

**From:** SARA [PNR] [<mailto:SARA.PNR@EC.gc.ca>]

**Sent:** January-23-15 4:27 PM

**To:** SARA [PNR]

**Subject:** Species at Risk Act - final Amended Recovery Strategy for the Greater Sage-Grouse in Canada

Greetings,

Environment Canada received many valuable comments on the proposed *Amended Recovery Strategy for the Greater Sage-Grouse in Canada* from consultation sessions held in southern Alberta and Saskatchewan and via the Species at Risk Public Registry. The final *Amended Recovery Strategy for the Greater Sage-Grouse in Canada* is now available on the Species At Risk Public Registry at:

[http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default\\_e.cfm?documentID=1458](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/document/default_e.cfm?documentID=1458)

This amended recovery strategy is a planning document that makes general recommendations on what should be done, collectively, to help this species recover in Canada. It includes the identification of critical habitat that the species needs for its population to recover. To address input received by Environment Canada at consultation sessions or during the public comment period, the following major changes were made to the proposed version of the amended recovery strategy:

- the level of threat from predators was increased from 'medium' to 'high', and a threat related to human presence (e.g., photographers, bird watchers, etc.) at or near a lek was added;
- any reference to forage utilization rates has been removed. The document still indicates that prolonged over-grazing would not be compatible with the requirements of Sage-Grouse;
- recent information and scientific references were added regarding the threat of noise disturbance and vertical structures to Sage-Grouse;
- an explanation was added for how the various simultaneous threats facing Sage-Grouse can interact, or act in concert, resulting in a 'very high' level of concern; and
- a number of clarifications were made to the text of the section titled *Activities Likely to Result in Destruction of Critical Habitat*.

Responsibility for the conservation of Sage-Grouse in Canada is shared between the federal and provincial governments. Federal government responsibilities derive from the federal *Species at Risk Act*. The *Act* is designed to complement provincial/territorial legislation to protect wildlife species and their habitats. For example, responsibility for the protection of Critical Habitat is shared by federal and provincial governments under their respective legislation. Stewardship remains a priority approach for achieving Sage-Grouse survival and recovery.

The Government of Canada's plan for successful recovery of this species includes this amended recovery strategy, which will guide recommended voluntary stewardship activities, a joint program with the Calgary Zoo to breed and rear Sage-Grouse chicks in a safe environment to help increase the population in the wild, and the Emergency Protection Order, which focuses on the imminent threats to the species in the wild. The Emergency Protection Order lists activities that are legally prohibited on some provincial and federal crown lands. Several pamphlets are

included with this letter to explain the similarities, differences and legal ramifications of both the amended recovery strategy and Emergency Protection Order.

I trust that you will find this information helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Wayland".

**Mark Wayland**

Head, Species at Risk Recovery Unit

Canadian Wildlife Service | Service canadien de la faune

Environmental Stewardship Branch | Direction générale de l'intendance environnementale

Prairie & Northern Region | Région des Prairies et du Nord

Environment Canada | Environnement Canada

**Enclosed:**

Agricultural Producers and the Sage-Grouse Recovery Strategy

Agricultural Producers and the Emergency Protection Order

Key Questions and Answers for Producers on the Emergency Order