

Proposal for Symposium

Title: Sagebrush Birds in a Changing Environment

Organizers:

Steven E. Hanser, Sagebrush Ecosystem Specialist, U.S. Geological Survey, Phone: 703-648-4054 e-mail: shanser@usgs.gov

Cameron Aldridge, Associate Professor, Colorado State University, in cooperation with U.S. Geological Survey, Phone: 970-226-9433, e-mail: cameron.aldridge@colostate.edu

Peter S. Coates, Research Wildlife Biologist, U.S. Geological Survey, Phone 530-669-5073, e-mail: pcoates@usgs.gov

Invited speakers:

Cameron L. Aldridge (Confirmed), Colorado State University, in cooperation with U.S. Geological Survey, Phone: 970-226-9433, e-mail: cameron.aldridge@colostate.edu

Talk Title: Evaluating biodiversity of sagebrush-dependent species within sage-grouse habitat: an example from the Wyoming Basins

Peter S. Coates (Confirmed), U.S. Geological Survey, Phone 530-669-5073, e-mail: pcoates@usgs.gov

Talk Title: Sage-grouse Response to Wildfire

Anna Chalfoun (Confirmed), Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Phone: (307) 766-5415, e-mail: achalfou@uwyo.edu

Talk Title: Cumulative effects of habitat and climate change on breeding sagebrush songbirds

David Pavlacky (Invited), Bird Conservation of the Rockies, Phone: (970) 482-1707 ext. 11, e-mail: david.pavlacky@birdconservancy.org

Talk Title: Sagebrush Obligate Bird Decision Support Tool

Adrian Monroe (Confirmed), Colorado State University, in cooperation with U.S. Geological Survey, Phone: 970-226-9122, e-mail: adrian.monroe@colostate.edu

Talk Title: Looking for responses to land use by Greater sage-grouse populations at broad scales: an example from public grazing records

Julie Heinrichs (Confirmed)

Affiliation: Colorado State University, In cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey, Phone: 970-226-9149, e-mail: Julie.Heinrichs@colostate.edu

Talk Title: Simulating the future impacts of development, climate change, and fire on Sage-grouse populations

Nick Van Lanen (Invited -Tentative confirmation), Bird Conservancy of the Rockies, Phone: (970) 482-1707 ext. 28, e-mail: Nick.vanlanen@birdconservancy.org

Talk Title: Using the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions program to evaluate local and landscape-scale influences on focal bird species across the sagebrush range

Michael Falkowski (Invited), Colorado State University, Phone: 970-491-3575, e-mail: M.Falkowski@colostate.edu

Talk Title: Building a decision support tool for pinyon-juniper removal: Maximizing benefits to sagebrush- and forest-obligate songbirds

Jennifer Timmer (Invited), Colorado State University, e-mail: timmerj3@gmail.com

Talk Title: State and Transition models and sagebrush avifauna

Format: Full day regular

Description:

The sagebrush ecosystem in the western United States supports a diversity of bird species, including the greater and Gunnison sage-grouse and other sagebrush-dependent passerine species. This ecosystem once covered over 150 million acres and that total has been reduced by 40% and over half of the remaining habitat has been altered due to a variety of human activities. These activities include urban development, conversion to agriculture, livestock grazing, and development of a variety of energy resources. Human activities and alteration of the landscape has resulted in a number of other changes including introduction and spread of invasive plant species, increase fire frequency, expansion of conifer woodlands, and a changing climate.

This day-long symposium will provide insights on how these changes to the sagebrush ecosystem are affecting the bird community and discuss multiple management alternatives to reduce impacts to those species while maintaining the western communities and livelihoods. The issues facing the sagebrush ecosystem are not unique and lessons learned from the collaborative conservation efforts that have been at the core of management strategies to conserve and restore the sagebrush ecosystem can serve as a model for species conservation in other ecosystems.

Presentations will address the dominant disturbance types in the sagebrush ecosystem and the impacts on a variety of bird species that depend on these habitats. Invited speakers will include professionals, faculty, postdocs, and students representing federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations, and universities.

Rationale:

The science-based decision making that was at the heart of the 2015 decision to not list the greater sage-grouse under the Endangered Species Act provides a model for future large-scale collaborative conservation efforts. Federal, state, and local agencies, universities, and non-governmental organizations continue to work together to address management concerns and understand the population dynamics of the bird community, habitat conditions, and threats to the long-term health of ecosystem. The issues facing the sagebrush ecosystem are not unique and the science that is informing the conservation and restoration of the sagebrush ecosystem to improve conditions for the bird community can serve as a model for species conservation in other ecosystems.