

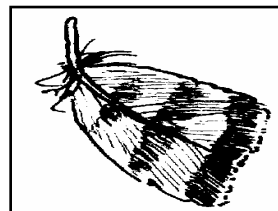


MINNESOTA PRAIRIE CHICKEN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 48 No. 3 Summer 2022

From The Editor

Greetings to all our Prairie Chicken and Prairie enthusiasts! Can you feel it? “Its” in the air; mostly in the mornings and evenings but It is there and palpable to even the feeblest of human senses ... FALL is coming to the northern Prairies! For many of our members Fall is the grandest of all our wonderful seasons. For those of us lucky enough to be near native Prairie tracts the colors of late Summer and early Fall are a well known tapestry; the distant copper of headed-out Big Bluestem and Indian grass dotted with the brilliant yellows of Maximilian and Stiff sunflowers and various goldenrods touched with ridiculous “brush strokes” of pinkish-purple called Dense, Rough and Meadow blazingstars. Upon entering the grassland one immediately starts seeing other colors presented by plant species of lower height; such as Fringed gentians, Bottle gentians, Sneezeweed, Mountain mint and New England aster. The air literally smells of Mountain mint and the entire scene is unforgettable. The abundant Spring rains of 2022 have created incredible life on our late Summer Prairies so get out there and enjoy these amazing habitats! RHH



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Little Boomer and Big Boomer Get A “Touch-up” On Their Plumages by Ross H. Hier

On the 28th of June, I made the trip from Crookston down to Rothsay; “The Prairie Chicken Capital of Minnesota”. The citizens of that fair town that sits along I-94 between Moorhead and Fergus Falls have long had a strong connection to Prairies and Prairie Chickens. Under the direction and building skills of the late Art Fosse, Rothsay constructed not one but 2 monuments in honor of Prairie Chickens. The first, Big Boomer (built in 1975), is impossible to miss if you exit off I-94 and drive into Rothsay. It is a permanent, mammoth-sized male Prairie Chicken in “full booming mode”. Some of you will remember that in 2008, a group of MPCS Board members and students and professor from Concordia University (Moorhead), gave Big Boomer an entirely new plumage (see MPCS Newsletter Vol. 47-No. 3, 2021). Little Boomer (built in 1976 and refurbished in 2021 by Rothsay City personnel) is about Volkswagon Beetle-sized and stands atop a sturdy trailer such that he can “display” while being led through Rothsay or other nearby towns during various celebration parades/events. After the refurbishments were completed in 2021, Little Boomer received an entirely new plumage through the efforts of Bd members Brian Winter, Doug Hedtke and your Editor. He looked great until he got a little too ambitious during “booming” and smacked the top of his head on the back of the pick-up that was towing him. No worries though, Eric Larson and the crack team who work for the City of Rothsay had repaired his anatomy by early Spring 2022. So, on that gorgeous June day, my 3 dogs sat and patiently watched me repaint Little Boomer’s head. It didn't take too long so I decided to touch-up Big Boomer’s neck sacs and combs while I was in Rothsay. Those parts hold the brightest colors which after 14 years had started to fade a bit.

While I was on my ladder, 3 vehicles stopped at Big Boomer to look and read about Prairie Chickens and the Rothsay area. One couple, from New Jersey, were ecstatic to have their photo taken next to Big Boomer as the wife of the couple had read somewhere about this Midwest creation.

I appreciate the efforts and friendly banter of Eric Larson and his crew. They are so easy to work with on projects like this. Before I left town, I fed my dogs and then myself ... opting for a large slice of Banana Cream pie and a glass of milk at the Rothsay Café and Truck Stop. The pie did not disappoint!



