

## PROJECT ABSTRACT

### Colorado Plateau Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (Cooperative Agreement # H1200-09-0005)

**Park:** Dinosaur National Monument

**Project Title:** Distribution and Occupancy of Sagebrush-obligate Passerines in Dinosaur National Monument

**Funding Amount:** \$22,000

**CPCESU Partner Institution:** Utah State University

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**Start Date:** August 15, 2009

**End Date:** August 15, 2011

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**Abstract:** Three sagebrush-obligate passerine species potentially occur within Dinosaur National Monument (DINO), the Brewer's Sparrow (*Spizella breweri*), Sage Sparrow (*Amphispiza belli*), and Sage Thrasher (*Oreoscoptes montanus*). All three species are regularly detected on the Dinosaur Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) route and were identified as a conservation priority in 2005 by the Colorado Division of Wildlife's sagebrush conservation assessment. All three species appear to require relatively large expanses of unfragmented big sagebrush. Fragmentation and loss of sagebrush-step communities due to conversion, road building, alteration of fire regimes, and other factors have been implicated in the apparent declines of these three species. It is unknown whether the prescribed burn program at DINO at previous levels is negatively impacting these species. This study proposes to evaluate distribution and occupancy of Brewer's Sparrows, Sage Sparrows, and Sage Thrashers within Dinosaur National Monument using a double-sampling occupancy approach. Information gathered during the 2010 field season using this approach will provide monument personnel with baseline information useful in planning management activities such as prescribed burning. In addition, this work will provide pilot data enabling expansion of research to look at the habitat requirements of these species within DINO, as well as evaluating the effect of management activities on these species.

**Keywords:**

Surveys/Monitoring, birds, shrubs