

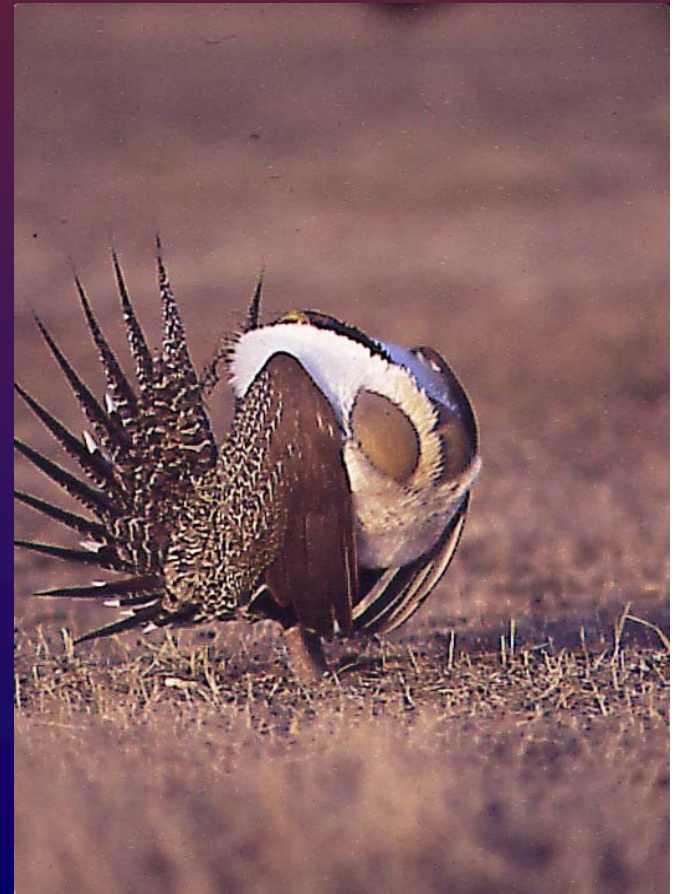
Sage Grouse Lek Route Protocols





GENERAL APPROACH

“Before establishing lek routes in a given area, some thought should be given to personnel available for conducting routes. It is much better to have a few routes with high quality data than many routes with virtually useless data.”



