

Wildfire Impact

When sagebrush burns, it may require 30 years or more to regain pre-burn densities, assuming a seed source is in the general vicinity.

Wildfires have converted large tracts of sagebrush to cheatgrass and medusahead, which are unpalatable to livestock and have little value to sage-grouse.

Cheatgrass is a highly flammable invasive annual grass, and can grow quickly, unlike sagebrush. When sagebrush is lost, flammable grasses and weeds can easily establish and prevent sagebrush from reestablishing.

When sagebrush is not available, the sage-grouse have no suitable habitat to survive, thus increasing the risk of extinction for the threatened species.

Why are we concerned with Sage-grouse habitat?

Sage-grouse populations have been declining due to the conversion and fragmentation of their sagebrush habitat.

Large scale fires and reduction of CRP lands are the largest contributor to the recent decline in sage-grouse habitat.

Not only is sagebrush a habitat for sage-grouse, it provides habitat for an array of wildlife. It also serves as a “nurse” plant for other plants important for wildlife grazing.

For More Information Visit...

www.lincolncd.com

www.blm.gov

www.dnr.wa.gov

www.sagegrouseinitiative.com

www.fws.gov/greatersagegrouse

Wildfire Sage- & grouse



*Working together to
protect our land and
sage-grouse habitat*



Sage-grouse

(*Centrocercus urophasianus*)

The largest North American grouse species. Adult males are about 28 inches long on average and weigh about 6 lbs.

Hens are about 21 inches in height and weigh about 3 lbs.



Sage-grouse habitat is sagebrush steppe and grassland country. They mostly consume sagebrush leaves, other plant leaves, stems, buds, and insects. Sagebrush is particularly important for sage-grouse in the winter, as it is their primary food source.

During mating season (March-May) the males gather to dance at strutting grounds, known as leks (open areas surrounded by sagebrush cover). Hens usually mate with the most dominant male and nest in suitable sagebrush cover within close proximity to the lek. Hens lay 6-10 chicken sized eggs.



Sage-grouse chicks are able to run and feed on their own upon hatching, but are still dependent on their mother hen for guidance and protection until about 50 days post-hatch.

Survival

Sage-grouse can survive up to 9 years in the wild. In Washington, the annual survival rate for males is 56.9% and 72.5% for females.

Populations have been declining since the 1960's, and in Washington State the sage-grouse is currently considered threatened.

Wildfire & Sage-grouse

In Washington, sage-grouse habitat is found in the sagebrush covered shrub-steppe and channeled scabland areas, as shown in the sage-grouse Priority Habitat map (right).

Not only is this area habitat for sage-grouse, it is also highly susceptible to wildfire. Sage-grouse naturally prefer the land that has not been burned in recent decades and has mature sagebrush intact. The concern here is that scablands have a moderate to high potential for wildfire. Protecting the landscape, as well as sage-grouse habitat is crucial to sage-grouse survival.

