



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service

Farm Service
Agency

April 2011



Seriously Sage-Grouse

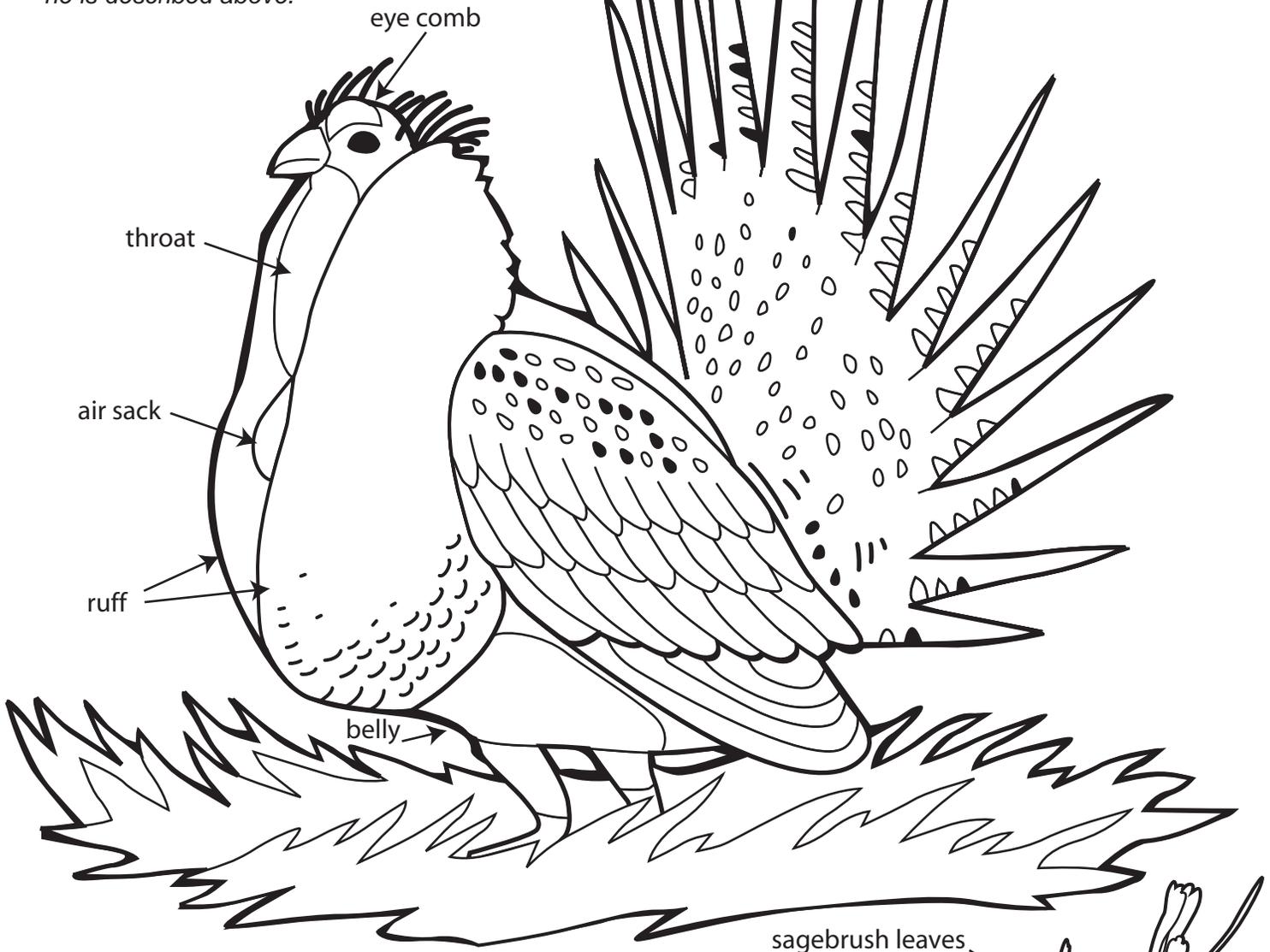


Helping People Help the Land

What Do They Look Like?

