

APPENDIX G

LEK COUNT/LEK ROUTE PROTOCOLS

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE INSTRUCTIONS FOR GREATER SAGE-GROUSE LEK COUNTS

- 1) Arrive at the lek at least 45 minutes before sunrise.
- 2) Do not approach any closer than about 200 yards from the lek. This will prevent disturbance of the birds while strutting.
- 3) Conduct all counts between 30 minutes before sunrise and 1.5 hours after sunrise.
- 4) If at all possible, observe the lek from inside your vehicle. Sage grouse are less sensitive to the approach of a vehicle and its presence than they are to you.
- 5) Note your arrival time and departure time on the lek count form.
- 6) Obtain a minimum of three counts at 15-minute intervals of each lek on each date counted. A count of males, females, and unknown birds is always preferable to a flush count.
- 7) In the comments section of the form, please note the following information
 - a. Wind direction and speed
 - b. Temperature in degrees Fahrenheit
 - c. Ground condition – dry, muddy, snow (depth in inches)
 - d. Cloud cover in the following manner:
 - i. Clear
 - ii. Partly cloudy (less than 25% cover)
 - iii. Scattered (more than 25% but scattered horizon to horizon)
 - iv. Cloudy (more than 50% cover)
 - v. Foggy
- 8) Note the presence of predators by species, time and activity: Example – golden eagle @ 6:45 a.m. flying over lek; coyote chasing grouse at 8:15 a.m.
- 9) Be sure to use the common name of the lek

INSTRUCTIONS FOR GREATER SAGE-GROUSE LEK ROUTES

As established by Connelly et al. (2003) in Monitoring Greater Sage-grouse Habitats and Populations.

In many portions of Nevada, lek routes can only be conducted in limited areas because of remote lek locations and limited access because of both spring runoff conditions and the lack of roads.

Lek routes should only be conducted when weather conditions are characterized by clear to partly cloudy skies and winds less than 15 kph.

Each route should be repeated at least four times during the spring. The Nevada Department of Wildlife recommends alternating travel routes when conducting the survey. For example, the first lek surveyed on a route in late March would be the last lek surveyed on a subsequent survey.

Conduct lek routes in late March, early April, mid April, and late April. Counts may begin a week earlier in weather conditions permit or where lek occur in lower elevations and can also be extended a week in higher elevations when snow conditions permit.

- 1) Conduct all route surveys between 30 minutes before and 1 hour after sunrise for a total survey period of 1.5 hours.
- 2) Locate a spot that provides good visibility of the entire lek. If the lek is very large (100 or more birds) it may be necessary to select two vantage points.
- 3) Record the time that the count begins
- 4) Count the birds from left to right (or vice versa)
- 5) Wait one to two minutes, then count from right to left
- 6) Obtain at least three counts of birds
- 7) Record the high number of males and females separately, and then move on to the next lek.
- 8) If a lek is not occupied (and it had been in the previous weeks or years), the observer should leave his/her vehicle and (with the engine off) listen for sounds of displaying grouse.