Wyoming Game & Fish Department

2019

Annual Law Enforcement Report

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Law Enforcement Coordinator — Aaron Kerr

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Cover Photo: A game warden stops a vehicle for violating a road closure on state land.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

Wyoming is a special place and our abundant wildlife resources play a central role in the lives of those who live, work, and recreate here. Hunters, anglers, trappers, landowners, wildlife enthusiasts, farmers and ranchers all play a vital part in the stewardship of Wyoming's wildlife. In turn, they entrust the men and women who wear the Wyoming Game Warden Badge to provide firm yet fair enforcement of the laws and regulations enacted to conserve Wyoming's wildlife. This report is a summary of the law enforcement work conducted in calendar year 2019 by your Wyoming Game Wardens.

I am confident that as you read this report, you will see the dedication, professionalism, and determination Wyoming Game Wardens put forth to ensure we continue to enjoy the unique Wyoming wildlife experience. It takes a special set of skills, interests, and abilities to work as a Wyoming Game Warden. The responsibility of finding the right person to wear the red shirt and protect your wildlife is one we do not take lightly. Take a minute to review the rigorous process we undertake to select the most capable individuals to serve you and conserve your wildlife. I am sure you will agree we do our due diligence. Indeed, Wyoming is a special place made so with the help of thoughtfully and carefully selected men and women who wear the badge of a Wyoming Game Warden.

This report is intended to provide you with a summary of the return on a portion of your license investments. I think you will be pleased to know the dollars you contribute for the enforcement of Wyoming's wildlife laws are well spent. Take some time to enjoy the case highlights, then head outside to continue enjoying your Wyoming wildlife experience with the assurance the conservation of your wildlife is in good hands.

Take Care,

Rick King
Chief Game Warden

INTRODUCTION

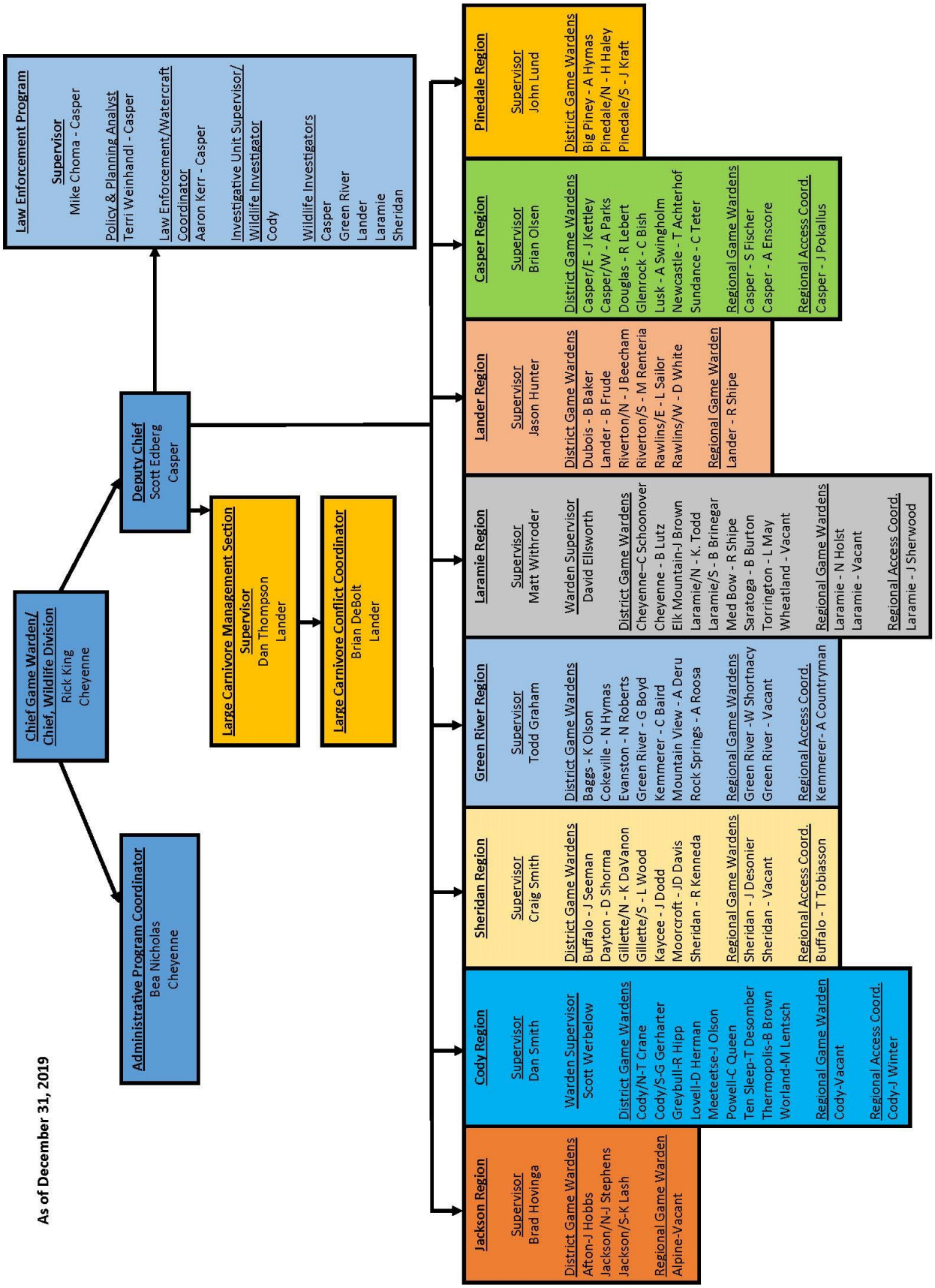
The Wyoming Game & Fish Department (Department) is responsible for the conservation and management of over 800 species of wildlife found in the state. Residents and visitors both value Wyoming's world-class opportunities for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing. The Department is dedicated to conserving and protecting Wyoming's wildlife to ensure these opportunities for future generations. Enforcement of wildlife laws and apprehension of wildlife violators are critical components of the Department's overall wildlife management efforts.

The Wyoming public has consistently supported the Department's law enforcement officers and programs, giving high marks to game wardens and wildlife investigators for their professionalism and dedication to their work. Department law enforcement officers investigate all types of wildlife crimes and work through the court system to ensure the successful prosecution of violators. Annually, officers dedicate thousands of work hours, hundreds of thousands of vehicle miles (patrol vehicles, all terrain vehicles and snowmobiles), thousands of watercraft hours and hundreds of horseback days patrolling Wyoming's vast landscapes to enforce the state's hunting, fishing, trapping, boating and general wildlife laws. They also spend countless hours interacting with members of the public to gain support for and ensure compliance with wildlife and watercraft safety laws.

The following report details Department law enforcement efforts and highlights for calendar year 2019. It includes an organizational chart of law enforcement personnel, regional summaries, violation statistics, new game warden testing/hiring results, game warden training and new legislation affecting the law enforcement program. It also discusses Wyoming's Stop Poaching Program, Wildlife Investigative Unit efforts and other aspects of wildlife law enforcement in Wyoming.

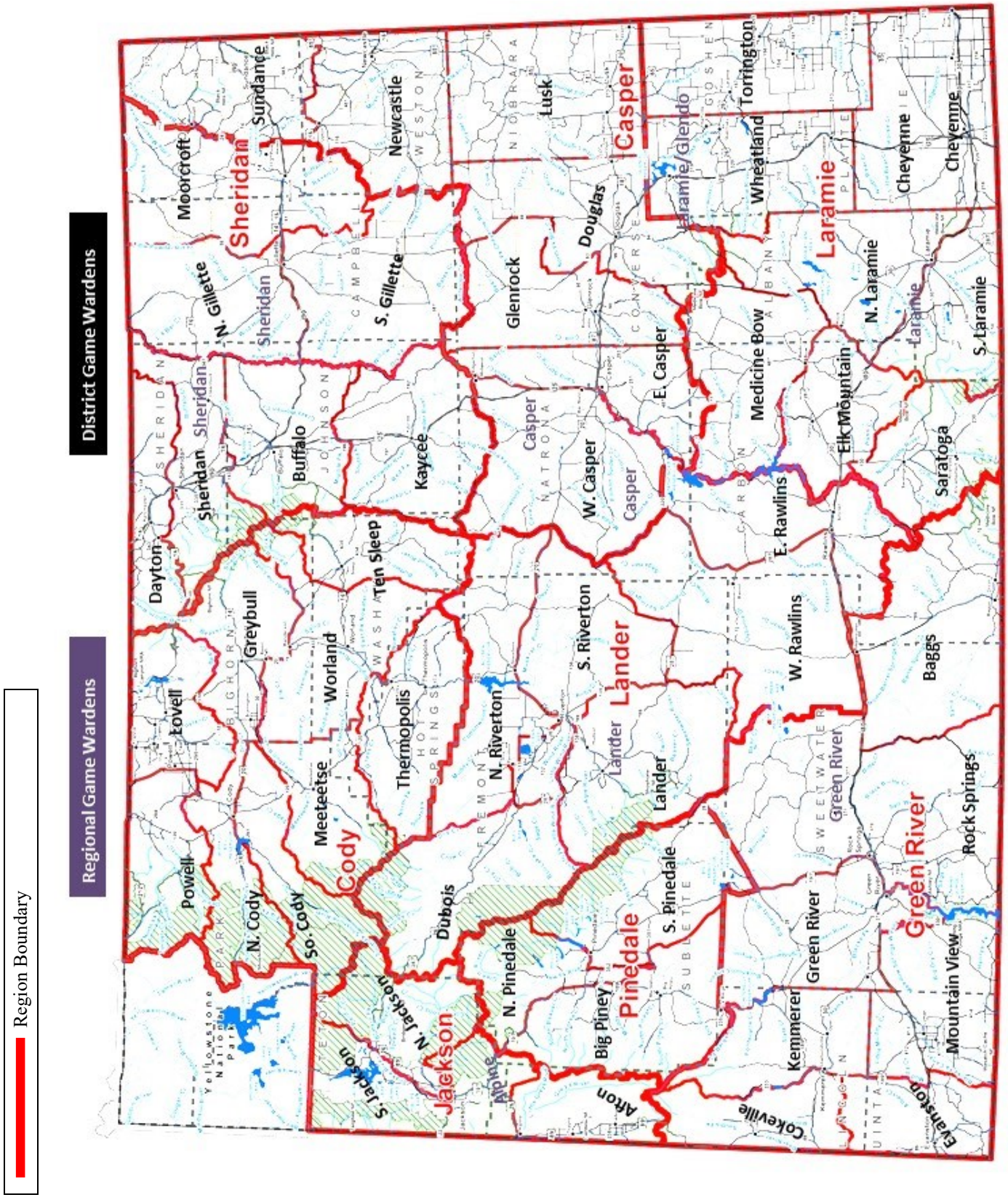
Wardens Dustin Shorma and Jon Desonier check elk hunters during the archery season in the Bighorn Mountains.

2019 LAW ENFORCEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

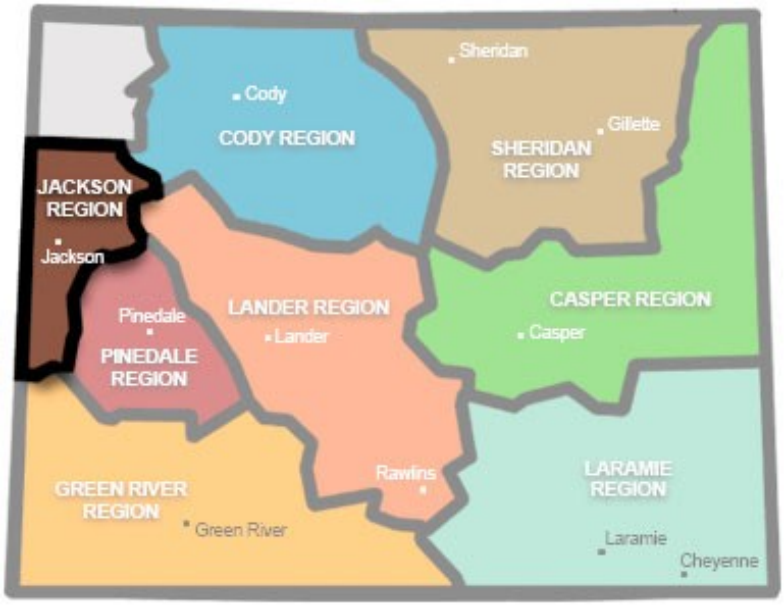


As of December 31, 2019

STATEWIDE REGION AND GAME WARDEN DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



Jackson Region



Work Unit Overview

The Jackson Region has up to five law enforcement officers, including three district game wardens, one regional game warden stationed in Alpine on occasion and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Jackson Region is located south of Yellowstone National Park and wardens patrol the Jackson Hole Valley, Gros Ventre Range and Star Valley, along with the Hoback and Greys River drainages. The district game wardens cover the North Jackson, South Jackson and Afton game warden districts.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

Jackson Region law enforcement officers documented 190 violations within the region in 2019. Officers issued 74 citations, 110 warnings and investigated six cases in which a suspect was never developed. Although the Jackson Region is relatively small, the game wardens in the region are extremely busy from a law enforcement perspective. In addition to fall hunting seasons, fishing enforcement, bear baiting and dealing with winter range/antler collection violations, game wardens respond to many calls for service from a diverse public with varying wildlife interests.

Game wardens in the Jackson Region spent a considerable amount of time working horseback in remote backcountry areas and by boat/kayak on the Greys, Salt and Snake rivers. The high public use in these areas keeps wardens busy in their law enforcement efforts. This year, game wardens detected several fishing violations in some very remote areas of the Jackson Region.

Game wardens were able to spend a significant amount of time conducting watercraft enforcement on Jackson Lake, Palisades Reservoir and the Snake River. Watercraft enforcement on Palisades Reservoir in past years was typically limited when the water level dropped and the reservoir essentially left Wyoming. However, in recent years, the Bureau of Reclamation has maintained higher water levels in the reservoir later into the summer. Wardens were able to conduct compliance checks throughout the summer and their efforts seem to be having an impact on watercraft violation rates occurring on the reservoir.

Wardens spent time working trapping enforcement and responding to public concerns when traps were

Warden Jon Stephens checks anglers on the Yellowstone River in the Teton Wilderness.

Warden James Hobbs issues a citation while contacting a boater on Palisades Reservoir.

encountered along major recreational trails on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. This year, there were fewer instances where domestic dogs were caught in traps set for predators. In these instances, the trapping activity was legal.

The region was fortunate to have a game warden stationed in Alpine during the first half of 2019. The addition of this officer is extremely valuable in workload relief for other regional personnel. Having the position in Alpine increases enforcement presence in the region and allows district game wardens to diversify work tasks. The position also provides a significant benefit to district game wardens in dealing with damage issues and the public at large on a daily basis. The community of Alpine is growing rapidly and the calls for service there are increasing.

The Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) elk reduction program and the elk/wild bison hunting season on the National Elk Refuge (NER) continue to be a considerable workload for law enforcement personnel in the region. However, this year elk harvest in GTNP and the NER decreased substantially due to the late onset of severe winter weather conditions in the region. Wild bison harvest was extremely low in 2019 due to mild weather conditions and all wild bison harvested in 2019 were taken on surrounding United States Forest Service (USFS) lands.

Game wardens continued to invest significant effort into the enforcement of the shed antler collection regulation. Game wardens detected several violations of this regulation and local winter range closures. Several cases were long-term investigations that required search warrants and a significant investigative investment by regional game wardens.

Decoy Operations

During the past five years, the Jackson Region conducted decoy operations on the west side of the Teton Range to target hunters from Idaho that strayed into Wyoming to hunt deer. During these years, compliance rates have increased and violation rates have decreased dramatically. The region opted not to employ decoy operations this year.

Task Forces

The region conducted its annual Antler Rendezvous task force in Alpine from May 10-18. This effort is designed to monitor the sale and transfer of antlers, heads, taxidermy mounts and other wildlife parts during the Antler Rendezvous. This is an excellent opportunity to work closely with participating antler dealers/vendors while issuing interstate game tags (IGT) for antlers/horns on skull plates prior to and during the weeklong event. A modest number of minor violations centering on IGT requirements were documented during the rendezvous. No major violations were detected. Game wardens also worked the NER antler sale on the Jackson town square held on the third Saturday of May each year, immediately following the Alpine Antler Rendezvous. This provides game wardens an opportunity to deal with IGT violations that arise at the auction and is an excellent public relations opportunity for the Department.

