

**Fiscal Services Division**  
**Legislative Services Agency**  
**Fiscal Note**

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SF 558 - Game Bird Habitat Development Program (LSB 2216 SZ)  
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Fiscal Note Version – As Passed by the Senate Ways and Means Committee

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**Description**

Senate File 558 creates the Game Bird Habitat Development Program and increases the wildlife habitat fee from \$8.00 to \$11.00. The \$3.00 fee increase will be distributed to the Program and allocated for the following:

- Two dollars to the Game Bird Wetlands Conservation Account. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will accumulate the funds until the account reaches \$1.0 million or to an amount that will qualify for matching federal funding under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. The DNR will apply for the matching federal funds, and once obtained, the money will be used for wetlands projects that develop game bird habitat in areas that are accessible for public hunting.
- One dollar to the new Game Bird Buffer Strip Assistance Account. The DNR will accumulate funds for a five-year period. At that time, the DNR will have developed procedures detailing buffer strip project eligibility requirements for the establishment of game bird habitat. Funding will be used to develop buffer strip projects that will develop game bird habitat areas that are accessible for public hunting. Landowners will receive cost share assistance for improvement projects that may or may not be eligible for matching federal funds. The Bill also specifies the DNR can use funds to publicize this Program.
- The DNR may use a portion of the funds to pay administrative expenditures related to the Program.

**Background**

Game birds refer to birds that are hunted for sport. The DNR estimates there are 140,000 resident and 40,000 non-resident pheasant hunters in Iowa. Although the Department manages 300,000 acres of public hunting areas, there remains 34.0 million acres in private land. The DNR estimates that between 700,000 and 750,000 pheasants were harvested during the 2006 hunting season.

The Bill increases the habitat fee and uses the fee increase to encourage private landowners to develop conservation wetlands or buffer strips that will be accessible for public hunting of game birds. Wetlands are land areas that are covered by water some or all of the time that reduce flooding and soil erosion. They also provide habitat areas for game birds and provide food and shelter for migrating birds. Buffer strips are small strips of land that have permanent vegetation designed to slow down water runoff and trap sediment, nutrients, and pesticides from farm fields. Buffer strips reduce noise and odor and provide food, nesting cover, and shelter for game birds.

**Assumptions**

- The DNR estimates they will sell 236,000 wildlife habitat fees.
- The additional \$3.00 will generate \$707,000 per year to the Fish and Game Protection Fund.

- Two-thirds of the funding or \$471,000 will be allocated to the Game Bird Wetlands Conservation Account and one-third or \$236,000 will be allocation to the Game Bird Buffer Strip Assistance Account.

**Fiscal Impact**

The fiscal impact of SF 558 is an increase in revenue to the Fish and Game Protection Fund of approximately \$707,000 per year beginning in FY 2007. The funds will be allocated with \$471,000 for the Game Bird Wetlands Conservation Account and \$236,000 to the Game Bird Buffer Strip Assistance Account.

**Source**

Department of Natural Resources

/s/ Holly M. Lyons

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March 20, 2007

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The fiscal note and correctional impact statement for this bill was prepared pursuant to Joint Rule 17 and pursuant to Section 2.56, Code of Iowa. Data used in developing this fiscal note and correctional impact statement are available from the Fiscal Services Division, Legislative Services Agency to members of the Legislature upon request.

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