

QUARTERLY REPORT

2025

April 1, 2025 - June 30, 2025



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Candidate Conservation Agreements
for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken and the
Dunes Sagebrush Lizard in New Mexico

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Candidate Conservation Agreements

This report describes the activities conducted in the second quarter of 2025 for the Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) and Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances (CCAA) for the Lesser Prairie-Chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*; hereafter LPC) and Dunes Sagebrush Lizard (*Sceloporus arenicolus*; hereafter DSL). The Center for Environmental Health Monitoring and Management (CEHMM) administers a CCA for federal lands and minerals and a CCAA for non-federal lands and minerals. The two agreements, collectively referred to as the CCA/A, allow the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and CEHMM to work in cooperation and in consultation with landowners and industry to support conservation measures for the LPC and the DSL. Both species are now listed under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 1531, et seq.). In 2023, the LPC was listed as endangered in its southern distinct population segment and threatened in its northern distinct population segment (Appendix A). In 2024, the DSL was listed as endangered throughout its entire range. The purpose of the CCA/A is to:

- Develop, coordinate, and implement conservation actions to reduce and/or eliminate known threats to the LPC and the DSL in New Mexico on federal, state, and private surfaces and minerals
- Support ongoing efforts to re-establish and maintain viable populations of LPC and DSL in currently occupied and suitable habitats
- Encourage the development and protection of suitable LPC and DSL habitats by giving incentives to Participating Cooperators to implement specific conservation measures

Under the CCA, federal lessees, operators, or permittees, who joined by voluntarily signing a Certificate of Participation (CP), receive a high degree of certainty that additional restrictions are not to be placed on their otherwise legal activities with the federal listing of both species. The companion CCAA provides incentives for voluntary conservation of the LPC and the DSL on non-federal lands. By signing a Certificate of Inclusion (CI) under the CCAA, the lessee, owner, operator, or permittee voluntarily committed to implement specific conservation

measures for the species on non-federal lands. Under the CCAA, private landowners receive assurances that additional restrictions cannot be placed on their otherwise legal activities on enrolled lands. In both cases, enrollment in the CCA or CCAA is voluntary. CEHMM is the federal permit holder for these agreements and is responsible for implementing, monitoring, and reporting on projects completed with CCA/A funds.

CEHMM is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation based in Carlsbad and Milnesand, New Mexico. CEHMM's participation allows for a federally approved, independently audited financial management system to provide funding for management and administration.

The following quarterly report details projects funded and completed with CCA/A funds. The report also details the daily implementation of the agreements, including activities such as siting energy development outside of DSL habitat, conducting presence/absence surveys to monitor the species, and evaluating participant conservation commitments. For more details on the CCA/A programs, visit our website at www.cehmm.org.

Benefits of Candidate Conservation Agreement Programs

- Voluntary enrollment
- Measurable on-the-ground conservation
- Landscape-based approach
- Allow landowners and industry to continue work on the ground

Enrollment Numbers

The number of enrollees in the LPC and DSL CCA/A programs can be found in Table 1. Currently, there are 2,345,125.21 acres enrolled by ranching participants in the program (Figure 1). To date, industry participants have enrolled 4,965,343.28 acres in the CCA/A program (Figure 1). CEHMM is continuously updating enrolled acreage through the All-Activities method of enrollment, as participants can add or remove their covered acres at any time.

Table 1. Current program enrollment totals for LPC/DSL and DSL only CCAs, and LPC/DSL and DSL-only CCAAs for ranching, industry, and linear development. Industry enrollment is divided by parcel-by-parcel and all-activities enrollment types.

Enrollment Type	LPC/DSL CCA Enrollments	DSL Only CCA Enrollments	LPC/DSL CCAA Enrollments	DSL Only CCAA Enrollments
Ranching	40	1	103	1
Industry (Parcel-by-Parcel)	14	0	12	0
Industry (All-Activities)	47	3	50	3
Linear Development	31	6	32	6

