We Need Your Help
The Texas Panhandle area supports a large proportion of the remaining populations of Lesser Prairie-Chickens, so we all have an important opportunity to ensure conservation of the grasslands that support this unique grassland species. One of the challenges facing biologists and managers is the need to collect accurate census data in order to address the questions and concerns of whether Lesser Prairie-Chickens should be listed as a threatened species across their range. With your help and reports of observations, we will be able to determine how many prairie-chickens we have in Texas.

If you see this bird please contact any of the following:

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept. (http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/landwater/land/habitats/)
Heather Whitlaw
Box 42125, TTU
Lubbock, TX 79409-2125
Phone: (806) 742-4968 Email: heather.whitlaw@tpwd.state.tx.us

US Fish & Wildlife Service (http://www.fws.gov/arlington texas/west tx.htm)
John Hughes
PO Box 713
Canadian, TX 79014
Phone: (806) 323-6636 Email: john_p_hughes@fws.gov

Natural Resources Conservation Service (http://www.tx.nrcs.usda.gov/)
Charles Coffman
4609 W. Loop 289
Lubbock, TX 79414-1403
Phone: (806) 791-0581 Email: charles.coffman@tx.usda.gov

Farm Service Agency (http://www.fsa.usda.gov/TX/Find_your_local_office.htm)

Texas Cooperative Extension (http://texasextension.tamu.edu/)

Ken Cearley
PO Box 60275 WTAMU
Canyon, TX 79016
Phone: (806) 651-5760 Email: k-cearley@tamu.edu

Please provide details of the date, location and number of individuals seen. If possible include GPS coordinates. Did you happen to get a photograph or digital image? Your information is valuable and will help ensure the continued survival of this unique grassland bird.

Section 12.0251 of the Parks and Wildlife Code provides that information collected on private land relating to the specific location, species identification or quantity of any animal or plant life is confidential and may not be disclosed.
Conservation in Texas

Most of the rangelands in Texas are privately owned and therefore the success of conservation efforts relies on the cooperation and coordination of private landowners, land users, and public agencies to manage and conserve habitats for Lesser Prairie-Chickens.

There are many opportunities in Texas for private landowners who want to manage their rangeland habitats – and even CRP – for Lesser Prairie-Chickens. TPWD, NRCS, and USFWS all provide confidential, voluntary, and non-binding technical assistance to landowners who want to manage for wildlife values. These agencies can also provide information on cost-share and incentive programs to help defray some of the costs of habitat improvements. And finally – there are many qualified people who are willing to help you determine if you have Lesser Prairie-Chickens on your property. Please contact the biologist of your choice to help you get started.

About Lesser Prairie-Chickens

Lesser Prairie-Chickens have a unique breeding display. Each spring, male prairie-chickens congregate on breeding grounds, also known as leks, to display and make vocal sounds (“booming”) to defend their territory and attract females for mating. Males will often use the same lek year after year; leks are normally areas with shorter vegetation and are often found on raised areas. Sometimes leks are even located on abandoned oil pads or on roads. Males establish their territory and court females by displaying bright yellow eye combs, inflating their red air sacs, and by flutter jumping, cackling, and foot stomping.

All of this activity makes the spring the best time to look and listen for Lesser Prairie-Chickens.

Lesser Prairie-Chickens may sometimes be confused with other game bird species such as Ring-Necked Pheasants. However, the two species can be distinguished because Lesser Prairie-Chickens have a short rounded tail in comparison to the long straight tail of Pheasants, Lesser Prairie-Chickens are much stockier and oval shaped than Pheasants, and Lesser Prairie-Chickens have barred plumage and a dark eye stripe. In addition, when flushed, prairie-chickens will often cluck as they take flight.

Lesser Prairie-Chicken Habitat

Lesser Prairie-Chickens inhabit rangelands with a shinnery oak or sand sagebrush component, in 5 states within the southern Great Plains. Although the Lesser Prairie-Chicken was once abundant in Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, populations have declined by approximately 90% since the early 1900s. In Texas, biologists estimate that Lesser Prairie-Chickens occupy less than 50% of their former range. Loss, degradation, and fragmentation of grassland habitats due to drought, improper grazing practices, land development, and conversion of native grasslands to cropland have contributed to their decline.