Females are mottled brown, black, and white. Males are larger and, in spring, they have a large white ruff around their necks, a yellow eye comb, and bright yellow air sacks on their breasts, which they inflate to show off to females. Males have a black throat. The feathers on the back, wings, and tail are mostly brown, with some white and black spots. Both sexes have black bellies outlined with white.

This male sage-grouse is showing off to a female. Color him in so he looks the way he is described above.

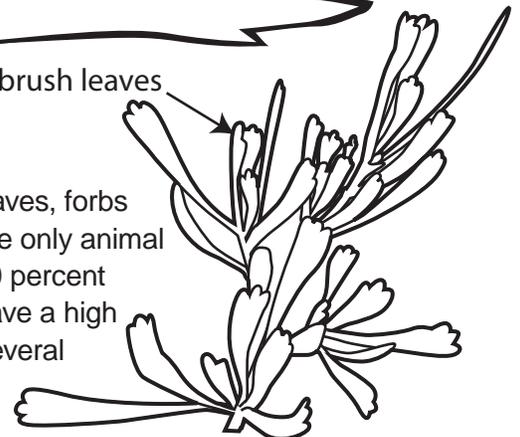


How big do they grow?

The greater sage-grouse is a large, round-winged, ground-dwelling bird. It can grow up to 30 inches long and two feet tall, weighing from 2 1/2 to 7 pounds. It has a long, pointed tail with legs feathered to the base of the toes.

What do they eat?

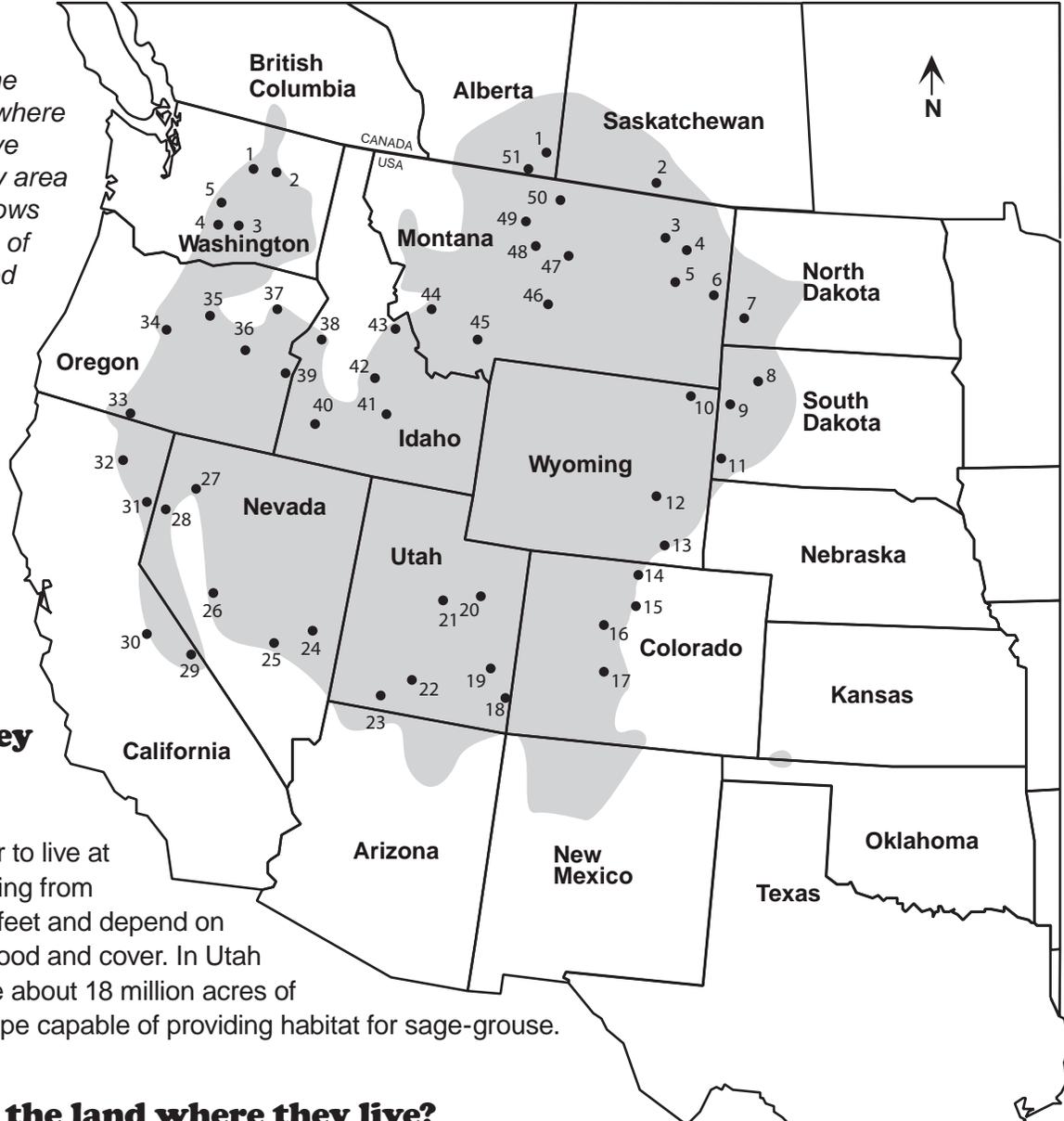
Sage-grouse eat sagebrush leaves, forbs (wildflowers) and insects. It's the only animal that, in winter, can live on a 100 percent sagebrush diet. Chicks must have a high quality insect diet for the first several weeks after hatching.