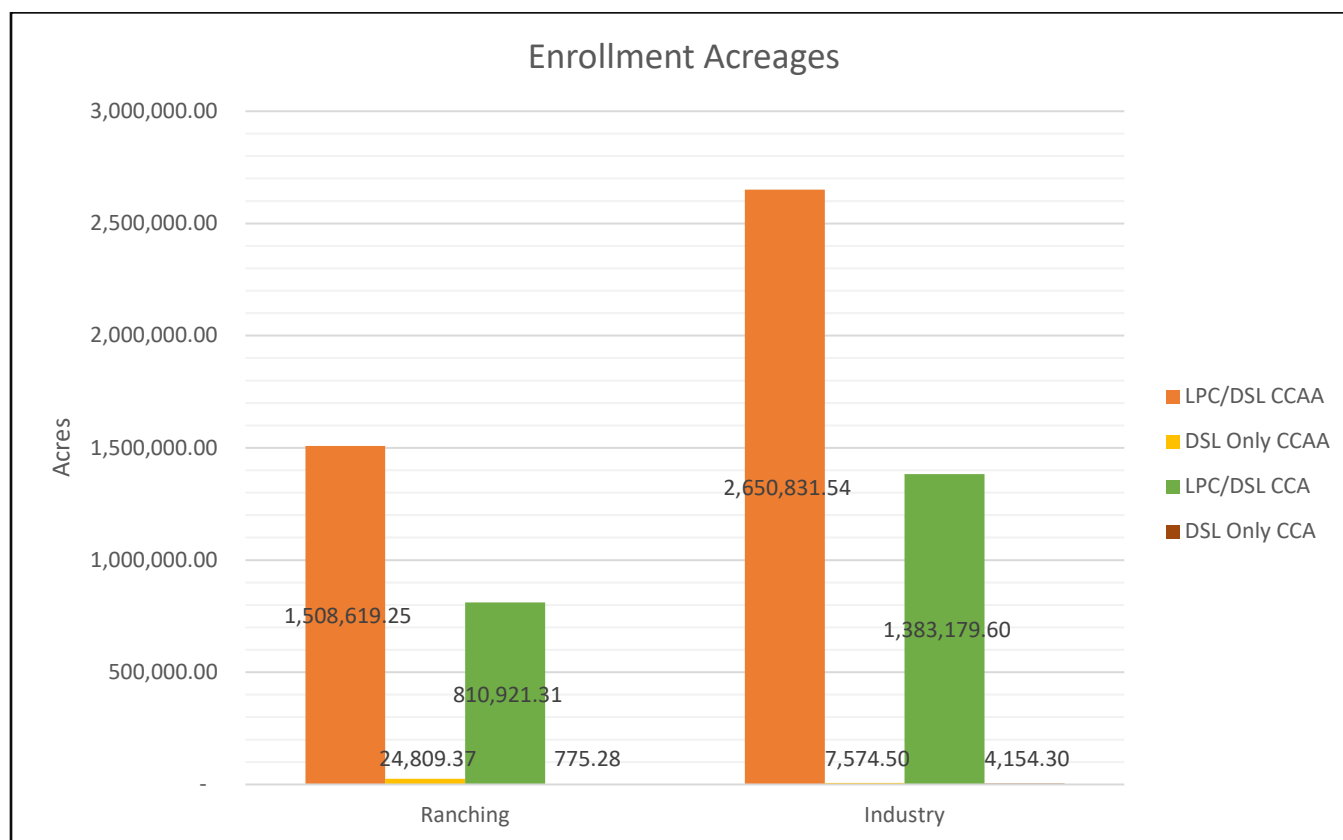


Figure 1. Current enrollment acreages for LPC/DSL and DSL-only CCAs and CCAAs for ranching and industry enrollment types.



Habitat Conservation Fund

CEHMM establishes a Habitat Conservation Fund (HCF) for each oil and gas operator, as well as each linear development operator, that executes a CP or CI. The contribution amount is determined by the number of acres enrolled within their CP or CI agreements. Once land-disturbing activities are identified and permitted in the operator's certificate, conservation fees are debited from their HCF. Approximately 29% of the funds received are allocated for overhead expenses. The remaining balance is used exclusively in support of the CCA/A programs. Supported activities include, but are not limited to, planning and implementation, on-sites, grazing programs, projects authorized by the ranking team, research, enrollments and amendments, project monitoring, education and outreach, and support services (e.g., vehicle and equipment procurement and maintenance).



Habitat Restoration Projects Completed in Q2 of 2025

Mathis Fence

Completed: June 2025

Units: 11.1 miles of fence

Description: Removed approximately 11.1 miles of dilapidated boundary fencing and replaced it with wildlife-friendly fencing.

Running N Kenna Fence

Approved and Funded: September 2024

Budget: \$228,880.11

Units: 6.9 miles of fence

Description: Remove approximately 6.9 miles of dilapidated boundary fencing and replace with wildlife-friendly fencing.

