

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife



Reintroductions & Private Lands Key to Sage Grouse Future



Capturing and releasing sage grouse from Oregon and Nevada to a new home in the Swanson Lakes Wildlife Area of Lincoln County is just one role of the WDFW when it comes to helping out birds that inhabit a fraction of their former range. Biologists started the project in 2008 and slowly the birds are taking hold in historic sagebrush habitat.

For centuries, sage grouse thrived in eastern Washington. Today, privately owned Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) lands that offer enough native grasses and sagebrush, along with patches of unplowed sagebrush-steppe provide about 1,000 birds places to live. One group lives mostly in Douglas County, not far from Coulee Dam on the Columbia River. The second falls in Kittitas-Yakima Counties. The third is the reintroduced population. The hope for WDFW, working with the Sage Grouse Initiative, private landowners, and other agencies is to restore enough habitat for the birds to connect three separated habitats.

“Our state agency appreciates SGI for providing both the technical and the financial resources to help ranchers improve their ranges for livestock grazing and sage grouse.” ~Don Larsen, private land coordinator, WDFW

Meet the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

About

WDFW’s mission is to “preserve, protect and perpetuate fish, wildlife and ecosystems while providing sustainable fish and wildlife recreational and commercial opportunities.” Every state wildlife agency is charged with managing local wildlife species. The agency biologists serve a critical role for both public land agencies and private landowners. Without their expertise, it would be impossible to know whether species like the sage grouse are in trouble or not. They keep count of our wildlife and then work cooperatively to devise and carry out restoration plans when species are in trouble, like the sage grouse.



WDFW private land biologists play a pivotal role in sage grouse conservation.

Role With Sage Grouse Initiative

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife produces and carries out the recovery plan for sage grouse; monitors sage-grouse populations, collaborates with partners to improve sage-grouse genetic diversity and reintroduce new populations, and provides data to partners to assist with targeting of conservation funding. The private land coordinator works in the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) office. Private lands biologists meet with landowners in the field to assist them with habitat improvements.



Contact

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