

Frequently Asked Questions About the Pheasant Restoration Initiative

What is the Michigan Pheasant Restoration Initiative (MPRI)?

The MPRI is a conservation initiative to develop public-private cooperatives that improve habitat for pheasants and other wildlife on a landscape level. The MPRI works by acquiring state and federal resources to assist landowner cooperatives in improving wildlife habitat on their property.

How did the MPRI get started?

A collection of state and national conservation organizations with local, state and federal agencies agreed that prioritizing habitat development on public and private land for game-birds and small game would increase hunting opportunity and assist in hunter recruitment efforts.

Is the MPRI a statewide initiative?

The MPRI is focused on three priority areas that have the highest potential for providing exceptional pheasant habitat. Those areas are Gratiot, Saginaw and Clinton counties; Huron, Tuscola and Sanilac counties; and Hillsdale, Lenawee and Monroe counties.

How can I get involved?

There is information on our website, www.michigan.gov/pheasant about how to form a neighborhood cooperative.

How much land do you have to have in order to form a cooperative?

Out of a 10,000-acre area, neighborhood pheasant cooperatives need to provide 1,500 to 2,000 acres of habitat. State, federal and local agency staff will provide technical assistance to each cooperative to evaluate existing habitat and make recommendations for habitat improvements to meet the cooperative's habitat goals.

Does it cost anything to form a cooperative?

The only thing participation in the MPRI costs you is the time and commitment required to form a cooperative and make the habitat improvements needed to see more wildlife on your property. Some specific improvements may have a cost associated with them, yet many government programs exist to defray the costs of making habitat investments on your property.

How will habitat improvements occur?

The neighborhood cooperative is a way of coordinating habitat improvements across a landscape to provide the mix of habitats needed to improve pheasant abundance. Coupling cooperative habitats with improvements in state land habitats will provide the full range of habitat types utilized by pheasants in each stage of their life cycle, contributing to an overall increase in pheasant abundance.

What resources are available to help get this work done?

In addition to the technical assistance provided by staff from various agencies and MPRI partners, we will also work to leverage federal and state programs to fund habitat projects in the cooperatives. Other partners will assist to identify sources of material for habitat work.

How did you select the priority areas?

Habitat models were developed by DNRE Wildlife Division staff to identify areas where pheasants have greatest potential to respond to habitat improvements. Those three-county areas represented high potential for great habitat and have substantial state game area property within each of them.

What if I live outside of a priority area?

If you live outside of a priority area, but have been able to form a cooperative based upon the acreage requirements of the initiative, we'd love to work with you. Just contact us using the information below and we'd be happy to work with your cooperative.

Will there be a release of wild birds?

Subject to the availability of wild birds and the conditions in each cooperative, wild pheasants can be released in cooperatives where MPRI habitat objectives have been met and a release will assist in jump-starting population response.

Will there be a refuge area or a closed season in the priority areas for pheasants?

At this time, no season closures are being recommended for pheasants.

Is the initiative just an effort to grow game for hunting?

There is no doubt that the MPRI is designed to expand hunter opportunity, but the goals of the MPRI extend well beyond this. Improving the quality of habitat on public and private land will benefit not only pheasants but a wide variety of game and non-game species. Conversion of croplands to grasslands and wetlands will benefit soil and water conservation and can sequester carbon, helping to mitigate climate change.

Hunting and hunters have been critical to the rehabilitation of wildlife habitat and the recovery of all kinds of wildlife - both game and non-game. We know that providing habitats is the single most important factor in providing for abundant wildlife, *so even if you are not a hunter, you can contribute to wildlife conservation by becoming involved in a cooperative and improving habitat on your land.*

How can I get more information?

Just ask! Contact your local Conservation District and visit the Michigan Pheasants Restoration Initiative web page at www.michigan.gov/pheasant for additional details.