Habitat Restoration Projects Funded and Awaiting Completion

D2 Shop

Approved and Funded: September 2024

Budget: 140,000.00

Units: 1 shop

Description: Install a shop on the Milnesand property to house all the equipment and tools needed for daily operations in District 2.

Marley Water Project

Approved and Funded: September 2024

Budget: \$23,362.78

Units: 3 water troughs

Description: Remove three non-functional water troughs and replace them with 20-foot fiberglass tanks.

Berry Hand Mesquite Treatment

Approved and Funded: September 2024

Budget: \$24,047.94

Units: 55 acres

Description: Hand treat approximately 55 acres of mesquite.

Bogle Fence Proposal

Approved and Funded: August 2023

Budget: \$375,410.28

Units: 9 miles of fence

Description: Remove approximately 5.5 miles of dilapidated interior fencing and 3.5 miles of dilapidated boundary fencing and replace with wildlife-friendly fencing.

Bogle Mesquite Proposal

Approved: August 2023 **Funded:** September 2024

Budget: \$681,313.30

Units: 9,896 acres

Description: Aerially treat approximately 9,896 acres of mesquite.

Kerby Mesquite Proposal

Approved & Funded: August 2023

Budget: \$160,818.60

Units: 2,262 acres

Description: Aerially treat approximately 2,262 acres of mesquite.

Kerby Water Proposal

Approved & Funded: August 2023

Budget: \$97,426.37

Units: 3 troughs; 5.5 miles of water pipeline

Description: Remove 3 non-functional water troughs and replace them with 20-foot fiberglass tanks. Remove and replace 5.5 miles of water pipeline.

Progress: In 2024, 2 troughs and 3.2 miles of water pipeline were installed.

Taylor Peak Mesquite Treatment

Approved & Funded: August 2023

Budget: \$38,139.01

Units: 1,026 acres

Description: Aerially treat approximately 1,026 acres of mesquite.

Navarette Water (formerly known as the K. James Wildlife Water Amendment)

Approved & Funded: June 2016 (Amended 2018)

Budget: \$39,451.89

Units: 1 trough; 1 solar pump; 1 windmill removal

Description: Remove 1 old windmill and replace it with a solar-powered pump. Install a new 20-foot fiberglass tank.

Pembers DSM

Approved & Funded: March 2022

Budget: \$45,784.55

Units: 1,600 acres

Description: Remove approximately 1,600 acres of dead, standing mesquite (DSM).

Running N DSM

Approved & Funded: March 2022

Budget: \$148,777.39

Units: 5,800 acres

Description: Remove approximately 5,800 acres of DSM.

Robert Jolley Fencing Improvement

Approved & Funded: October 2022

Budget: \$120,215.80

Units: 5.75 miles of fence

Description: Remove approximately 5.75 miles of dilapidated boundary fencing and replace with wildlife-friendly fencing.

Research Project Updates in Q2 of 2025

Owyhee LPC Survey Research Project

Completed: June 2025

Units: Two flight surveys and four ground surveys were conducted to count LPCs at 24 lek sites.

Description: This research project developed a protocol for conducting aerial LPC surveys using advanced infrared cameras mounted on fixed-wing aircraft. Aerial surveys were conducted on two consecutive days during peak LPC lekking season in mid-April 2025. Ground-based surveys were conducted concurrently to allow for comparison between aerial and

ground methods. The final report for this project was completed on June 11, 2025, and publication of the data is ongoing.

USGS Dunes Sagebrush Lizard Population Monitoring and Shinnery Oak Tebuthiuron Studies

Approved & Funded: June 2018

Description: The objective of this project was to implement a long-term monitoring study to assess DSL population dynamics across their range in New Mexico. Population monitoring began in 2018 and has continued through additional funding to track key parameters across multiple DSL populations. Additionally, a secondary study was conducted to assess the potential long-term impact of past tebuthiuron treatments on shinnery oak recovery, as shinnery oak cover is an important predictor of suitable DSL habitat. Preliminary assessments have been completed; interpretation of these results and exploration of future directions for shinnery oak recovery are ongoing.



Vegetation Monitoring

In the second quarter of 2025, CEHMM staff completed preparations for grazing exclosures to be monitored in the upcoming year. In District 1 (i.e., enrolled ranches south of NM 380), 28 additional exclosures were installed during the second quarter, 19 of which were relocations. Combined with the 24 exclosures installed in the first quarter, a total of 52 will be monitored in 2025. In District 2 (i.e., enrolled ranches north of NM 380), 45 exclosures installed during the first quarter will also be monitored.