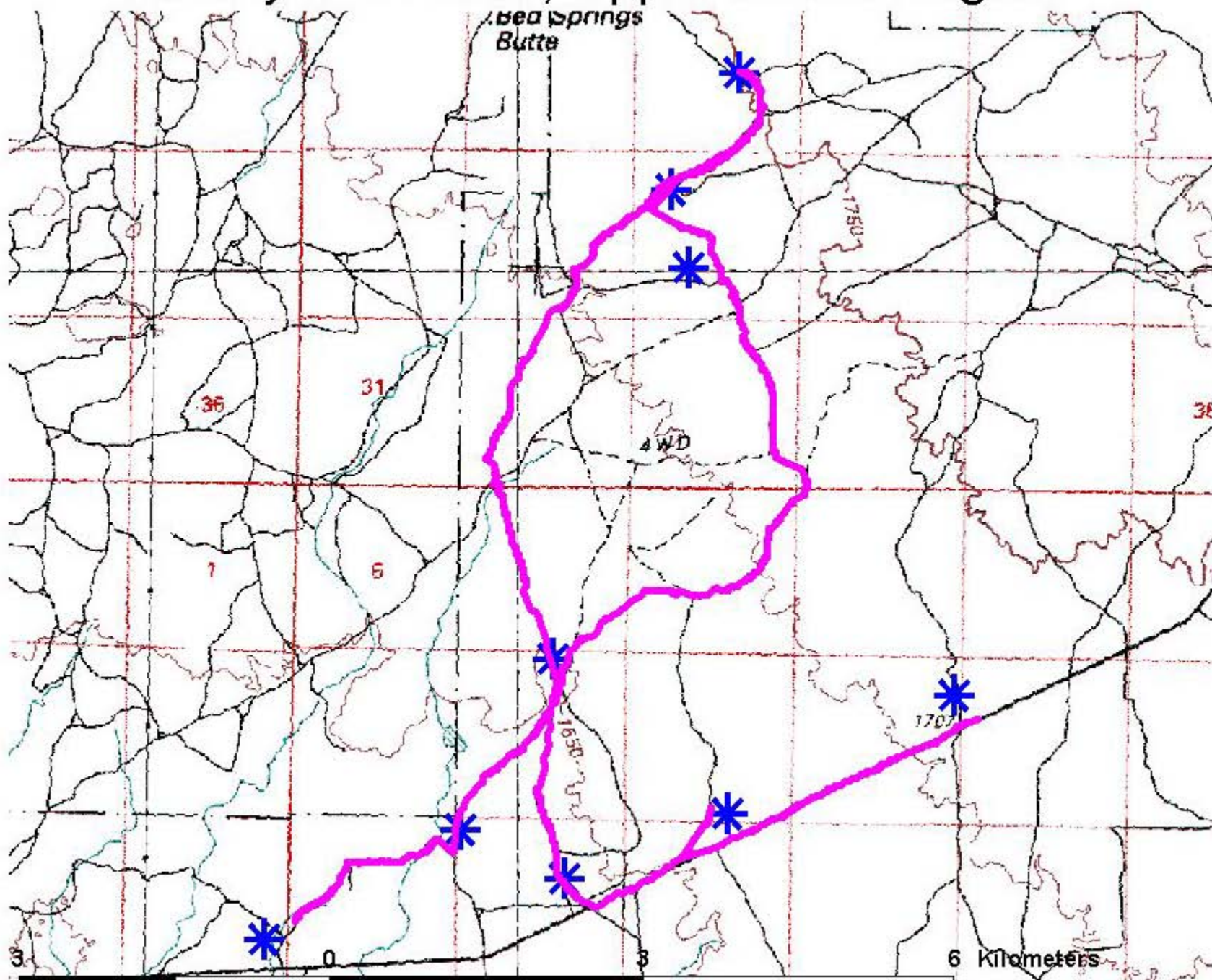


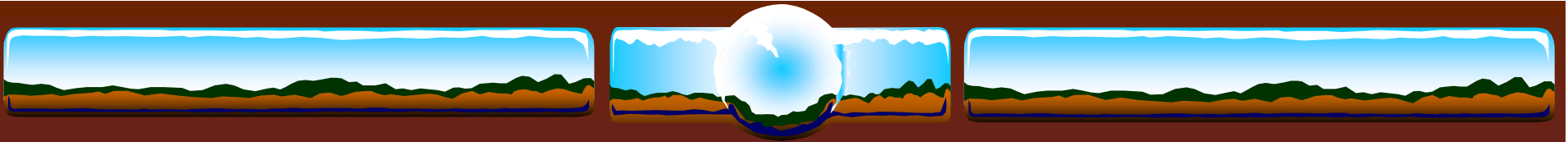
Lek Route

All known leks
within a given
geographic
area that can
be counted
within 1.5-2.0
hours.



Jacoby Lek Route, Upper Snake Region





Route Protocol

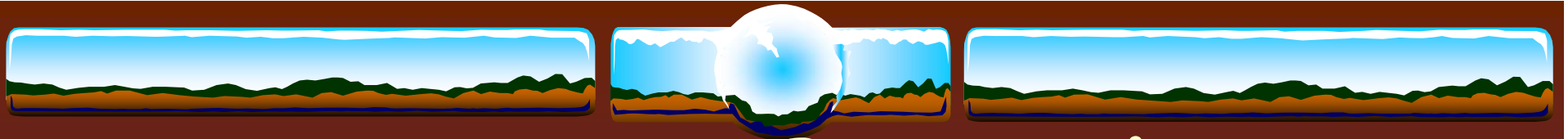
All leks along a route must be counted on the same morning.