Notable Cases

Antler Hunting Violations: The Wyoming antler hunting regulation prohibits the gathering of horns or shed antlers from January 1 through April 30 on public lands west of the Continental Divide in Wyoming. This regulation has been in effect since 2009 and includes all state-owned lands and federal

Warden Cody Schoonover surveys Jenny Lake during a boating safety and fishing patrol.

lands. The purpose of the seasonal closure is to minimize harassment or disturbance of big game animals on their winter and spring ranges when they are most vulnerable to stress and displacement.

Antler hunting continues to gain in popularity and each year there are some individuals who cannot wait until the May 1 season opener in western Wyoming. This year, South Jackson Game Warden Kyle Lash caught a handful of antler poachers starting their antler collection early, and their sentences will hopefully discourage others from doing the same. Warden Lash highlights that it was a team effort from all Jackson Region law enforcement personnel including James Hobbs, Cody Schoonover and Jon Stephens, who were all game wardens in the Jackson Region during the 2019 season, along with Brad Hovinga, Jackson Regional Wildlife Supervisor. In addition to Jackson Region personnel, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Elk Refuge Officer Brian Yetter provided considerable assistance.

A man from Bliss, Idaho, was caught illegally picking up antlers on March 25, and again on March 27, south of Jackson. Appearing in court on May 10, the violator pled guilty and was sentenced to 10 days in jail, $420 in fines and a one-year loss of hunting and fishing privileges in Wyoming and 47 other member states of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact. The man had also been convicted of 17 wildlife related violations in the state of Idaho over the past year.

A second case occurred in the same area a couple of weeks later on the night of April 11, when an individual dropped off two men who wanted to get a "jump" on other antler hunters. One suspect from Thayne pled guilty and was sentenced to pay $1,720 in fines and the loss of hunting and fishing privileges for two years. The second suspect, of Alpine, paid $805 in fines and lost his hunting and fishing privileges for one year. The driver of the car also received a $435 fine for their part in the antler poaching spree.

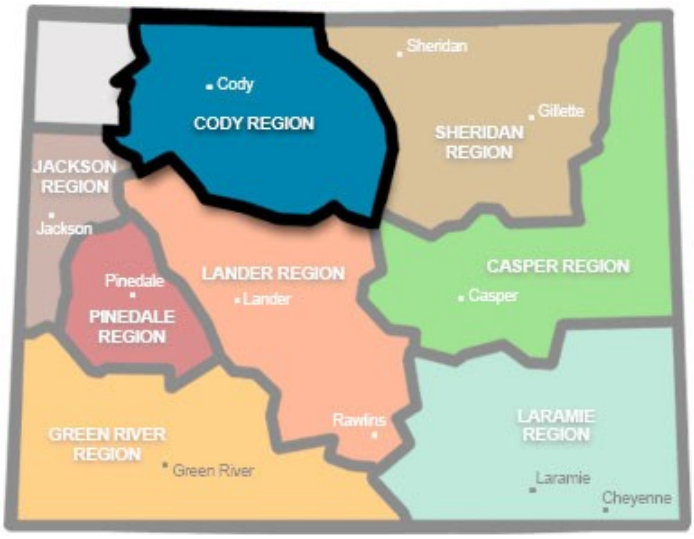
A third case involved a Jackson man who was cited for violations of the antler hunting regulation and the seasonal closure on the South Park Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) south of Jackson, where he illegally obtained shed antlers on the evening of April 9. He pled guilty and was sentenced to a $1,055 fine and lost hunting and fishing privileges for two years.

False Residency Claims: In late 2017, Game Warden James Hobbs received a report that a California man was purchasing licenses and hunting as a Wyoming resident. He had been using his ex-wife's address in Afton to apply for and purchase licenses. Warden Hobbs made contact with the suspect in early 2018 and he claimed that he traveled back and forth to California to take care of family matters but that he lived with his ex-wife in

Afton. Warden Hobbs continued to investigate the suspect and found that he had purchased resident fishing licenses in California in 2016 and 2017. Both of those years, he had purchased a variety of Wyoming resident hunting licenses, including deer and elk licenses. Warden Hobbs continued to investigate the suspect until the fall of 2019, when he cited the man for false oath violations in 2016 and 2017 for illegal deer and elk licenses. He had not harvested animals either year. The citations required a mandatory appearance before Judge Corpening in Lincoln County. The suspect pled guilty and was fined $4,000 and lost all hunting, fishing and trapping privileges until 2023.

Warden Travis Crane in the Beartooth Mountains.

Cody Region



Work Unit Overview

The Cody Region consists of 13 law enforcement officers, including nine district game wardens, one regional game warden, one access coordinator, one game warden coordinator and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Cody Region is located in northwest Wyoming and wardens patrol from the Montana state line south to Boysen Reservoir and from Yellowstone National Park east to the west slope of the Bighorn Mountains. The region includes the North Cody, South Cody, Powell, Lovell, Meeteetse, Greybull, Ten Sleep, Thermopolis and Worland game warden districts.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

Cody Region law enforcement officers documented 369 violations within the region in 2019. Officers issued 162 citations, 200 warnings and investigated seven cases in which a suspect was never developed. Wardens spent the majority of their time patrolling their districts and assisting neighboring wardens with locating suspects and conducting several search/arrest warrants. The Cody Region wildlife investigator worked on several high priority cases and assisted region wardens on investigations involving search/arrest warrants.

The North Fork of the Shoshone River and Buffalo Bill Reservoir continue to be popular fisheries. A portion of Buffalo Bill Reservoir is closed to fishing April 1-July 14 and the July 15 opening day of the reservoir's west end is popular among anglers. On opening day, several wardens from throughout the Cody Region patrolled the reservoir, with the goal of checking every boat and angler on the reservoir for compliance with fishing and boating safety regulations. Some wardens patrolled by boat, while others were stationed at each of the boat ramps to check anglers as they came off the water. Overall compliance was very good and only a few violations were detected. Anglers and recreational boaters were generally happy to be contacted by wardens during the opener and many thanked the wardens for their efforts.

Access Coordinator Jordan Winter answers questions about the Access Yes Program at the Wyoming Outdoor Expo.

The Cody Region has a great deal of rugged backcountry with a diverse amount of both trophy game and big game animals. Wardens spent considerable time patrolling these areas with horses and pack animals. Although this work is often rewarding, wardens must be prepared for the many dangerous situations which may arise during backcountry patrol. These include potential for inclement weather, downed trees across trails, grizzly bear encounters, horse accidents and other hazards.

The Cody Region continues to utilize late antlerless elk hunting seasons for population management. These late antlerless elk seasons are needed to obtain harvest in areas that are over population objective, and hunter access is limited due to large numbers of elk congregating on private properties that allow no public access. Most elk seasons close on December 21, but one hunt area remained open until January 15. In these late season hunts, wardens typically deal with trespassing calls, over limits of elk, and shooting wrong sex of elk violations. As an example, two individuals hunting in the Bighorn Mountains each harvested an elk legally and mistakenly hit a third elk that died within 60 yards of the other two, unseen by the hunters. Another hunter nearby witnessed the incident and reported the over limit to Greybull Game Warden Rob Hipp, who was able to identify the hunters after further investigation and issue a citation for taking an over-limit of elk.

Wardens in the Cody Region have encountered an increase of issues regarding cell phone mapping apps. These apps are becoming more popular and replacing traditional GPS units. However, hunters should be aware that sometimes there are discrepancies between ownership data on these apps and county assessor records, especially for parcels with "unknown" ownership and some state land sections. Some hunters have tried to take advantage of these situations and ended up trespassing on private lands. Although mapping apps and GPS units are excellent tools, hunters are ultimately responsible for hunting where there is legal access available to them.

Task Forces

In late July, six wardens worked together on a task force to check anglers at remote high country lakes in the Bear Tooth Mountains near the Montana border. Working out of a base camp, wardens on horseback checked over 30 backcountry lakes for fishing activity during a three-day period. Wardens issued eight citations and two warnings for various fishing violations. During this task force, Powell Game Warden Chris Queen observed an individual who stashed an over limit of brook trout in the tall grass and willows next to a hiking trail. After further investigation, this individual was issued a citation for possessing 18 fish over the limit and a second citation for abandoning 21 fish. The

Over limit of 21 brook trout dumped by violator and found by Warden Chris Queen, leading to the violator's prosecution.

citations required the violator to appear in court. On August 19, Park County Circuit Court Judge Bruce Waters sentenced the man to $500 in fines and court costs and suspended all of his hunting, fishing and trapping privileges for two years.

Notable Cases

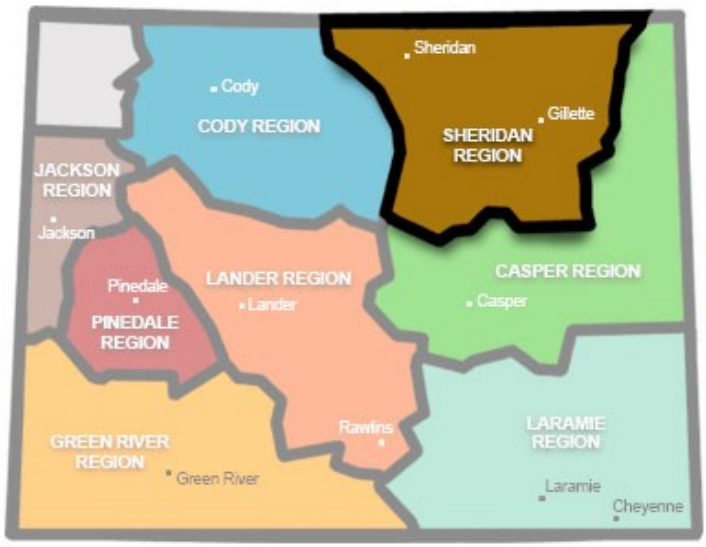
Trespasser Kills Trophy Mule Deer Buck: On November 2, South Cody Game Warden Grant Gerharter observed a man dragging a large buck mule deer on what appeared to be private property where deer hunting is not allowed by the owner. Warden Gerharter contacted the suspect, who stated that he harvested the deer on a narrow strip of BLM land that ran through the private land. According to the Park County Assessor's map, there is a strip of BLM land approximately 1,000 yards long and 25 feet wide in the area. Warden Gerharter retraced the suspect's steps and followed the drag marks from the mule deer, where he discovered that the deer had been killed approximately 200 feet from the strip of BLM land on private property. After shooting it, the suspect had dragged the deer to the strip of BLM land, which was marked by a T-post, and then field dressed it. Warden Gerharter accompanied the suspect to where he started his hunt on the Carter Mountain Access Road. The man's tracks indicated he had walked off the road and fired two times from private property, approximately 100 feet from the BLM land. The suspect had one empty shell casing in his pocket and Warden Gerharter located a second empty shell casing on the ground where he shot from. Warden Gerharter seized the deer and issued the suspect a citation for hunting on private land without permission. He was found guilty in court and fined $435, with an additional $1,000 in restitution for the deer, which he was not allowed to keep.

Trophy buck mule deer illegally killed by trespasser.

One of two bull elk killed in an illegal outfitting case.

Illegal Outfitting Case: North Cody Game Warden Travis Crane finalized a case involving two professional guides in Wyoming who knowingly took two nonresident hunters into a limited quota area that was closed at the time and harvested two bull elk on general licenses. Numerous pictures of the hunt were reviewed by Warden Crane, showing an area in the head of the Fishhawk drainage where the hunt took place in the wrong hunt area and during a closed season. The bull elk were left un-gutted and not retrieved until the following day causing some wasted meat. Both guides pled guilty to the violations in the case. One of the guides was fined $1,225 lost his guiding, hunting, and trapping privileges for two years. The second guide was fined $235.

Sheridan Region



Work Unit Overview

The Sheridan Region had 10 law enforcement officers in 2019, including seven senior game wardens, one regional game warden, one access coordinator and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Sheridan Region encompasses the east slope of the Bighorn Mountains, the Powder River Basin, the Rochelle Hills, portions of the Little Missouri River drainage and the western edge of the Black Hills. The region includes game warden districts in Dayton, Sheridan, Buffalo, Kaycee, North Gillette, South Gillette and Moorcroft. The regional access coordinator is stationed in Buffalo, and the regional game warden is based out of Sheridan but conducts enforcement throughout the region.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

Sheridan Region law enforcement officers documented 441 violations within the region in 2019. Officers issued 180 citations, 186 warnings and investigated 75 cases in which a suspect was never developed. Due to the amount of private land in the region, wardens receive complaints of trespassing, shooting from a public road and failure to tag violations. During the 2019 calendar year, wardens documented 38 trespass violations, 14 instances of hunters shooting from a public roadway, 23 fail to tag big game animal before leaving the site of kill and 29 violations for wasting a big game animal. The region also employs aggressive hunting seasons for doe/fawn white-tailed deer which inherently results in the increased take of young male animals. In 2019, wardens documented 29 violations for taking the wrong sex of big game animal. The region only had one warden assigned strictly to watercraft and fishing enforcement at Keyhole Reservoir this year, and therefore observed a reduction in the number of watercraft violations documented. Game wardens did document 11 violations for failure to provide life jackets aboard watercraft, 18 violations for fishing without a license and six violations for operating an unnumbered watercraft. A late spring, the retirement of Sheridan Game Warden Bruce Scigliano, several injuries and the departure of one officer for promotion contributed to the reduced enforcement effort compared to previous years.

Task Forces

One task force was conducted in the region again this year to address the problem of illegal take of elk and deer in the vicinity of the Kerns Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) and is referred to as the State Line Task Force. Two-officer teams were assigned to the area during January and February of 2019. Operations were focused on nighttime and

Warden Ryan Kenneda patrols the Bighorn Mountains.

Warden John Pokallus patrols near the Wyoming-Montana state line.

early morning hours. Wardens drove 19,390 miles and worked 1,149 hours during this task force. They made 99 public contacts and documented six violations that were addressed with five citations and one warning. The State Line Task Force resulted in few detected violations given the amount of time and effort expended, however, poor communications (radio and cell phone) and the random nature of violations were identified as potential difficulties in conducting the operation. Again this year, suspects from previous documented violations were identified through the efforts of the task force participants. The information gathered and contacts made during this task force are worth the effort in order to identify and deter violations. Based on public comment, area landowners and the sporting public appreciate the Department's work to address the significant illegal killing of elk and deer.

Notable Cases

Archery Cheat: On October 7, 4th Judicial Circuit Court Judge Shelley Cundiff approved the conditions of a plea agreement reached between the Johnson County Attorney's Office and a Bloomfield, Nebraska resident, who pled guilty to accessory to taking a big game animal without a license and two counts of accessory to transfer of a big game license. The violator agreed to pay $21,000 in fines and lost his hunting and fishing privileges in Wyoming, Nebraska and 46 other Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact states for two years. The case began in January 2019 when Buffalo Game Warden Jim Seeman received information from another Game and Fish employee about discrepancies in records that indicated a possible hunting violation had occurred in September 2018. Warden Seeman learned that a bull elk had been brought to a taxidermist and tagged with a license that belonged to an individual who did not have an archery license. In addition to an elk license, an archery license is required for hunting during the September special archery season. Warden Seeman ran additional checks and found that the license came back as a "party" application of a family; the violator and three of his children. Taxidermy records indicated that the violator and the other three license holders had all harvested bull elk, supposedly on the same weekend in September, though the animals were

Warden Jim Seeman with seized antlers of bull elk killed illegally by violators from Nebraska.