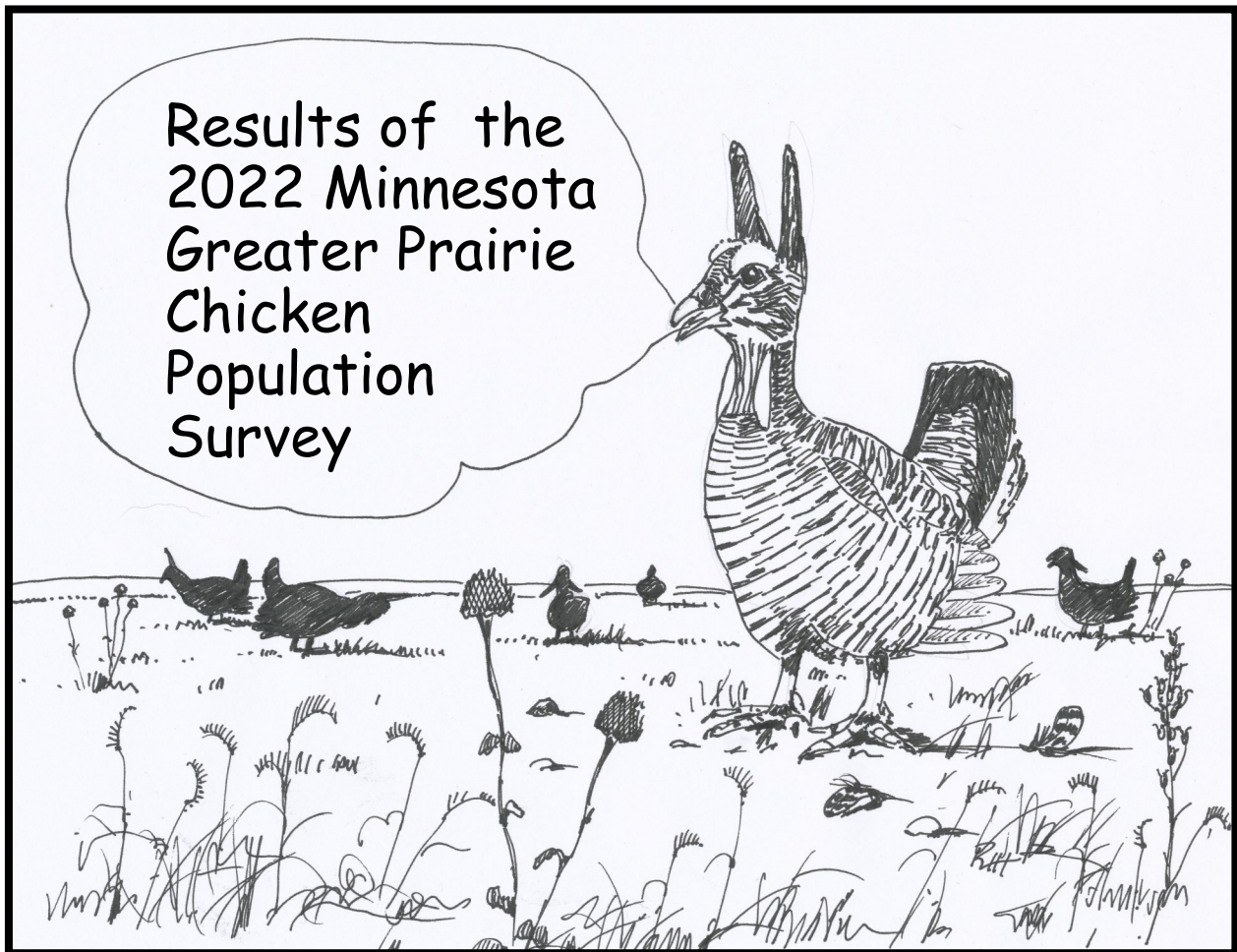
Big Boomer “Before and After” the touch-up of his neck sacs and combs on 28 June 2022.