Where Do They Live?

Sage-grouse live in Montana and 10 other Western states (California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming). They also live in the Canadian provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan.

Connect the dots to show the boundaries of where sage-grouse live today. The gray area on the map shows the boundaries of where they lived in the past.

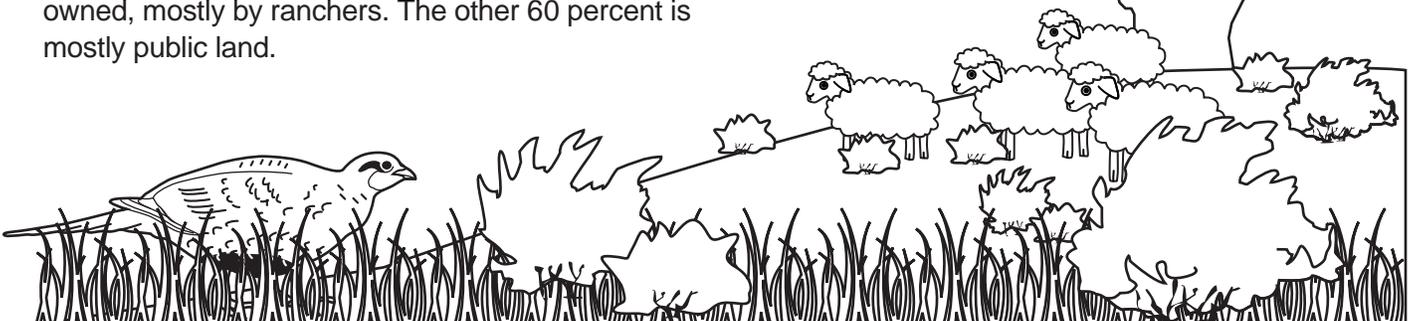


Why do they live where they live?

The birds prefer to live at elevations ranging from 4,000 to 9,000 feet and depend on sagebrush for food and cover. In Utah alone, there are about 18 million acres of sagebrush steppe capable of providing habitat for sage-grouse.

Who owns the land where they live?

About 40 percent of sage-grouse habitat is privately owned, mostly by ranchers. The other 60 percent is mostly public land.



How Do Sage-Grouse Have Babies?

Sage-grouse reproduce by laying eggs. Female sage-grouse (hens) lay two eggs in three days. One nest can have seven to nine eggs in it. Chicks inside the eggs grow (or incubate) for 28 days before they hatch.

If a hen has eight eggs in her nest, how many days did it take her to lay those eight eggs? _____

How does an egg hatch?

The chick inside the egg chips its way through the eggshell with an egg tooth, a temporary tip on its bill that helps the chick break the shell. The chick hatches after one to two days of pecking circular fractures around the large end of the egg, finally breaking through it.



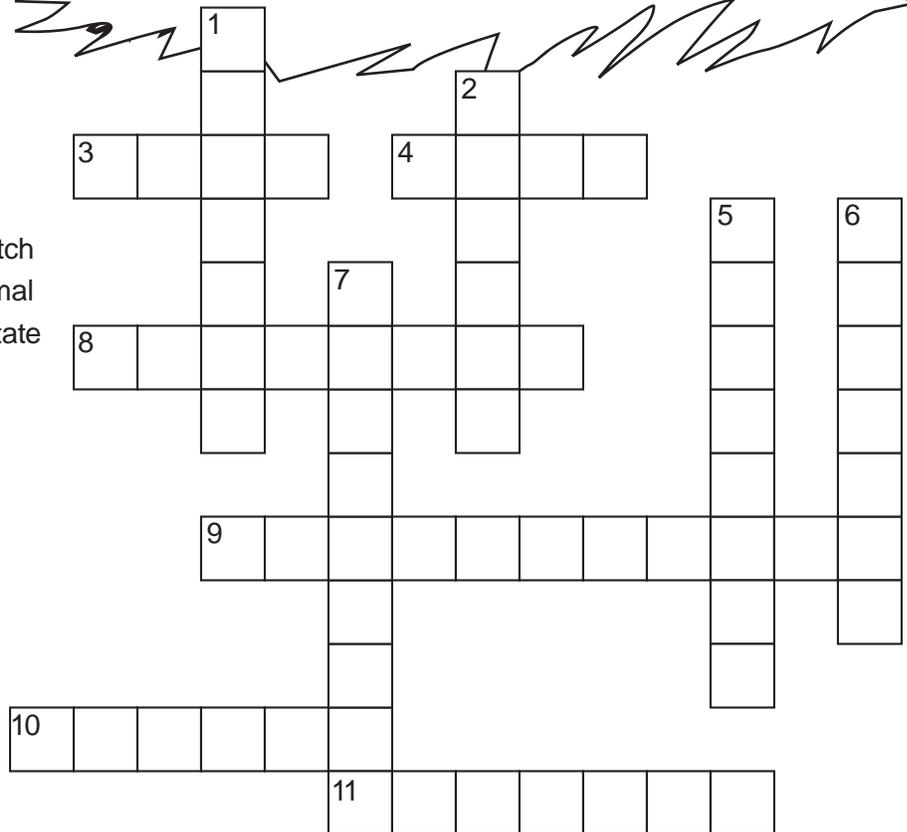
Crossword puzzle

ACROSS

- 3. Female sage-grouse (pl.)
- 4. Where eggs stay before they hatch
- 8. An animal that eats another animal
- 9. Land divided into lots for real estate
- 10. Baby sage-grouse (pl.)
- 11. A place where an animal lives

DOWN

- 1. Evergreen tree or shrub
- 2. The color of the air sacks on a male sage-grouse
- 5. Animals living in the wild
- 6. When a cow or other animal eats grass for food
- 7. Provides food and cover for sage-grouse



What is a lek?

