

News Release



Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

1340 Financial Way, Suite 234
Reno, Nevada 89502
Tel: 775-861-6300; Fax 775-813-4546
<http://fws.gov/nevada>

Date: October 25, 2013
Contact: Jeannie Stafford (775) 861-6300
Jeannie_Stafford@fws.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of Greater Sage-Grouse Proposed for Protection under Endangered Species Act

Special rule allows flexibility of land management in portions of California and Nevada

RENO, Nev. – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has proposed to protect the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as a threatened species with a special rule, and to designate 1,868,071 acres of critical habitat. The special rule will allow for continued flexibility in land management intended for restoration and conservation of the species.

“We applaud the combined efforts of our federal, state and local partners, as well as private landowners across the species’ range, to address the significant challenges faced by the Bi-State DPS of greater sage-grouse,” said Ren Lohofener, Regional Director of the Service’s Pacific Southwest Region. “These efforts are essential to the recovery of the species. Today’s decision, based on the best available science, should not deter us from continuing our work on behalf of the Bi-State DPS as well as the wider-ranging greater sage-grouse.”

The DPS’s current range is limited to six population management units (PMUs) along the California and Nevada border, which is less than 50 percent of its historical range. Scientists predict that four of the six PMUs could be lost in the foreseeable future.

The Service has proposed critical habitat to identify geographic areas of particular importance for the recovery of the species. This habitat encompasses federal, state, tribal and private lands on four separate units in Carson City, Douglas, Lyon, Mineral and Esmeralda Counties in Nevada, and in Alpine, Mono, and Inyo Counties in California.

Critical habitat is a term defined in the ESA that identifies geographic areas containing features essential to the conservation of a threatened or endangered species and that may require special management considerations or protection. The designation of critical habitat does not affect land ownership or establish a refuge, and has no impact on private landowners taking actions on their land that do not require federal funding or permits.

The greater sage-grouse is a large, ground-nesting bird known for elaborate courtship displays on its breeding grounds. The booming calls of male sage-grouse have long been associated with the arrival of spring on the sagebrush steppe of the West.

The Service will open a 60-day comment period to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the proposed listing, special rule and critical habitat designation. During that time, the agency will also seek peer review from qualified members of the scientific community to ensure that the final decision is based on the best available science. A copy of the finding and other information about the Bi-State DPS of greater sage-grouse is available at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada> or by contacting the Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office at 775-861-6300.

The agency will hold two informational public meetings regarding the proposals at the following times and locations:

November 5, 2013
4 to 6 p.m.
Tri-County Fairgrounds, Home Economics Building
Sierra Street and Fair Drive
Bishop, CA 93514

November 6, 2013
1 to 3 p.m.
Smith Valley Community Center
2783 State Route 208
Wellington, NV 89444

Scientific information regarding these proposals will be accepted until December 27, 2013, and may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- (1) Electronically: Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS–R8–ES–2013–0072 and FWS–R8–ES–2013–0042, which are the docket numbers for these rulemakings. Then, in the Search panel on the left side of the screen, under the Document Type heading, click on the Proposed Rules link to locate these documents. You may submit a comment by clicking on “Comment Now!”
- (2) By hard copy: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: FWS–R8–ES–2013–0072 or FWS–R8–ES–2013–0042; Division of Policy and Directives Management; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; 4401 N. Fairfax Drive, MS 2042–PDM; Arlington, VA 22203.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/cno>. Connect with our [Facebook page](#), follow our [tweets](#), watch our [YouTube Channel](#), and download photos from our [Flickr page](#).

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