

Hunting Preserves and Gamebird Farms

Preserving Wildlife *and* Rural America



**Produced by the North American Gamebird Association (NAGA)
and the North American Gamebird Foundation (NAGF)**

The gamebird production and hunting preserve industries are important parts of rural America.

Built upon foundations of respect for the land and wise-use of renewable natural resources, these industries provide significant conservation, social and economic benefits.

For more than one hundred years, private individuals in the U.S. have been raising gamebirds for release into the wilds. Gamebird producers and hunting preserves are licensed and regulated in all 50 states by each state’s conservation department. Gamebird producers provide a wide range of birds for hunting preserves (see Figure 1), and for human consumption as well.

Hunting preserves serve the public in many ways besides providing traditional hunting opportunities. According to Jim Trinklein of the Michigan Association of Gamebird Breeders and Hunting Preserves, “In general, hunting preserves offer a wide variety of opportunities: hiking trails, bird watching, sporting clays, 3-D Archery, fishing, safe settings for youth hunter safety classes, family events, dog training, handicap hunting opportunities, business meeting areas, dining and camping—just to name a few.

“Hunting preserves run the gamut from the smallest do-it-yourself operations to the grandest of hunting/outdoor recreation facilities. There is a preserve to fit every taste and budget.”

Preserving generational lands ... through the economy, ecology, and investments in our future.



Peggy Boehmer

Figure 1
Gamebird Producers – Top Five Birds Produced

- Pheasant
- Bobwhite quail
- Chukar
- Mallard
- Wild Turkey

Preserves and gamebird farms protect the resources they value without involving state or federal ownership, management or investments. This is accomplished as a private initiative, funded by people with a vested interest in conservation and wise-use of our natural resources.

Conservation Benefits

Even for people who do not visit hunting preserves, such places offer numerous benefits. One primary benefit is that hunting preserves are an oasis for nature and wildlife in otherwise shrinking natural landscapes.

In the mid-1990's, the American Farmland Trust reported approximately 1 million acres of agricultural lands were lost to development each year—lands that can never be restored to their natural state.

However, with demand for quality hunting lands increasing, many landowners are turning to wildlife to realize new sources of income. Many of the acres that were once intensively farmed are being restored and replanted for wildlife.

Hunting preserves are restoring natural habitat to millions of acres of land. This year alone, hunting preserves maintained over **16 million** acres, protecting them from development, protecting wildlife habitat, and keeping the land in the hands of families who have worked it for generations.



Hunting preserves can be considered conservation showcases. Preserves provide a beautiful sight to behold, with acres of flowing native prairie grasses, and mixtures of grain and sorghum for wildlife. Ecologically sound, they improve the delicate balance for wildlife by providing much-needed habitat and feeding grounds.

The average preserve maintains at least half their property in natural or native habitat. They practice wise-use with low-till or no-till farming methods and offer natural water filtration. Preserves plant thousands of trees and maintain ponds that benefit all types of wildlife, game and non-game alike.

John Mullin, Editor of Wildlife Harvest magazine and a recognized expert on hunting preserves and their role in conservation said, “People often comment that visiting a preserve is like turning back the hands of time. They can enjoy hunting as it was in their Grandfather’s day.

“It’s a fact that there is now more wildlife habitat and ‘escape cover’ on a well-managed hunting resort than there is on a **hundred** average farms—after the crops are harvested.” It’s no wonder the preserve concept is growing!

Preserves create natural hunting conditions by restoring the land to what it was 50 years ago when fields held large numbers of wild pheasant and fencerows grew thick with cover. Hunting preserves offer the opportunity for young and old alike to savor the flavor of bird hunting as it once was.

Consumer Benefits

Picture this: it's a beautiful fall day. The air is fresh and crisp, you're walking in a field of bluestem and switchgrass, sunlight sparkling on the seed-heavy tips of the grass. The fields that surround you, ablaze with color, are rich with possibilities. As far as the eye can see, nature abounds. The field is bordered by a fencerow and thickets. Somewhere up ahead a cock pheasant cackles. Where can one experience this ideal setting? This scene can be found at many of the fine hunting preserves throughout the U.S.

Images like this beckon outdoor enthusiasts to take to the fields. It is part of the reason the hunting sports attract 19 million participants each year from all walks of life. However, hunting has changed considerably over the past 30 years. Most hunters hail from urban locations, and do not have readily-available access to favorable hunting lands. Additionally, populations of wild upland gamebirds and waterfowl have been dramatically impacted in many areas by shrinking habitat and population pressures. As a result, hunting preserves have increased tremendously both in numbers and in popularity.

Gamebirds Produce Significant National and Rural Economic Impacts

As the popularity of the gamebird production and hunting preserve industries increase, so have their economic impacts. In 2003, the gamebird farm and hunting preserve industries injected over \$1.6 billion dollars into the Nation's economy, which stimulated nearly **\$5.0 billion** in economic activity (Figure 2). Even government reaps rewards, with \$243 million in Federal income tax revenues produced as a direct result of gamebird and hunting preserve-related commerce.

