



Greater Sage-grouse Status Review

Predation

Sage-grouse are Prey

- Predation is the most common cause of direct mortality reported.
- Have co-evolved with their predators
- Predator impacts increase as habitat quality decreases.
- Predation on hens, chicks and nests will have the greatest impact on sage-grouse population growth.



Effects of Predation

- Predation likely has population effects in fragmented habitats and areas with human-subsidized predator populations
- Lack data that definitely links sage-grouse population trends with predator abundance
- May be limiting to population growth in localized areas with compromised habitat and high levels of human activities



New Predators

- Increasing abundance of predators associated with human activities and habitat disturbance is occurring across the range of sage-grouse.
 - Corvids, foxes, raccoons, skunks
 - Effective nest and chick predators
- This shift in predator dynamics may be altering the sage-grouse-predator balance



Synergistic Impact

Predation is synergistic with factors contributing to poor habitat quality and fragmentation

- Infrastructure
- Urban/exurban development
- Energy development



Conclusions

- Where habitat is not limited or fragmented predation is not likely a contributing factor to declining sage-grouse populations.
- No new evidence suggesting a range-wide impact from predators
- “New” predators may be shifting the predator-prey dynamic
- Predation is synergistic with other factors that fragment habitat or increase human activities

