

All About Grouse: Little birds that are a big deal

Recreational property buyers often narrow their land search by seeking out tracts with quality deer habitats. But in many cases, that isn't all hunters are looking for – they often also want a property that's conducive for hunting grouse.

Grouse, popular with hunters across the North, is a hardy bird that can survive in areas where other birds, such as pheasants and turkey, are not able to get through the winter.



So what makes a property attractive for this popular game bird? Basically, a quality grouse habitat will have younger trees and plenty of vegetation and brush, along with an abundance of trails.

“Grouse like to be in areas on the edges of logging roads and paths,” says Charlie Chernak of [Bear Island Land Co.](#) in Ely, Minn., part of the Potlatch Preferred Broker Network. “You won't find them in places with big timber and no understory.”

Hunters need only reflective gear, a shotgun and the appropriate hunting license to hunt grouse. Opportunities occur when the grouse come out in the open in a flush after being startled, so hunters need to be ready to react quickly to have success. To help prepare, consider practicing your shotgun skills ahead of time. Learn what grouse in your area are eating, so you can spot potential spots where you will find them. And as you start to hunt a certain area, keep a log of your activities to help you find the best spots more quickly. (These are among the quality tips included in an [article](#) by outdoor writer Steve Galea on the Bass Pro Shops website.)

Many Potlatch recreational properties in the North – which often include areas that have been harvested for timber in recent years – can be excellent for grouse hunting. And to make some of its Minnesota properties even more attractive for grouse hunters – and for recreation in general – Potlatch is grubbing out trails in a number of locations, making it easier for hunters to access grouse areas from a four-wheeler.

“If a property has trails, one thing that grouse hunters find is a big help is to seed the trails with clover,” Chernak says. “Just use a handheld spreader to put out seeds, something you can do off the back of a four-wheeler.”



Hunters find that grouse makes for an excellent meal, tasting much like chicken. But there is one key part of cooking grouse – keeping the meat moist. “You can dry grouse out very quickly if you aren't careful as you are cooking,” Chernak says. “One thing we like to do is to cook ‘em up in a mushroom sauce.”

In many areas of the South, meanwhile, a variety of factors have dramatically reduced the population of game birds over the years, says [Potlatch Preferred Broker Tom Smith](#). So while some property owners go to great lengths to create habitats for bird populations, hunting for birds – such as quail – has taken a back seat to other activities in states like Alabama and Mississippi. And certainly, there are extensive opportunities for deer and turkey hunters in both states.

Wherever you are looking for property, [Potlatch brokers](#) are experts in what goes into a quality hunting tract, and can talk about grouse, deer, food plots, water sources and everything involved in finding the perfect hunting property for you.