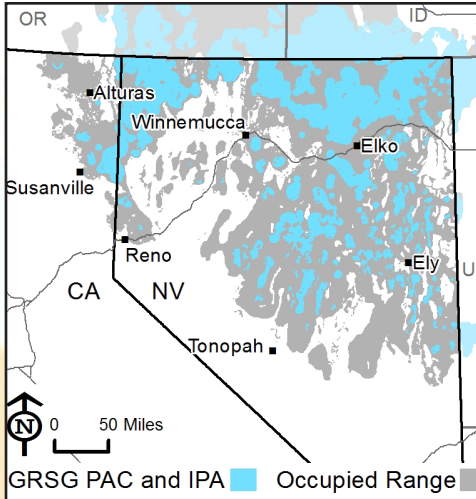
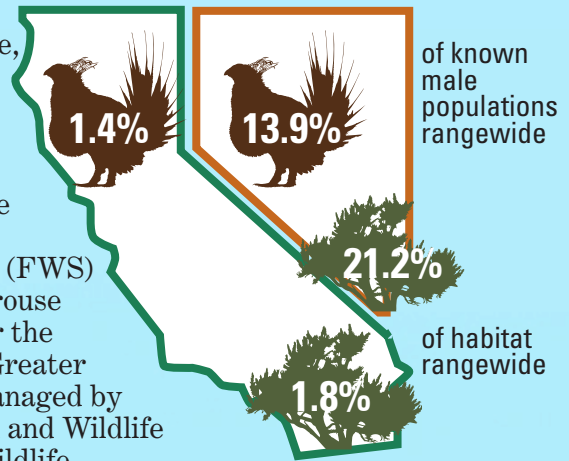




Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation in Nevada and Northeastern California



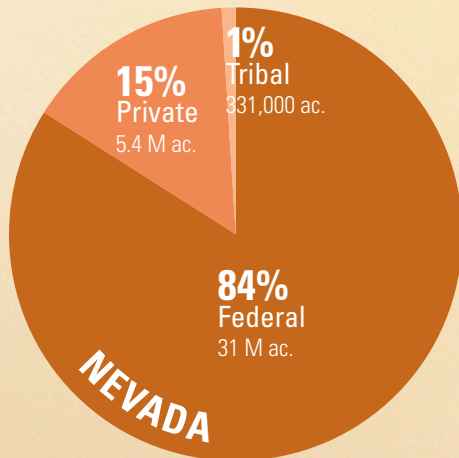
Nevada and California have been active partners in the collaborative, science-based conservation campaign to protect the greater sage-grouse and the sagebrush ecosystem. Due to the collective efforts of federal, state and private partners across the range, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has found that the greater sage-grouse does not warrant protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Greater sage-grouse will continue to be managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Nevada Department of Wildlife.



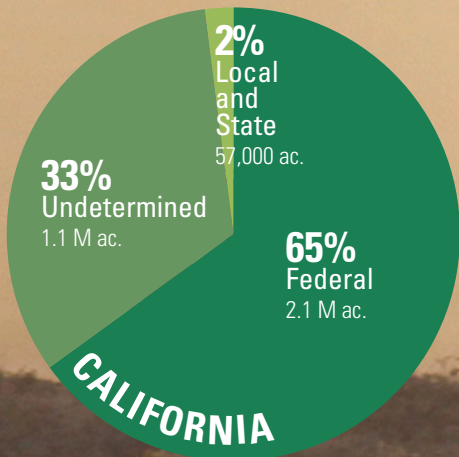
Important Conservation Areas and Occupied Range for Greater Sage-Grouse in Nevada and California

Land Ownership

Total Occupied Range: 36.8 million acres



Total Occupied Range: 3.21 million acres



Greater Sage-Grouse in Nevada and Northeastern California

The state of Nevada, along with a small portion of eastern California along the state boundary, is a key region to the conservation of greater sage-grouse. Nevada has more area recognized as Priority Areas for Conservation for the species as outlined by the Conservation Objectives Team Report than any other state except Wyoming. In addition to the greater sage-grouse, the region's sagebrush ecosystem is the home to more than 350 wildlife species thought to be locally or regionally imperiled, such as Brewer's sparrow and the pygmy rabbit. Trends in greater sage-grouse numbers since the mid 1960's have shown long term declines in most populations.

