

Report: Sage grouse numbers surged in '14 and '15

By Phil Taylor, E&E Publishing

Greater sage grouse numbers in the West have grown by nearly two-thirds since 2013, marking what could be a significant rebound to the bird's previous several years of decline, according to scientists in Western states.

Western state biologists said they spotted 80,284 male sage grouse across the West in 2015, a 40 percent jump over the 57,399 that were spotted in 2014 and 63 percent over the 49,397 that were spotted in 2013, according to yet-to-be-published research compiled by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and shared with Greenwire.

Sage grouse experts caution against drawing conclusions from the two-year spike, noting that sage grouse populations appear to fluctuate on roughly decadelong cycles and are influenced in the short term by precipitation.

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