.75:1	not available	not available
Average Flock/Covey Size	3.3 birds	3.3 birds	10.4 birds	12.4 birds