Routes should be run 0.5 hours before sunrise to 1.0 hour after sunrise.

Can stretch to 1.5 hours after sunrise during peak hen and maximum male attendance.

Each route must be run at least 4 times each spring.

The same observer should conduct all 4 counts.



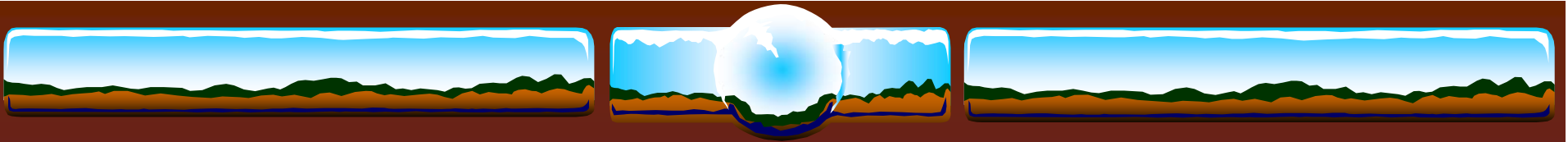
Route Protocol

Counts should be spaced roughly 10 days apart.

Begin 25 March and run through 30 April in low elevation zones (Owyhee).

Begin 1 April and run through 10 May in higher elevation zones (Lemhi).

The counts should coincide with peak hen attendance and maximum male attendance.

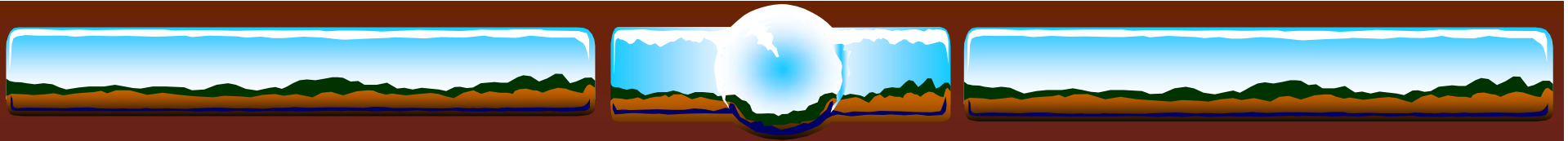


Route Protocol

Lek routes should only be conducted when weather conditions are favorable (clear to partly cloudy skies and winds < 10kph).

Routes should never be conducted during rain or snow storms.

If weather degenerates after a route has begun, the route should be run again.



