

Pheasant season opens Saturday

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Not since the 1960s has the pheasant crow count been this high. There will be plenty of places to hunt this year with the Walk-in Access Program.

This year there are 21,685 leased acres in Phillips County and 12,000+ leased acres in Sedgwick County. Of these leased acres, the Phillips County Pheasants Forever Chapter paid for 4,587 acres in Phillips County and 4,867 acres in Sedgwick County.

A big concern this year is that the corn harvest is just starting. Farmers will be in the field and on the road with their harvested crops. Hunters need to be respectful of them by not blocking the county roads and always parking as close to the edge of the road as possible. Also, farmers don't appreciate hunters that stand on the end of their field and wait for the combine to push the pheasants out of the corn. This is considered an unlawful use of a motor vehicle to hunt wildlife. Not only is this unlawful, it also creates some ethical concerns. Also, hunters can't legally ride on a combine to hunt either.

The Walk-in Access Program is a self funded program. The purchase of the \$20 permit is required for any hunter, age 19-64. In order to determine how many youth use the Walk-in Program, all youth under age 18 are required to have a free youth Walk-in permit with them when hunting on the Walk-in Access properties. Those hunters without the permit will not be allowed to hunt the enrolled acres. It's very important that hunters read the first two pages of the access book. In order to maintain good landowner/hunter relations, don't hunt on leased fields depicted in the atlas unless you also see Walk-in Access Program signs posted on the boundaries. Permits can be purchased at any license agent.

The Ring-neck Pheasant daily bag limit is three roosters, with a possession limit of nine. The Bobwhite Quail daily bag limit is eight with a possession limit of 24. Chukar Partridge daily bag limit is four with a possession limit of 12 birds. In Eastern Colorado, the Pheasant season will end on Jan. 31, 2010, Bobwhite Quail season will end on Jan. 3, 2010 and Chukar season will end Nov. 22. Wildlife thieves affect your hunting and success. Sportsmen should always report any wildlife violation to Jack Wieland at 854-3512, Phillips County Sheriff's Office at 854-3644 or the Sedgwick County Sheriff's Office at 474-3355. They will contact a wildlife officer in the field.