



December 6, 2017

Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission  
PO Box 43200  
Olympia, WA 98504-3200

Dear Washington Fish & Wildlife Commission,

On behalf of Seattle Audubon Society's 3,000+ members, we ask that you uplist the level of protection for Washington's population of Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse by listing it as "endangered," not just "threatened."

We ask this for the following science-based reasons:

- Sharp-tailed Grouse populations have fallen by one-third in the past 17 years and continue to destabilize.
- Your own review of numbers of birds indicates populations have fallen below viable numbers in several identified areas, including Crab Creek.

These two facts alone should persuade you to uplist Sharp-tailed Grouse. It is not state-wide numbers alone that should drive such decisions, but rather how possible it is for breeding populations to sustain their numbers in a given area. The total numbers of Sharp-tailed Grouse (estimated to be 608 birds) are scattered over eight areas. Thus, in no area does a healthy breeding population guarantee the survival of this iconic bird.

Surely this qualifies the Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse for uplisting to "endangered," as it is definitely at high risk of complete extirpation from Washington.

Last October, Seattle Audubon staffed a table at the Burke Museum's "Birds at the Burke." As part of the exhibit, the Burke Museum staff brought out two of their most prized study skins: a Passenger Pigeon, and an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. It was deeply disturbing and sad to see these two examples of how unconcerned we were about falling populations of these birds until it was too late to save them. Please take action to keep the Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse from joining this tragic club. Let us not have to tell our children, "We were the generation that saw the extinction of this bird from our borders."

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Constance J. Sidles".

Constance Sidles  
Conservation Committee Chair