Route Protocol

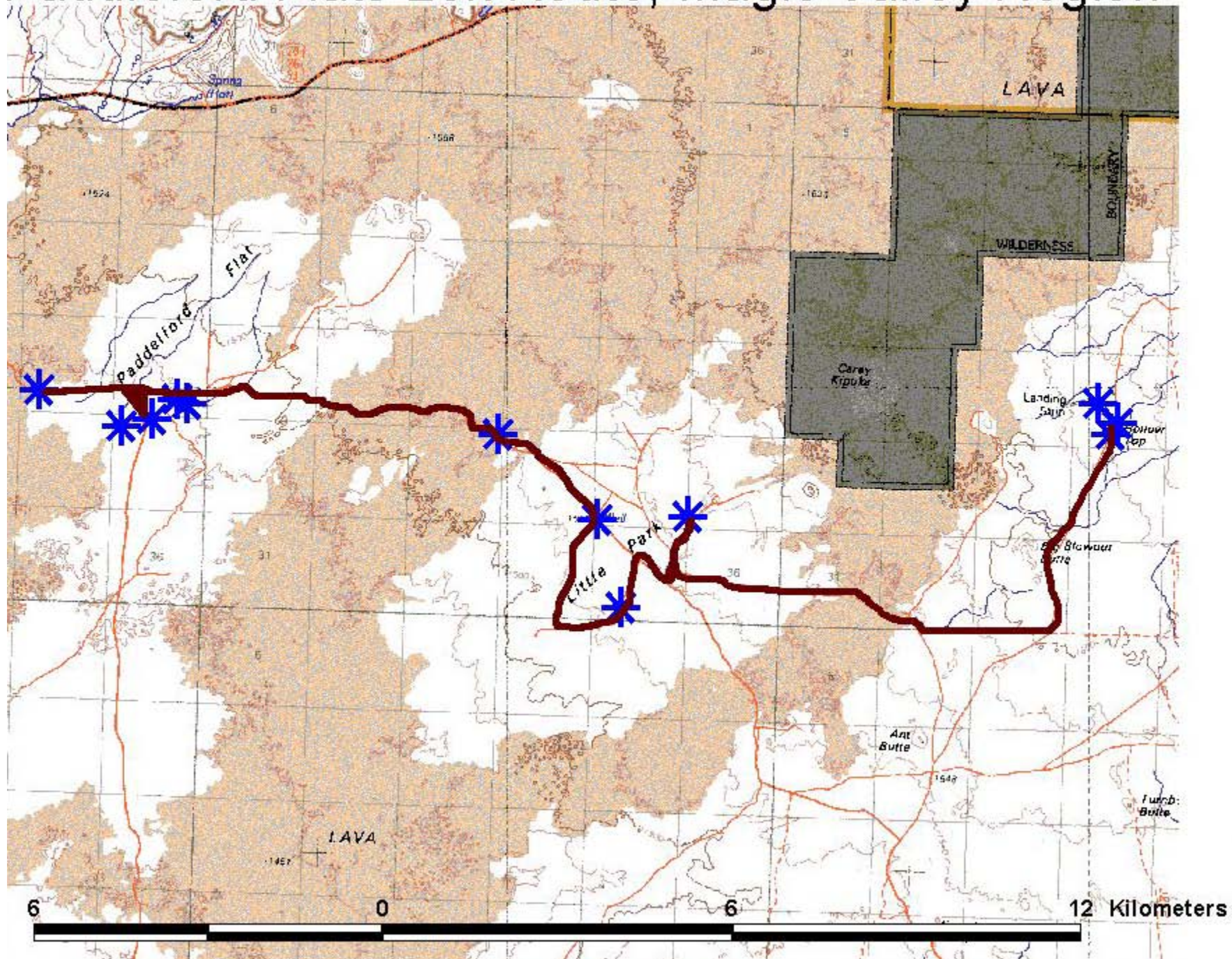
If a lek is not occupied but has been in recent weeks or years, the observer should turn off engine, step outside of vehicle, and listen for displaying birds.

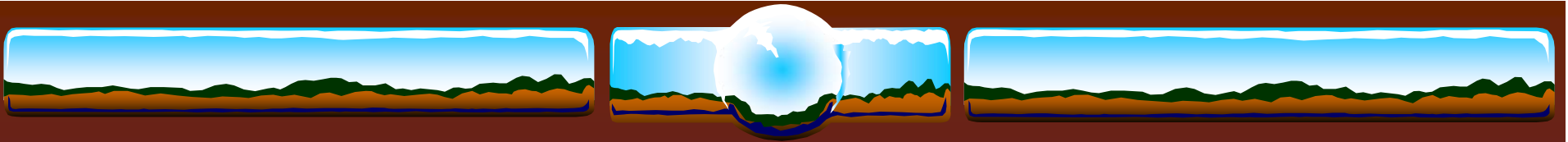
Birds may move short distances and continue displaying following disturbance.

