

REGION 2 SENSITIVE SPECIES EVALUATION FORM

Species: Sage sparrow (<i>Amphispiza belli</i>)			
Criteria	Rank	Rationale	Literature Citations
1 Distribution within R2	B	The sage sparrow occurs in Colorado and Wyoming in areas dominated by sagebrush. Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Geographic Society 1989
2 Distribution outside R2	C	<p>BREEDING: central Washington, eastern Oregon, southern Idaho, southwestern Wyoming, and northwestern Colorado south to southern California, central Baja California, southern Nevada, southwestern Utah, northeastern Arizona, and northwestern New Mexico.</p> <p>NON-BREEDING: central California, central Nevada, southwestern Utah, northern Arizona, and central New Mexico south to central Baja California, northwestern mainland of Mexico, and western Texas.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AOU 1983 Martin and Carlson 1998
3 Dispersal Capability	D	No known barriers to dispersals. Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
4 Abundance in R2	D	Absolute numbers are not available. Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.natureserve.org

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<p>5 Population Trend in R2</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>BBS shows a nonsignificant 0.3 percent average annual increase survey-wide (1966-1996, N = 187 survey routes); a significant decline of -4.8 percent average per year for 1966-1979 (N = 73); and a recent significant increase of 2.0 percent average per year, 1980-1996 (N = 154; Sauer et al. 1997). BBS data indicate recent nonsignificant declines in Wyoming, 1980-1995. Generally low sample sizes make trend estimates unreliable for most states and physiographic regions. Christmas Bird Count (CBC) data show a significant decline (-2.1 percent average per year; N = 160 survey circles) survey-wide for the period from 1959-1988. Trend estimates show declines in Arizona, New Mexico, and a significant decline only in Texas (-2.2 percent average per year; N = 16).</p> <p>Moderately threatened range-wide, habitat or community lends itself to alternate use.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sauer et al 1997 • http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/literatr/grasbird/fplbcu/fplbcu.htm
<p>6 Habitat Trend in R2</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>NFS lands in Region 2 still harbor significant areas of sagebrush but those areas face threats similar to sagebrush areas outside NFS lands.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

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<p>7 Habitat Vulnerability or Modification</p>	<p>A</p>	<p>Habitat loss and fragmentation are major threats. Sagebrush shrublands are vulnerable to a number of activities that reduce or fragment sagebrush habitat, including land conversion to tilled agriculture, urban and suburban development, and road and power-line rights of way. Range improvement programs remove sagebrush by burning, herbicide application, and mechanical treatment, replacing sagebrush with annual grassland to promote forage for livestock.</p> <p>Cheatgrass readily invades disturbed sites, and has come to dominate the grass-forb community of more than half the sagebrush region in the West, replacing native bunchgrasses. Crested wheatgrass and other non-native annuals have also fundamentally altered the grass-forb community in many areas of sagebrush shrub-steppe.</p> <p>Cheatgrass has altered the natural fire regime in the western range, increasing the frequency, intensity, and size of range fires. Fire kills sagebrush and where non-native grasses dominate, the landscape can be converted to annual grassland as the fire cycle escalates, removing habitat for sage sparrow.</p> <p>NFS lands in Region 2 still harbor significant areas of sagebrush but those areas face threats similar to sagebrush areas outside NFS lands.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rich 1996 • Paige and Ritter 1998
<p>8 Life History and Demographics</p>	<p>B</p>	<p>The species is closely tied to the sagebrush ecosystem that is declining in quality in much of the western U.S.</p> <p>Confidence in Rank High or Medium or Low</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.natureserve.org
<p>Initial Evaluator(s): John G. Sidle</p>			<p>Date: 6/18/01</p>

National Forests in the Rocky Mountain Region where species is KNOWN (K) or LIKELY(L)¹ to occur:

<u>Colorado NF/NG</u>		<u>Kansas NF/NG</u>		<u>Nebraska NF/NG</u>		<u>South Dakota NF/NG</u>		<u>Wyoming NF/NG</u>	
Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely	Known	Likely
	L	Cimmaron NG		Samuel R.McKelvie NF		Black Hills NF		Shoshone NF	
	L			Halsey NF		Buffalo Gap NG		Bighorn NF	
	L			Nebraska NF		Ft. Pierre NG		Black Hills NF	
	L			Ogalala NG				Medicine Bow NF	K
	L							Thunder Basin NG	K
	L								
K									

¹ Likely is defined as more likely to occur than not occur on the National Forest or Grassland. This generally can be thought of as having a 50% chance or greater of appearing on NFS lands.

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