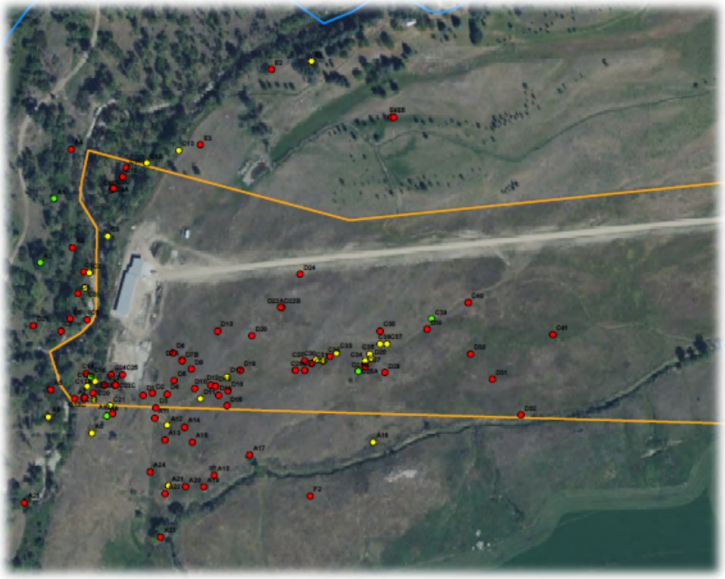
delivered for taxidermy work on different dates. "Archery elk hunter success rates tend to be 10% or less," said Seeman. "I've been an archery hunter for over 40 years so I know the odds of four archery hunters from the same hunting party successfully taking four trophy-class bull elk on the same weekend and in the same area are next to impossible." Although the violator had an archery license, no other members of the party did. Warden Seeman contacted conservation officers with Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, who determined that the two adult children and one juvenile child listed on the violator's party application had never purchased hunting licenses in Nebraska. The two adult children, living in Nevada and California, were subsequently interviewed about their license purchase in Wyoming. They both stated they did not know they had Wyoming hunting licenses, nor had either of them ever been to Wyoming, even though licenses with dates and signatures of their names had been put on two bull elk to make it appear as though the animals were harvested legally. After further investigation, Warden Seeman learned that the violator allowed one of his underage children to harvest a bull elk on his license. A fourth bull elk was legally harvested by another of the violator's juvenile children. "Elk licenses are tough to draw and some people wait many years before drawing one," said Seeman. "In this case, of four elk licenses that were used on a ranch south of Buffalo, three of them were used illegally."

Tip From the Public Helps Solve Elk Poaching: Dayton Game Warden Dustin Shorma received a report about a dead bull elk along the Pass Creek Road March of 2019. The caller said it looked like the bull's head had been removed from the carcass. Warden Shorma discovered the headless and hindquarter-less bull adjacent to the Pass Creek Road near the Montana state line. It appeared the bull had been shot from the county road and drug off the hillside, where the head and hindquarters were removed and loaded into a vehicle. The rest of the animal was left to rot. It appeared the vehicle then headed north towards the Crow Reservation. Warden Shorma spoke with several landowners in the area and was able to formulate a partial vehicle description. A break in the case came when one of the Pass Creek landowners observed a pickup truck

Bull elk head recovered as evidence in investigation.

with similar characteristics of the suspect vehicle parked in Sheridan. He took several photos of the truck and provided them to Warden Shorma. It was determined that a man from Lodge Grass, Montana was the owner of the pickup truck. He was interviewed at his residence in April. During the interview, the suspect confessed to shooting the bull elk and relinquished the 6x6 bull elk head. The suspect was charged with taking an antlered big game animal without a license, hunting on private land without permission and shooting from a public roadway. The suspect appeared in court and pled guilty to all charges. He was assessed $5,655 in fines and restitution.

Felony Deer Killing Case: A Beckton resident was sentenced in District Court October 17, 2019 to two misdemeanor counts of wanton destruction of big game and nine felony counts of wanton destruction of big game for illegally killing 113 white-tailed deer on his property between 2016 and November of 2018. He was ordered to pay $254,000 in fines and restitution and serve nine months in jail. The case began late November 2018 when a call came in from a citizen who observed the suspect dragging a dead white-tailed deer behind a lawn mower. Sheridan Game Warden Bruce Scigliano and Dayton Game Warden Dustin Shorma responded to the scene and determined the case was probably much larger than one individual animal. The investigation turned up multiple deer carcasses and interviews with neighbors laid the groundwork

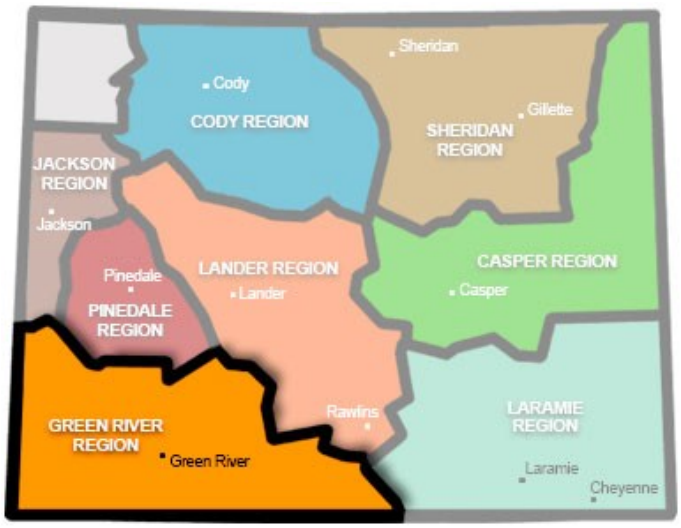


Map of known deer and antelope kill sites on property belonging to suspect charged with felony wildlife crimes.

for a search warrant of the residence. Additionally, while on surveillance the Sheridan Region Wildlife Investigator observed the suspect kill a white-tailed deer from his home. Game wardens from all over the Sheridan Region assisted with the search of the suspect's home and property where the remains of 81 white-tailed deer were discovered. Also discovered were firearms and bloody clothes. A search of the neighboring properties uncovered another 32 white-tailed deer carcasses and one antelope.

State Line Elk Poaching Case: An elk poaching case from February of 2018 was finally adjudicated early 2019 when a suspect from Wyola, Montana pled guilty to taking an elk without a license and hunting on private land without permission. The case started when game wardens Jordan Kraft and David Ellsworth observed suspicious activity along the Little Horn River near the Wyoming-Montana state line. Due to the fading light, the wardens returned the next day and discovered an elk had been shot in Wyoming and drug into Montana where it was loaded into a pickup truck. Wardens Kraft and Ellsworth contacted Game Warden Dustin Shorma to assist with the investigation. While driving through the Crow Reservation, Warden Shorma observed a freshly killed calf elk lying in a driveway near Wyola, Montana. Warden Shorma knew this residence from other poaching cases With the help of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the suspect was contacted at the residence and identified as the shooter. The suspect stated he killed the elk the previous day on the Crow Reservation in Montana. A DNA sample was removed from the calf and sent to the Department's Forensic Laboratory for analysis. The lab was able to match DNA evidence from the crime scene to the DNA sample removed from the calf elk in the suspect's driveway. The suspect was cited for taking an elk without a license and hunting on private land without permission. He pled guilty to both charges and paid $1,660 in fines and restitution.

Green River Region



Work Unit Overview

The Green River Region typically has 11 law enforcement officers at full staff, including seven district game wardens, two regional game wardens, one access coordinator and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Green River Region covers southwest and south central Wyoming and includes the Baggs, Rock Springs, Green River, Mountain View, Evanston, Kemmerer and Cokeville warden districts. In 2019, one of the regional game warden positions was vacant. The remaining regional game warden focused on assisting district wardens with law enforcement and damage through the first few months of the year. The regional game warden focused on watercraft enforcement and safety from

Wardens Andy Countryman and Neil Hymas contact a shed antler hunter.

May through the July 4 holiday. During the fall hunting seasons there was a non-enforcement employee in this position that collected field harvest checks and CWD samples, freeing up game warden time. However, the position vacancy did contribute to an overall reduction in law enforcement efforts in the region.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

In 2019, Green River Region law enforcement officers documented 294 violations. This continues a decline in violations compared to 646 in 2016, 475 in 2017 and 422 in 2018. Officers issued 115 citations, 164 written warnings and investigated 15 cases in which a suspect was never identified.

From the summer of 2016 through 2018, there have been two regional wardens specifically assigned to work fishing and watercraft enforcement on Flaming Gorge Reservoir. Due to turnover, there was only one regional warden assigned to the region in 2019 and he was promoted to a district warden position mid-summer. This undoubtedly resulted in a reduction in boating violations documented, from 38 in 2018 to 15 in 2019, not including aquatic invasive species (AIS) violations.

AIS violations have been an area of focus for the Green River Region. In particular, there has been a collective effort to prevent persons transporting watercraft from failing to stop at AIS check stations. There are four primary AIS check stations in the Green River Region. These are located at the Evanston Port of Entry, Kemmerer, Anvil Draw and Firehole. In 2019, regional law enforcement officers documented 60 AIS violations, 58 of which were failing to stop at an AIS check station.

Violations of the antler collection regulation continued to be a focus in the region. Wardens worked together at the end of April to target antler hunters collecting antlers prior to the May 1 opening date. Once again, an airplane was used to look for violations. This year 11 violations were documented.

Notable Cases

Persistence Pays Off: In the fall of 2015, some hunters found the carcass of a moose in the Strawberry Creek area of the Sierra Madres. Things looked out of place to them so they reported it to Baggs Game Warden Kim Olson. Upon investigation, the moose parts had been intentionally

Warden Kim Olson on patrol in the Hog Park area.

covered up with branches and stashed in between logs to try to conceal them. The antlers and all of the meat had been taken, but Warden Olson surmised that the offenders probably did not have a license for the moose. Warden Olson returned to the area each September to try to find out who might have done this, and in the fall of 2017, she found a nearby camp. Several men in the camp were identified and they were archery hunting both deer and elk. There was also a neighboring camp of nonresident hunters. Upon returning a third time to the location, the nonresident camp informed Warden Olson that their neighbors had harvested some elk during the archery season, but they believed the hunters had used firearms rather than archery equipment. The suspects had left, so Warden Olson proceeded to look for carcasses. On the second trip, she found one elk carcass. It was clearly evident the elk had not been taken by archery equipment, as the whole chest cavity was perfect with no holes or cuts. Unable to find anything significant, Warden Olson took the carcass to the forensics lab in Laramie, where a bullet fragment was recovered from the neck of the elk. With the assistance of other game wardens and the Wildlife Investigative Unit (WIU), interviews were conducted and a suspect was charged. In July 2019, the suspect pled guilty to the charges of wanton destruction of a big game animal and use of a firearm during the special archery season. He was fined a total of $2,110 and had his hunting and trapping privileges revoked for 10 years. Investigation of the moose continues.

Repeat Offender: Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas and Afton Game Warden James Hobbs began an investigation in November 2018 after receiving a report from the manager of a ranch near Cokeville. The manager had discovered four sets of fresh mule deer antlers hidden in a barn on the ranch. The investigation revealed the suspect had been working on the ranch between November 5 and November 13, 2018. During that time, he had killed four antlered mule deer. The skull plates and antlers were removed from these animals and the remainder of the animals were hidden and left to waste. The suspect's hunting privileges had already been suspended from a prior conviction in 2016. At that time, he was convicted of taking one deer without a proper license and taking an over-limit of deer. The suspect received probation in that case and was fined $800. His hunting privileges were also suspended for all of 2016, 2017 and 2018. On July 26, 2019, the suspect pled guilty to four counts of taking a deer without the proper license. He was sentenced to serve six months in jail and ordered to pay $16,000 in restitution. He was also placed on 18 months unsupervised probation with the possibility of an additional 18 months of jail and an additional $20,000 in fines if he were to violate that probation. In addition, the suspect's hunting privileges were suspended for a period of 20 years and his fishing privileges were suspended for 10 years.

Hunter Reports Two Violations near State Line: On October 25, Rock Springs Game Warden Andy Roosa received a call from Utah Conservation Officer Jack Lytle. Officer Lytle stated that he had received a report from a Utah deer hunter who had witnessed a young female hunter from Utah shoot a buck mule deer just north of the Wyoming state line. The female hunter and an adult male that was with her picked the deer up and moved it over the fence into Utah, where they field dressed it before loading the deer and leaving the location. Informed with a vehicle description, license plate number and direction of travel, Officer Lytle stopped the vehicle on Highway 191 just north of Vernal about an hour later. When Officer Lytle asked where the deer was shot, the hunters admitted that the buck had been

Buck mule deer taken illegally in Wyoming by hunters licensed in Utah.

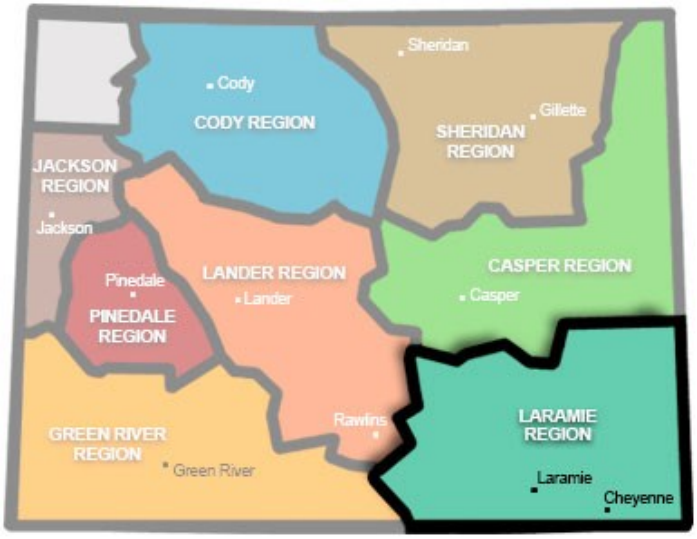
shot on the Wyoming side of the state line but said that they did not realize it was in Wyoming until after it was killed. Warden Roosa met with the hunters that afternoon and they showed him where the deer had been shot from and where the deer died. The girl's father said that he would take responsibility because he had told his daughter to shoot the deer without knowing for sure which side of the state line it was on. Warden Roosa issued the young hunter a warning for taking a deer without a license and issued her father a citation for accessory to taking a deer without a license. The father paid a fine of $805 and the deer was donated to someone in need.

October 26, Warden Roosa received another call from Officer Lytle saying the same Utah deer hunter had reported seeing a man and a woman push a group of buck deer from Wyoming across the state line into Utah, where a young hunter then shot one of the bucks. This occurred about a mile from where the buck had been shot the previous day. Officer Lytle gave Warden Roosa all the information on the location and the people involved and they met at the hunter's camp. Warden Roosa questioned the man and woman who pushed the deer and they said that the young man had shot and injured the buck in Utah and it had crossed into Wyoming, so they pushed it back across the state line so he could finish it off. Warden Roosa spoke to the Utah hunter who had witnessed the event and he stated that he had seen the group of deer before the other party arrived. He said that none of them were injured and the deer had not been in Utah prior to the man and woman pushing them south across the state line. After further questioning, the man admitted that he had decided to push the bucks across the state line so the young man could shoot one. They had been unable to find any bucks in Utah and he wanted to get the young man his first buck. Warden Roosa cited the man for taking a deer without a license and seized the deer. The deer was donated to someone in need and the man paid a fine of $805. Both of these cases were made because of a hunter taking time out of his own hunt two days in a row to report violations and with help from Utah Conservation Officer Jack Lytle.

Warden Nick Roberts with a successful youth hunter.

The Antelope with Four Hind Legs: On October 28, Rock Springs Game Warden Andy Roosa received a call from a game processor stating that a Rock Springs man had brought four antelope quarters in for processing the previous week. When they had taken the quarters out of the cooler to begin processing them, they noticed that there were four hind quarters and no front quarters. The man had only provided one carcass coupon for the meat. Warden Roosa checked the license system and the man only had one antelope license. When the man was questioned about why he had taken the processor four hind quarters and no front quarters from his antelope the man said that he had messed up and accidentally shot two antelope. He stated he had stalked a group of antelope and shot a buck. After the shot, he thought the antelope was still standing there so he fired again, but when he walked up there were two dead bucks within 10 yards of each other. Instead of reporting the incident, the man field dressed both bucks and took them home. He then processed the front quarters and backstraps from both bucks and took the hind quarters to the processor. He had also taken both heads to a friend to have them boiled for European mounts. Warden Roosa issued the man a citation for taking an over limit of big game. He seized one of the antelope heads and half of the antelope meat, which was donated to a person in need. The man paid a fine of $435.

Laramie Region



Winter conditions in the Elk Mountain warden district.

Work Unit Overview

The Laramie Region has 13 law enforcement officers, including nine district game wardens, two regional game wardens, one access coordinator, and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Laramie Region covers southeast Wyoming, including the eastern Sierra Madre Mountains, Snowy Range, Shirley Basin, Laramie Range and eastern plains to the Nebraska state line. The region includes game warden districts in Cheyenne, Torrington, Wheatland, Medicine Bow, North Laramie, South Laramie, Elk Mountain and Saratoga. In addition, the two regional game wardens are assigned to Glendo and Laramie.

