

# NEWS BREAK

**Wednesday's News Break selects an article from Monday, September 14, 2015** of The Seattle Times e-Edition for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected story and answer the attached study questions.

**Feds: Sage grouse face decline if wildfires aren't controlled** (By Keith Ridler, **NW Monday, page B9**)

## Pre-Reading and Vocabulary

1. Before you read this article, as a class discuss what you think this story will be about. Write down any keywords from the title, which you used to make your predictions.
2. **Vocabulary: Match the words to the numbered definitions below.**

- A. avert
- B. degradation
- C. economies
- D. ecosystem
- E. endangered
- F. habitat
- G. indicator
- H. invasive
- I. nullified
- J. precipitation
- K. resilience
- L. resistance
- M. sagebrush
- N. spatial
- O. steppe
- P. swaths
- Q. vast

1. a sign that shows the condition or existence of something
2. the process or system by which goods and services are produced, sold, and bought in a country or region
3. a large, flat area of land with grass and very few trees
4. the ability to become strong, healthy, or successful again after something bad happens
5. the act or process of damaging or ruining something
6. tending to spread
7. a small plant that has leaves with a strong smell and that grows in dry areas of the western U.S.
8. a long, wide strip of land
9. everything that exists in a particular environment
10. of or relating to space and the relationship of objects within it
11. water that falls to the ground as rain, snow, etc.
12. the place or type of place where a plant or animal naturally or normally lives or grows

13. very great in size, amount, or extent
14. to prevent (something bad) from happening
15. to cause (something) to lose its value or to have no effect.
16. the ability to prevent something from having an effect
17. used to describe a type of animal or plant that has become very rare and that could die out completely

### Comprehension

1. The sage-grouse ranges across how many Western states? **(Multiple Choice)**
  - a) **5 states**
  - b) **7 states**
  - c) **11 states**
  - d) **None of the above**
2. Sage-grouse are one of some 400 species that use the sagebrush steppe, but scientists consider the bird an indicator of what?
3. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service faces a court-ordered September 30 deadline to decide what?
4. The Sage-grouse once numbered in the millions but now have an estimated population of \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_. **(Multiple Choice)**
  - a) **100,000 to 200,000**
  - b) **200,000 to 500,000**
  - c) **500,000 to 700,000**
5. The sagebrush steppe is sometimes called the “sagebrush ocean” – **true or false?**
6. The study and report by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) identified potential ways to avert sage-grouse declines by classifying areas for their \_\_\_\_\_ to disturbance and resistance to \_\_\_\_\_ such as cheatgrass and then applying suitable strategies. **(Fill in the blanks)**
7. Much of the USGS report focuses on cheatgrass. According to the article, what is its main weapon that wipes out sagebrush ecosystems?
8. The study which examined 30 years of data, found that burned areas near sage-grouse breeding grounds \_\_\_\_\_ population growth that would normally occur after years with high \_\_\_\_\_. **(Fill in the blanks with vocabulary words)**
9. Name two of the five states that were included in the USGS study area.
10. If increasingly destructive wildfires in the Great Basin can't be stopped, what do scientists say will happen to the sage-grouse population over the next three decades?

### Additional Activities/Questions

1. Have students watch the Cornell Lab trailer for their film about The Sagebrush Sea at <http://sagebrushsea.allaboutbirds.org/trailer>. Then have students read the article “Last Grouse Standing” about the state of Wyoming’s core plan attempts to salvage the last population of Greater Sage-Grouse in Wyoming sagebrush country at <http://sagebrushsea.allaboutbirds.org/livingbirdmag/#top>
2. Have students research to find out more about the Sage-Grouse, its habitat and conservation and more at <http://www.fws.gov/greatersagegrouse/>. Have students write one – two paragraphs about what they learned.

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