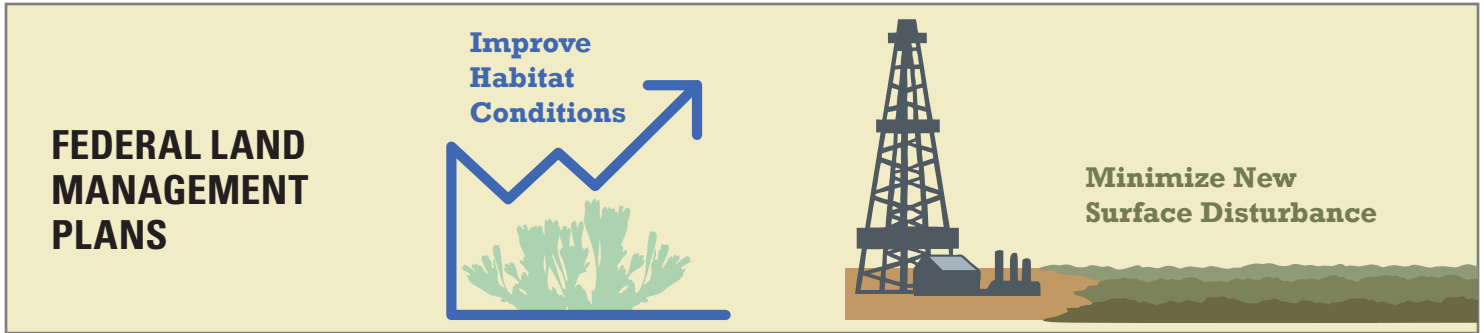
Invasive plant species and wildfires are the primary threats to the bird in the Great Basin region and are a leading cause of sagebrush habitat loss. Because 86 percent of Nevada's population is managed by the federal government, federal agencies are working collaboratively to take appropriate action to proactively manage these threats.

Primary Threats

Loss and fragmentation of sagebrush due to:

- Invasive species and wildfire,
- Conifer expansion,
- Improper grazing, and
- Mining and energy development.

Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Strategy in CA/NV



STATE AND PRIVATE LAND CONSERVATION

Overview of State Actions

- California does not have a state greater sage-grouse conservation plan. However, California has designated greater sage-grouse as a state-listed species of special concern that should be considered during the state's environmental review process.
- California was an active partner in the successful effort to address threats to the Bi-State Distinct Population Segment of greater sage-grouse.
- Nevada's approach relies on executive orders in support of a goal of no net loss of sage-grouse habitat to human disturbance. Nevada's Sagebrush Ecosystem Council finalized the Nevada Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Plan in 2014. The Nevada plan creates the Conservation Credit System, which creates a compensatory mitigation program that requires developers to purchase credits to offset unavoidable impacts in sage-grouse habitat.
- Nevada's plan requires that any development that affects greater sage-grouse habitat in Nevada will need to acquire credits to compensate for those effects before the development proceeds. In 2015, the Governor created Rangeland Fire Protection Associations to add capacity and resources to support fire suppression.

NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative

The Natural Resources Conservation Service's Sage Grouse Initiative (SGI) has been a catalyst for sagebrush conservation across the West. SGI's vision of wildlife conservation through sustainable ranching provides win-win solutions for ranchers, greater sage-grouse and 350 other species. With more than 1,120 participating ranches in 11 western states, SGI and its partners have invested \$424.5 million in greater sage-grouse conservation on 4.4 million acres of private ranchlands.

In April 2015, the FWS withdrew the proposal to list the Bi-State Sage Grouse population along the California/Nevada border as threatened under the ESA as a result of voluntary conservation.

Through SGI, NRCS placed:

- 12,000 acres of priority habitats under easement,
- Cut 5,450 acres of encroaching conifer,
- Pledged another \$12 million in SGI 2.0 to finish the job.

Candidate Conservation Agreements with Assurances (CCAA)						
Name	Location	Covered Area Size	Acres Enrolled	Acres Committed	Land Uses	Date of Completion
Smith Creek Ranch	NV	2,200	2,200			

RANGELAND FIRE STRATEGY

The California and Nevada plan will help reduce the threat of rangeland fire by placing added priority on the prevention, suppression and restoration of sagebrush landscapes threatened by rangeland fire through improved federal-state-local collaboration and coordination.



Nevada received \$638,000 in targeted Fire and Invasives Assessment Tool funding for projects, such as mowing along roadways to create fuel breaks and seeding native plants for sagebrush habitat improvement. The funding also allows for treatment of invasive cheatgrass.