Relocating grazing exclosures involves installing them at least six feet from their previous locations to new, representative areas within the same pasture. This process helps to avoid forage weight bias that may occur when exclosures are left in the same location for four years. Once grazing exclosures are moved to novel sites, the grass inside is clipped to ensure that data collection is representative of the current growing season. In 2025, CEHMM staff in Districts 1 and 2 plan to complete grazing monitoring for 97 grazing exclosures within 17

enrolled ranches.

LPC Monitoring

During LPC monitoring efforts in the second quarter of 2025, CEHMM staff surveyed 17 enrolled ranches and observed 487 individuals at 54 lek locations. Including the 173 LPCs recorded across 19 leks in the first quarter, the 2025 year-to-date total is 660 individuals across 73 lek locations.

During LPC survey efforts (including roadside surveys and traditional lek surveys), the following data are collected: survey area (i.e., ranch name), presence and direction of LPCs, time, air temperature, wind speed, cloud cover, noise sources and levels, and other wildlife observed or heard. During roadside surveys, surveyors stand outside of the vehicle and listen for 10 minutes to detect LPC booming from lek sites. If no LPCs are detected after 10 minutes, the surveyor returns to the vehicle, drives approximately one mile to the next survey stop, and repeats this process. When LPCs are detected during a roadside survey, a bearing is taken in the direction of the birds, and again at the next survey stop, to triangulate the approximate location of the lek. Once located, the lek is flushed and LPCs are counted. Traditional lek surveys are completed on CCA/A-enrolled ranches and involve visiting both historic and active lek sites to determine current LPC counts. When LPCs are heard, surveyors flush the lek and count the individuals present. All surveys (including roadside surveys and traditional lek surveys) are initiated 30 minutes prior to sunrise and conclude at 9 a.m. If wind speeds exceed 15 miles per hour, surveys are stopped and continued the following day, as high wind speeds inhibit the detection of LPC activity.



Mitigation of Impacts to Habitat

Oil and gas development and associated infrastructure can pose a serious threat to the DSL because of its specialized nature and dependence on dynamic sand dune habitats. Due to the severe loss of these habitats in the wake of development, enrollees have agreed to implement certain conservation measures to offset further decline, including no surface occupancy within 30 meters of suitable or occupied DSL habitat. There are four types of evaluations (i.e., field consultations, desktop block reviews, linear development desktop consultations, and pad desktop consultations) conducted by CEHMM staff to ensure infrastructure does not fall within this 30-meter buffer. Field consultations include on-site visits with participating enrolled companies to appropriately relocate proposed developments that occur in or near suitable or occupied habitat to help ensure that DSL dune habitats are avoided. The remaining three assessment types are conducted via desktop analysis in which CEHMM staff utilizes a variety of spatial data (e.g., aerial imagery, soil layers, species distribution models, habitat suitability models) to 1) delineate suitable habitat, 2) reroute linear infrastructure, and/or 3) relocate pads or similar surface disturbances. The number of wells and rights-of-way (ROW) moved out of DSL habitat during the second quarter of 2025 is shown in Table 2. It is important to note that not all the consultations depicted within the table below were located within DSL habitat.

	Field Consultations	Desktop Block Reviews	Linear Development Desktop Consultations	Pad Desktop Consultations
Initial Development Reviews	29	5	23	21
Developments Relocated out of Habitat	26	3	17	8



CHS Occupation Day 2025

On April 16, 2025, CEHMM staff visited Carlsbad High School and gave a presentation on careers in conservation. They also hosted a public booth to share information about CEHMM programs.

Carlsbad Homeschool Co-Op Presentation

On April 3, 2025, CEHMM staff gave a presentation to the Carlsbad Homeschool Co-Op, a nonprofit resource group for alternatively educated children in Eddy County, on local herpetofauna and careers in biology.

