

GOT SAGE-GROUSE ?



Need Habitat ?

www.utahcbcp.org

*Morgan-Summit Adaptive Management Resource Group (MSARM)
Sage-Grouse Local Working Group*

Sage-Grouse Basics

Sage-grouse breed in the spring on strutting grounds called leks. Early in the morning, males display for – and mate with – females. The females then move away from the lek to nest under sagebrush, and raise their young. The first few weeks are a critical time when chicks are particularly vulnerable to weather conditions and predation, particularly if the habitat isn't sufficient. In the spring and summer, sage-grouse eat insects, forbs, and sagebrush, and use the sagebrush to hide from predators. In the winter, their diet is almost exclusively sagebrush.

Early brood-rearing habitat: mix of sagebrush with native grasses/forbs (other non-woody plants), with available insects and tender shoots for baby chicks in the first few weeks of life

Summer/Late brood-rearing habitat: sagebrush/grasses/forbs mix that allows hens and older chicks to grow and hide from predators

Winter habitat: denser, tall sagebrush that sticks above the snow, providing food and shelter for wintering birds.

Threats to Sage-Grouse

Many different threats combine to create problems for sage-grouse. No one threat causes all the problems. Below are some of the concerns for sage-grouse in the MSARM area.

Development: Building developments can negatively impact key habitats, bring increased human activity to an area, and increase predators like ravens or domestic cats that eat chicks and eggs.

Recreation: Sage-grouse are very faithful to the same lek and nesting areas year to year. Human disturbance, including activity and noise, may drive birds away from traditional areas into lower quality habitat. Snowmobiles, ATVs, and even quieter human activity (such as birding) around leks can disturb the birds at critical times.

Improper grazing management: Overgrazed areas may lack the vegetation (sagebrush, grasses and forbs) that sage-grouse need. On the other hand, well-managed grazing can help both livestock and sage-grouse. Fencing very close to leks may also kill birds that collide with barbed wire.

Predation: Ravens and other predators eat eggs and chicks, especially in areas where the habitat doesn't provide adequate protection. Tall structures that allow for ravens and other to perch and watch for sage-grouse can contribute to this problem.

Invasive Weeds: Weeds can reduce habitat quality for sage-grouse by outcompeting native plants.

Morgan-Summit sage-grouse conservation plan: <http://www.utahcbcp.org/htm/groups/morgan>

Utah State Plan: <http://wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame/sage-grouse/> This link also points to additional information, such as GIS shape files of sage-grouse habitat areas.

For general information about MSARM or to be added to the mailing list for meeting announcements and sage-grouse updates, contact Lorien Belton, USU Extension facilitator, at lorien.belton@usu.edu or 435-770-2413.

Sage-Grouse, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Local Working Groups

On March 5, 2010, the US Fish and Wildlife Service announced that greater sage-grouse now have a “warranted, but precluded” status. This means that the Service feels that sage-grouse warrant listing on the Endangered Species Act, but that other species are a higher priority. The USFWS will conduct annual reviews to monitor the status of the bird, and work being done to help conserve it, across its range. By doing good work for sage-grouse, local working groups can help sustain and increase populations to maintain the species. For more info, visit:

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/birds/sagegrouse/>

Interested in sage-grouse habitat projects on private land?

Funding is available to help private landowners **design and implement sage-grouse habitat improvements**. For Morgan-Summit, call: Steven Wilcox , NRCS/UDWR Biologist, Ogden Service Center, 2871 S. Commerce Way, Ogden, Utah 84123. 801-629-0580 ext. 23 or steven.wilcox@ut.usda.gov

The current project sign-up deadline for these funds in May 20th, 2011.

If you have other questions about sage-grouse habitat needs or populations, you can contact the following Division of Wildlife Resources biologists:

Clint Brunson
Wildlife biologist
801-476-2740
clintbrunson@utah.gov

Scott Walker
Habitat biologist
801-476-2776
scottwalker@utah.gov

Scott McFarlane
Wildlife biologist
801-476-2740
scottmcfarlane@utah.gov

Henefer-Divide and Pioneer Trail Leks

Both of these leks occur on private land in Morgan and Summit counties, and are found near Hwy 65 between East Canyon Reservoir and Henefer. Statewide, one third of known leks occur on private land. The chart below shows recent high counts from these two leks:

YEAR	# of birds on Henefer-Divide lek	# of birds on Pioneer Trail lek
2003	35	27
2004	72	20
2005	70	22
2006	48	19
2007	35	31
2008	53	9
2009	32	39
2010	56	33

If you visit the leks on early spring mornings, stay in your car and take care not to disturb the birds.

For general information about MSARM or to be added to the mailing list for meeting announcements and sage-grouse updates, contact Lorien Belton, USU Extension facilitator, at lorien.belton@usu.edu or 435-770-2413.