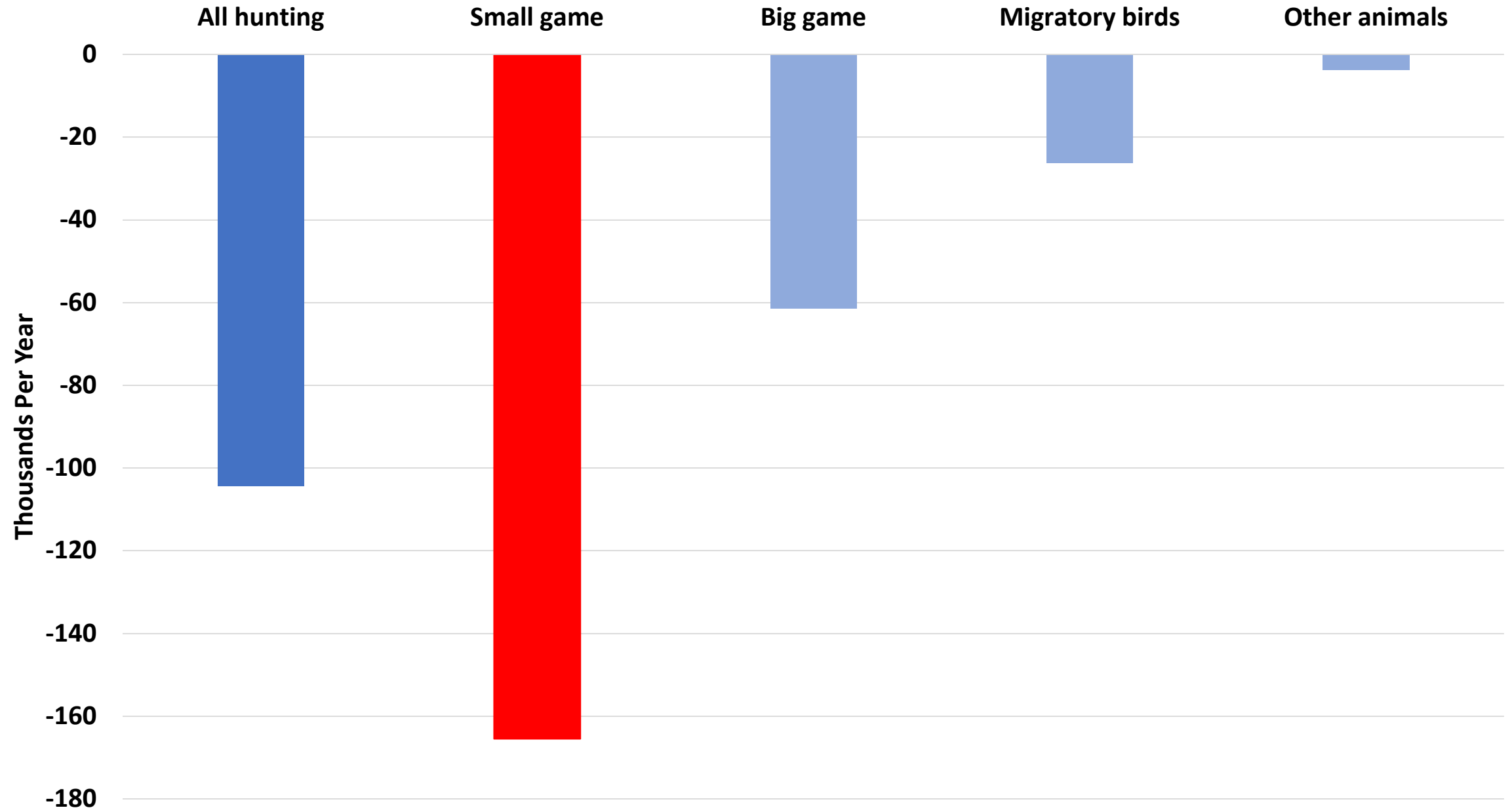


Average Annual Change in Hunter Participation, 1991-2016



AFWA Resolution 2019-05-10

Whereas...

- Small game hunter participation is in sharp decline,
- Small game hunting license revenue remains important,
- Small game hunting creates an impetus for upland habitat conservation,
- Small game-based NGOs are important agency partners,
- Data on small game hunter participation are sparse,
- Current national R3 plans do not identify a specific need to focus on small game hunter participation, and
- Achieving the goals of the National Hunting and Shooting Sports Plan is unlikely without formulating a response to small game hunter participation declines

Be it resolved that...

- The small game hunter participation decline is a national conservation concern, and
- The sponsoring committees should present a prioritized list of key questions or issues and recommended steps for subsequent actions to the AFWA Directors



Small Game R3 Resolution “Working Group”

Hunting/Shooting Sports Participation Committee representatives

- Matt Dunfee – Wildlife Management Institute
- Micaela Rahe – National Wild Turkey Federation / Nebraska GPC

Bird Conservation Committee (RGBWG) representatives

- Shaun Oldenburger – Texas Department of Wildlife and Parks
- Billy Dukes – South Carolina Department of Natural Resources
- Scott Taylor – Pheasants Forever / MAFWA

Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies representative

- Gordon Batcheller – NEAFWA Executive Secretary



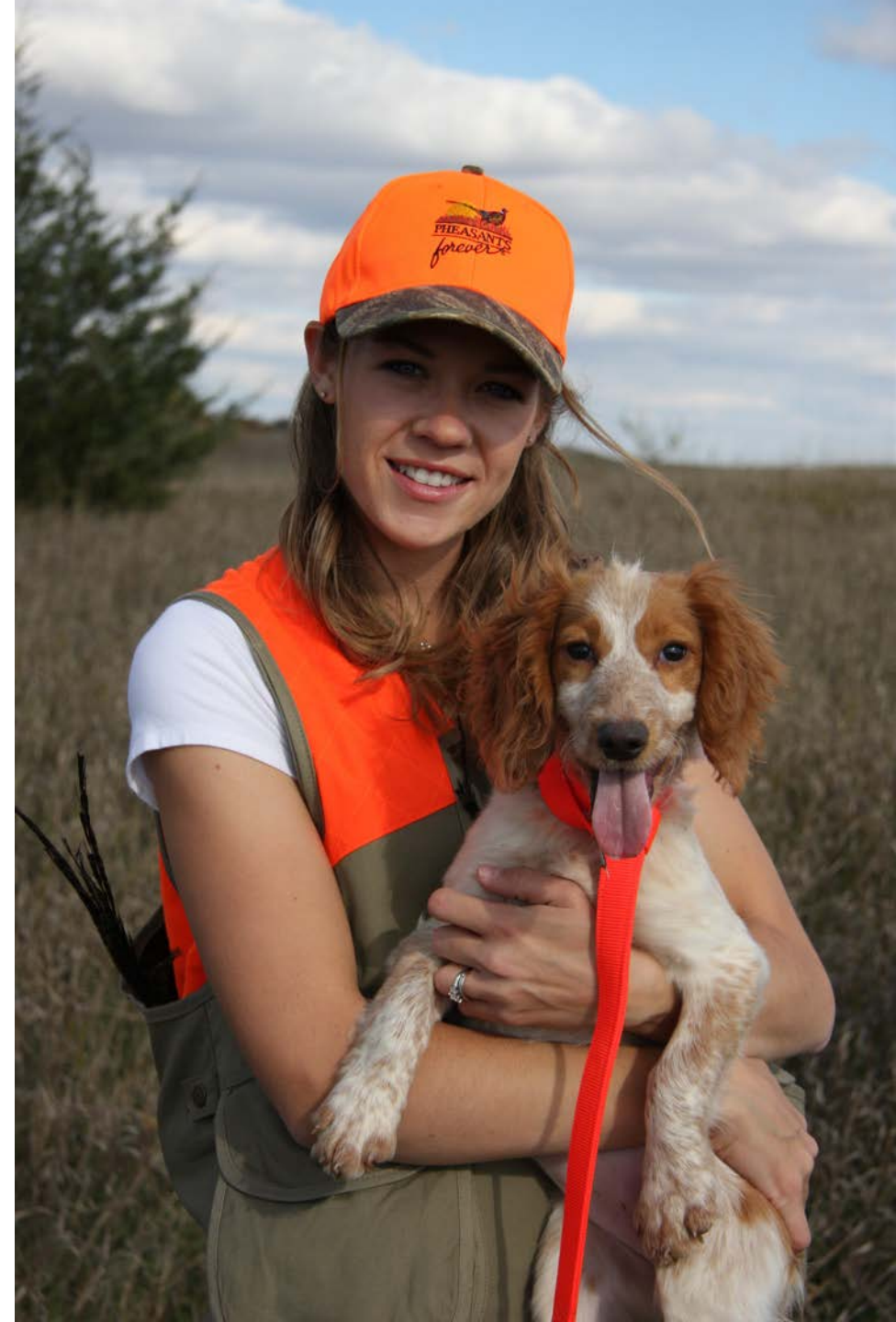
Key Questions and Issues

1. Given current hunter demographics and participation trends, how many U.S. small game hunters are there likely to be in 10, 20, and 30 years?
2. Besides agency revenue, which is in theory replaceable, what else is lost as small game hunters decline? Is there anything indispensable that can't be supported through other types of hunting?
3. If participation declines continue, at what point are current hunter-supported NGO contributions to state conservation programs likely to be compromised?
4. How influential are game abundance and land access to small game hunter retention, recruitment and reactivation, relative to other factors and to each other?
5. From an industry perspective, why is there an apparent shortage of marketing toward small game hunters? Is the customer base lacking, or does the sport (compared with big game and waterfowl hunting, for example) not lend itself as well to developing and marketing new products?
6. What legislative or policy changes could help states mitigate or adapt to declining small game hunter participation?
7. What interventions have states taken to maintain small game hunter participation, which interventions have been adequately evaluated, and which have proven to be most cost effective?



Recommended Actions (Draft; unprioritized)

- Strongly encourage continuation of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Related Recreation such that measures of national small game hunter participation and demographics are maintained for direct comparison to those from previous surveys.
- Sponsor a forum of representatives from the hunting industry, small game hunting-related NGOs, and AFWA committee representatives to discuss the relevance of small game hunter declines, marketing challenges, and potential cooperative actions that could be taken to stabilize participation.
- Sponsor cooperation among agencies and relevant AFWA committees to 1) compile and synthesize relevant literature and unpublished state-level analyses about factors affecting small game hunter participation, including R3 program evaluations; 2) gather, organize, and maintain available state-collected data on small game hunter participation, demographics, success, access, R3 interventions, and small game species abundance; and 3) perform multi-state analyses to reveal relative effects of these factors on small game hunter retention, recruitment, and reactivation.



- Solicit feedback from state directors about what types of hunters (categorized by the species they pursue) are their agency's highest priority to retain, recruit, and reactivate, then make the responses readily available to relevant AFWA committees, working groups, members, and staff so that future activities can be prioritized accordingly.
- Sponsor a forum of relevant AFWA committees and working groups to discuss potential policy interventions addressing the problem of maintaining game management programs as hunter participation declines, including statute changes allowing the voluntary creation of state-controlled, interest-bearing game management trust funds, with non-federal contributions to such funds being eligible for PR reimbursement.
- Comments? staylor@pheasantsforever.org

