

FIELD Wildlife Journal

Beth Bear

FISHERIES BIOLOGIST

WORKING ON AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES



There is an important issue going on right now in Wyoming. We are concerned about invasive species entering our state. Invasive species are plants and animals that aren't originally from here. They get transported into our state by people bringing equipment, like boats, from other states to Wyoming waters. Aquatic invasive species can cause harm to our plants, animals, lakes and rivers. Specifically, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department is worried about some species of mussels, or clam-like animals, coming into the state, so we have a fish biologist working on aquatic invasive species. Beth Bear is the biologist whose job is to keep our state clean and free from aquatic invasive species by helping start the aquatic invasive species program. She works with different people all over Wyoming to monitor our lakes and

rivers for these species, or kinds of mussels, called zebra and quagga mussels. "It is an important issue in Wyoming right now and we are doing everything we can to help keep our waters clean. This includes teaching people how to properly clean their boats, writing management plans, developing education materials, just to name a few things," says Bear. "I feel like if we can keep these mussels out of Wyoming then we have saved our waters, and that makes my job exciting and very challenging!"

Bear started out studying marine biology and fisheries. She spent a summer working in Yellowstone National Park and decided Wyoming is where she wanted to work. When not working on the aquatic invasive species program, she works with native nongame fish

that live in warm prairie streams in Wyoming. "These fish thrive in some of the most extreme water conditions across the state and it is amazing to me at how they can live. I'd say they are the underdogs of the fish world and I am always cheering for the underdog," she says.

There are many different jobs in the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, but all are important to Wyoming's wildlife. Maybe you could someday help start a new program in Wyoming Game and Fish Department like Beth Bear. And remember "Don't Move a Mussel!"

For more information on zebra and quagga mussels see Around Wyoming on page 6.

