



Featured Species Habitat Management Guidance for Sharp-tailed Grouse

Latin Name: *Tympanuchus phasianellus*

Scope: Upper Peninsula

Rationale - *why we value the species and the problem for the species:*

The sharp-tailed grouse (STG) is a species of special concern and a Species of Greatest Conservation Need (Michigan DNR, 2015). The public desires STG viewing opportunities and the hunting season was reopened in 2010 after being closed since 1997. In 2013, 3,800 hunters sought STG (Frawley 2014). Although STG were relatively widely distributed in the Upper and northern Lower Peninsulas during the 1950's (Ammann 1957), their range has since contracted (Maples and Soulliere 1996). It is thought that declines in openland cover types is the cause for this bird's shrinking range and associated decline in STG numbers.

Habitat Need - *the cause & effect relationship between habitat and species and its primary limiting habitat need:*

Distribution and abundance is tied to relatively large blocks of herbaceous openlands, including upland herbaceous openings, sedge meadows, other herbaceous wetland types, and upland pine barrens (Sjogren and Corace 2006). Open blocks of 4 square miles or larger are ideal, but smaller blocks may be suitable when connected via dispersal corridors (Sjogren and Corace 2006). Ideal habitat includes a complex of herbaceous openings with adjacent shrubland or regenerating forests (Ammann, 1957).

Habitat Objectives - *the treatment or management to address the primary limiting habitat need:*

- 1) No net loss of preferred STG cover types.
- 2) Create or maintain large opening complexes made-up of herbaceous openings, pine barrens, sedge meadows, and other herbaceous wetland types:
 - a. maintain or expand herbaceous openings;
 - b. manage pine barrens on short or 10-20 year rotations of opening maintenance;
 - c. manage adjacent forests to maintain regenerating forests adjacent to permanent openings;
 - d. controlled burning can be used where appropriate to maintain openings and manage pine types;
 - e. maintain connectivity of preferred cover types within complexes.

Priority Geographic Areas – *the specific geographic areas where we should focus management for the species:*

The 328 square miles of high quality habitat in the Upper Peninsula based on the STG landscape habitat model (Donovan 2003: MDNR unpublished); and the 8 Regional State Forest Management Plan Management Areas (1 WUP and 7 EUP) and two UP WLD Project Areas, which identify STG as a featured species.

Priority Landscapes – *the landscape, setting, or cover-type where we should focus management within the areas above:*

Landscapes classified as high quality habitat (classes 6-8) in the landscape habitat model (Donovan 2003: MDNR unpublished).

Population Goal - *the goal for the species, its habitat, or a stakeholder's actions:*

Maintain a viable STG population that supports hunting and viewing in the UP.

Evaluation Method - *the monitoring method to measure progress towards the goal above:*

Annually measure occupancy rates in the survey study area (Fig. 2) based on established protocols (Luukkonen et al. 2009).

Incidental Species – *other species which may benefit from management for this species:*

Bobolink; eastern meadowlark; and upland sandpiper.

References - *citation for documents referenced in this guidance:*

- Ammann, G.A. 1957. The prairie grouse of Michigan. Michigan Department of Conservation, Lansing, Michigan.
- Frawley, B. J., 2014. 2013 Sharp-tailed Grouse Harvest Survey - Wildlife Division Report No. 3587 Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Lansing, MI.
- Luukkonen, D.R., T. Minzey, T. E. Maples, and P. Lederle. 2009. Evaluation of population monitoring procedures for sharp-tailed grouse in the eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division Report 3503.
- Maples, T.E. and G.J. Soulliere. 1996. Status of Michigan sharp-tailed grouse in the 1990's. Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Division Report 3256.
- Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR). 2015. Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) online list of Frequently Asked Questions on the 2009 Revision of the State Endangered Species List. < http://www.michigan.gov/dnr/0,1607,7-153-10370_12141-213610--,00.html >. Accessed 9 Sept. 2015.
- Sjogren, S.J. and R. G. Corace. 2006. Conservation assessment for sharp-tailed grouse in the Great Lakes Region. U.S.D.A., Forest Service, Eastern Region.