Jodie “Yours For Grouse” Provost Keeping Her Hands on the Cryptic Feathers of All Things Grouse

Jodie Provost recently completed a long and stellar career with MNDNR’s Section of Wildlife. During that era of her life, she was (and still is) a major catalyst for projects benefitting Sharp-tailed grouse and Great Prairie Chickens. She and her husband Tom (recently retired as a Conservation Officer with MNDNR) have left Minnesota for her home state of North Dakota. However, Jodie is continuing to be heavily involved in grouse management ... grouse and their habitats are feeling good knowing that’s the case! She started working part-time last October as Communications Director for North American Grouse Partnership (NAGP). NAGP’s mission is conservation of all 12 grouse species in North America with current emphasis on prairie grouse because of the great losses in grassland and shrubland habitats. With a personality just the opposite of “grousey”, Jodie has taken her new role on with gusto, big smiles and an appetite to learn and interface. She noted she never thought she’d learn to manage a website, Facetime page and Instagram. Her duties are varied; ranging from overseeing membership, maintaining social media outlets to get the word out on key grouse conservation efforts, providing input on policy and advocating for it, assisting NAGP Board members and fellow staff, and building numerous relationships and collaborating with partners on projects such as the Lesser Prairie Chicken Landowner Alliance. Jodie has long understood grouse species are charismatic ambassadors for a wide range of habitats in North America and can be used to initiate and complete many habitat projects. She looks forward to continued work with MPCs. For more information on NAGP, go to <http://www.grousepartners.org>.