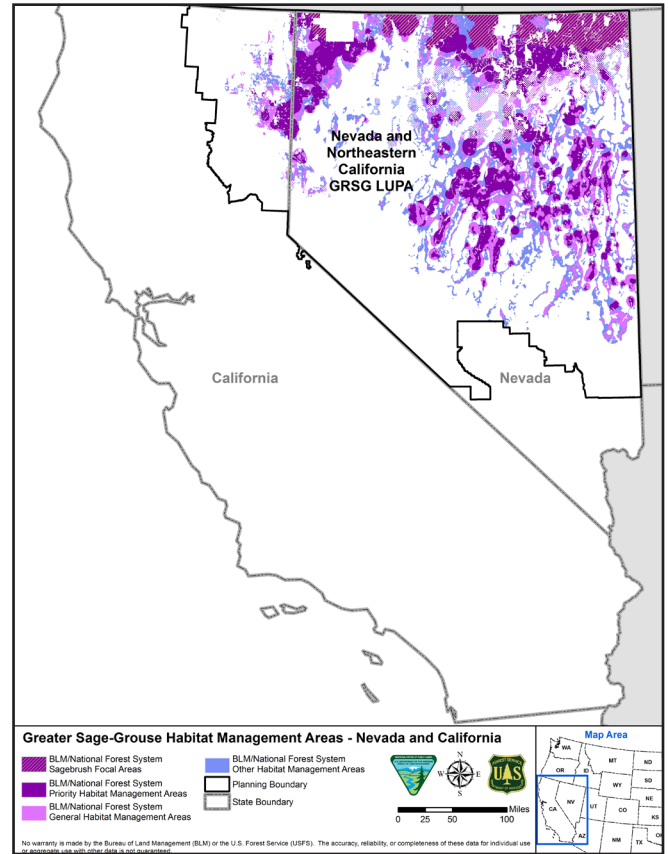


Northeastern Nevada landscape

BLM-USFS Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plans in CA/NV

- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) have amended land-use plans in California and Nevada to address threats to the greater sage-grouse. The BLM-USFS plans provide a layered management approach that focus protections on the areas of highest importance to the species:

- ▶ The highest levels of protections are applied to Sagebrush Focal Areas (SFA), which are landscapes with high breeding population densities of sage-grouse, high-quality sagebrush habitat, and a preponderance of federal ownership or protected areas that serve to anchor the conservation value of the landscape. These areas are prioritized for habitat improvement and vegetation management efforts and proposed for locatable mineral withdrawal.
 - ▶ Priority Habitat Management Areas (PHMA), equivalent to Core Areas, are managed to avoid and minimize further disturbance. Surface energy and mineral development is limited in these areas. Development is capped with limits on the amount and density of disturbance allowed. All of the SFAs are incorporated within PHMA.
 - ▶ General Habitat Management Areas (GHMA) provide greater flexibility for land use activities. Mitigation and required design features ensure that impacts from development are avoided, minimized and mitigated in GHMA.
 - ▶ Other Habitat Management Areas (OHMA) help preserve and restore seasonal and connectivity areas.
- The BLM and USFS will work closely with the State of Nevada to utilize the Conservation Credit System in mitigation.
- The plans respect valid, existing rights, including those for oil and gas development, renewable energy, rights-of-way, locatable minerals and other permitted projects.
- During grazing permit renewals and modifications on lands within sage-grouse habitat, the BLM will incorporate locally developed management objectives for sage-grouse habitat and rangeland health standards, consistent with ecological potential. The BLM and USFS will prioritize monitoring for compliance, review and processing of grazing permits in the areas most important for sage-grouse first, SFA, followed by PHMA, with a focus on lands containing riparian areas and wet meadows.



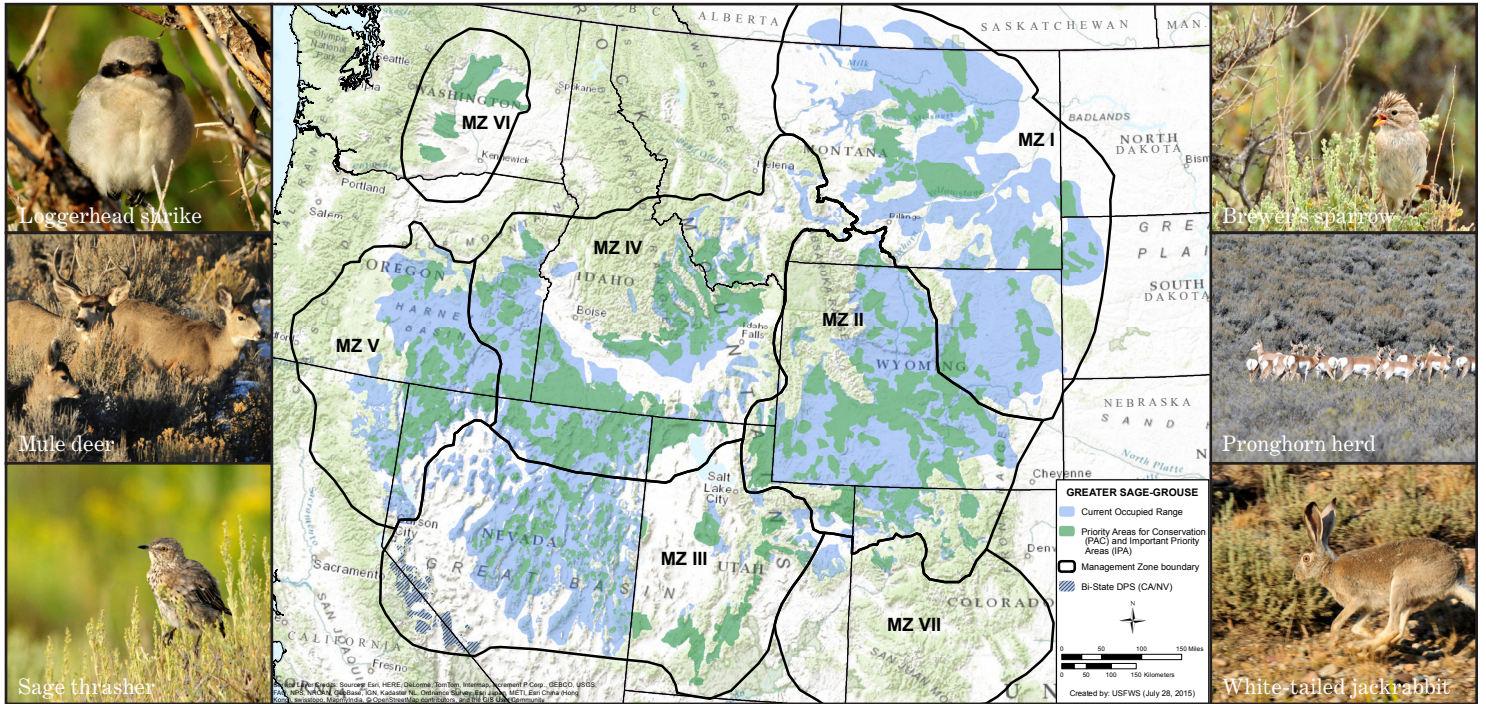
SFA Acres in CA	SFA Acres in NV	PHMA Acres in NV and CA	GHMA Acres in NV and CA	OHMA Acres in NV and CA
None	2.9 million acres	10.3 million acres	6.5 million acres	6.5 million acres