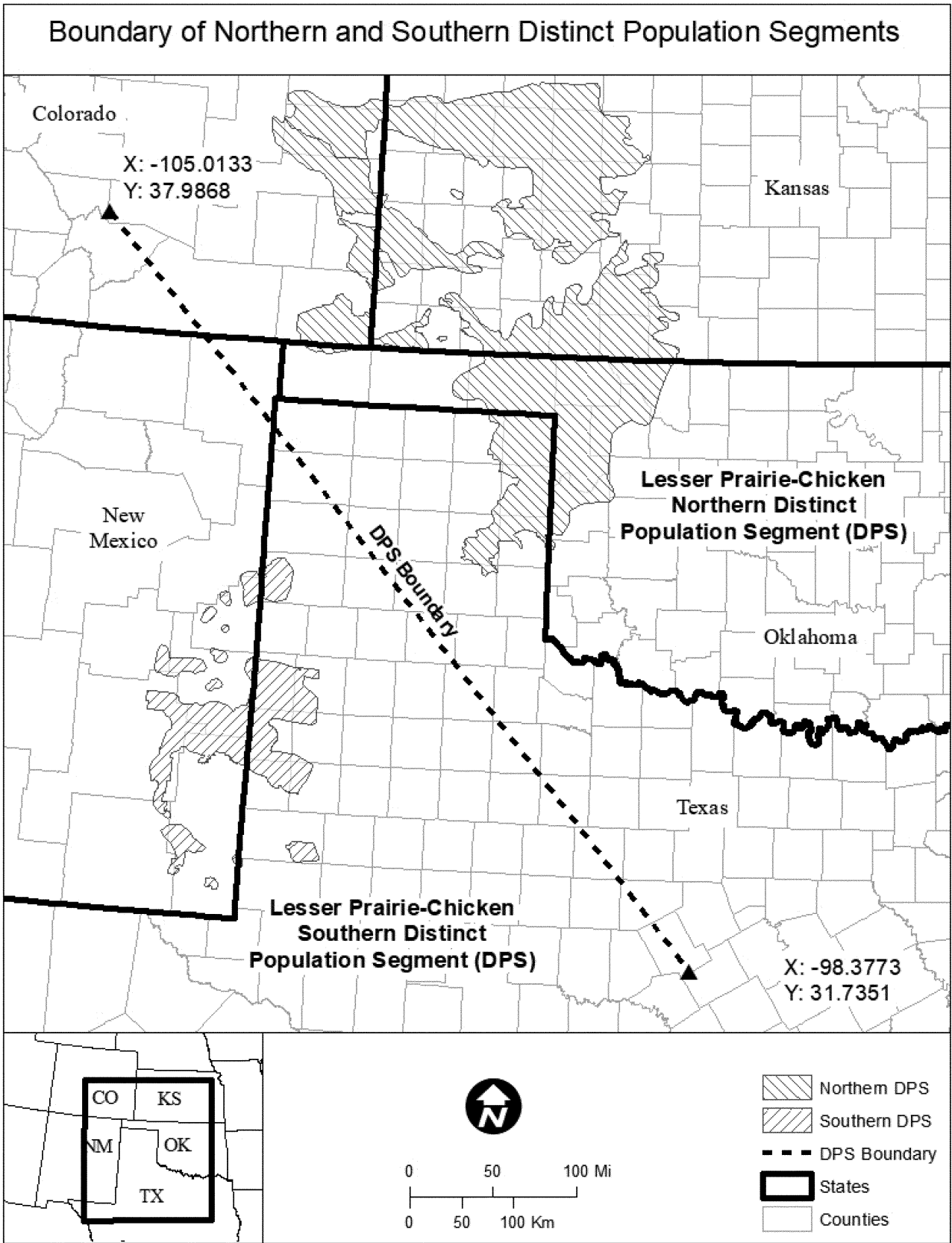
2025 Inspired by Science

During the week of June 2, 2025, CEHMM staff assisted with the Inspired by Science annual summer camp held at Southeast New Mexico College. As part of the event, staff led an activity to teach the use and value of dichotomous keys for identifying wildlife.

PBPA Regulatory Seminar

On May 1, 2025, CEHMM staff attended the Permian Basin Petroleum Association's annual Environmental Regulatory Seminar held at the George Bush Convention Center in Midland, Texas. The seminar serves as a platform for state and federal agency representatives to share updates on current legislation and environmental policies affecting the oil and gas industry.

APPENDIX A: LESSER PRAIRIE-CHICKEN DISTINCT POPULATION SEGEMENTS



Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service. 87 FR 72674

Executive Director Signature

Signed: Emily K. Wirth
Emily K. Wirth, Executive Director

Date: 7/31/2025

If you have any questions, please contact Connor Adams at (575) 885-3700
or Kyle Dillard at (575) 675-2324.