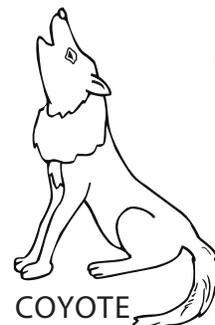
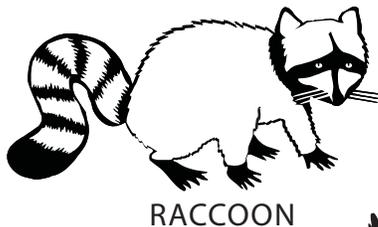
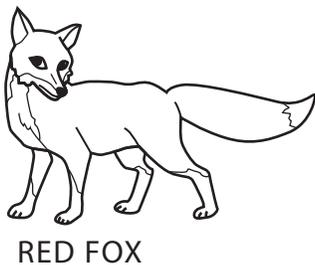
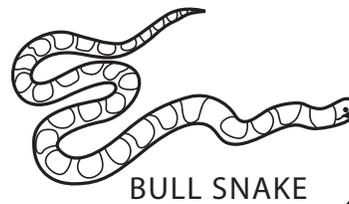
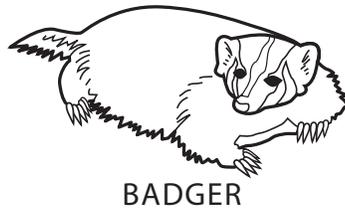
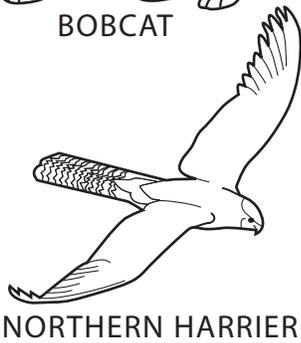
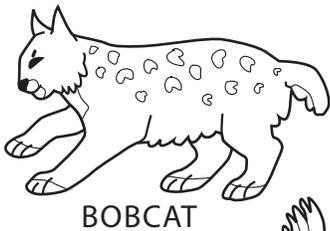
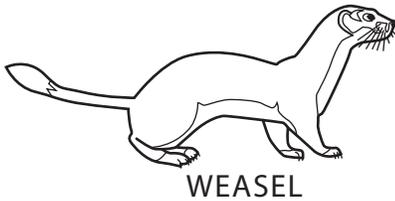
One of the most unique characteristics of the greater sage-grouse is the ritual used for mating. A lek is a gathering of males for the purpose of competitive display (strutting) and mating. Males commonly roost overnight near the lek, and before sunrise, will move to the lek and display. This will continue for a couple of hours following sunrise, March through May.

Who Are the Predators of Sage-Grouse?

A predator is an animal that eats another animal. Predators of sage-grouse can be either other birds or animals that hunt on the ground.

Other bird predators: black-billed magpie, common raven, Golden eagle, Northern harrier, and prairie falcon. Ground predators: badger, bobcat, bull snake, coyote, raccoon, red fox, skunk, and weasel.

Find and circle the names of these predators of sage-grouse in the word puzzle.



O	B	M	N	N	X	J	N	D	Z	O	X	I	O	L	M	C
B	U	Z	O	G	W	E	A	S	E	L	A	X	U	B	C	O
B	L	A	C	K	B	I	L	L	E	D	M	A	G	P	I	E
P	L	R	L	N	P	Q	R	E	G	D	A	B	B	A	F	Q
W	S	I	A	P	X	C	T	C	M	J	E	N	F	X	Y	K
C	N	X	F	H	G	O	L	D	E	N	E	A	G	L	E	K
A	A	P	E	A	D	M	S	Q	L	V	C	G	B	K	F	H
W	K	M	I	N	Z	J	O	T	A	Z	J	S	B	A	O	R
R	E	I	R	R	A	H	N	R	E	H	T	R	O	N	A	X
K	T	H	I	S	R	A	N	B	O	M	Y	A	P	C	O	I
G	O	R	A	O	K	O	J	R	Z	E	G	D	C	F	O	W
Z	Y	S	R	V	M	U	A	T	S	X	V	O	D	B	J	Z
X	O	O	P	M	J	Z	N	L	X	T	O	E	Q	I	O	X
X	C	V	O	T	S	U	A	K	J	N	R	T	C	U	Y	B
K	F	C	I	A	O	X	I	B	M	L	Z	N	F	D	L	O

Why Are There Fewer Sage-Grouse Now?

