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# News Release



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE WILL NOT CONSIDER LISTING THE MONO BASIN AREA SAGE-GROUSE AT THIS TIME**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today announced that two petitions seeking to add the Mono Basin area sage-grouse to the federal list of threatened and endangered species did not contain substantial scientific or commercial information to demonstrate that Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection is warranted. The negative petition finding was published in the Federal Register on December 19, 2006.

The Service made the determination in response to a petition received November 15, 2005, from Stanford Law School Environmental Law Clinic on behalf of The Sagebrush Sea Campaign, Western Watersheds Project, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Christians Caring for Conservation and after reconsidering a petition received in December 2001 from the Institute for Wildlife Protection. Under the ESA, the Service is required to review petitions to decide whether they contain substantial scientific information indicating listing may be warranted.

“Although the petition finding is negative, the Service will continue to monitor the sage-grouse and will continue working with our partners to implement the 2004 Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan for Nevada and eastern California,” said Bob Williams, Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office Field supervisor.

The Service has concerns about long-term declines in the sage-grouse population as a whole and is working cooperatively with Western state wildlife agencies and federal agencies to conserve and manage sagebrush habitat for the benefit of the sage-grouse. Western states are developing and implementing conservation plans to address issues such as habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation to identify opportunities for habitat restoration and enhancement.

The sage-grouse is a large, ground-dwelling bird, measuring up to 30 inches long and two feet tall and weighing between two and seven pounds. It has a long, pointed tail with legs feathered to the base of the toes and fleshy yellow combs over the eyes. In addition to the mottled brown, black and white plumage typical of the species, males sport a white ruff around their necks. The sage-grouse is found from 4,000 to more than 9,000 feet in elevation. It is an omnivore, eating soft plants (primarily sagebrush) and insects. The Mono Basin area sage-grouse occurs in Carson City, Lyon, Mineral,

Esmeralda, and Douglas Counties in Nevada, and portions of Alpine, Inyo, and most of Mono County in California.

In order to resolve existing litigation between the Service and the Institute for Wildlife Protection, the Service agreed to complete a 90-day finding on the November 2005 petition and at the same time to re-consider the December 2001 petition and supporting information.

A copy of the finding about Mono Basin area sage-grouse is available on the Internet at <http://www.fws.gov/nevada> or by contacting Bob Williams, 1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234, Reno, NV 89502, (775) 861-6300.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 97-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 546 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.