In 2019, the Laramie region experienced significant turnover in personnel throughout the region, specifically in the Cheyenne, Elk Mountain and Medicine Bow game warden districts, the Regional Wildlife Supervisor position and Cheyenne Headquarters position. Several of these districts and positions were vacant for several months throughout 2019, so enforcement efforts were down from 2018.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

Laramie Region law enforcement officers documented 712 violations within the region in 2019. Officers issued 296 citations, 379 warnings and investigated 37 cases in which a suspect was never developed. The region's game wardens have a diverse enforcement workload demonstrated by the array of violations documented. In 2019, Laramie Region officers recorded 97 watercraft and 70 AIS related violations. Fishing opportunities abound in the region, as evident in the 114 total sport fish related violations documented. Of the sport fish violations documented, more than 50% (62) were fishing without license violations. Big game populations in the region are generally stable to increasing and wardens remained busy during the lengthy big game seasons. In 2019, 72 violations associated with pronghorn were documented. In addition, 78 violations associated with elk and 73 associated with mule deer were recorded. In total, these three species accounted for 31% of the region's total violations documented. In addition to these violations, Laramie Region game wardens and wildlife investigators continue to investigate several open cases involving big game animals and multiple suspects. Charges are pending in several of these cases.

Task Forces

The Laramie Region conducted two task force projects in 2019. Officers from outside the region assisted with fishing enforcement in the Snowy Range Mountains. The Snowy Range contains dozens of high mountain lakes and receives significant fishing pressure during the short summer season. In addition, two mountain reservoirs, Lake

Warden Biff Burton patrolling the Huston Park Wilderness.

Owen and Rob Roy Reservoir, are popular summer fishing destinations. The Snowy Range Task Force focused on these lakes and reservoirs. During each weekend in July, one officer patrolled from a pickup and on foot. The task force officers documented 11 violations, including ten fishing without license violations and one failure to purchase conservation stamp violation.

The Laramie Region is home to several high profile mule deer herds. Effective management requires an effective enforcement program. In 2019, the Laramie Region requested assistance from outside region officers to assist in patrolling mule deer winter ranges. Patrols focused enforcement efforts in November when mule deer are most susceptible to illegal harvest. These officers concentrated their patrol efforts on winter ranges near the Wyoming-Colorado border. While no violations were detected, the region considers the task force a valuable deterrent and worth the investment in time and personnel.

Notable Cases

Shot and Left Moose Case: On September 3, South Laramie Game Warden Bill Brinegar received a call about a shot and left cow moose, which had some edible portions of meat removed. Warden Bringear had little evidence to go on other than a vehicle description and a specific sticker that was in the back window. With a little luck, Warden Brinegar was able to contact the organization represented by the sticker, and they were able to find the suspect truck on their Facebook page. After tracking the suspect down in Cheyenne, the suspect explained how he was archery elk hunting and shot the cow moose with a calf at side when he saw movement, and did not know he had shot a moose until the reporting party confronted him about it. The suspect removed some of the meat and left the area. When he arrived home in Cheyenne, he decided to toss the meat in the garbage. In his written statement, he explained how he was frustrated after hunting two years in a row with no

Wardens Schoonover, Brinegar and Holst with elk antlers seized as evidence in a poaching investigation.

Suspects in an antler hunting trespassing case in the Elk Mountain warden district.

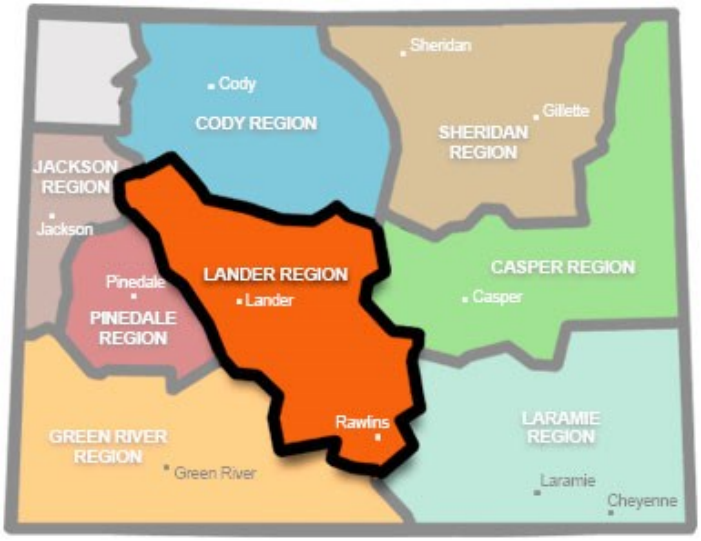
success and just wanted to shoot something. He admitted he knew it was a moose and did not realize the potential consequences. The suspect was charged with taking a moose without a license, waste of big game and shooting a cow moose with calf at side. He received $4,665 in fines, $7,500 in restitution, suspension of hunting privileges for seven years and community service.

Waterfowl Waste Case: On April 17, Glendo Game Warden Becca Lutz received a report of wasted ducks and geese. An investigation uncovered over 100 duck and goose carcasses in various stages of decay, with some edible portions of game meat being removed. Warden Lutz was able to identify a suspect and issue multiple citations for waste or abandonment of game birds. The suspect was sentenced to fines and restitution of $2,135 and a two-year suspension of hunting privileges.

Pronghorn Cover-Up: On October 19, Wheatland Game Warden David Ellsworth made a visit to the local meat processor. While there, Warden Ellsworth was inspecting some of the recent harvests turned in to the locker and noticed a pronghorn that had been turned in skinned, eviscerated and missing a head. The pronghorn had no evidence of sex and the person who field dressed the animal had made a large incision near where the genitalia of the pronghorn would have been, removing much of the area. Warden Ellsworth reviewed the intake form from the processor, where the hunter who had turned it in indicated the pronghorn was a female. The hunter possessed a type 6 (doe/fawn) license, which was used to tag the animal. When interviewed, the hunter insisted the pronghorn was a female and that he had removed the evidence of sex prior to taking it to the processor. Warden Ellsworth explained that a DNA sample from the carcass would verify the hunter's story and if it was a female, no further action would be required. The hunter then inquired about the possibility of a "hermaphrodite" pronghorn. The hunter stated that he had definitely harvested a female, but just wanted to know for his information. Warden Ellsworth told the hunter that he had never heard or seen of such a thing in pronghorn. Approximately eight hours later, the hunter called Warden Ellsworth back, apologized for lying and stated that he had in fact harvested a buck. The hunter met with Warden Ellsworth in Wheatland later that night and forfeited the head of a mature buck pronghorn. The hunter was cited for taking an antelope without a license and was warned for taking the wrong sex of big game. He pled guilty and was fined $805.

Game warden investigates a moose carcass to determine the cause of death.

Lander Region



Wardens traverse the difficult road into Shoshone Lake on ATVs during a fishing enforcement task force.

Work Unit Overview

The Lander Region has seven law enforcement officers, including six district game wardens and one regional wildlife supervisor. District game wardens are stationed in Dubois, North Riverton, South Riverton, Lander, West Rawlins and East Rawlins. The Lander Region is located in central Wyoming and wardens patrol from the Red Desert north to the Owl Creek Mountains and from the Gas Hills west to the Wind River Range and southern Absaroka Mountains.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

Lander Region law enforcement officers documented 302 violations within the region in 2019. Officers issued 104 citations, 153 warnings and investigated 45 cases in which a suspect was never developed or charged. The Lander Region focused efforts on issues ranging from illegal antler collection in Dubois, hunters pursuing elk in the desert, and watercraft and fishing enforcement on Boysen and Seminoe reservoirs as well as several other smaller bodies of water and high mountain lakes. Progress was made in these areas using task force operations and coordinating with the WIU.

Task Forces

The Lander Region conducted one task force using out-of-region officers this year to focus on backcountry fishing violations near Lander. Over the past several years, there have been reports of individuals fishing during a closure on Shoshone Lake (September 1-June 14). This year, four plain-clothes officers using ATVs patrolled Shoshone Lake watching for fishing activity during the closure. Several individuals were contacted and three citations were issued to members of a group suspected of violating the closure for several years. Department personnel placed three closure information signs this year; one at the parking/ loading area, one near the forest boundary along the Shoshone Lake Road, and one at the Shoshone Creek inlet. It is believed these signs helped alleviate some of the violations that had been reported in past years.

Notable Cases

Dubois Man Charged with Wildlife Violations for a Third Time: Over the past several years, Wardens Brian Baker and Brian DeBolt have worked with the Lander wildlife investigator and special agents from the USFWS to complete multiple cases involving numerous wildlife violations and suspects. Three of these cases involved one common suspect from Dubois.

Wardens take a break during a day of snowmobile training in the Wind River Mountains near Lander.

This suspect was most recently arrested on August 28 by deputies from the Fremont County Sheriff's Office on an outstanding warrant for five violations. These included; accessory before or after the fact in taking game animals without a license (two counts), accessory before or after the fact in using automobiles for hunting, accessory before or after the fact of hunting from the highway and interference with a peace officer. He spent six days in the Fremont County Detention Center and was released after posting a $10,000 cash bond on September 3. The charges in this case stemmed from the suspect, who had his license privileges suspended at the time, assisting another man in taking a bull elk and a buck mule deer without licenses, shooting from a vehicle and shooting from a county road during the fall of 2018. The shooter pled guilty in this case and was ordered to pay $6,000 in fines and restitution and lost his license privileges for four years.

The suspect's license suspension was the result of his involvement in the illegal killing of a grizzly bear in September 2015. That case was solved in a cooperative effort between investigators from the Department and USFWS and was detailed in the Department's 2018 Annual Law Enforcement Report. The suspect's 2018 sentence included a five-year worldwide license suspension and five years of probation, both of which he violated in the most recent case against him.

The suspect also previously pled guilty in August 2007 to being an accessory to taking a bighorn sheep ram without a license, waste/abandonment of a bighorn sheep, two counts of waste of a big game animal and two counts each of making a false statement to obtain resident big game licenses. For this incident, the suspect was fined $2,490, ordered to pay $1,500 restitution for the ram and his privileges were revoked for three years. In addition, he was sentenced to one year probation, a 30-day suspended jail sentence, and ordered to forfeit a .243 bolt action rifle used in the crimes.

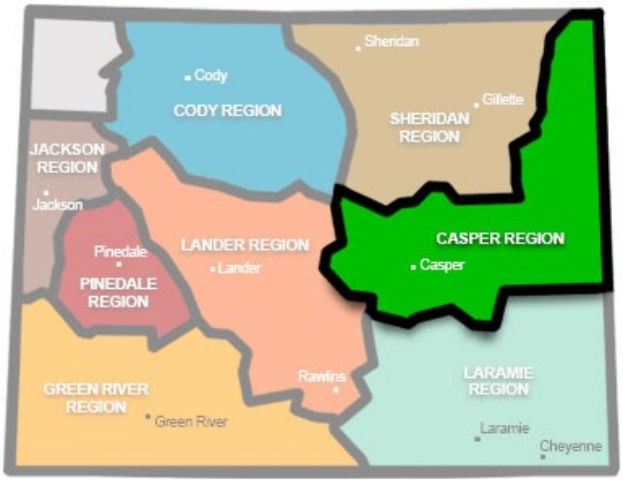
This case is a prime example of a habitual violator

who continues to commit wildlife crime even after being caught. In the latest case against him, the suspect pled guilty to three charges. He was sentenced to one year in jail, $6,365 in fines and restitution, three years supervised probation and loss of license privileges for 18 years.

Federal Game Warden Helps with Common Hunting Violation: Although this case dealt with a common hunting violation, it is notable because one of the officers involved was a visiting federal game warden based in Kansas. On September 21, Law Enforcement Coordinator Aaron Kerr met USFWS Officer Joe Ferrero while checking antelope hunters on the western side of Pathfinder Reservoir. Officer Ferrero was in the area for the first time to check waterfowl and big game hunters on the Pathfinder National Wildlife Refuge and adjacent federal lands. While talking with hunters in a camp along the Buzzard Road, the two game wardens heard rifle shots near their location. They left the camp to investigate and found two hunters standing by a harvested buck antelope. The antelope was approximately 175 yards from their truck, which was parked along the county road. The game wardens immediately noticed a .270 rifle casing on the road next to the driver's door of the hunter's truck. They also could see clear footprints in the sandy road where the driver exited the truck and moved to the front fender on the driver's side. Officer Ferrero also noticed a .270 rifle casing resting on the windshield wiper. Warden Kerr walked around the front of the truck and observed a third .270 rifle casing on the ground near the passenger door. Before talking to the hunters, the game wardens had plenty of physical evidence to show what violation had occurred. As soon as the conversation began with the hunters, who were husband and wife, the husband denied shooting from the road. Once the game wardens discussed the physical evidence, the husband still denied the violation until his wife told game wardens that she was the passenger and her husband had shot the antelope. He was issued a citation for shooting from a public roadway and paid the $235 fine.

A spent .270 cartridge casing under a truck's windshield wiper provides evidence of shooting from a public roadway.

Casper Region



Work Unit Overview

The Casper Region consists of 11 law enforcement officers, including seven district game wardens, two regional game wardens stationed in Casper, one access coordinator and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Casper Region is located in east-central Wyoming and game wardens patrol from the Rattlesnake Hills and southern Big Horn Mountains east to the Nebraska state line, along with a portion of the Thunder Basin Grasslands and the Black Hills. District game wardens are stationed in

Glenrock, Douglas, Lusk, Newcastle, Sundance and two in Casper.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

In 2019, Casper Region law enforcement officers documented 799 violations. Officers issued 347 citations, 393 written warnings and investigated 59 cases in which a suspect was never identified. The Casper Region continues to place emphasis on watercraft safety, fishing violations and boating under the influence (BUI) enforcement on Alcova, Pathfinder and Glendo reservoirs and on the North Platte River. Enforcement efforts on these bodies of water have the goal of reducing watercraft safety violations and increasing public awareness of the seriousness of BUI. Casper Region game wardens contacted hundreds of families and nearly 2,700 people recreating during the summer boating season. Game wardens documented 218 violations in the region through their watercraft enforcement efforts. Of these, 108 were watercraft violations, 53 were AIS violations and 57 were fishing violations. Six arrests for BUI were made by game wardens during the boating season. Two occurred on the North Platte River and the remaining four arrests occurred on Alcova Reservoir. Five out of the six operators were found to be impaired by alcohol at a level higher than the legal limit in Wyoming of 0.08% blood alcohol content (BAC) (0.10% before July 1, 2019). Approximately 16 additional operators were put through preliminary BUI testing and were subsequently found to be within legal limits to operate their watercraft. Although game wardens detected alcohol on 23% of contacts made during summer boating season, many boats utilized a sober operator. Because of the potential for a deadly boating accident, BUI enforcement remains a high priority for Casper Region wardens.

Warden John Pokallus collects evidence in an illegal deer baiting investigation.

Busy hunter check station near Devil's Tower.

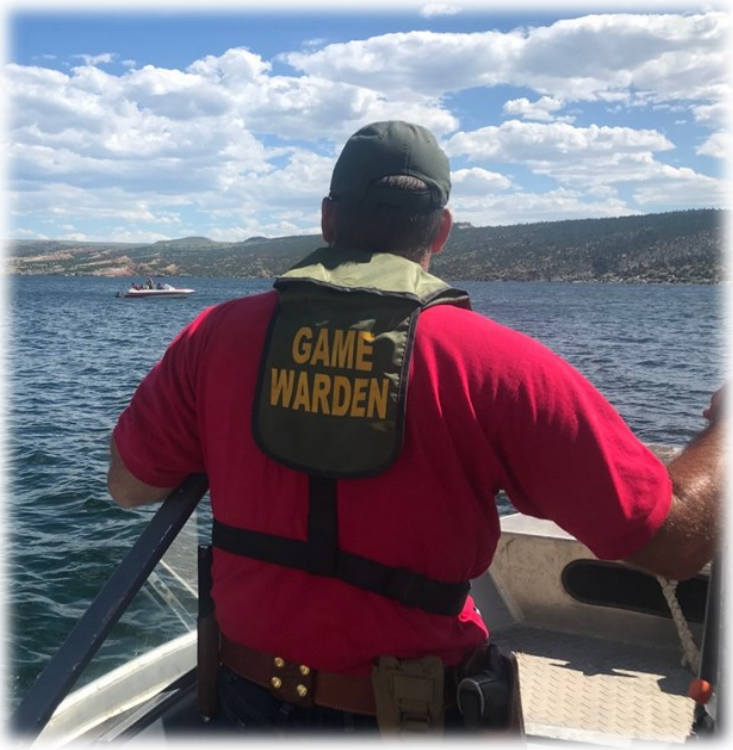
During the 2019 boating season, game wardens responded to five reported watercraft accidents. Two of these resulted in fatalities, one being heart failure and the other a drowning. Game wardens assisted the Natrona County Sheriff's Office with four search and rescue operations. One of the search and rescues involved a person falling off a boat and being unable to get back in, while the other three were river rescues where people floating down the North Platte River were exceptionally late to their arrival location.