Significant Economic Benefit

These businesses are especially essential to rural areas. Industry expendi-

tures are predominately infused into economically-poor rural areas of America. Additionally, these businesses bring tourists to those communities. The increased traffic supports many other businesses. These expenditures, listed in Figure 3, create jobs that allow young people to remain in the local area, and keep families on their farms. Mark Klippert, owner of Whistling Wings, Inc, in Hanover, Illinois, describes the process well: "The majority of the customers visiting hunting preserves come from large metropolitan areas, which provide virtually no hunting opportunities. They exchange their 'city money' for



Peggy Boehmer

Figure 2**Economic Impacts of the Gamebird Business (Gamebird-related hunting preserves and Gamebird Producers)**

(Industry expenditures for specific categories plus the resulting economic impacts)

	Industry Expenditures	Multiplier Effect	Salaries, Wages and Farm Profit	Jobs (part and full-time)	Federal Income Tax Receipts
Feed and supplements	\$427,785,612	\$1,479,527,892	\$321,284,731	9,594	\$59,168,370
Wages, salaries, bonuses, and employee benefits	\$248,984,595	\$512,982,960	\$150,585,883	4,955	\$30,557,731
Payments for capital equipment (incubators, vehicles, etc.)	\$47,718,148	\$123,419,382	\$34,840,969	386	\$2,381,717
Payments for capital structures (buildings, pens)	\$149,464,282	\$414,120,687	\$142,872,908	4,125	\$25,441,461
Freight (including boxes and other packing materials)	\$23,394,526	\$71,713,579	\$21,857,505	683	\$4,213,012
Overhead and admin. (rent, interest, accountants, attorneys, etc.)	\$58,486,314	\$112,826,690	\$38,535,055	1,301	\$8,022,657
Medicine and veterinary services	\$36,762,826	\$114,589,729	\$35,023,944	1,294	\$7,980,812
Propane, heating oil and/or other fuels	\$68,512,539	\$164,191,056	\$32,316,831	944	\$5,824,364
Purchase of breeding stock, eggs, chicks or adults	\$203,866,581	\$796,445,571	\$188,107,694	6,748	\$41,616,886
Utilities (electric, phone, city/county water, sewage)	\$86,893,952	\$235,612,952	\$51,762,727	1,225	\$7,556,213
Travel (visit customers, fairs and shows related to gamebirds, etc.)	\$23,394,526	\$56,164,008	\$11,035,015	322	\$1,988,807
Repair and maintenance of buildings, structures and equipment	\$85,222,915	\$274,119,506	\$75,780,216	2,335	\$14,401,327
All insurance	\$61,828,389	\$218,557,173	\$68,870,643	1,818	\$11,210,650
Taxes, licenses and permits (federal, state and county)	\$55,144,239	\$138,519,571	\$36,160,835	1,230	\$7,584,039
Advertising and marketing expenses	\$48,460,089	\$130,624,170	\$44,849,812	1,250	\$7,710,800
Hunting licenses and stamps	\$13,368,300	\$37,611,713	\$9,102,476	259	\$1,599,460
Other (hunter supplies and dogs, habitat maintenance, etc.)	\$31,749,713	\$91,616,395	\$25,224,687	925	\$5,707,101
Total	\$1,671,037,547	\$4,972,643,034	\$1,288,211,931	39,396	\$242,965,409

Figure 3**Annual Operating Expenses for Average Gamebird Producers and Hunting Preserves Offering Gamebirds**

(Includes gamebird-related expenses only – expenses related to non-gamebird business are excluded)

	Hunting Preserves Only (Buys All Birds Elsewhere)	Combined Bird Producer + Hunting Preserves	Bird Producer Only (Does Not Offer Public Hunting)
Feed and supplements	\$21,981	\$38,553	\$49,092
Wages, salaries, bonuses, and employee benefits	\$47,196	\$24,075	\$14,357
Payments for capital equipment (incubators, vehicles, etc.)	\$4,843	\$4,011	\$4,402
Payments for capital structures (buildings, pens)	\$14,077	\$12,224	\$14,862
Freight (including boxes and other packing materials)	\$688	\$1,561	\$3,209
Overhead and admin. (rent, interest, accountants, attorneys, etc.)	\$11,489	\$6,544	\$3,264
Medicine and veterinary services	\$4,266	\$3,146	\$3,666
Propane, heating oil and/or other fuels	\$7,430	\$5,732	\$6,693
Purchase of breeding stock, eggs, chicks or adults	\$41,417	\$21,032	\$12,429
Utilities (electric, phone, city/county water, sewage)	\$9,976	\$8,084	\$8,080
Travel (visit customers, fairs and shows related to gamebirds, etc.)	\$2,718	\$2,185	\$2,248
Repair and maintenance of buildings, structures and equipment	\$14,620	\$7,501	\$6,826
All insurance	\$13,278	\$7,430	\$3,106
Taxes, licenses and permits (Fed, state and county)	\$10,285	\$5,257	\$3,909
Advertising and marketing expenses	\$12,246	\$5,518	\$2,252
Hunting licenses and stamps	\$3,027	\$1,634	\$528
Other (hunter supplies and dogs, habitat maintenance, etc.)	\$7,497	\$405	\$2,494
Total	\$227,036	\$154,892	\$141,418

