University of IdahoAnimal Care and Use CommitteeStandard Operating Procedure (SOP)Number2001.10Version1Last Updated1/17/01TitleCapture of grouse using walk-in trapsSpeciesGrouse

Purpose

Columbian sharp-tailed grouse are a subspecies of sharp-tailed grouse that has declined over most of its range. It now occupies only 10% of its former range, yet is still a game bird in 3 states. More information on movements, habitat use, survival and impacts of human activity is need to better manage the species. Many studies require the capture of individual animals for marking, attachment or implantation of transmitters, or for measuring current biological parameters.

Potential Impact on Animal Subjects

When performed correctly, the capture and release process has no ill effects on the animal. In the event that an individual animal is accidentally injured while being handled, it will be evaluated on site as to whether the bird should be released or euthanized. Euthanasia will only be used if the bird has a broken wing or leg such that it cannot survive in the wild. Cervical dislocation will be used in such an emergency situation, but this should occur very infrequently under field conditions. Euthanized birds will be given to the respective state wildlife agency for disposal or use (museum specimen or live-mounting of the agency so chooses).

Description

Birds will be captured using walk-in traps placed on leks (communal display grounds). Traps are placed on the lek in the afternoon when grouse are not present and then opened in the pre-dawn hours before grouse fly to the lek at dawn. A researcher waits in the distance (aided with a spotting scope or binoculars) and as soon as a bird or two enter a trap or two the researcher approaches the lek, removes the birds and proceeds to process them per protocol approved procedures. Traps may remain open for several hours in the morning. Traps are closed when the researcher leaves the lek to prevent accidental capture. The following night traps are opened in the pre-dawn hours for another morning of trapping. Each lek may be trapped for up to three consecutive mornings and then the traps are moved to another lek.

References

Schroeder, M.A., and C.E. Braun. 1991. Walk-in traps for capturing greater prairie-chickens on leks. Journal of Field Ornithology 62:378-385.

Young, J.R. 1994. The influence of sexual selection on phenotypic and genetic divergence among sage grouse populations. Ph.D. Thesis, Purdue Univ. 123pp. She modified the technique for sage grouse.

Marks, J.S., and V.A. Marks. 1987. Habitat selection by Columbian sharp-tailed grouse in west-central Idaho. USDI Bureau of Land Management, Boise, ID 115pp. Detailed description of the approach for sharp-tailed grouse.