

# Greater Sage Grouse in Color Country



Female

## Natural History Information

**Greater Sage-grouse** (*Centrocercus urophasianus*), inhabit open sagebrush plains. This large, ground-dwelling, chicken-like bird (25-30" long; 3-7 lbs) is similar to the smaller blue grouse (21" long; 3.5 lbs), which lives at higher elevations. Their mottled brown, black and white coloring serves as a camouflage from predators. Each spring, male sage grouse gather together and perform courtship displays on historic strutting grounds (leks). Females then lay 5-9 eggs, and raise their chicks in moist habitat where high-protein insects are available.



Male

## Status

Studies estimate that Greater Sage-grouse have declined approximately 50% in the past century. Declining Greater sage-grouse numbers may be an indicator that our sagebrush-steppe community is unhealthy or declining. Hunting for sage-grouse has been closed in this area since the early 1990s.

## Threats to Sage-Grouse Populations

- Native and non-native predators
- Increased populations of invasive vegetation
- Loss of sagebrush habitat
- Habitat loss due to roads, utilities, and other development



## How Can I Help?

**Respect the birds and their habitat by:**

- Viewing sage-grouse from a distance
- Avoiding and not disturbing strutting grounds during breeding season
- Staying on ATV trails or existing roads
- Reporting sage-grouse sightings to local management agencies (UDWR:435-865-6100)
- Reporting poaching (1-800-662-DEER)

## Finding a Solution –Working Together!

Color Country Local Working Group formed several years ago to address Greater Sage-grouse needs in Southern Utah. The working group consists of: Utah Farm Bureau Federation, Utah State University Extension, Color Country Resource Conservation & Development, Upper Sevier River Community Watershed Project, Local Conservation Districts, County Commissions, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, local ranchers and farmers, and YOU!

**For more info** contact:  
nicki.frey@usu.edu or  
stop by your local  
Extension office.