Fragmentation (breaking a large area up into several unconnected areas) of sagebrush habitats from a number of sources is the main cause of the decline in sage-grouse populations. Other reasons include exotic species invasion, unsustainable grazing systems, sodbusting, subdivision, and conifer encroachment.

What do these words mean?

Draw a line from the word to its definition.

Fragmentation

Sagebrush

Habitat

Population

Predator

Exotic

Invasion

Unsustainable

Grazing system

Sodbusting

Subdivision

Conifer

Encroachment

All the individuals of one species in a given area

To be broken apart

A place in which an animal or plant normally lives or grows

To move beyond an established limit

An animal that lives by capturing and eating other animals

To break land out of grass to plant to a crop

The act of spreading into or over

Cannot be supported or maintained

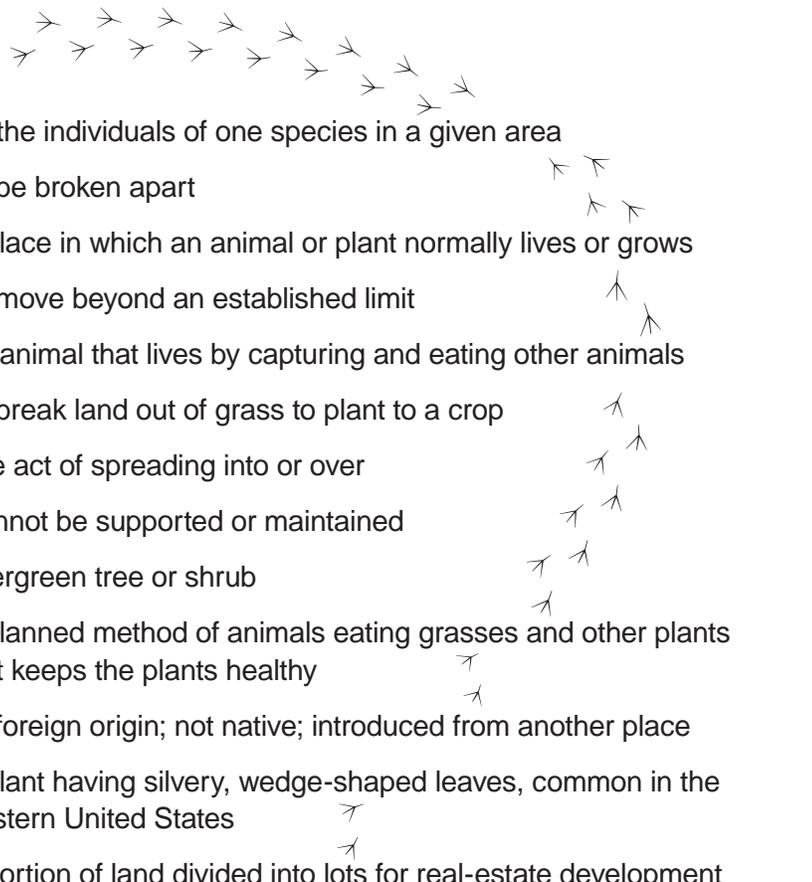
Evergreen tree or shrub

A planned method of animals eating grasses and other plants that keeps the plants healthy

