

BLM Study Review of Hells Canyon Studies

E.3.2-8 Distribution of Sage and Sharp-tailed Grouse in Hells Canyon and Transmission Line Corridors Associated with the Hells Canyon Complex

1. INTRODUCTION

Surveyed 457 square miles in 1996 (25 hours)

Surveyed 405 miles of right of way in 1998 (12 hours)

2. CONCLUSION

I am assuming the surveys only covered each site once! Current accepted protocols call for three flights during a lekking season since predators and other disturbances may prevent birds from displaying. Transmission lines should also have been surveyed in at least two consecutive years.

3. STUDY ADEQUACY

BLM believes that the study is inadequate. Multiple surveys are recommended by studies in page 1 of abstract.

Summary: "However we cannot conclude that these species are no longer present in the area."

4. BLM CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS: The study should have included a review of the literature reporting impacts of transmission lines and poles on upland birds which can serve as avian predator perches. Some recent research indicates that structures, even if they do not provide raptor perches, can result in avoidance of adjacent habitat by sage grouse.

RECOMMENDATIONS: