

## **BLUE GROUSE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

Procedure 1: To assess blue grouse distribution and population trends.

- A. Regional and Game Branch personnel should record all observations of blue grouse. These data should be forwarded to the small game biologist in Game Branch on an annual basis. Data collected should include date, specific location, number, and sex/age (if possible).
- B. Regional and Game Branch personnel will delineate occupied and potential blue grouse habitat.
- C. Explore and evaluate or develop a population survey technique for this species. Traditional spring "hooting" surveys may not be appropriate for blue grouse (Rogers 1963). Other researchers have used a combination of techniques, including pointing dog surveys and surveys using tape-recorded calls (Cade and Hoffman 1993).

Procedure 2: To collect annual data on age, sex, hunt success, and condition of harvested blue grouse.

- A. Hunt check stations and/or wing collection barrels may be operated in selected areas. Check stations should be operated the first 3 days of the season. All data should be forwarded to the Small Game Biologist in Game Branch within 4 weeks.
- B. Develop an effective method to identify blue grouse hunters. Evaluate new ways to survey blue grouse hunters, including internet surveys, check boxes, and stamps.
- C. Hunt questionnaires will be sent to a random sample of general hunting license holders by February 1. The collection and distribution of questionnaire data and results will be the responsibility of the Game Branch. Data will be tabulated by unit, summarized, and sent to the Game Specialists within 60 days of the initial mailing.

Procedure 3: To identify land use activities that may either improve or adversely affect grouse populations. Seek funding and implement habitat improvements for blue grouse.

- A. Ensure habitat maintenance and protection through coordination with land management agencies. Work closely with the USDA Forest Service to ensure the needs for this species are addressed. Emphasize the need for maintenance and creation of forest openings within spruce-fir and aspen communities. Emphasize the need to maintain and increase connectivity of blue grouse habitats.
- B. Enhance habitat conditions by promoting the use of prescribed fire in blue grouse habitat.
- C. Review allotment management plans to assure that grazing management is consistent with the needs of blue grouse.

- D. Review timber management plans to assure these are consistent with the needs of blue grouse.
- E. Delineate changes in land areas available to blue grouse, or blue grouse hunting, due to forest management prescription and land use change. Evaluate blue grouse habitat with GIS-based overlays to document available habitat.

Procedure 4: Use translocations of blue grouse to expand the occupied range or supplement existing populations of blue grouse.

#### Literature Cited

- Cade, B. S., and R. W. Hoffman. 1993. Differential migration of blue grouse in Colorado. *The Auk* 110:70-77.
- Rogers, G. E. 1963. Blue grouse census and harvest in the United States and Canada. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 27:579-585.