Of foreign origin; not native; introduced from another place

A plant having silvery, wedge-shaped leaves, common in the western United States

A portion of land divided into lots for real-estate development

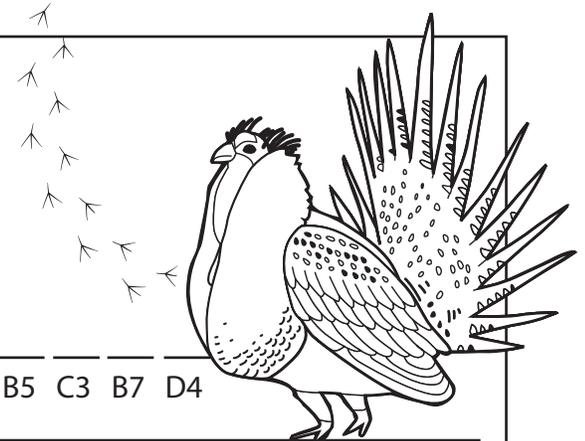


Break the code

D4 A5 C3 B7 C4 B1 C3 B1 B6 B2 A4 B7 C3

D2 B7 C4 B7 D3 B4 A6 B2 D6

B2 C7 D4 A5 C3 C4 B4 C3 B6 D2 D1 C4 C1 B5 C3 B7 D4

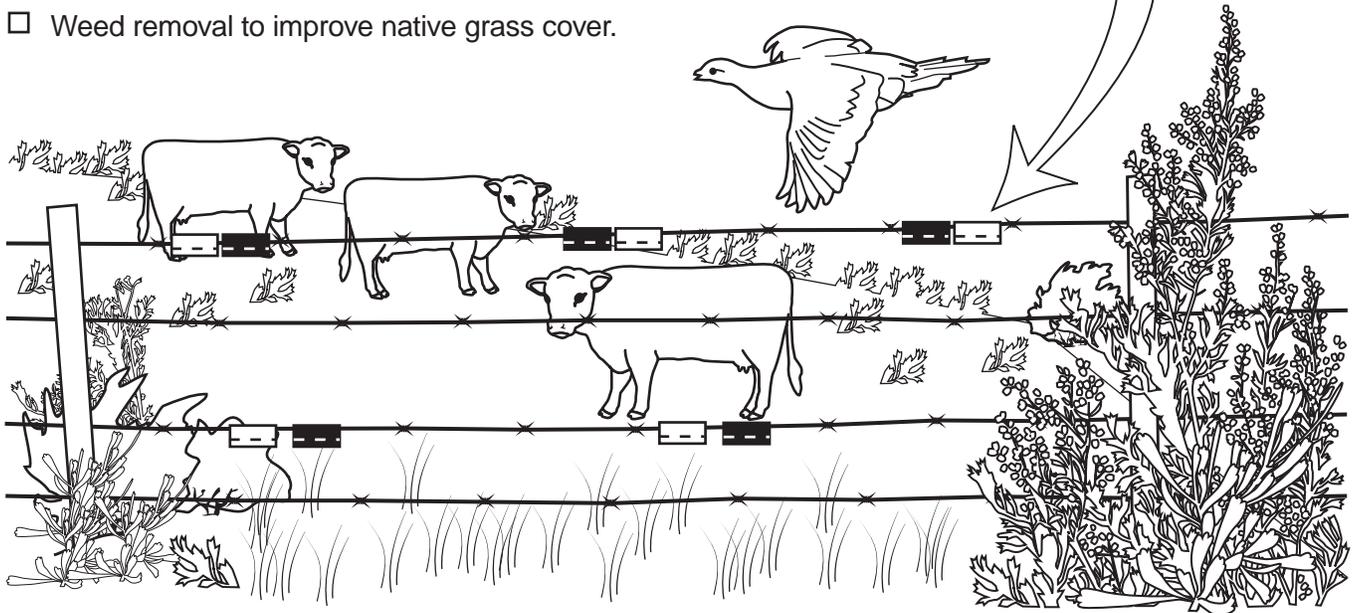


	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	J	D	Q	U	H	B	Z
B	G	O	K	M	W	R	S
C	N	R	E	A	Q	X	F
D	C	I	Y	T	P	L	V

How Can We Help?

What's good for cows is generally good for sage-grouse, too. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) works with ranchers to develop grazing systems that are good for their land, their cows or sheep, and the sage-grouse. Ranchers often use the following practices that are good for the land and good for the sage-grouse:

- Grazing systems that allow cattle and sheep to be moved from pasture to pasture to keep grass high enough to hide sage-grouse nests.
- Markers placed on fences so sage-grouse see the fences and don't fly into them.
- Escape ramps placed in stock water tanks for sage-grouse and other wildlife to use if they get into a stock water tank by accident.
- Weed removal to improve native grass cover.