Game wardens provided informal on-site watercraft safety awareness during contacts with the public. Game wardens also participated in the cooperative children's life jacket awareness program offered between the Department and Sloanes General Store, which provided children 12 and under a free ice

cream cone every time they were "caught" wearing their life jacket. Additionally, the Respect Our River organization donated life jacket loaner stands to be placed at Alcova Reservoir and Pathfinder Reservoir. The Department, along with other agencies, donated numerous life jackets to each stand. These stands showed to be useful by the amount of life jackets seen borrowed each weekend.

Decoy Operations

Decoys were used three times during the fall, with three citations and three warnings issued. A white-tailed deer decoy was deployed two different times in Crook County. Game wardens placed a decoy because of the increased number of complaints from homeowners concerning hunting in closed areas and shooting from the road. Game wardens also conducted a decoy operation based on landowner reports of hunting at night, shooting from the county road and killing deer on private property without permission. Even though there were only two vehicles that drove past this decoy, the landowner appreciated the enforcement efforts.



Warden Jake Kettley patrols Alcova Reservoir.

Task Forces

Alcova July 4

The Alcova July 4 task force included seven Casper Region wardens and one additional warden from the Cody Region. These eight wardens worked Alcova and Pathfinder Reservoirs as well as the North Platte River over the July 3-7 timeframe. The task force recorded approximately 650 public contacts and 58 violations, including two arrests for BUI. Game wardens on the task force also assisted local and federal law enforcement officers on several occasions. This included backing up and assisting Natrona County sheriff deputies with a drug search as well as assisting two BLM rangers responding to a fight near Sloanes General Store. Game wardens also assisted the Wyoming Highway Patrol search for a suspect in a high-speed chase. Several wardens responded to a report of a possible drowning that occurred on the afternoon of July 4 that resulted in the death of a man whom had fallen off a personal watercraft.

Glendo July 4

The Casper Region also conducted a July 4 law enforcement task force at Glendo Reservoir. This task force documented numerous violations again this year. Five game wardens wrote a total of 38 citations and 16 warnings. Severe weather, which included large hail, strong winds and heavy rains, occurred each afternoon. The total number of BUI arrests on Glendo since the first task force operation in 1996 has decreased dramatically. The increased law enforcement presence during the July 4 holiday has resulted in fewer boats with alcohol on board and more boats having designated operators. Fishing without a license and boaters not stopping at the AIS check station were the most common violations.

Notable Cases

Lusk Juveniles Plead Guilty to Poaching Violations: Two Niobrara County juveniles recently pled guilty to 24 poaching violations resulting in over $96,000 in restitution and loss of hunting privileges for 20 years. In early 2018, Lusk Game Warden Brady Vandeberg received a tip from the public to be aware of some high school students that were poaching big game animals. Warden Vandeberg began investigating these individuals

based on tips from interviews throughout the community and he quickly found a large amount of illegal activity. Evidence showed that there were over 150 violations for each suspect, including illegal take of songbirds, raptors, small game, furbearers and big game, along with wasting of game meat. The two suspects took over limits, shot game out of season and without licenses. They also violated fair chase and safety laws like shooting from the road, trespassing, spotlighting, using illegal calibers and shooting road signs. This was a year round killing spree, with total disregard for wildlife and private property. One juvenile from Niobrara County pled guilty to 12 counts of Game and Fish violations, which was reduced from 56 original charges as part of a plea agreement. The charges ranged from wanton destruction of big game to knowingly taking an antlered big game animal without a license. Nine of these counts were under Wyoming Statute 23-3-102(d), which provides for some of the stiffest penalties of any Game and Fish violation and is reserved for only the most serious offenses. The second juvenile also pled guilty to 12 counts after the plea agreement reduced the initial 56 charges. These violations were similar in nature and included five counts of violating W.S. 23-3-102(d). In addition to the restitution, each suspect will be spending 90 days in jail over the next year at the Niobrara County Detention Center; they shall not have firearms, archery equipment, ammunition or black powder rifles for a period of 20 years. They will be on probation for 10 years, which includes not possessing drugs or alcohol or associating with individuals who use drugs or alcohol. They were also fined $60,000, which was suspended. Their hunting, fishing and trapping privileges and the ability to purchase preference points were revoked for 20 years.

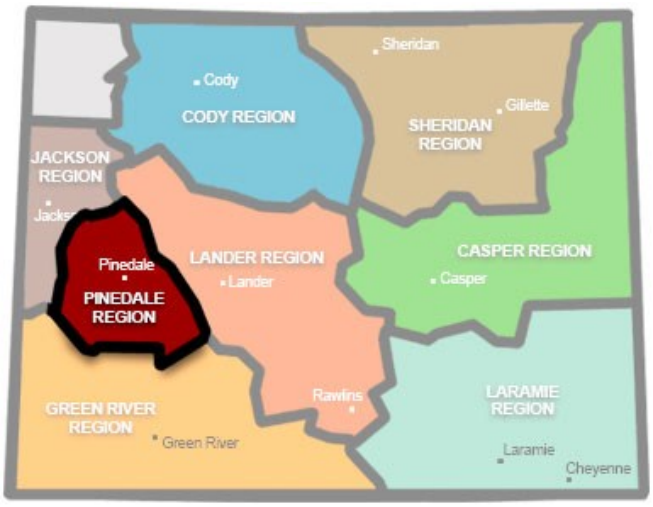
Regional Wildlife Supervisor Brian Olsen patrols state land south of Casper.

Warden Austin Swingholm patrols Pathfinder Reservoir.

Game Warden Discovers Angler in Possession of Cocaine: While making public fishing contacts along the North Platte River, Casper Game Warden Adam Parks observed a pickup truck parked along the river's edge and a man actively fishing. As Warden Parks approached the pickup, he identified two individuals with fishing poles and neither had a fishing license. When asked if either had prior contact with a game warden for this particular violation, one of them stated he had been ticketed for fishing without a license the previous month. During the contact, one of the individuals was not acting normally. He was giving short responses to questions and making frequent eye contact with the other angler. It was determined that one of the individuals had a knife in his pocket and a small jewelry pouch was hanging from his jacket pocket. The angler stated he kept his fishing weights in the pouch and Warden Parks asked if he could see it. When the angler handed over the jewelry pouch,

Warden Parks found a white substance inside. Warden Parks informed the angler that he was going to be contacting the Casper Police Department so that an officer could investigate the jewelry pouch. The angler then admitted the substance was cocaine. Both individuals were cited for fishing without a license and the angler with cocaine in his possession was arrested, searched by the police officer and taken to the Natrona County Detention Center.

Pinedale Region



Work Unit Overview

The Pinedale Region has four law enforcement officers, including three district game wardens and a regional wildlife supervisor. The region is in western Wyoming and covers Sublette County from the west slope of the Wind River Range to the east slope of the Wyoming Range. The Pinedale Region includes the North Pinedale, South Pinedale and Big Piney warden districts. The regional wildlife supervisor and the Green River access coordinator also assist with enforcement efforts in the region. On large-scale investigations, the Green River wildlife investigator is utilized when needed.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

Pinedale Region law enforcement officers documented 146 violations in 2019. Officers issued 63 citations, 71 warnings and investigated 12 cases in which a suspect was never developed. The region is home to a very diverse wildlife and aquatic resource with high desert habitat as well as three major mountain ranges and several cold water lakes, streams and river systems. Law enforcement efforts vary depending on the season. Typical enforcement duties include desert and front country small and big game enforcement, watercraft, fishing and backcountry patrols.

Warden Jordan Kraft takes a break during a winter patrol in the Wind River Mountains.

Late fall and winter enforcement efforts included mule deer winter range patrols, monitoring trapping activity, and patrolling the antler hunting season closure and WHMA closures. Antler hunting complaints continue to increase as more people become interested in the activity. Wardens receive many reports of illegal antler hunting activity every year, however many of the reports are vague and only report suspicious activity. Apprehending violators can be difficult and wardens continue to explore new ways to effectively and efficiently detect and apprehend violators. A team approach involving the region's entire enforcement staff as well as the assistance of other local agencies has proven effective and as a result compliance increased significantly in 2019.

In addition to antler hunting enforcement, wardens focused attention to black bear bait compliance checks in the spring. Summer efforts were focused on fishing and watercraft enforcement on lakes and rivers, including backcountry fishing enforcement. Several typical fishing violations were detected, both

Buck mule deer on winter range near Big Piney.

on Pinedale area lakes and rivers, as well as in remote backcountry areas. Angler use continues to increase on the Green and New Fork rivers, resulting in the need for increased law enforcement efforts. The use of drift boats and kayaks to patrol local rivers has resulted in increased effectiveness and efficiency in fishing enforcement. While the region has several large lakes, recreational watercraft activity is minimal compared to other areas in Wyoming. Cold water temperatures discourage water skiing and personal watercraft activity, so documented watercraft violations remain low compared to other regions. Enforcement of AIS regulations remains a priority in the region and five violations were detected in 2019.

Reduced deer numbers from the 2016-2017 and 2019-2020 winters combined with mild conditions throughout the fall made hunting difficult. The mild fall conditions also delayed deer and elk movements toward winter ranges, reducing late season vulnerability to harvest, which resulted in a below average number of violations detected. Again in 2019, several cases resulted from hunters turning themselves in after accidently harvesting the wrong sex or over-limits of big game animals. This trend in self-reporting is encouraging. Compliance with Elk Special Management Permits improved significantly in 2019, with only six violations detected.

Task Forces

An annual mule deer winter range enforcement task force has been ongoing in the region for 20 years and continued in 2019. The number of documented violations and suspects apprehended tends to fluctuate from year to year. Few violations have been documented over the last several years, indicating its success in deterring many potential violators. The task force involves personnel from around the state, who each spend four to five days in the region throughout November and into mid-December. This task force remains very important to the public and continues to have significant public support. No violations were documented during the task force in 2019. This is encouraging and should be attributed to years of consistent enforcement coverage and engagement with the public. Due to its success, as well as public concern for mule deer in western Wyoming, this task force will continue well into the future.

Wardens from the Pinedale and Jackson regions participated in a multi-day backcountry fishing task force in the Wind River Mountains in 2019. Over 150 anglers were contacted and four citations were issued for fishing without a license. The Wind River

Winter range patrol near Pinedale.

Mountains are a popular destination for hikers and anglers from around the nation, with thousands of visitors each year. Hundreds of remote lakes and streams receive significant fishing activity, and due to their remote location, adequate enforcement attention is difficult. Wardens patrolled the backcountry for several days both on foot and horseback, contacting fishermen at remote lakes. Overall, compliance was encouraging and this task force was an excellent opportunity to interact with anglers from around the country who were enjoying a spectacular part of Wyoming.

Notable Cases

Utah Man Guilty of Illegally Obtaining Licenses: An anonymous report led to the investigation of a Utah man who had been purchasing resident Wyoming hunting and fishing licenses illegally for several years. The investigation revealed the suspect purchased several resident licenses between 2013 and 2018 using a Bondurant address. At this address was a camper, which the man claimed as his residence, although there were no signs of recent occupancy. Further investigation, with the cooperation of the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources, revealed the man had been living in Utah and had purchased multiple resident Utah licenses between 2002 and 2018. The man was cited for four of the most recent false statement violations. He was found guilty and paid $5,055 in fines and $1,500 in restitution. His hunting privileges were suspended for four years.

Suspect Tries to Cover Up Elk Over-limit: On October 23, North Pinedale Game Warden Bubba Haley received a report of a possible over-limit of elk in South Gypsum Creek in elk hunt area 95. That morning, a hunter heard four gunshots north of South Gypsum Creek and began glassing the area, where he observed another hunter quartering a 6x6 bull elk. The witness observed the carcass of a second, smaller bull elk, just downhill from the 6x6. He continued to watch the other hunter through his spotting scope and saw that he never approached the second elk and no other hunters were in the area. The witness believed the other hunter had killed both elk, so he described the location to Warden Haley and continued watching the hunter. As Warden Haley traveled to the scene, the witness observed the suspect drag the smaller bull down under a log out of sight. Warden Haley arrived as the suspect was packing the larger bull to his vehicle. When questioned about the second bull, the suspect admitted he had accidently killed two elk and hidden the second one. He agreed to immediately return to the second bull and field dress it so it didn't spoil. The suspect was issued a citation for taking an over-limit of elk. He paid a $435 fine and forfeited the head of the 6x6 bull.

Wardens Bubba Haley and Jordan Kraft on "plain clothes" patrol in the Wind River Mountains.

Work Unit Overview

The WIU is comprised of five wildlife investigators stationed at the Casper, Green River, Lander, Laramie and Sheridan regional offices. One supervisor/investigator is stationed at the Cody regional office.

The WIU is responsible for investigating large scale, complex, lengthy, overt and covert cases. The WIU places its highest priority on cases with commercial involvement (illegal outfitting or sale of wildlife), multiple suspects, multiple violations and wildlife violations taking place across several jurisdictions. Investigators also assist game wardens with larger enforcement cases, task forces and other special projects. The WIU maintains several intelligence databases. WIU members operate with unmarked vehicles and typically out of uniform. The WIU is equipped with digital media forensics, modern evidence collection, surveillance, tracking, covert vehicles and other equipment items. The WIU also works closely with other states' wildlife investigators and with several federal agencies, including the USFWS.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

The WIU initiated at least 17 major investigations in 2019 and assisted game wardens throughout Wyoming and officers from other jurisdictions across the country with over 100 other cases.

The WIU continues to explore new technologies related to tracking suspect activity, covert equipment and forensics. The WIU analyzes all cell phones, computers and other electronic devices seized from wildlife violators in Wyoming. The WIU has acquired an additional cell phone forensics system to expand and improve its forensics capabilities. Approximately 46 cell phones, seven GPS units, 44 SD cards, 13 computers, and six cameras seized by game wardens and investigators as evidence, were forensically examined by WIU personnel. The WIU also coordinated the downloading of additional cell phones for other Wyoming law enforcement agencies in several cooperatively worked cases. The WIU wrote and executed cell phone, Google geofence and social media preservation letters and search warrants.

Notable Cases

Back to Taxidermy: Laramie Game Wardens received a report of a taxidermy business operating in Laramie without the proper license. This individual had previously been licensed in 2016 and 2017, but did not renew in 2018 or 2019. Officers developed information that the individual was operating as a taxidermist without a license and probable cause was documented for search warrants. During the search of the residence, outbuildings and vehicles, 20 big game heads, five capes, a computer, numerous receipt books and a cell phone were seized. In reviewing the records, phone and computer obtained at the business, officers determined the individual had taken in over 75 heads between 2018 and 2019, along with payments in excess of $15,000. Officers contacted the clients who still had big game heads at the taxidermist and found the taxidermist had taken in over $4,000 in deposits from the clients. The taxidermist also had 13 untagged big game heads at the residence without any licenses or other documentation. Working with the Albany County Prosecutors Office, officers cited the individual for eight counts of operating a taxidermy business without a license and two counts of illegal possession of untagged game heads. The individual pled guilty in Albany County Circuit Court and was fined $4,550 and assigned $4,450 in restitution to be paid out to the clients who gave deposits to the taxidermist for unfinished taxidermy work. The individual was also suspended from

Evidence seized during investigation of illegal taxidermist.

hunting, fishing and trapping for three years. Officers utilized the Department's Forensic Laboratory to match DNA samples from the unlabeled capes to the big game heads so they could be returned to the proper clients.

