Sage-grouse in Utah

an overview of efforts

Iron County Commission
February 14th 2011

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Sage Grouse Stats

- Size: up to 30” long, and 2 feet high
- Weight: 2-7 lbs
- Habitat: sagebrush
  - 4,000-9,000 feet
- Food: sagebrush, insects
Sage grouse stats

- mating: polyandrous
- at leks
- March – May
- Year after year
  - Used for estimates
Sage grouse stats

- Nest mid-April to June
- Clutch 6-9 eggs
- Gallinaceous variability
- 35%-85% mortality
Survival

- Adult survival rates 50-70%
- For stable populations, need 2.25 juveniles/hen
- Rain and snow influence survival
- Combinations of factors can decrease survival
Sage-grouse need sagebrush

Large unfragmented tracts

Food and Shelter

Grocery stores: a variety of grasses/forbs = insects for chicks

Not all sagebrush is good habitat

Black sage vs. big sage
Status of sage-grouse

- currently occupy 56% of pre-settlement potential - sagebrush steppe habitat
  - 480,000 km² or 111,610,583 acres
  - 70% on public land
  - 50% managed by BLM for multiple uses
Distribution in Utah
Number of male sage-grouse counted in Utah

Increased counts in the past 10 years probably reflect increased searching effort, new leks, and increases in populations.
• Several key areas in S. Utah (these are leks)
• In SW Desert LWG
  • Dog and Bear Valleys
  • Hamlin Valley
• Brood Rearing
• 2 Species of sage-grouse in Utah

• An update/revision of the first Utah plan from 2002

• Assistance from a specially chartered Sage-grouse Plan Advisory Committee
Local Working Groups

• Early Groups:
  • 1996 San Juan County
  • 1997 Parker Mountain

• 2002 Utah Sage-grouse Conservation Strategy
  • Management must be a cooperative effort

• USU Extension identified as facilitator
  • Community-based Conservation Program
  • Adaptive Resource Management

• UDWR has management authority
USU EXT Role

- Facilitate local working groups
- Writing
- Implementation
- Engage all stakeholders
- Work with local stakeholders
- Assist in monitoring and research
- http://utahcbbc.org
Local working group
LWG plans

Each plan identifies local threats to sage-grouse

- Development
- Loss of quality habitat
- Drought and weather
- Fire management
- Predation
- Hunting
- Livestock grazing
LWG Plans

• Each plan evaluated the current situation for grouse

• Ranked threats as high medium low

• Identified strategies and actions to alleviate risks
LWG PLans

- All groups have completed plans.
- Plans are in a 10-year implementation phase.
- Groups meet at least 3 times/year, with a field tour
- Plans are modified each year if needed
- USU Extension tracks the groups’ progress annually
USU Extension has website for Community Based Conservation Program (CBCP)

- Local working group information
  - Local conservation plan
  - Meeting times
  - Research projects
- Research publications
- Annual progress reports
- Useful references and links

http://utahcbcp.org/
Actions/strategies

- Study key populations
- Increase public involvement
- Increase awareness
- Improve habitat quality
- Study predators
Color Country LWG

- Studied predator community
- Alton Sage Grouse
  - Radio-telemetry
  - BLM Habitat Treatment
- Hoyt’s Ranch
  - Effect of corridors
  - Alton Coal and UDWR
- Field tours with other groups
Status and Listing Decision 2010

- Utah State Sensitive Species
- Petitioned for listing under the ESA
- Jan. 2005, listing was “not warranted”
- 2007: a second 12-month review
- March 5th 2010: warranted but precluded
Impact in Utah

- Business as usual
- Data collection and monitoring
- Continue implementation of state plan
- Status reviewed by USFWS annually
  - Want to show Utah is working
    - Research, monitoring, implementation
Impact on CC LWG

• Continued local support

• Consider the grouse when planning
  • Urban and rural
  • Oil, gas, mining, transmissions

• Know who is out there to help
  • LWG (CCARM)
  • UDWR Website and personnel
  • USU Ext Specialist (Nicki Frey)
  • Local NRCS, RC&D, BLM and FS office
Thanks

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