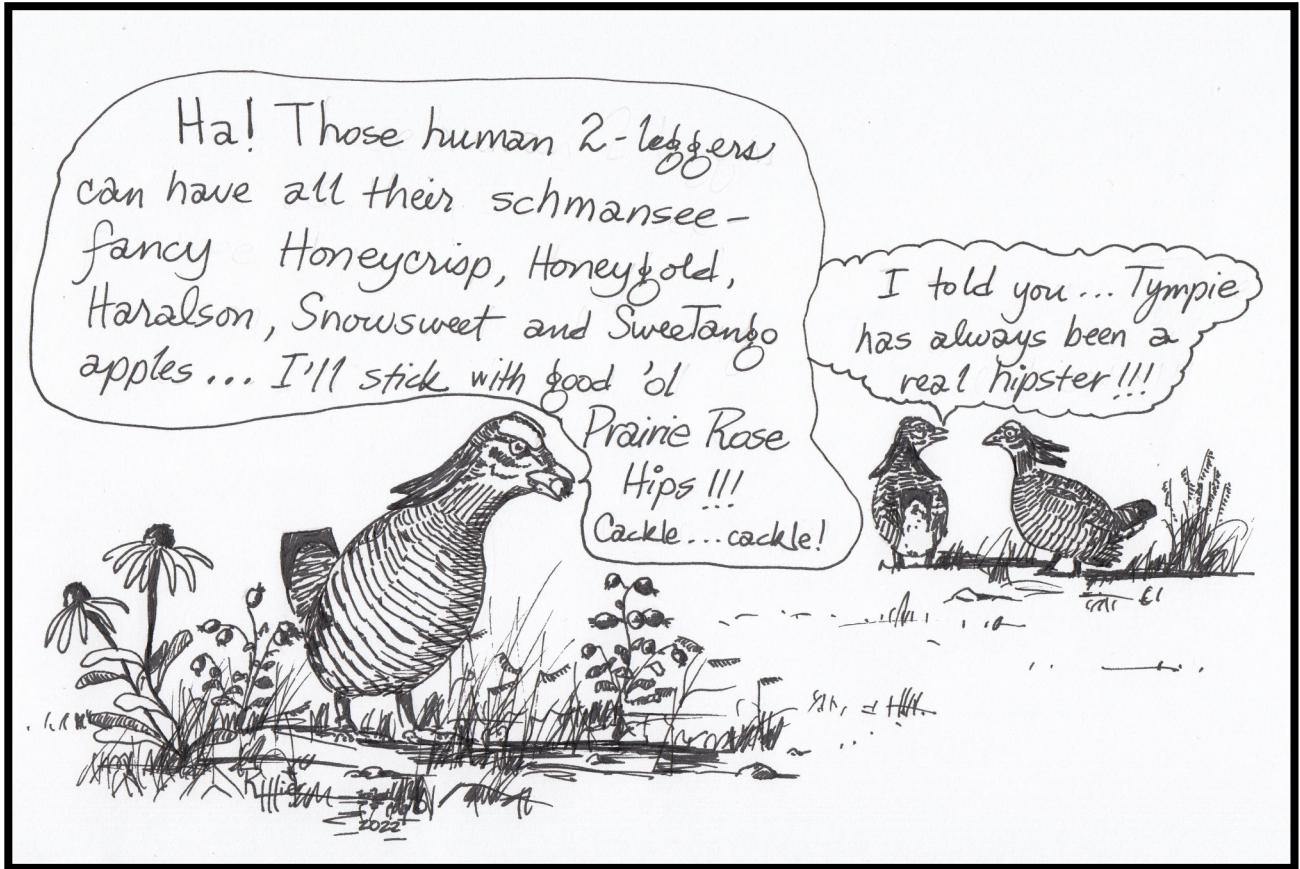




MNDNR's Grouse Biologist, Dr. Charlotte Roy, has summarized the 2022 survey efforts of Greater Prairie Chickens. Conditions (extremely consistent, strong winds) were difficult for those counting chickens throughout the entire range. However, professionals and volunteers persevered and completed all 17 survey blocks and areas beyond them. In the survey blocks, observers located 50 booming grounds and counted 606 males and birds of unknown sex. Including areas surveyed outside the blocks, observers located 120 booming grounds. Total number of males counted was 1,336 along with 37 birds of unknown sex. Within the survey blocks, estimated densities of booming grounds was 0.07 grounds /sq km (0.05-0.10) while males/booming ground equaled 12.1 (9.6-14.6). Both data sets were similar to density ranges during recent years and during the 10 years that preceded modern hunting seasons (i.e., 1993-2002).

The Adventures of Tympie Nuchus

By Ross H. Hier



Pieces of the Prairie



The Prairie Rose (*Rosa arkansana*), is a common wild flower throughout the northern plains. It is a mid-summer bloomer with its variable-colored flowers seen from June into July. The typical flower color is a rich pink but plants may show flowers ranging from white to very pale pink or “rose” colored. By late summer, it shows itself to human prairie walkers in the form of blood-red “rose hips”. These “little prairie apples” are an important food for Greater Prairie Chickens, Sharp-tailed grouse and other birds and mammals. Native People ate the rose hips as an emergency food but also used much of the plant in various ways ranging from eating fresh flower petals to steeping leaves for a tea to drying petals as a perfume. Early Europeans used the hips as a source of Vitamins A and C.



MPCS Board Members

(Updated 25 March 2022)

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Director At Large: Terry Wolfe and Dan Svedarsky			
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Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society Membership

Your gift membership will help! Any tax deductible contribution or donation will bring you the MPCS Newsletter and supports the Society's efforts to save Minnesota's prairie chickens and their habitats. Renew your membership today!

The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization exempt from Federal Income tax as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions made to the Society are deductible by donors as provided in Section 170 of the Code. The Society's Federal Identification number is #41-1327954.

- I would like to make a membership contribution.
 I would like to contribute to Prairie Chicken Habitat Improvement.
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Or RENEW ONLINE with PayPal at: <https://www.prairiechickens.org/donate>

Name:

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MPCS Newsletters Now Electronic

After a slow transition period from direct mailing to electronic newsletters, the board has decided to post all newsletters on the newly updated website. Newsletters will now be posted as a .pdf file and be in full color. We recognize that some members may still want to receive direct mailings so please contact Travis for direct mailing. The newsletters posted on the website will allow members to read past newsletters and share them with family, colleagues, educational institutions, or other conservation partners.

Take a look.

www.prairiechickens.org