About 96 percent of federal lands with high and medium oil potential in Nevada are outside of federally managed priority conservation areas. There is no high and medium gas potential within the state.

All of the federal lands with high to medium oil and gas potential in California are outside of federally managed priority conservation areas.

Acres of High & Medium Oil and Gas Potential and Lease Status on Federal Lands and Minerals within PHMA								
State	High/Medium Oil Potential				High/Medium Gas Potential			
	Within PHMA Already Leased	Within PHMA Subject to BLM/USFS RMP Decisions for Priority Habitat	Outside of PHMAs	Total High/Medium Oil Potential	Within PHMA Already Leased	Within PHMA Subject to BLM/USFS RMP Decisions for Priority Habitat	Outside of PHMAs	Total High/Medium Gas Potential
Nevada	1,000	2,000	52,000	55,000	0	0	0	0
California	0	0	9,009,000	9,009,000	0	0	3,716,000	3,716,000

The Future for Greater Sage-Grouse in CA/NV



Redefining the Future of Conservation

FWS is confident that the unparalleled conservation effort by federal, state, and private partners has addressed the major threats to greater sage-grouse by putting the right protections in the most important places. A sustained commitment to sagebrush conservation is needed to ensure effective conservation for greater sage-grouse and the hundreds of other wildlife that depend on sagebrush habitat.

Implementation

Partners will now begin to implement their commitments whether under state and federal plans, individual conservation agreements, or the Rangeland Fire Strategy. The BLM and USFS plans will be implemented in close coordination with state and local partners, as well as through continued collaboration with the Sage Grouse Task Force and local working groups. FWS will remain an active partner in the sagebrush conservation effort, funding new research, providing on-the-ground support for private landowners, as well as federal, state, industry and conservation partners.

Enduring Benefits for All

Restoring the greater sage-grouse will benefit hundreds of other native plants and animals and communities across the West. What's more, these conservation efforts are led and strengthened by effective partnerships – ensuring that the gains we make for the greater sage-grouse will endure.



WAFWA wildfire restoration field trip in Nevada

All photos credit to and courtesy of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service unless specified otherwise.

Sage Grouse Initiative 2.0

Since 2010, SGI has focused on arresting habitat loss in the highest priority areas for conservation from ex-urban development and conifer encroachment, and on reducing greater sage-grouse collisions with high-risk fences.

NRCS has committed to invest another \$211 million in SGI 2.0, with an expanded mission of addressing the synergistic problems of invasive weeds and wildfires, on slowing the loss of sagebrush to agricultural conversion and on protecting wet meadow habitat critical for brood-rearing. The program's goal is to bring the total amount of private land under conservation to 8 million acres.

In California, SGI 2.0 will alleviate the conifer threat within priority areas for the Klamath Basin population by 2018.

Nevada is expanding its easement portfolio to protect another 3,400 acres of intact grazing lands as brood habitat. Nevada is coupling protective measures with wet meadow restoration to help increase populations.