

R2 Sensitive Species (SS)

Recommendations and Evaluations

Common Name: White-tailed Ptarmigan

Scientific Name: *Lagopus leucurus*

Recommendation: R2 Sensitive Species (SS)

Recommendation Rationale:

NFS units in Colorado clearly support the majority of suitable habitat for this species, and R2 populations are isolated from nearest northerly populations by long distances. Recent research (not included in the species review) suggests that cadmium from mining runoff is being concentrated in willows (their primary food source) and toxicity levels in some areas are affecting ptarmigan lifespan. This research suggests that some Colorado ptarmigan populations may not be self sustaining. There is good evidence that the species is susceptible to local extirpation, population size tends to be small in most R2 populations, they are not thought to colonize new areas well, most suitable habitat in R2 is on NFS lands, and NFS management actions directly affect the species and its habitat. For these reasons, SS designation is warranted.