

Meeting Notes
Bi-State Technical Advisory Committee
Bi-State Sage Grouse
June 5, 2019

Time: 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Antelope Valley Community Building
442 Mule Deer Rd. Walker, CA 96107

1) Present

Mark Ricca, Katherine Miller, Steve Nelson, Anne Orlando, Katrina Krause, Sheena Waters, Shawn Espinosa, Steve Abele, Rebecca Kelble, Heather Stone, Wendal Kane, Laine Yandell, Sherri Lisius, Thomas Torres, Corrina Sanchez, Amy Sturgill

2) Topics tabled for next TAC meeting

- a. Conservation efforts database
- b. Tracking agency sage-grouse related funding

3) Accomplishment Report Review

- a. Steve Abele suggests using numbers from the updated commitment letters to create a graph depicting what % of funding commitment has been fulfilled by each agency since 2014.
 - 1. Katherine will send CDFW's funding spent for 2014-2018 to Amy
 - 2. Mark will send USGS's funding spent for 2014-2018 to Amy
- b. Discussed decision to remove all information pertaining to the 2018 IPM from the report. 2019 IPM utilizes different datasets and changes some model parameters that make results more accurate. We removed 2018 IPM information to avoid contradicting information that may come out of the upcoming, updated 2019 IPM run.
- c. Steve Nelson has concerns with the current lek count graphs that include a histogram of number of leks surveyed. Amy will work with Steve to update graphs.
- d. Amy will meet with Heather Stone to review, conifer and vegetation sections as well as the project highlight section.
- e. Katrina suggested adding a caveat to the urbanization sections that notes that the implementation of these projects depends on landowner willingness to enter agreement.

- f. Rebecca Kelble noted that no new captures are completed in Parker Meadow. Amy will update capture table to note that monitored bird in Parker were originally captured in Bodie.

g. Deadline for TAC Accomplishment Report comments is Friday June 14th.

- h. The TAC will meet in the fall, post-listing decision, to review and prioritize remaining Action Plan items and develop next steps

4) Review of Monitoring Schedule/Captures/Translocations

a. Overview

1. The group questions how we should move forward and how to prioritize captures, monitoring and translocation efforts. A meeting will be scheduled for the fall to discuss the monitoring plan further.
2. Since 2012, 724 birds have been captured in the Bi-State. There was a discussion of number of birds captures, potential capture impacts on bird populations and tolerance threshold for capture.
3. It was suggested that monitoring population trends, anticipating increases and planning future translocation efforts during these times of abundance may be an effective way to increase translocation success while limiting impacts to source populations.
4. Discussion of other subpopulations, identified in the Action Plan, which may require future translocation efforts including, Pine Nuts, Fales, Sagehen and Coyote.
5. CDFW adheres to a translocation plan. Through this plan source populations are identified for future translocations. Any and all new translocation efforts would

b. Captures in Bodie

1. Can we decrease captures in Bodie and still support translocations to Parker? Do we have enough birds to translocate considering Bodie numbers are down this year?
2. How many marked birds do we need in Bodie? What is the minimum?
3. The USGS noted the value in having a large amount of population data from Bodie from both low and high precipitation years. They would like to monitor heavily for one more year but note that they may be able to decrease fall captures and focus on spring captures.

c. Parker Translocations

1. 2019 translocation efforts so far include translocation of 5 pre-nesting hens and 5 males. Two nests have been initiated in Parker. One female returned to Bodie and two are missing. The first brood was captured June 5th and is scheduled for translocation. Up to 10 females with broods are expected to be translocated from Bodie to Parker this year.
2. Mary Meyerpeter's research is suggesting the brood-translocations result in higher translocation success and recruitment.
3. Parker translocation funding will run out after this year. USGS would like to secure another two years of funding to make sure that translocation efforts achieve success.
4. Do we need to look at additional source populations for translocation efforts? Long Valley was originally identified as an alternate source population but that option does not seem feasible at this time given the current population trend and habitat changes occurring in Long Valley.
5. Katherine noted that CDFW will require handling permits for all staff engaged in handling sage-grouse for translocation purposes.

d. Monitoring in the Pine Nuts

1. Monitoring in the Pine Nut PMU is scheduled to start in 2020. Given low numbers of birds Katrina would like to consider camera trapping and employing minimally invasive monitoring techniques as opposed to capture. USGS agrees this may be a better method considering the difficulty of finding birds to capture. USGS has had previous success monitoring occupancy utilizing these methods.
2. GBI crews have not been able to detect birds. FIM has reported observing birds in abnormal locations.
3. Shawn suggested completing brood surveys in July this year to try and detect birds. Katrina noted that this is scheduled to occur.
4. There was question of whether this is a habitat issue. There is a lot of wild horse activity. This year horse gathers were implemented and will possibly continue in the fall. Katrina is going to complete a field review of conifer projects to determine if treatment maintenance is necessary. She will also take a look at quality of high meadows in the Pine Nuts.

e. Lek numbers at Fales

1. Last year there were 20-30 birds observed. This year 5 total birds were counted on two leks.
2. This count is 1 year post-fire. We should keep an eye on numbers next year to determine if low numbers this year are an isolated event.
3. Discussion of taking a more active monitoring approach at Fales. Considering the area is difficult to access we should consider increasing flight monitoring efforts.
4. If future translocations are deemed necessary it would have to be approved through CDFW's translocation plan process.
5. Habitat issues include pinyon infill near leks, private property, noise levels near leks in Huntoon Valley. Habitat work should be completed before potential augmentation efforts to see if population numbers increase.

f. Other

1. The USGS conducted a signal analysis to determine if individual lek trends are decoupling from lek trends in the rest of the Bi-State. A few leks triggered this signal in the USGS's most recent analysis. These require future discussion. Leks include, Virginia low sage, wheeler, sagehen and others.

5) Integrated Lek Database

- a. NDOW is moving away from entering data through the established Access framework and instead using ESRI ArcGIS Collector and Survey 123. However, some lek counts and aerial survey still need to be entered using the Access data entry process. CA and NV Survey 123 platforms are not currently compatible with each other. While there still has been a few hiccups with this process, it has improved ease and has been less troublesome than last previous years.
- b. The group is still working to integrate the CA and NV databases. We have an integrated Excel spreadsheet with all lek locations and lek history data, but not a common framework yet. A meeting for this working group will be scheduled in the fall once the 2019 data have been entered and QA/QC'd

6) Egg Oiling in the Bi-State (slides attached)

- a. Hardshell Labs and USGS have initiated raven egg oiling in the Bi-State. A depredation permit was acquired through the Service. There is one site in Long Valley where oiling is occurring as well as one control site.
- b. Sage-grouse nest videography is occurring as well to detect nest fate.

- c. The goal of this study is to determine if egg oiling is an effective method to limit raven depredation and improve sage-grouse nest success. Additional data will be completed to determine survival rates this year. So far, apparent survival in Long Valley is higher than last year.