

Dept. of Natural Resources: Collaborative ruffed grouse restoration efforts underway in northern Wisconsin to translocate up to 300 grouse to Missouri over three- year period

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MADISON - Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff and the Missouri Department of Conservation will collaborate on ruffed grouse restoration efforts to translocate 300 ruffed grouse from northern Wisconsin to the River Hills region of east-central Missouri over a three-year period (2018-2020).

Ruffed grouse are a native species in Missouri, but their numbers have declined precipitously over the last several decades as forests have aged. Extensive habitat management has been conducted in the River Hills region of Missouri to maximize success. Missouri Department of Conservation has laid out a long-term plan to continue to create and maintain young forest habitat for grouse into the future.

Trapping will occur in Lincoln, Price, Sawyer, Taylor, and Rusk counties. Trapping pressure will be spread across county and state-managed properties to minimize any localized impacts. Trapping will occur from Aug. 15 to Sept.15, with an option to extend trapping activities if the annual capture goal (100 birds per year over three years) is not reached.

Translocation efforts involving 100 birds annually over a three-year period represent 0.05% of the 2017 estimated ruffed grouse harvest. Translocation efforts are not expected to have any impacts on the statewide ruffed grouse population.

The Missouri Department of Conservation will provide Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources with a donation that will be used to create early-successional forest habitat in the areas where grouse trapping will occur. This work will benefit grouse and other wildlife species that depend on early-successional forest habitat.

Translocation of wildlife among states is commonly used to establish or bolster wildlife populations. Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and Missouri Department of Conservation are continuing a long-standing partnership, as Missouri provided Wisconsin with the original turkeys used to reestablish their now thriving turkey population.