License Fraud Investigations

The Lander investigator closed two notable false oath cases in 2019. One violator received five citations (for violations in the past five years) and multiple warnings (for violations older than five years) for making false statements to obtain resident licenses. The violator had at one time been a resident of Jackson, but moved back to his hometown in Nebraska and only returned to the Jackson area to work part of the year as a whitewater river boat guide and to elk hunt. He lived in temporary housing conditions while in Wyoming (and in nearby Idaho), claiming residency in the Jackson area. It is suspected that this violator may have committed up to 90 violations of Wyoming's residency statutes while he was a Nebraska resident. The violator was found guilty and paid $5,215 in fines, lost his privileges to hunt and trap for five years and forfeited three elk heads.

In another false oath case, the violator had at one time been a resident of Rawlins but moved to Colorado and returned to the Rawlins area to hunt and visit family each year. The violator answered charges in five different counties and made a court appearance in Carbon County. The violator pled guilty to the 10 citations he was issued. He was fined $5,355 and had his privileges to hunt and trap suspended for five years. In total, the suspect could have been cited for 24 Wyoming resident licenses he illegally purchased from 2001-2017 while he was a resident of Colorado.

Surveillance of suspects in the field is a major component of a wildlife investigator's job.

Work Unit Overview

The Large Carnivore Section (LCS) is responsible for the management and conflict resolution of mountain lions, black bears, grizzly bears and wolves in Wyoming. The high profile nature and inherent controversy associated with large carnivores requires a working knowledge of the species and their interactions with humans and other wildlife. The LCS consists of one law enforcement officer, stationed in Lander, serving as the LCS Conflict Coordinator, and several non-law enforcement personnel, stationed in Lander, Pinedale, Cody, and Jackson. The LCS Conflict Coordinator is also responsible for reviewing all trophy game damage claims in those respective regions. The LCS Conflict Coordinator focuses on conflicts between humans and carnivores and law enforcement situations with these animals. In addition, the LCS Conflict Coordinator serves as the lead of the Department's Predator Attack Team (PAT) and coordinates with regional law enforcement and LCS personnel on all human attacks by carnivores. The LCS Conflict Coordinator mostly provides an advisory/investigative role in statewide law enforcement activities.

2019 Law Enforcement Efforts

With continually changing management authority for wolves and grizzly bears, LCS personnel and regional law enforcement personnel were active in investigating more than 12 reports of aggressive grizzly bear encounters that resulted in several bear mortalities. The LCS Conflict Coordinator, Brian DeBolt, served as the lead assistance person to USFWS agents and game wardens in multiple ongoing grizzly bear enforcement cases. In addition grizzly bear investigations, LCS personnel assisted with several wolf, mountain lion, and black bear investigations. The LCS also provided localized assistance to game wardens with other non-carnivore related cases involving watercraft, fishing, and others. Although most cases are referred to local wardens, Warden DeBolt cited several individuals for misdemeanor wildlife violations as encountered.

LCS Conflict Coordinator Brian DeBolt investigates the case of a grizzly bear killed in self defense.

LCS Conflict Coordinator Brian DeBolt gives a public presentation about grizzly bears.

The PAT did not have to respond to any animal caused human injuries or deaths this year in Wyoming. These conflicts, when they occur, require an immediate response by trained, equipped law enforcement personnel. The Department will continue to prioritize reducing conflicts between grizzly bears and humans and maintain an immediate and efficient response in all wildlife/ human attack situations. Of note in the past year was a training course facilitated through the LCS for conductive electrical weapons (CEWs, also referred to as "Tasers") for use in multiple wildlife management situations throughout the state. Use of CEWs is strictly limited to wildlife, but provides another tool to increase safety to wildlife, Department personnel and the general public. In addition, Warden DeBolt obtained certification to train personnel for Departmental certification of CEW use.

WATERCRAFT SAFETY PROGRAM

Although much of Wyoming is high desert, mountains or plains with limited water resources, there are a wide variety of opportunities for recreational boating on major reservoirs, smaller lakes, ponds, rivers and streams. Popular boating activities include fishing, towed water sports (tubing and water-skiing), white-water rafting and paddling non-motorized watercraft. The Department is the state agency primarily responsible for promoting and enforcing watercraft safety laws. Recognizing that their education and enforcement efforts may save someone's life, game wardens spend significant time patrolling Wyoming's waters to ensure the safety of boaters and other water recreationists.

Wardens Aaron Kerr and Jordan Winter team up with deputies from the Natrona County Sheriff's Office to patrol Alcova Reservoir on July 4.

Game wardens worked approximately 4,800 hours on watercraft safety enforcement and educational efforts. Six regional game wardens (two in the Casper Region, one in the Green River Region, two in the Laramie Region and one in the Sheridan Region) were assigned full time to watercraft safety duties from Memorial Day through Labor Day. This number is down from the normal 11 positions due to several unfilled vacancies from retirements and promotions in Department law enforcement ranks this year. Most district game wardens also worked watercraft safety enforcement along with their other duties. Wardens contacted thousands of Wyoming boaters during the spring and summer months, emphasizing the importance of carrying the proper safety equipment on board and operating watercraft in a safe and sober manner. In addition to waterway patrols and safety checks, wardens in communities throughout Wyoming provided boating safety education at the Wyoming Outdoor Expo in Casper, numerous local safety events and school presentations.

To accomplish the Department's boating safety mission, game wardens work in partnership with county sheriff's offices, municipal police departments, local fire departments and volunteer search and rescue organizations. The Department also partners with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and other boating safety organizations throughout the country to work toward consistent regulations and education messaging among the states. According to USCG statistics, on average, drowning accounts for nearly 70% of all boating related fatalities nationwide in a given year. In approximately 85% of these cases, the victims were not wearing life jackets. Many of these deaths could have been prevented with life jacket wear. For this reason, game wardens emphasize the importance of carrying and wearing properly fitting life jackets aboard watercraft when contacting the boating public. The Department participates in the National Safe Boating Council's "Wear It!" Campaign, designed to educate boaters on proper life jacket wear. Throughout the 2019 boating season, the "Wear It Wyoming!" logo was displayed on game warden trucks and patrol boats.

A local volunteer organization in Casper, "Respect Our River," maintained several life jacket loaner stations along the North Platte River and installed additional loaner stations at Alcova and Pathfinder reservoirs. Wardens observed many people taking advantage of this program, especially in the area of the Casper Whitewater Park on the North Platte River, which has been the scene of several drowning fatalities in the past few years.

Watercraft accidents that occur in the state are investigated by game wardens. To develop the skills

Boaters enjoy Sandy Beach on Alcova Reservoir.

necessary for these investigations, the Department sends game wardens to advanced training in watercraft accident investigation techniques. In 2019, three wardens attended a comprehensive training course in Salt Lake City, Utah. This training aids wardens in conducting thorough, professional investigations to determine the causes of watercraft accidents ranging from those involving minor property damage to incidents involving serious injuries or death. In 2019, game wardens investigated 11 reportable watercraft accidents involving 11 watercraft and 42 individuals. Sadly, three of these incidents resulted in fatalities. One man died of heart failure on July 4 after he fell off a personal watercraft and was rescued by other boaters. One man drowned on the Snake River near Jackson after the drift boat he was in capsized. He was not wearing a life jacket. In early September, an intoxicated man fell overboard from a fishing boat in Fremont Canyon on Alcova Reservoir. He also was not wearing a life jacket. In addition to these incidents, eight additional people were injured in watercraft accidents and required treatment beyond first aid, ranging from water skiing injuries to hypothermia.

Alcohol and drug use has been a contributing factor in many of the most serious watercraft accidents in Wyoming over the past several years. Game wardens keep a watchful eye for boat operators under the influence of alcohol or drugs, with the goal of intervening before an accident occurs. During 2019, six boat operators were arrested for BUI. Most of these individuals were under the influence of alcohol, while one had also been using marijuana. With recreational and medicinal marijuana now legal in several western states, marijuana related BUI cases are likely to increase. The Department again participated in Operation Dry Water, a nationwide effort to educate the public about the dangers of BUI and encourage boaters to designate a sober operator.

The Department continues to improve the training of game wardens related to boating safety, including specialized boating law enforcement and water survival techniques. The initial training that all new game wardens receive includes general boat operations, review of Wyoming boating laws and regulations, boat-to-boat arrest tactics, BUI detection and enforcement, an officer survival pool session and training on the effects of cold water immersion. Wardens also routinely participate in scenario-based training to evaluate their skills and decision-making abilities in a variety of situations they may encounter on the water.

The Department remains involved in national and regional associations dedicated to safe boating. Law Enforcement Coordinator Aaron Kerr chairs the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators Enforcement and Training Committee. This committee is dedicated to developing and providing training resources to marine law enforcement officers nationwide. Kerr also serves as an executive board member for the Western States Boating Administrators Association, which is dedicated to collaboration among western states in the interests of recreational boating safety enforcement and education.

STATE LAND ENFORCEMENT

In addition to wildlife and watercraft law enforcement, the Department assists the Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments by enforcing certain statutes applying to Wyoming State Trust Land (state land). Department game wardens have the authority to enforce prohibitions of off road travel, overnight camping, open fires and littering on state land. Most state land enforcement was incidental to hunting and fishing patrol duties. On many state land parcels throughout Wyoming, off road travel is an ongoing issue and has caused considerable resource damage to some areas. Much of this off road use occurs in the early spring or fall when soils are wet or when roads are blocked by snow and people attempt to drive around the drifts. Littering is also a problem, whether it is the dumping of large appliances/household trash or litter left behind from recreational shooters in the form of spent cartridge casings and the remains of items used as targets. Many of the state land violations discovered by game wardens were handled with verbal or written warnings to educate the violators, although several more serious violations causing resource damage were addressed with citations.

STATEWIDE SUMMARY OF STATE LAND ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Violation	Written Warnings	Citations	Total
Off Road Travel	11	22	34
Camping	23	4	27
Open Fires	1	4	5
Littering on State Land	4	5	9
TOTAL 2019	**39**	**35**	**74**
TOTAL 2018	31	47	78
TOTAL 2017	31	38	69

Wardens in the Laramie Region investigated this “tiny house” illegally placed on state land.

REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

The Department utilizes an electronic case management system (CMS) to document wildlife violations and create individual law enforcement case reports. The CMS allows for the compilation of wildlife violation data and associated law enforcement action. Personnel work hours are tracked through a Daily Activity Report database. Both of these Department databases were utilized to compile the statistics included in this report.

Some law enforcement positions were vacant for part of the year due to retirements and personnel moves. The number of law enforcement positions listed for each region or work unit represents the total number of positions that documented law enforcement activity while assigned to a region or work unit.

Jackson Region – 5 Enforcement Personnel

(3 District Game Wardens, 1 Regional Game Warden*, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	2,900	4	37,138
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	223	59	2,211
TOTAL	3,123	63	39,349

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	54	44	6	104
SPORT FISH	28	23	0	51
NON-WILDLIFE	20	6	0	26
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	8	1	0	9
TOTAL	110	74	6	190

*Alpine game warden was present January-June 2019.

Cody Region – 12 Enforcement Personnel

(9 District Game Wardens, 1 Regional Access Coordinator, 1 Game Warden Supervisor, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	7,643	2	111,346
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	204	44	2,693
TOTAL	7,847	46	114,039

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	143	115	7	265
SPORT FISH	34	35	0	69
NON-WILDLIFE	16	9	0	25
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	7	3	0	10
TOTAL	200	162	7	369

Sheridan Region – 10 Enforcement Personnel

(7 District Game Wardens, 1 Regional Game Warden, 1 Regional Access Coordinator, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	5,296	17	76,736
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	776	193	8,479
TOTAL	6,072	210	85,215

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	155	140	74	369
SPORT FISH	11	23	1	35
NON-WILDLIFE	18	16	0	34
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	2	1	0	3
TOTAL	186	180	75	441

Green River – 11 Enforcement Personnel

(7 District Game Wardens, 1 Regional Game Warden*,1 Regional Access Coordinator, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	5,058	28	78.419
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	330	80	3,887
TOTAL	5,388	108	82,306

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	106	54	15	175
SPORT FISH	18	26	0	44
NON-WILDLIFE	13	2	0	15
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	27	33	0	60
TOTAL	164	115	15	294

*One regional game warden transferred from Green River to Elk Mountain in August.

Wardens attend training on trapping law enforcement techniques.

REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

Laramie Region – 13 Enforcement Personnel

(8 District Game Wardens, 2 Regional Game Wardens, 1 Regional Access Coordinator, 1 Game Warden Supervisor, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	6,606	7	97,203
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	1,193	339	10,814
TOTAL	7,799	346	108,017

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	214	181	36	431
SPORT FISH	43	70	1	114
NON-WILDLIFE	57	40	0	97
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	65	5	0	70
TOTAL	379	296	37	712

Lander Region – 8 Enforcement Personnel

(6 District Game Wardens, 1 Large Carnivore Conflict Coordinator, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	3,755	0	77,381
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	602	135	7,751
TOTAL	4,357	135	85,132

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	69	48	44	161
SPORT FISH	39	32	0	71
NON-WILDLIFE	31	24	1	56
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	14	0	0	14
TOTAL	153	104	45	302

REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

Casper Region – 11 Enforcement Personnel

(7 District Game Wardens, 2 Regional Game Wardens, 1 RegionalAccess Coordinator, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	5,539	37	84,410
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	952	340	10,306
TOTAL	6,491	377	94,716

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	252	207	55	514
SPORT FISH	42	78	4	124
NON-WILDLIFE	51	57	0	108
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	48	5	0	53
TOTAL	393	347	59	799

Pinedale Region – 4 Enforcement Personnel

(3 District Game Wardens, 1 Regional Wildlife Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	1,957	0	24,831
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	148	31	1,451
TOTAL	2,105	31	26, 282

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	53	38	11	102
SPORT FISH	6	20	1	27
NON-WILDLIFE	10	2	0	12
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	2	3	0	5
TOTAL	71	63	12	146

Warden Jake Brown does some trail maintenance during a trip to check for illegal bear bait sites.

WIU AND ADMINISTRATION LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

Wildlife Investigative Unit - 6 Investigators

(5 Wildlife Investigators, 1 Wildlife Investigative Unit Supervisor)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	7,306	60,882

PROGRAM ENFORCMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	0	9	9
SPORT FISH	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	9	9

Note: Many of the investigations undertaken by the WIU in 2019 are ongoing or in the process of having charges filed through the appropriate prosecuting attorney's office.

Law Enforcement Administration – 4 Enforcement Personnel

(1 Chief Game Warden, 1 Deputy Chief Game Warden, 1 Law Enforcement Supervisor, 1 Law Enforcement Coordinator)

ACTIVITY	HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT	1,179	11,483
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT	375	1,909
TOTAL		

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT	WARNINGS	CITATIONS	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE	31	14	45
SPORT FISH	3	1	4
NON-WILDLIFE	2	0	2
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES	10	0	10
TOTAL	46	15	61

Wildlife Supervisor Craig Smith on backcountry patrol in the Bighorn Mountains.

STATEWIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

84 Law Enforcement Personnel

ACTIVITY		HOURS	WATERCRAFT HOURS	MILES
WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT		47,239	95	659,829
WATERCRAFT ENFORCEMENT		4,803	1,251	49,501
TOTALS	**2019**	52,042	1,346	709,330
	2018	55,294	1,525	735.782
	2017	53,742	1,635	638,220

PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT		WARNINGS	CITATIONS	UNKNOWN SUSPECT	LAW ENF. ACTIONS
TERRESTRIAL WILDLIFE		1,075	850	248	2,173
SPORT FISH		224	308	7	539
NON-WILDLIFE		218	156	1	375
AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES		183	51	0	234
TOTALS	**2019**	1,700	1,365	256	3,321
	2018	2,213	1,787	228	4,228
	2017	2,337	1,798	268	4,403

Warden Grant Gerharter with two successful elk hunters.

Three Year Comparison of Violations

The number of violations detected on an annual basis depends on a variety of factors, including overall public use, shifting patrol efforts, law enforcement position vacancies and the amount of time spent by game wardens on non-law enforcement duties. Chart 1 compares the number of documented wildlife violations from 2017-2019 and Chart 2 illustrates violations by year for each category: terrestrial wildlife, fishing, non-wildlife and AIS. Documented violations have declined during this time period, particularly in the terrestrial wildlife category. In 2019, the number of non-wildlife (mostly watercraft) violations was considerably lower than in past years. This is due to several of the regional game wardens, who are primarily assigned to watercraft enforcement during the boating season, being promoted to vacant senior game warden positions where their primary responsibilities shifted. The Department is in the process of hiring more regional game wardens to fill vacant positions opened when several officers retired or took jobs in other states. Once back to full staff, the number of detected violations is expected to increase.

