

Cabinet Agencies' Performance Audit Action Item(s) & Status

Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program Department of Fish and Wildlife

(See also [cabinet agency response](#) for full context to Washington State Auditor's Office (SAO) [report](#), December 2009)

Agencies included in the performance audit: Department of Fish and Wildlife

SAO Issues Summary:

1. Pheasant populations and hunting opportunities have declined due to loss of habitat.
2. The Eastern Washington Pheasant Enhancement Program does not have the data it needs to measure the effectiveness of its habitat enhancement efforts.

The table below shows the current status of action items the agency initiated to address issues identified in the performance audit report. Please see the [cabinet agency response](#) for additional context and any additional steps already taken.

For an explanation of the columns below, [see the legend](#).

| Issue | Status | Action Steps | Lead Agency | Due Date | Current Resources? | Budget Impact? | Legislation Required? | Notes |
|-------|-----------|--|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Completed | Reduce the amount of funding devoted to purchasing pen-raised pheasants by at least 10% per year and reallocate those funds to habitat enhancement activities. The Department will begin reallocating funds beginning in 2010 with an ultimate goal of spending the majority of funds on habitat improvement activities. | F&W | 12/10 | Yes | Yes | No | Funding reductions of 10% occurred in 2010. Full reduction will be phased in over next four years. |
| 1 | Completed | Develop specific habitat enhancement prescriptions for key habitats. General prescriptions have been developed and more refined prescriptions are being developed. | F&W | 1/11 | Yes | No | No | |

| Issue | Status | Action Steps | Lead Agency | Due Date | Current Resources? | Budget Impact? | Legislation Required? | Notes |
|-------|-----------|--|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | Preliminary results should be available by 2011. | | | | | | |
| 1 | Completed | Establish demonstration habitat plots on private or public lands by 2011. The Department began working on establishing demonstration plots in the fall of 2009. | F&W | 1/11 | Yes | No | No | A number of habitat demonstration plots were established on private and public lands in 2011. More are in the works to be established. |
| 1 | Completed | Annually pursue contribution agreements with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to increase habitat enhancement opportunities. A pilot agreement was reached in the last quarter of the 2009 Federal Fiscal Year. Additional agreements are actively being pursued. | F&W | On-going | Yes | No | No | Currently one fully executed personnel agreement is in place. Others planned for next biennium. |
| 1 | Completed | Pursue granting opportunities with the USDA and others. Granting rules for the USDA Voluntary Public Access Program (known as Open Fields) are due to be released in early 2010. Once a granting opportunity is available, the Department will pursue a grant with pheasant habitat and associated public hunting access as a component. | F&W | 6/10 | Yes | No | No | Received approval from US Dept. of Agriculture in September 1, 2010 for \$1.9 million, of which \$400,000 is for pheasant focus areas. |
| 1 | Completed | Develop cost-share habitat and/or staffing agreements with | F&W | 6/10 | Yes | No | No | One staffing agreement completed in 2010. Other staffing agreements will be |

| Issue | Status | Action Steps | Lead Agency | Due Date | Current Resources? | Budget Impact? | Legislation Required? | Notes |
|-------|-----------|--|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | Pheasants Forever, local Conservation Districts, or other entities on an annual basis. | | | | | | developed as needed on an annual basis. |
| 1 | Completed | Document rationale for landowner resistance to public hunting on their property and summarize by 2011 and use the results to help improve hunting access. | F&W | 1/11 | Yes | No | No | To address landowner concerns that relate to knowing who is using their land and having to manage individual hunters seeking permission to hunt, WDFW developed an online reservation system this spring that allows hunters to reserve hunt dates on specific land and landowners to view who has been or will be hunting on their property. After the 2013 hunting season, WDFW will survey landowners in this new program to get their feedback as a component of continuing program improvement and adaptive management. |
| 1 | Completed | Develop quality private lands hunting opportunities through a variety of means. Investigate the feasibility of developing a hunting reservation system that addresses landowner concerns as well as the need for the Department to provide public benefit. | F&W | 12/10 | Yes | No | No | Hunting reservation system approach approved by Executive Management Team in May 2010 |
| 1 | Completed | By 2011, utilize the Upland Game Advisory Committee and Regional WDFW staff to help identify the most effective release areas and timeframes. Annually coordinate reductions with identified | F&W | 1/11 | Yes | No | No | |

| Issue | Status | Action Steps | Lead Agency | Due Date | Current Resources? | Budget Impact? | Legislation Required? | Notes |
|-------|-----------|--|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--|
| | | priorities. | | | | | | |
| 1 | Completed | Create pheasant status reports on an annual basis. These reports will include habitat enhancement efforts, the results of population monitoring efforts, and a discussion on program effectiveness. | F&W | 10/10 | Yes | No | No | Reports will be continued to be provided annually in the WDFW Game Status and Trends report. |
| 2 | Completed | Review small game harvest survey protocols to determine if changes to sampling or stratification will improve precision. Implement identified changes by 2011. | F&W | 1/11 | Yes | No | No | |
| 2 | Completed | By 2011, modify the small game harvest survey to increase the precision of harvest and hunter participation estimates at the county level. Concentrate efforts in the Pheasant Official Response: Performance Audit of the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife From the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife December 4, 2009 Focus Area first, and then expand efforts to other important pheasant counties as possible. | F&W | 1/11 | Yes | No | No | |
| 2 | Completed | By 2011, consider implementing crowing count and brood count surveys in the Pheasant | F&W | 1/11 | Yes | No | No | |

| Issue | Status | Action Steps | Lead Agency | Due Date | Current Resources? | Budget Impact? | Legislation Required? | Notes |
|-------|-----------|---|-------------|----------|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------|
| | | Focus Area to improve population trend information at the county level or smaller. Survey routes have been identified and a few pilot surveys were conducted in 2009. | | | | | | |
| 2 | Completed | As part of each year's small game harvest estimation process, develop specific statistics for banded pheasant harvest. | F&W | 6/10 | Yes | No | No | |