“Quite simply, the public desire for hunting and other outdoor recreational opportunities increasingly exceeds the amount of land available for such activities. ...Private-enterprise has stepped up to fill that demand. Hunting resorts and other private enterprises fill that void nicely.”

Senator Kent Conrad (D-ND)

the rustic preserve experience. The preserve very quickly spends this money purchasing renewable resources from rural-based gamebird farms. The gamebird farm then infuses the majority of that money in the local economy, replenishing their stock. Money is spent locally on payroll and products.”

The largest investment for most producers is the money they spend to purchase feed from regional feed companies. The feed company in turn has to purchase millions of bushels of corn, soybeans, and wheat to produce their feed products. This is one small example of the large financial impact this industry provides rural America. Figure 4 highlights the rural benefits of gamebird producers and hunting preserves.

In addition, many hunting preserves provide benefits beyond hunting. Many hunting preserves generate income year-round, using their natural and scenic qualities as a setting for business and social gatherings. Many more offer year-round multi-functional recreational opportunities to attract outdoor enthusiasts from across the country, infusing the local economies with money that travels in for unique recreational, business and social experiences (Figure 5).

Figure 4

Percentage of annual expenses spent within the local community	54.9%
Average number of annual guests to hunting preserves	1,585
Average percentage of annual guests from out-of-state	40.9%
Employment	
Average full time employees per operation, including family	5
Average part time employees per operation, including family	3
Percentage of labor provided by family members	64%

Figure 5
Income Sources for Gamebird Producers and Gamebird-Related Hunting Preserves (Reports Percent of Producers and Hunting Preserves Involved in Each Activity)

Sell eggs	30.0%
Sell chicks (all birds less than adult)	41.9%
Sell adult birds	70.4%
Operate a fee hunting operation using birds produced or native birds	31.9%
Operate a fee hunting operation using birds bought from others	39.5%
Other hunting (<i>non-gamebird</i> related hunting)	29.6%
Kennel operator	27.0%
Sporting Clays Operator, Skeet, or Trap	27.3%
Other non-gamebird recreation (wildlife viewing, fishing, golf, etc.)	20.8%
Sell gamebirds for human consumption (in raw or processed form)	31.4%
Lodging	22.8%
Special events, meeting facilities, etc.	28.1%
Other activities not listed above	10.2%

Ours is a business that has as its foundation respect for the land and its inhabitants.

Stewards of the Land

As stewards of the land, gamebird producers and hunting preserves know the majesty of wildlife and wilderness. We respect the game we take and appreciate the opportunity to continue our time-honored occupation.

Ours is a business that has as its foundation respect for the land and its inhabitants. It involves ecologically sound practices and responsible care of the land and water. It is based on the wise use of renewable resources. In addition, it boosts the economy, creating jobs and opportunities for rural families.

The gamebird and hunting preserve industry is vitally important to the future of rural lands, of wildlife, and of the Nation's economy. Together we can ensure a better quality of life for ourselves and future generations.



Peggy Boehmer



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Lee Kamey/USFWS

Role of NAGA and NAGF

A non-profit trade association, the North American Gamebird Association (NAGA) has been helping gamebird producers and hunting preserve operators for over 70 years, representing and protecting their interests by working with agricultural administrators, wildlife managers and other government officials at the local, state and federal level. Affiliated members and businesses work together to solve mutual problems and improve conditions for the entire industry.

NAGA is leading the field in providing the highest quality wildlife habitat, land restoration and recreational experiences for generations to come.

NAGA is dedicated to promoting, protecting and improving the gamebird and hunting preserve industries, and promoting strong ethics and *standards of excellence* for its members. A strong NAGA will help secure a healthy future for rural families and for habitat supported by hunting. For more information visit their website at www.naga.org.

The non-profit North American Gamebird Foundation (NAGF) has been created to undertake research and educational projects related to conservation, wildlife management and the gamebird breeding and hunting preserve industries.

Although the North American Gamebird Association has been around for over 70 years, its core foundation has been around since the birth of our country. As this great country continues its technological advances and urban sprawl expansion, it is critical that we as a nation remember our rural heritage.

For more information, please contact the:

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