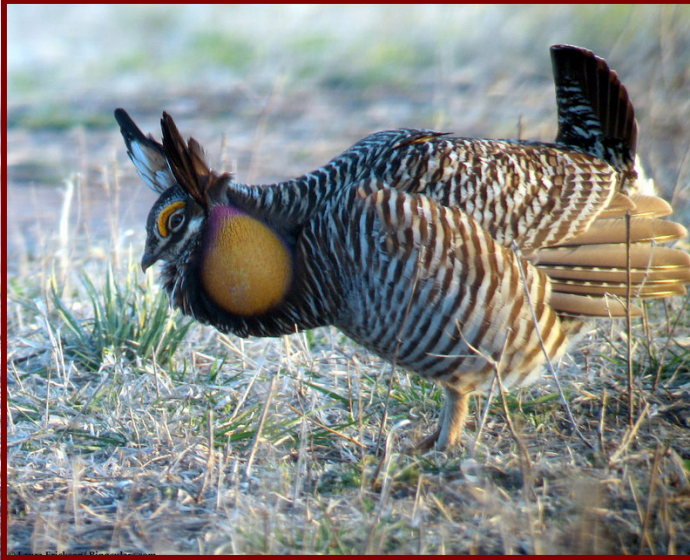




GREATER PRAIRIE CHICKEN

Tympanuchus cupido



The Greater Prairie Chicken is a member of the grouse family that is adapted to living in open grassland habitats. Once abundant, this species has become rare or extinct over much of its range due to habitat loss. This Greater Prairie Chicken is stocky and round-winged. Adult males have yellow-orange combs over their eyes and dark, elongated head feathers that can be raised when they display to females. An orange, unfeathered neck patch can also be inflated while displaying. During the breeding season, males gather in large groups called leks. The females choose a mate based on the display characteristics of the male. Usually, one or two males will be involved in 90% of the mating attempts.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

The Greater Prairie Chicken is about 14 inches in length.

WEIGHT

Male Greater Prairie Chickens weigh about 2.25 lbs., while females weigh about 1.75 lbs.

FOOD HABITS

The diet of the Greater Prairie Chicken consists primarily of seeds and fruit, but during the summer they also eat insects and green plants.

HABITAT

The Greater Prairie Chicken is a permanent resident of grasslands. They prefer undisturbed prairie and were originally found in tall grass prairies.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The Greater Prairie Chicken can be found from Wisconsin and Minnesota south through Nebraska, Kansas, and Missouri. Attwater's Prairie Chicken is found in coastal areas of Texas.

FUN FACT

One threat to the Greater Prairie Chicken is the Ring-Necked Pheasant. Pheasants will lay their eggs in the nests of prairie chickens. The pheasant eggs hatch first, and this causes the prairie chickens to leave the nest, thinking that their own young have hatched.