

The following is a description of good sage grouse habitat from Smith Valley to Bridgeport, and from there to Bodie Hills. Private lands and public lands. All this land has plenty of water and feed for the sage grouse.

1. Desert Creek Ranch is located in the southern part of Smith Valley on the west side of Highway 338, with 1174 acres of irrigated pasture. It is surrounded by approximately 40,000 acres of good sage grouse habitat, black sage, big sage, grasses and some forbs. Desert Creek runs through the area.
2. Dalzel Ranches and Nye Canyon are located just 2 miles south east of Desert Creek Ranch along highway 338 towards Bridgeport, and have about 1200 acres of sub irrigated lands running 7 miles south along highway 338 to Bridgeport. This also has over 20,000 acres of good sage grouse habitat adjoining it, with black sage, big sage, grasses and forbs.
3. The Sweetwater Ranch is located about 3 miles south of the Dalzel Ranches and has about 3800 acres of good irrigated pastures, with 20,000 acres of good sage grouse habitat surrounding it.
4. The Ambro Rossachi Ranch is the next adjoining ranch with about 520 acres of good irrigated pastures stringing along Highway 338 for about 4 miles. This ranch also has several thousand acres of good sage grouse habitat on both sides of it with high and low sage brush and grasses.
5. Adjoining the Ambro Rossachi Ranch is the old Rossachi Ranch now owned by the USFS, which has approximately 500 acres of irrigated pastures with thousands of acres of good sage brush on both sides, black sage, big sage grasses and forbs.
6. Adjoining the Old Rossachi Ranch is the Tod Scerine Ranch which has about 600 acres of prime irrigated pastures, with thousands of acres of good sage brush on both sides.
7. The next adjoining lands is about 1200 acres of scattered private pasture lands along Highway 338 for about 5 miles from the Scerine Ranch to the Bridgeport Dam. This 1200 acres runs along the river, and has black sage, big sage and good sage grouse habitat.
8. Next is the Bridgeport Valley with many thousands of acres of private irrigated lands with good sage brush habitat all around it.
9. There are also thousands of acres of irrigated acres in the south end of Bridgeport Valley and the Bridgeport meadows.
10. Just above Bridgeport Meadow is about 500 acres of good sage grouse habitat on Summers Meadows. This meadow is irrigated and has thousands of acres of black sage, big sage and grasses and forbs habitat. We have noticed a lot of sage grouse there this year.
11. Now we go into the Bodie Hills, where there are thousands of acres of wet meadows and surrounding acres of prime sage for the sage grouse. Our men have noticed a record number of sage grouse this year in this area.

12,000 acres of irrigated or sub irrigated lands lies in the Bi-State area from Smith Valley to Bridgeport and to Bodie. There is about 1 million acres of prime sage brush lands available which is around the private lands.

There are about 4 to 5 ounces of sagebrush leaves on a black sage plant. About 30 ounces on a big sage plant. One sage grouse eats about 2 to 3 ounces of sage per day. Now figure it out. There is enough habitat to raise many thousands of sage grouse in the Bi-State area. These birds have a great leverage to reproduce. The sage grouse lay anywhere between 5 and 13 eggs per year. If you protect them by removing the threats, you have more birds.

I have just showed you that the sage grouse have the habitat to take care of them. Back in the 60's and 70's when we had thousands of sage grouse, we also had 4 times more domestic livestock on the range. We also had 10 times more deer and antelope. The habitat took care of them. In the late 70's the sage grouse numbers started to go down. Why? We had the same habitat, but about ½ of the livestock was taken off the range allotments .

These birds do not have the protection from other birds and ground animals which have increased after 1980. If we want more sage grouse we must protect them. Here are a couple suggestions to accomplish this.

1. Build animal proof fences around the lek area.
2. We can build box nests to protect from threats.
3. We must put overhead wire guards to protect these nest areas so that other birds cannot get them.

I have talked to livestock people from all over the western states and they all say that these birds need protection like they had in the 50's, 60's, and 70's. The ranges[despite the drought], are in better shape now than they were in the 20's and 30's. The big thing that helped us was that the BLM and FS came in to regulate grazing and millions of dollars in private money went into range improvements. We must protect the birds from the Pinion/ Juniper encroachment, and graze to prevent wildfires.