Predator flushes lek

Livestock occupy lek

Paddleford Flats Lek Route, Magic Valley Region





Count Protocol

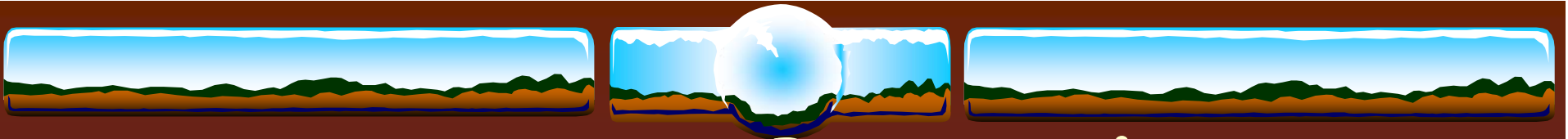
Do not drive >25 mph along route.

Look for and count new leks.

Locate a spot that provides good visibility of the entire lek.

Be careful not to get so close that the observer disturbs the birds.

If a lek has 50-100+ birds, select 2 or more vantage points if you cannot see all birds from 1 location.



Count Protocol

Record the time that the count begins.

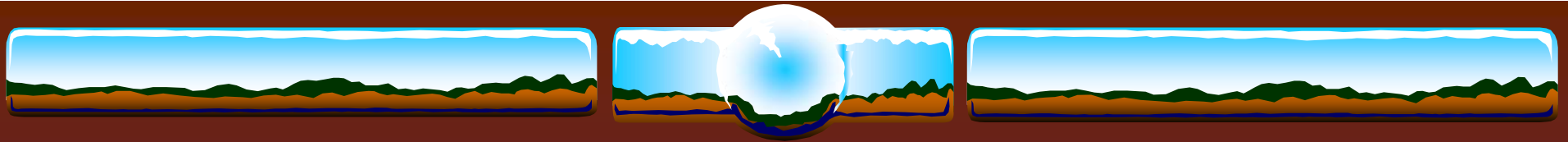
Count the birds from right to left.

Wait 1-2 minutes, then count left to right.

Repeat the steps once more.

Record the highest number of males and females, separately.

Move onto the next lek.



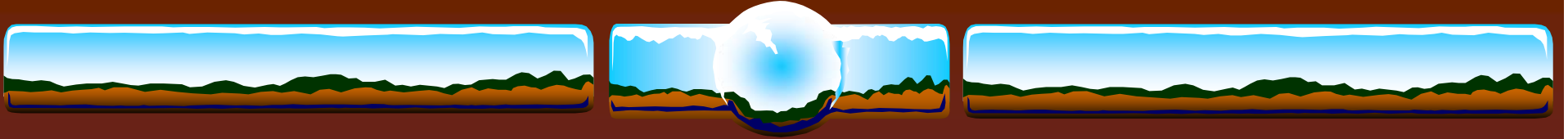
Count Protocol

If no birds are present (determined by stepping out of vehicle and listening closely for displaying birds), record a zero in the space.

Do not leave the space or form blank.

Prior to compiling, review field forms to ensure data were collected properly.