Chart 1. Violations by Year, 2017-2019

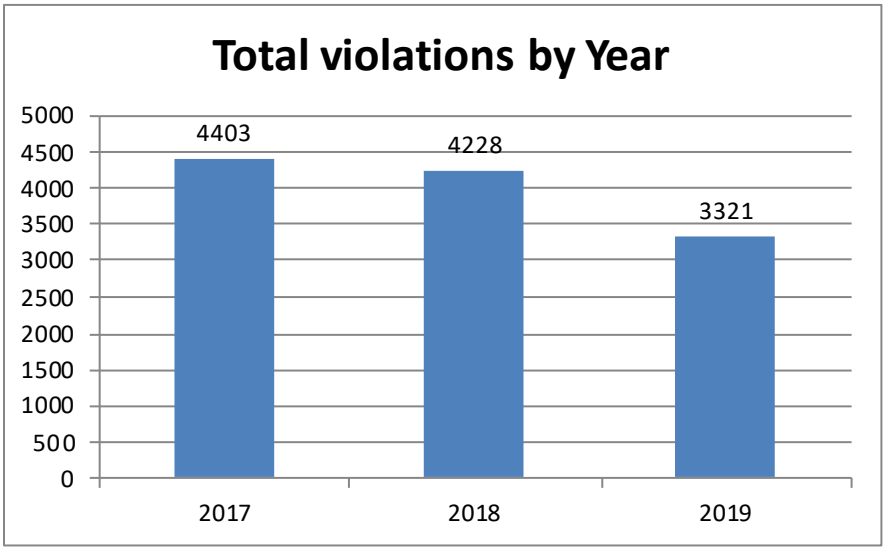
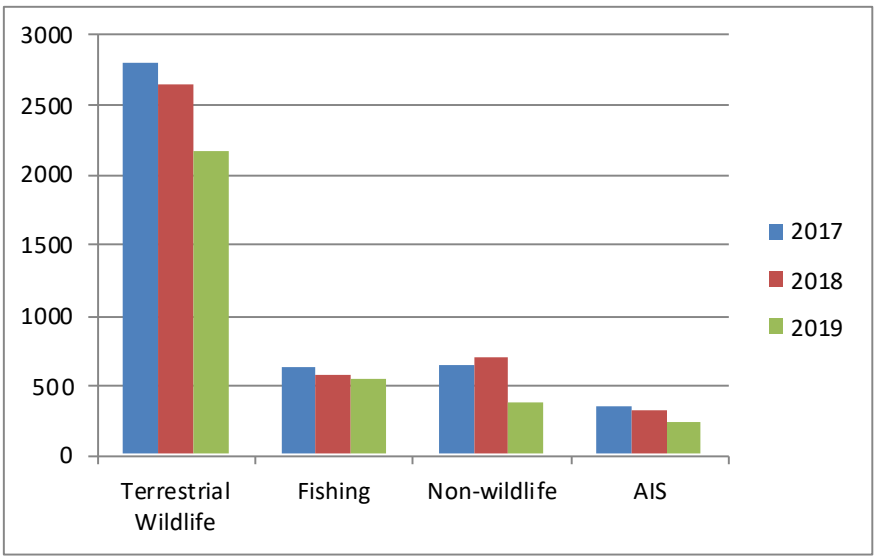


Chart 2. Violations by Category, 2017-2019



Breakdown of Law Enforcement Actions

In a typical year, Department law enforcement officers issue more warnings than citations, often taking the opportunity to educate people who may have inadvertently committed violations. A warning documents that a violation occurred but doesn't result in fines or loss of hunting privileges. Chart 3 illustrates the number of warnings, citations and unknown suspect violations (violation documented, but suspect yet to be identified so no citation or warning issued) by year for 2017-2019. Chart 4 shows the percentage of law enforcement actions by year for 2017-2019. These percentages remain relatively constant from year to year, with just over 50% of violations documented in the form of a written warning to the violator.

Chart 3. Law Enforcement Actions by Year, 2017-2019

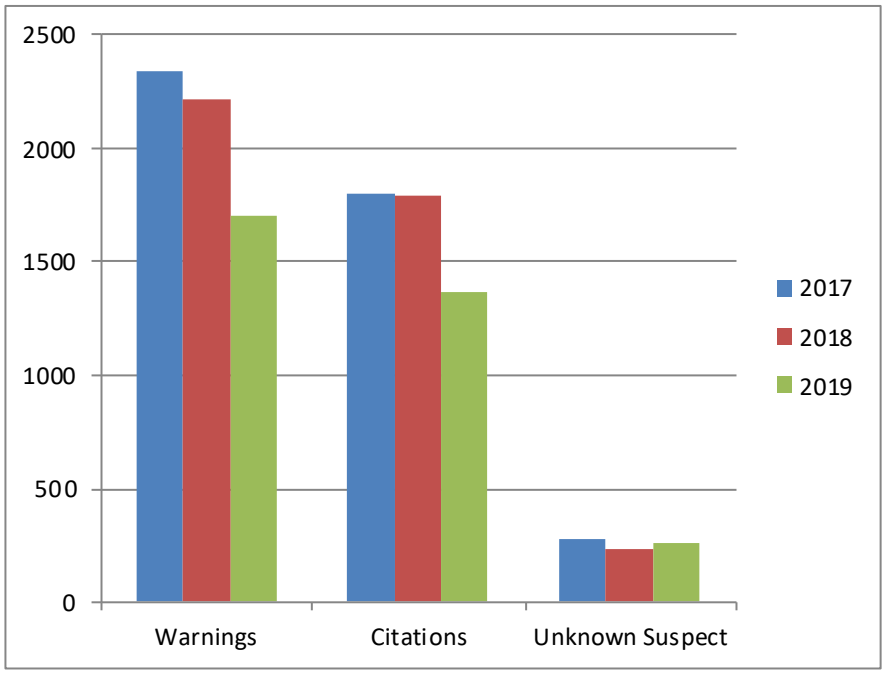
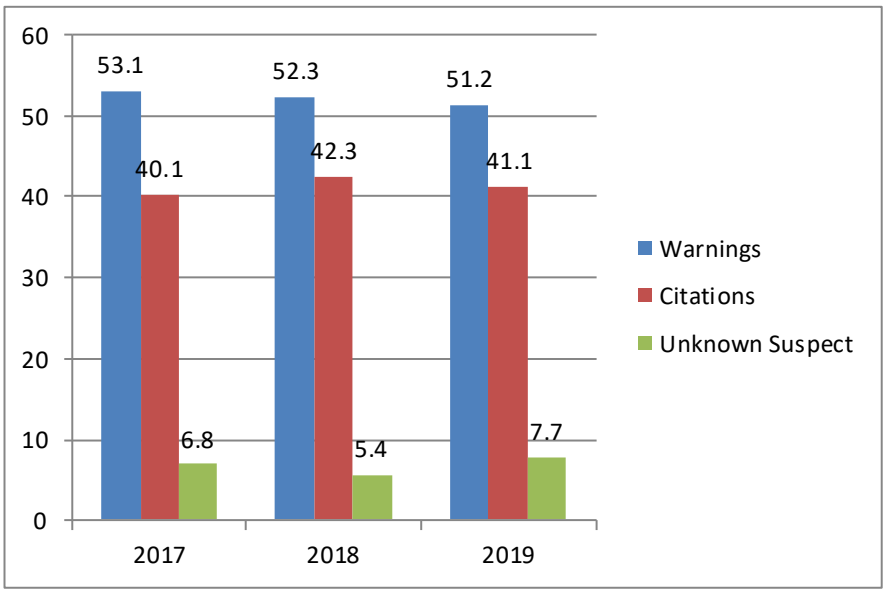


Chart 4. Percentage of Law Enforcement Actions by Year, 2017-2019



TOP TEN VIOLATIONS

In 2019, the top ten violations documented by Department law enforcement officers accounted for approximately 42% of all violations encountered. With few exceptions, the most common violations have not changed over the past several years and much of the Department's enforcement effort is geared toward these violations.

Fishing without a license is consistently the most common violation in the state and was again this year. This is due to recreational anglers being the largest user group that game wardens contact in the field during the year. Many of these violations are committed by individuals who simply forgot to purchase a license, while others fish without licenses intentionally and take their chances on getting caught. Even with the ease of obtaining fishing licenses online with a smart phone, the violation rate of fishing without a license was approximately 9% of all violations detected.

Responding to hunting, fishing and trapping trespassing complaints has long been a major part of the job for many game wardens, especially those with districts in the eastern half of Wyoming, which is predominantly private land. 2019 was the second year where the collection of shed antlers on private land without permission was also a specific violation of the state's trespassing statute, and several illegal antler hunters were cited for trespassing. Several of the trespassing violations wardens respond to are unintentional by a suspect, but in many instances the violators knew they were trespassing.

Department administered lands include properties owned by the Wyoming Game & Fish Commission (Commission) and private lands enrolled in the Access Yes Program. Various regulations apply to these properties and are enforced by Department law enforcement officers. Several of the Commission owned lands are closed to human presence during the winter months to protect wintering wildlife. Over the past few years, several individuals have been cited for entering these properties during closures, mostly to gather shed antlers. Other common violations on Department-administered lands include off road travel, open fires in restricted areas, lighting fireworks, failing to obey regulatory signs and violations of "ranch rules" on Access Yes areas.

The most common boating safety violations are inadequate life jackets or throwable flotation devices aboard watercraft. Game wardens patrolling the water emphasize the enforcement of these regulations due to the life-saving potential of proper life jacket wear. Many of these violations occur early in the boating season. Often, boaters clean out their boats and put life jackets and other safety equipment in storage over the winter. This equipment doesn't always make it back into the boat before the first outing of the year.

TOP TEN VIOLATIONS DOCUMENTED IN 2019	
1. Fishing without a license	300
2. Hunt, fish, trap, collect shed antlers on private land without permission (trespassing)	216
3. Violation of rules governing use of Department-administered lands	125
4. Fail to provide life jackets aboard watercraft	123
5. Take wrong sex of animal	119
6. Fail to tag big or trophy game animal	118
7. Fail to stop at AIS check station	101
8. Hunt big game, trophy game or wild bison in the wrong area	100
9. Waste or abandon big game	100
10. Fail to purchase AIS decal	91

Warden Troy Tobiasson bags evidence during a search warrant.

Taking the wrong sex of animal is another violation commonly encountered by game wardens. Most of these cases involve yearling male big game animals unintentionally shot by hunters with licenses valid only for females or antlerless animals. Some wrong sex violations occur when individuals shoot before properly identifying their target. Often, hunters who have committed a wrong sex violation turn themselves in via the Stop Poaching Hotline, which is taken into account by law enforcement officers in the field and prosecutors and judges during the court process.

Failing to tag big game animals, trophy game animals and wild turkeys continues to be a common violation. Licenses for these species contain carcass coupons, commonly referred to as tags. When one of these animals is harvested, the hunter is required to properly fill out the tag prior to leaving the site of the kill. Proper tagging entails detaching the carcass coupon from the license, signing the coupon and cutting out the month and day of harvest to show when the animal was killed. Game wardens often encounter hunters in transit from the kill site who have failed to take one or more of the steps to properly tag their animals. In these situations, it is difficult to know whether the tagging violation was simply an oversight or if the person was trying to get their animal home without tagging it so they could go hunting again using the same license. The Department has added diagrams into our regulation brochures for these species to remind hunters of proper tagging procedures at the kill site.

Violations of the AIS regulations remained high in 2019. The Department increased enforcement efforts at AIS check stations this year and stopped over 100 boaters who failed to stop as required. Failing to purchase an AIS decal for a watercraft also remained prevalent. Many AIS violations are by non-motorized watercraft users, who are not required to register their watercraft. Motorized watercraft owners tend to be more familiar with the boating and AIS regulations because they receive a watercraft regulation brochure when they register their watercraft. The Department continues to expand awareness of the AIS program and the importance of preventing species like zebra mussels and invasive vegetation from becoming established in Wyoming waters.

Licenses for big game and wild bison, along with mortality limits for trophy game species, are allocated to address various wildlife management objectives, and based on their license limitations, hunters can hunt in one or more hunt areas, but generally not statewide. Many hunting in the wrong area violations are honest mistakes made by hunters unfamiliar with the boundaries of their hunt area. In other cases, game wardens encounter people intentionally hunting in areas they prefer to hunt in but were unable to draw licenses for. In some investigations, officers have discovered suspects with a pattern of applying for easy to draw licenses and hunting in other hunt areas with more difficult odds of drawing a license. These are serious violations that can result in wildlife management objectives not being met and lost hunting opportunity for legal hunters.

Most of the waste of big game violations are situations where hunters fail to retrieve all of the edible portions from their animal. “Edible portions” of meat is defined in regulation and it is the responsibility of hunters to care for and retrieve all of the edible portions from the field. The Department has added a diagram to our big game hunting regulation brochure to educate hunters on what meat must be retrieved from a harvested big game animal and taken out of the field.

WILDLIFE FORENSICS LAB

The forensics section of the Department's Wildlife Forensic and Fish Health Laboratory provides law enforcement forensic services (analytical and technical) to aid Wyoming wildlife law enforcement personnel, Wyoming biologists and wildlife managers in ten other states.

Forensics lab personnel employ a variety of techniques to test evidence items collected during investigations of wildlife crimes. Species determination, sex identification and DNA analyses are performed on blood, hair, saliva, tissue and bones. Analyses also include DNA matching of submitted samples and determining the minimum number of animals represented in submitted samples. A detailed report of each test is compiled and provided to the requesting officer. Lab personnel are often called upon to testify in court during trials of defendants charged with wildlife violations.

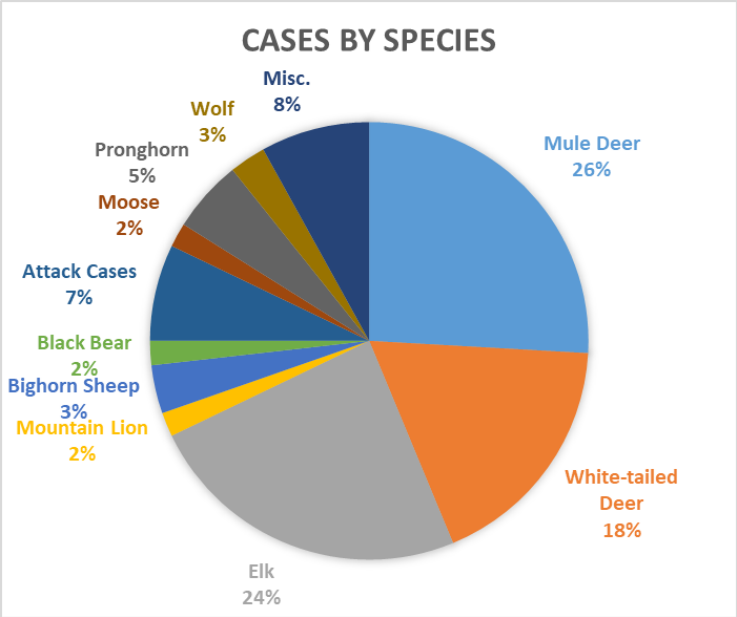
Forensic lab personnel are heavily involved in writing standards for the field of wildlife forensics. The federal government created a Forensic Science Supervisory Board with five Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) that are further broken into subcommittees, with wildlife forensics as one of the subcommittees. This subcommittee is tasked with writing standards for the wildlife forensic community that will be published by the American Academy of Forensic Science Standards Board (AAFS-ASB) and eventually placed on the National Institute of Standards and Technology registry. Kim Frazier, Department Laboratory Director, is the chair of the wildlife forensic subcommittee and Tasha Bauman, Department Forensic Program Manager, serves on the subcommittee and acts as the google suites liaison. These are all appointments made by the federal government. As of May 2019, the wildlife forensic subcommittee had six standards published through the AAFS-ASB.

OSAC Wildlife Forensic Subcommittee participants.

