From: Gemlo, Lynn
To: David Budeau
Subject: Re: FW: Wildfires in sage-grouse habitat
Date: Monday, March 11, 2013 1:03:53 PM

Dave, thanks for your thoughts, that is helpful, Lynn

On Mon, Mar 11, 2013 at 12:53 PM, David Budeau <david.a.budeau@state.or.us> wrote:

> Lynn,
>
> Please see my e-mail below which bounced back the first time because it was too large. I deleted all but one picture and hope it goes this time.
>
> Thanks,
>
> Dave Budeau
>
> Upland Game Bird Coordinator
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> Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
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> Salem, OR 97303
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> Ph: 503-947-6323
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> ---
>
> **From:** David Budeau
> **Sent:** Monday, March 11, 2013 11:47 AM
> **To:** 'Gemlo, Lynn'
> **Subject:** RE: Wildfires in sage-grouse habitat
>
> Lynn,
>
> My short answer is that we really don't know, at least not yet. Undoubtedly, based on past sage-grouse work the effect will be negative, at least in the near term, we just don't know how negative. Though more than 1 million acres were within fire perimeters, not all habitat was burned within these fire perimeters. I have attached are some photos I took this past October within the Holloway Fire. As you can see some areas burned completely, while other areas did not, the photos were from a relatively high elevation site that even where burned will likely recover fairly quickly. Some lower elevations had more complete burns and have higher risks of invasive annual grasses. In fact some of the low areas have burned frequently in recent decades

and did not offer the best sage-grouse habitat before the fire. We radio-marked birds in the area of the photos (E. Fork Trout Crk) in October, many of these birds did not move very far (2-5 miles) to winter. In fact, they wintered in the burn where there was little visible sagebrush (at least from the air) and were just below 100% snow cover in mid February. We had expected them to move farther to lower elevations for winter.

As you know the fires occurred in July and August 2012, and the 2013 lek monitoring is just beginning, so we don't have any monitoring data with which to compare. Once the 2013 lek counts are complete, any differences as compared to 2012 lek counts cannot be entirely attributed to the fire. There are typically annual variations even without large wildlife fires. All indications are that sage-grouse production was relatively low in 2012 due to the same drought conditions that contributed to the large wildfires. So even without the fires, we would expect lek counts to be lower in 2013 as compared to 2012 or before. We'll need a few years of data before having more confidence in answering your question.

ODFW and BLM are both increasing the lek monitoring efforts in the area of the large fires. In addition, a research project has been initiated to evaluate the effects of the landscape scale wildfires on sage-grouse. A graduate student and crew are out there right now attempting to put GPS PTTs on sage-grouse within the perimeter of the Holloway Fire.

Dave Budeau

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From: Gemlo, Lynn [mailto:lynn_gemlo@fws.gov]
Sent: Monday, March 11, 2013 11:10 AM
To: david.a.budeau@state.or.us
Subject: Wildfires in sage-grouse habitat

H Dave, From your perspective, can you talk about the effects from the large fires that

> occurred to sage-grouse? I know they were quite devastating. Can you characterize how they burned and any monitoring information you may have to help paint a picture of the impacts? Any insight is helpful, thanks, Lynn
>
> --
> Lynn Gemlo, Listing Coordinator
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