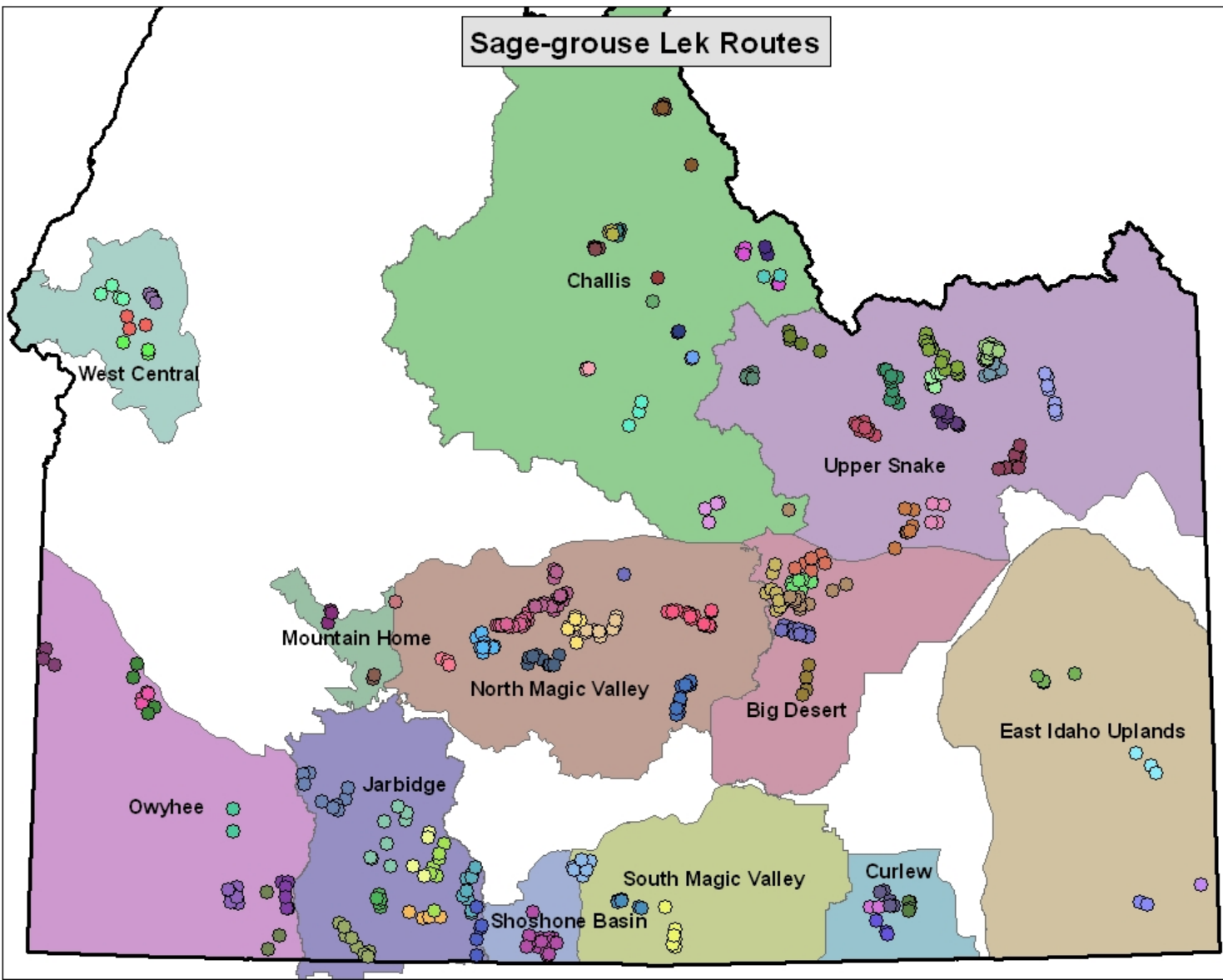
Double-check math under "Route Total".

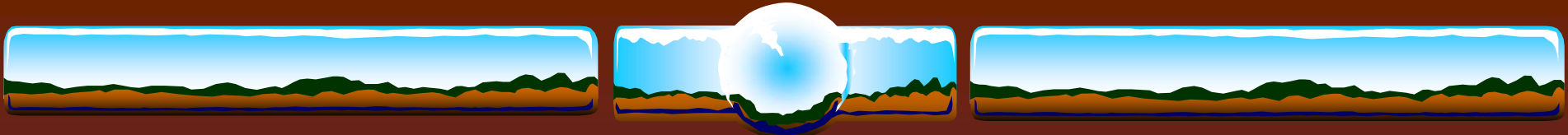


Sage-grouse Lek Counts

- ❖ Monitor population trend
 - ❖ Male breeding population trend
- ❖ Standard protocols (Connelly et al. 2003)
- ❖ 980 leks counted in 2011
 - ❖ 462 leks on 78 lek routes
- ❖ 578 Leks counted in 1997
 - ❖ 42 routes in 1997

Sage-grouse Lek Routes





THANK YOU

