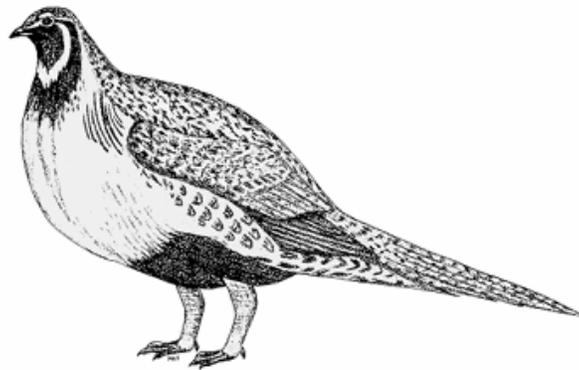


**Species Notes for
Greater Sage Grouse (*Centrocercus urophasianus*):**

**California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System
Level II Model Prototype**



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PREFACE

This document is part of the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System, operated and maintained by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) in cooperation with the California Interagency Wildlife Task Group (CIWTG). The information will be useful for environmental assessments and wildlife habitat management. For more information on the CWHR System and all of its components, please see <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cwahr/>.

Notes such as these were prepared for 32 species by the US Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station as part of a 2000/2001 contract with CDFG. Each is part of a prototypical “Level II” model for a species. As compared with the “Level I” or matrix models initially available in the CWHR System, “Level II” models incorporate spatial issues such as size of a habitat patch and distance between suitable habitat patches.

The notes are divided into three major sections. First, “Distribution, Seasonality and Habitats” represents information in the existing Geographic Information System (GIS) range data and in the Level I matrix model for a species. There is a vector-based GIS layer of geographic range and seasonality for each species in CWHR as well as a matrix containing all suitability ratings – High (H), Medium (M), Low (L) or Unsuitable (-) – by habitat (e.g. BOW or Blue Oak Woodland), stage (e.g. 4P or small tree, open canopy) and life requisite (reproduction, cover, or feeding.). Tools such as “Bioview” within the CWHR software will return these suitability ratings for a species to a user-supplied data set containing habitats and either stages (e.g. 4P) or stage values (e.g. trees of 16.0 average diameter at breast height in a stand of 30% canopy closure).

Second, “Required Attributes of Suitable Habitat Patches” represents spatially-explicit requirements of a species. The information here builds upon what is known about habitat patch size and the most critical attributes of a habitat patch needed by an individual of the species. Applications such as “GRABS”, which stands for “Grouping Resources Algorithm for Biological Data Sets”, will “clump” pixels of a user-supplied raster-based GIS data set representing patches of a suitable habitat and stage for a species. It will calculate area, perimeter, and complexity within each patch and analyze its outside edge for juxtaposition with other habitats and stages of interest. Many of the attributes are what were once called “elements” in the CWHR model.

Third, “Spatial Habitat Requirements for Persistence of Population” represents estimates of the amount of habitat needed to maintain a population of a species. This may be considered the starting point for a “Level III” CWHR model, which would take into account spatial issues as well as a number of population parameters not yet incorporated into CWHR. Such information is included for most, but not all, Level II-modeled species.

B137 Greater Sage Grouse *Centrocercus urophasianus*

Distribution, Seasonality and Habitats

<i>Model Parameter</i>	<i>Threshold Value(s) for Species</i>
<u>Biogeographic Range and Seasonality</u> range of the species, by season, in the state	Species is a permanent resident in sage dominated habitats in northeastern California.
<u>Suitable Habitats</u> habitats rated in the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR) System as high (H), medium (M), or low (L) suitability for reproduction, cover, or feeding	Species finds suitability (H --->L) for reproduction, cover and/or feeding in some or all stages of: Alkali Desert Scrub, Barren, Bitterbrush, Low Sage, Sagebrush, and Wet Meadow.
<u>Water</u> whether water is required, enhances, or is irrelevant for habitat suitability	Species is typically found near water, although the level of importance is not clear.

Required Attributes of Suitable Habitat Patches

<i>Model Parameter</i>	<i>Threshold Value(s) for Species</i>
<u>Patch Size</u> L = low suitability. This is the minimum patch size for persistence of an individual. H = high suitability. Above this patch size, area alone does not increase habitat suitability for an individual.	100 acre (L) 1000 acres (H) (Species is a communal breeder so relatively large areas of habitat are needed, as one or two individuals alone probably will not persist.)

<p><u>Edges</u> requirements for a transition between two life form types – tree/shrub, tree/grass, tree/water, tree/agricultural, shrub/grass, shrub/water, shrub/agricultural, grass/water, grass/agricultural, or water/agricultural</p>	<p>A shrub/grass edge (principally with sagebrush as the shrub) is essential during courtship. Sagebrush is used for feeding and cover while courting takes place in the open.</p> <p>A shrub/water edge is also used for all 3 life requisites.</p>
<p><u>Structural Habitat Attributes</u> requirements for live vegetation, dead or decadent vegetation, vegetation residues, physical features, or human-made features</p>	<p>A shrub layer and an herb layer are essential. Species needs open to dense sagebrush with herbaceous vegetation between bushes. More open sagebrush cover is good for nesting; more closed, for cover. Can also be found in shrubby and grassy riparian vegetation.</p>
<p><u>Food</u> vegetative or animal diet requirements</p>	<p>Species requires shrubs (principally sagebrush), forbs and terrestrial insects.</p>