



## News Release Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Brian Heeringa, 715-373-2667, ext. 234, bheeringa@fs.fed.us

### Moquah Barrens Sharp-tailed Grouse Viewing Opportunity April 20 – May 9

**Washburn, WI. – April 13, 2009.** The Forest Service will be opening their observation blind to the public for the chance to observe sharp-tailed grouse on the Moquah Barrens of the Washburn Ranger District, Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest, Bayfield County, WI.

Sharp-tailed grouse occupy large patches of early successional habitats including grasslands, shrublands, wetlands and early stages of forestland throughout much of central and northern North America. Within the eastern United States, sharptail populations are found in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Management on the Moquah Barrens is helping the sharp-tailed grouse and other area sensitive openland species. In recent years, sharptail populations have declined and their historic range has been reduced. The restoration of pine barren ecosystems utilizing prescribed fire and even-aged timber management is providing important, if not critical, habitat for this and other openland bird species of conservation concern.



Sharp-tailed Grouse (Photo Credit John R. Baldwin)

These grouse are usually quite secretive throughout the year, however, during the spring both sexes congregate at localized breeding areas referred to as leks or dancing grounds. Leks are communal display areas where males gather for the purpose of attracting and mating with females. These leks can consist of anywhere from 2-57 males, closer to the lower end of the range on the Moquah Barrens. The primary courtship display by the male sharptail consists of a period of activity followed by a period of relaxation. The period of activity can consist of foot-stomping, clicking, tail rattling, with numerous intricate vocalizations.

This gathering offers researchers and bird enthusiasts alike the opportunity to watch these amazing birds. The observation blind will be available from April 20 to May 9, 2009 from 1 hour before sunrise to 1-2 hours after sunrise. Those interested in participating must sign-up in advance and are required to complete/submit a provided data form.

For more information or to sign up, please contact Brian Heeringa at 715-373-2667 extension 234 or [bheeringa@fs.fed.us](mailto:bheeringa@fs.fed.us).

To view the sign-up calendar for available days and review the survey protocol please visit:  
[http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/wildlife/stg\\_index.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/cnnf/natres/wildlife/stg_index.html)