



WGFD

Conserving Wildlife, Serving People

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Wyoming Game and Fish Department Statement Regarding Sage Grouse Decision

Cheyenne—The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today its decision to classify the greater sage-grouse as a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act.

“The Wyoming Game and Fish Department would have preferred a not warranted-decision but feels the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service decision to preclude a listing at this time still provides management flexibility for the state. A warranted-but-precluded decision maintains Wyoming Game and Fish Commission management authority and gives Wyoming time to demonstrate that its sage grouse conservation policies and conservation efforts will maintain robust populations that do not warrant a listed status,” said Wyoming Game and Fish Department Deputy Director John Emmerich.

“Sage grouse are still abundant and well distributed in Wyoming,” said Emmerich. “Despite historic declines and declines documented the past three years, overall numbers have increased substantially since 1996 with the exception of the Powder River Basin. We will continue to work with our partners in industry including agriculture, government, and conservation to implement the core area strategy, which provides the best approach for preventing habitat fragmentation in those areas of the state most important to sage grouse. These core sagebrush habitats will also provide the habitat needed to secure the seasonal or year-long habitat needs of over 350 other wildlife species. We are confident that, over time, this and other conservation measures will justify the removal of sage grouse as a candidate species.”

“It is important for the public to understand that this decision will not lead to any major sage-grouse conservation strategy changes in Wyoming,” said Emmerich. “The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission still has management authority over sage grouse in the state and we will continue working to ensure a robust population of the species is secure within Wyoming for the long term.”

For more information about sage-grouse in Wyoming, visit the WGFD website at:
http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/wildlife_management/sagegrouse/index.asp.