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T H E S A G E - G R O U S E
 D 4 A 5 C 3 B 7 C 4 B 1 C 3 B 1 B 6 B 2 A 4 B 7 C 3
 L S A S Y M B O L
 D 2 B 7 C 4 B 7 D 3 B 4 A 6 B 2 D 6
 O F T H E A M E R I C A N W E S T
 B 2 C 7 D 4 A 5 C 3 C 4 B 4 C 3 B 6 D 2 D 1 C 4 C 1 B 5 C 3 B 7 D 4

p. 5

O B M N X J N D Z O X I O L M C
 B U Z O G W E A S E L A X U B C O
 P L R L N P Q R E G D A B A F O
 W S I A P X C T C M J E N F X X K
 C N X F H G O L D E N A G L E K
 A P M S O L V C G B K F H
 W K M I N Z J O T A Z J S B A O R
 R E I R A H N R E H T R O M A X
 K T H I S R A N B O M Y A C O I
 G O R A O J R Z E G D E F O W
 Z Y S R V M U A T S X V O B J Z
 X O O P M J Z N X T O I O X
 X C V O T S U A K J N R T C U Y B
 K F I A O X I B M L Z N F D L O



p. 6

Fragmentation - All the individuals of one species in a given area
 Habitat - A place in which an animal or plant normally lives or grows
 Population - An animal that lives by capturing and eating other animals
 Predator - To break land out of grass to plant to a crop
 Exotic - The act of spreading into or over
 Invasion - Cannot be supported or maintained
 Unsustainable - Evergreen tree or shrub
 Grazing system - A planned method of animals eating grasses and other
 Sodusting - plants that keeps the plants healthy
 Subdivision - Of foreign origin; not native; introduced from another place
 Conifer - A plant having silvery, wedge-shaped leaves, common in the western United States
 Encroachment - A portion of land divided into lots for real-estate development

p. 4

H A B I T A T
 G H I C K
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 N E S T
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 C

Answer
 Keys:



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Utah Office Locations

www.ut.nrcs.usda.gov

State Office

125 South State Street
Salt Lake City UT 84138-1100
(801) 524-4550

Ogden Office

2871 South Commerce
Way Ogden UT 84401
(801) 629-0580

Coalville Office

30 Main Street
Coalville UT 84017
(435) 336-5853

Logan Office

1860 North 100 East
Logan UT 84341-1784
(435) 753-5616

Provo Office

302 East 1860 South
Provo UT 84606-7317
(801) 377-5580

Randolph Office

195 North Main
Randolph UT 84064
(435) 793-3905

Tooele Office

185 North Main Street
Tooele UT 84074
(435) 882-2276

Tremonton Office

85 South First East
Tremonton UT 84337
(435) 257-5403

Richfield Office

340 North 600 East
Richfield UT 84701
(435) 896-6441

Beaver Office

620 North Main
Beaver UT 84713-0640
(435) 438-5092

Cedar City Office

2390 West Highway 56
#14
Cedar City UT 84720
(435) 586-2429

Fillmore Office

65 West 100 North
Fillmore UT 84631
(435) 743-6655

Manti Office

50 South Main, Suite #3
Manti, UT 84642
(435) 835-4111

Nephi Office

635 North Main
Nephi UT 84648
(435) 623-0342

Panguitch Office

225 East Center Street
Panguitch UT 84759-0362
(435) 676-8021

Price Office

540 West Price River
Drive
Price UT 84501
(435) 637-0041

Aneth Service Center

East Highway 262
Aneth, UT 84534
(435) 651-3493

Castle Dale Office

1120 North Des-Bee-Dove
Rd.
Castle Dale UT 84513
(435) 381-2300

Monticello Office

32 South 1st East
Monticello UT 84535
(435) 587-2481

Roosevelt Office

240 West Highway 40,
333-4
Roosevelt UT 84066
(435) 722-4621

Vernal Office

80 North 500 West
Vernal UT 84078
(435) 789-2100

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