

Threatened bird leads feds to block some drilling

June 18 2014, by Nicholas Riccardi

The federal government is declaring more than 400,000 acres in Colorado and Utah off-limits to energy exploration to protect a little-known bird.

The Gunnison sage grouse is related to the better-known greater sage grouse. The federal government is considering listing both birds as endangered species. That could prohibit development and agriculture in huge chunks of the West.

Of the two [birds](#), the Gunnison sage grouse is far less common and its habitat is restricted to southwestern Colorado and a small chunk of Utah. The protections announced this week formalize what the [federal government](#) is doing to conserve that bird.

Western states are bracing for far more sweeping restrictions to protect the greater sage grouse if it's listed as endangered.

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Citation: Threatened bird leads feds to block some drilling (2014, June 18) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-06-threatened-bird-feds-block-drilling.html>

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