



The Wildlife Society
The Kansas Chapter

Promoting Excellence in Wildlife Stewardship through Science and Education

02 February 2026

Position on proposed House Bill 2547:

On behalf of the Kansas Chapter of The Wildlife Society (KCTWS), an organization whose members are respected land managers, biologists, administrators, researchers, and educators in Kansas, we write to convey our position to HB 2547. Based on the available science within the wildlife profession, and the failed history of releasing pen-reared upland game birds as an effective management tool, we are against language within the bill that establishes an upland game bird stamp where all fees acquired from sales of this stamp fund “the procurement and release of upland game birds within the state of Kansas”.

The release of pen-raised upland birds (e.g., ring-necked pheasants) is not an effective strategy to increase populations of upland bird species. There is no evidence in the scientific literature that suggests this is a viable or effective strategy to increase population abundance. In fact, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) shut down all upland bird hatcheries by the mid-20th century because the scientific research indicated that releasing pen-raised upland birds was not an effective way to restore wild ring-necked pheasant populations. This position has also been upheld and advocated by the National Wild Pheasant Technical Committee and Pheasants Forever.

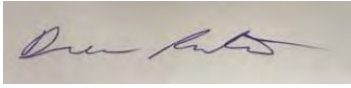
Upland game bird declines across Kansas, and elsewhere in the Great Plains, are due to loss and degradation of good-quality habitat. Peer-reviewed scientific literature indicates that a recent decrease in CRP acres and changes to using chemical fallow farming practices have resulted in habitat loss. Releasing large numbers of pen-reared upland game birds into available habitat would 1) increase competition for food and cover with wild upland game birds, 2) introduce an increased potential for disease into wild game bird populations, and 3) could potentially exceed the funds generated from an upland game bird hunting stamp. When financial resources are available to enhance efforts for population recovery, they should be used in an effective and science-informed manner. If an upland game bird stamp is established, proceeds would have a greater and more durable impact on Kansas wild upland game bird populations if they were allocated to upland game bird habitat enhancement.

The intended outcomes of this bill are commendable. We support enhancing upland game bird populations in Kansas and are in favor of increasing opportunities for hunters if KDWP biologists recommend that populations can sustain the appropriate hunting pressure. Moreover, we are also in favor of increasing opportunities for youth and new hunters. Fortunately, Kansas already has ample opportunities for hunters to pursue pen-reared upland game birds (e.g., ring-necked pheasant, Northern bobwhite quail, chukar). In fact, small businesses in Kansas released ~375,000 pheasants last year for hunters (with only ~50% of those reported as harvested) on nearly 135,000 acres of controlled shooting areas. Many out-of-state hunters come to Kansas, and many residents stay in Kansas, to chase wild birds for an authentic and challenging hunt. Widespread release of pen-raised pheasants on public lands in Kansas could degrade the authenticity of the hunting experience, leading some hunters to go elsewhere.

In short, KCTWS does not support HB 2547. As stated above, the intended outcome of this bill is commendable. However, based on the peer-reviewed scientific research on this specific topic, and the many failed attempts to release upland game birds as a tool to increase population sizes, KCTWS is against HB 2547. Our stance is that available resources, including any resources generated from an upland

game bird hunting stamp, should be used to increase the amount of quality habitat for upland game birds in Kansas. This approach will ensure that we strategically provide habitat for self-sustaining populations of upland game birds for future Kansans.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Drew Ricketts", on a light-colored rectangular background.

Drew Ricketts, President
The Kansas Chapter of the Wildlife Society