Kim Frazier, Tasha Bauman and Lauren Schumacher, Department Forensic Analyst, are all certified wildlife forensic scientists by the Society for Wildlife Forensic Sciences (SWFS) and all three participate in a yearly proficiency test administered by the USFWS Forensic Laboratory.

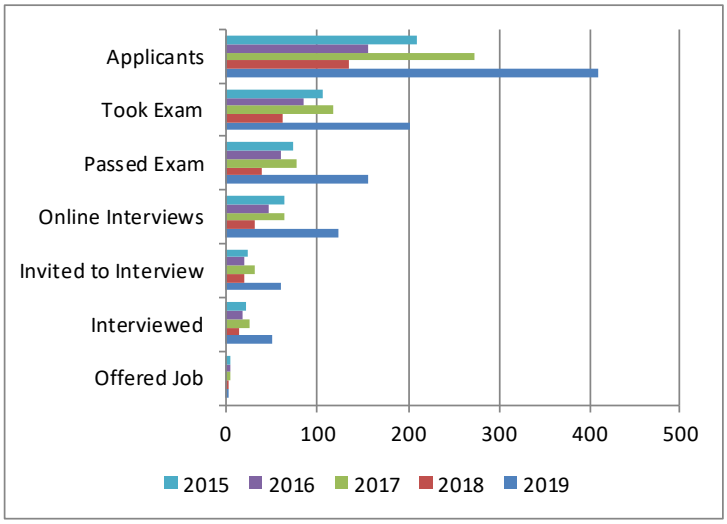
Forensic personnel are also involved with the SWFS, with Tasha Bauman serving as the President of the SWFS and Kim Frazier serving as the Director of Certification.

Over the last twelve months: the forensic laboratory averaged five lab tours a month; conducted four wildlife officer training workshops; three student presentations; and, received 82 cases from nine different states. The cases included approximately 1,000 samples covering 14 different species (see chart "Cases by Species").



GAME WARDEN APPLICANT TESTING

All game wardens are selected by competitive examination, per Wyoming statute. The first step to becoming a Wyoming game warden has traditionally been to earn a bachelor's degree in wildlife management, biology, zoology or a closely related field. In the most recent hiring process, applicants with other degrees, such as criminal justice, were considered, as long as they also had several years of wildlife experience. This change in the minimum qualifications allows the Department to consider applications from game wardens in other states who are looking to move to Wyoming. Many states do not require their game wardens to have a wildlife management degree as a prerequisite for hiring, and Wyoming could benefit from recruiting and hiring experienced game wardens from other states. Applicants must pass an online written exam consisting of general wildlife management knowledge, wildlife identification, legal terminology and questions about Wyoming wildlife statutes and regulations. Candidates who successfully pass the online written exam must complete a life history questionnaire, after which they may be invited for a preliminary online interview using Google Hangouts. This determines which candidates will complete an in-person interview, personality profile testing, psychological testing and polygraph examination. Candidates offered a game warden job undergo a thorough background investigation and must successfully graduate the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy (WLEA) 14-week, 595-hour Peace Officer Basic course prior to working as a Department law enforcement officer. Individuals who successfully complete this hiring process can take great pride in the fact they have achieved the high standards required to become a Wyoming game warden.



The above chart shows a comparison of game warden applicants, exam takers, interviewees, and hires for calendar years 2015-2019. On average, less than 5% of applicants are offered game warden positions at the end of the hiring process.

In 2019:

- Testing was offered online only
- 412 people applied
- 203 took exam
- 157 passed exam - 76% pass rate
- 125 online interviews conducted
- 60 invited for in-person interview
- 51 interviewed
- 3 offered job after first round of hiring. Several more will be hired in the spring of 2020.

Five game wardens were hired throughout 2019. Scott Fischer and Nate Holst graduated from the WLEA in April and Andrew Enscore graduated from the WLEA in November. Jon Desonier and Walker Shortnacy will attend the WLEA in early 2020. In addition, another game warden exam was

Laramie Region wardens train with their patrol rifles.

Warden Jim Olson, a firearms instructor, demonstrates a handgun drill for other Department firearms instructors.

offered in the fall of 2019. Successful applicants from the latest round of testing will be hired in April, 2020.

GAME WARDEN TRAINING

Department law enforcement officers throughout the state completed annual firearms, non-deadly force weapon (OC spray and expandable baton) and custody and control training and qualifications. All officers must qualify with their duty handguns, rifles and shotguns twice a year. Officers are also required to demonstrate proficiency with non-deadly force weapons and core skills used for self defense and controlling suspects, such as handcuffing and takedown techniques. Additional training included various shooting drills, use of force scenarios and legal updates related to law enforcement. Wardens throughout the state participated in a variety of additional specialized training, including interview and interrogation of suspects, wildlife field forensics, boat accident investigations and large carnivore conflict resolution. Several wardens also attended critical incident training, such as active shooter response, hosted by local law enforcement agencies in their communities.

After graduating the WLEA, new wardens attended training conducted by Department training officers and law enforcement staff to prepare them for the upcoming boating season. Training topics included watercraft accident investigation techniques, watercraft patrol, BUI detection, fishing enforcement and watercraft/fishing statutes and regulations. They received practical training in officer water survival, cold-water immersion, boat handling and patrol scenarios. They also received training from Wyoming Life Flight personnel on how to coordinate with them during a medical emergency and how to locate a suitable landing zone for the helicopter. The wardens attended a second training session to prepare for the fall hunting seasons. Training topics included review of Game and Fish statutes and regulations, patrol techniques, interstate game tag guidelines and issuance, game check stations, the Access Yes Program, general wildlife law enforcement, collection of evidence, crime scene investigation and various other game warden duties. In addition to these intensive training sessions, new game wardens spent a considerable amount of time in their respective regions receiving on-the-job training from other Department employees.

On a national level, Deputy Chief Game Warden Scott Edberg continue to be very engaged as steering committee members, instructors and executive advisers in the National Association of Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs Leadership Academy (NACLECLA). The academy's mission is to build a stream of leadership in the conservation law enforcement community with the capacity to solve complex and continually evolving challenges in the efforts to protect fish, wildlife and natural resources, now and in the future. In 2019, Sheridan Region Wildlife Supervisor Craig Smith attended NACLECLA.

Law Enforcement Coordinator Aaron Kerr attended the Rocky Mountain Command College in Denver, CO. This week-long program was hosted by the FBI Law Enforcement Executive Development Association and covered a wide range of topics relevant to law enforcement leadership, including dealing with critical incidents, working with the media and uses of new technology in various types of investigations.

TECHNOLOGY FOR WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT

The Department's strategic plan calls for effective and efficient wildlife management and law enforcement. One of the strategies to accomplish this goal is to expand and embrace the use of technology to increase effectiveness and efficiency in fish and wildlife management, law enforcement and forensic science. The Department continues to evaluate and implement new technology and equipment as appropriate and in line with the strategic plan. There are several examples of new or improved technology implemented by the Department for law enforcement in 2019.

All game wardens have been provided with subscriptions to OnX Maps on their cell phones, GPS units and computers. This program includes map layers showing land status, ownership information, hunt area boundaries, Access Yes areas and more. This information is routinely used by wardens during investigations into trespassing or hunting in the wrong area violations. It also helps wardens answer questions from the public regarding a wide range of topics.

Department law enforcement officers often work in locations with poor or no cellular service for extended periods of time. Conducting law enforcement in backcountry areas accessible only on foot or horseback poses some unique hazards and challenges. The Department has expanded its use of satellite communication devices, such as Garmin inReach and SPOT GPS messengers, to allow officers to keep their supervisors, dispatchers and families up to date on their locations and status. The Department will continue to invest in these important tools to improve officer safety.

Department UAS on a test flight in Sybille Canyon.

Warden Luke May participates in firearms training.

The Department is continuing to use unmanned aerial systems (UAS) on wildlife management and law enforcement projects. To date, the Department has purchased four small UAS equipped with video cameras and has successfully used them on various projects. In accordance with FAA regulations, all UAS flights are conducted by Department personnel certified as UAS pilots by the FAA. Flights are restricted to altitudes below 400 feet and within visual line of sight of the UAS pilot. Department law enforcement uses of UAS include video documentation of wildlife crime scenes, providing an overview of areas to be searched during search warrants, documenting scenes of boat accidents, monitoring Department lands during human presence closures and assisting with search and rescue operations. Based on the success of this program so far, the Department will likely look to expand its capabilities in future years.

STOP POACHING PROGRAM

The Stop Poaching Program began in 1980 as a means to provide an opportunity for the public to help protect their wildlife resource by reporting suspected poaching activity. This program is an excellent and necessary enforcement tool for helping to identify wildlife violators throughout the state. All information on the reporting party is kept strictly confidential.

In 2019, 311 tips were received from members of the public via the Stop Poaching Hotline, a text tip line and the Department website. Game wardens followed up on all of these tips, and in many cases, no violation could be determined. However, in numerous instances, wardens were able to identify wildlife violations and possible suspects. Investigations led to 22 citations and 11 warnings being issued to violators. Defendants charged as a result of tips made to the Stop Poaching Program paid $5,545 in fines and restitution to date, with 11 cases still under investigation or pending court disposition.

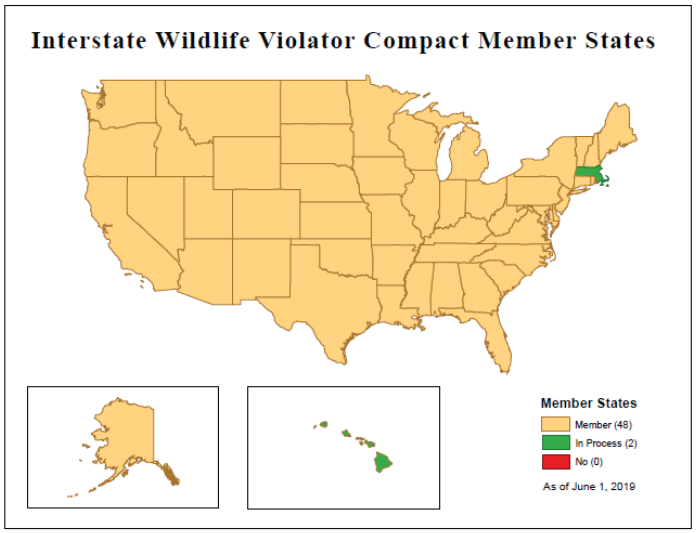
WYOMING WILDLIFE PROTECTORS ASSOCIATION

To encourage reporting of wildlife violations by the public, the Department has partnered with the Wyoming Wildlife Protectors Association (WWPA). The WWPA began in 1983 and is a registered non-profit organization. The sole purpose of the WWPA is to manage a reward account and provide monetary rewards to citizens who report suspected poaching activity. The WWPA is funded by restitution payments as ordered by the courts at sentencing of wildlife violators and from private donations.

Many of the successful investigations and prosecutions of wildlife violators in Wyoming would not have been possible without the information provided by concerned citizens. Often, informants are turning in a friend or family member, which can be difficult and shows their genuine concern for Wyoming's wildlife resource. Department enforcement officers may submit a reward recommendation request based on a reward payment schedule listed in the WWPA Constitution. In 2019, a total of $3,500 in rewards was paid to individuals who provided information leading to the conviction of wildlife violators.

WILDLIFE VIOLATOR COMPACT

Wyoming has been a member state of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (Compact) since 1996. The Compact is a reciprocal agreement between member states to honor suspensions of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges for convicted wildlife violators. Individuals who are suspended in one member state may also have their privileges suspended in the other member states. The Compact acts as an additional deterrent to violating wildlife laws and strengthens the consequences of illegal hunting, fishing or trapping activities. The Compact



is also an effective tool for ensuring that violators meet their court obligations, as those who fail to do so also have their privileges suspended until their case is resolved. The law enforcement coordinator routinely fields calls from individuals asking what they need to do to have their license privileges reinstated.

There are now 48 member states and two more, Massachusetts and Hawaii, are finalizing the process of joining. Nationwide, there were 6,095 new license suspensions entered in the Compact, including 49 from Wyoming. Several cases initiated in 2019 are awaiting court proceedings and may lead to further license suspensions once completed. With nearly the entire United States having joined the Compact, the loss of privileges in one state effectively amounts to a nationwide suspension.

NEW LEGISLATION AFFECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT

Bills enacted during the 2019 Legislature:

HB002 Regulation of Hunting Methods
Signed into Law by the Governor 2/26/2019
Summary: This bill modifies W.S. 23-1-302 and authorizes the Commission to adopt rules regulating, limiting or prohibiting the use of hunting technologies and the selling of wildlife geographic locations. Technologies that may be regulated under this act are thermal or infrared imaging and real time video or photography equipment capable of being viewed remotely.

HB0028 Regulation of Shed Antler and Big Game Horn Collection
Signed into Law by the Governor 2/26/2019
Summary: This bill amends W.S. 23-1-302 allowing the Game and Fish Commission to regulate the collection of shed antlers and horns on public lands in a larger portion of Wyoming and at any time of the year.

HB0073 Use of Dogs - Recovery of Killed or Wounded Big Game
Signed into Law by the Governor 2/19/2019
Summary: This bill allows a person to use a leashed blood-trailing dog to help recover a killed or wounded big game animal.

HB0169 Lifetime Fishing Licenses for Permanently Disabled Persons
Signed into Law by the Governor 2/27/2019
Summary: This legislation would direct the Department to establish a process for issuing resident lifetime fishing licenses and conservation stamps for permanently and totally disabled residents.

SF0040 Operation of Motorboat While Intoxicated
Signed into Law by the Governor 2/28/2019
Summary: This bill amends W.S. 41-13-206 amending the alcohol concentration level that constitutes operation of a motorboat by an intoxicated person. The result of this legislation is that the blood alcohol concentration at which a person is presumed to be intoxicated has been reduced from 0.10% to 0.08%.

SF0093 Grizzly Bear Hunt
Signed into Law by the Governor 2/15/2019
Summary: This bill invokes the 10th amendment to the U.S. Constitution as a basis for granting state statutory authority to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission to conduct a grizzly bear hunt if the WGFC determines a hunt would be beneficial for:

- Managing Wyoming's wildlife
- Protecting Wyoming workers and other citizens and tourists of the state

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Several Wyoming game wardens were recognized in 2019 for their outstanding service to the state by the Department and other organizations.

2019 Shikar-Safari Club Wildlife Officer of the Year - Jim Seeman, Buffalo Game Warden

2019 North American Wildlife Enforcement Officers Association Outstanding Service Award - Bill Brinegar, South Laramie Game Warden

2019 National Wild Turkey Federation Officer of the Year - Jessica Beecham, North Riverton Game Warden

2018 Wyoming Game Wardens Association Officer of the Year - Bill Brinegar, South Laramie Game Warden

2018 WAFWA Pogue-Elms Law Enforcement Officer of the Year - Dustin Shorma, Dayton Game Warden

2018 Wyoming Outfitters and Guides Association Agency Personnel Award - Biff Burton, Saratoga Game Warden

RETIREMENTS

Scott Talbott - Wyoming Game and Fish Department Director - 34 years of service

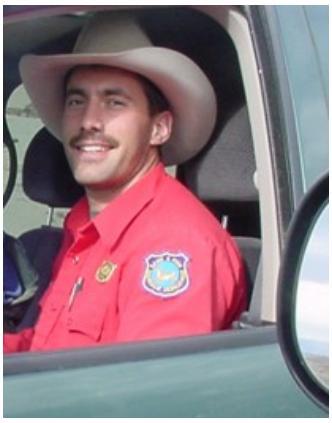
Mike Ehlebract - Investigative Unit Supervisor - 19 years of service (plus 18 years as a Kansas game warden)

Bruce Scigliano - Sheridan Game Warden - 30 years of service

Brady Vandeberg - Lusk Game Warden - 24 years of service

Scott Talbott

Bruce Scigialno



Brady Vandeberg

PROMOTIONS

Brian Nesvik - Chief Game Warden to Wyoming Game and Fish Department Director

Rick King - Laramie Regional Wildlife Supervisor to Chief Game Warden

Matt Withroder - Casper Region Access Coordinator to Laramie Regional Wildlife Supervisor

David Ellsworth—Wheatland Game Warden to Laramie Region Game Warden Supervisor

Game Warden to Senior Game Warden

Jake Brown - Elk Mountain; Becca Lutz - Cheyenne; Cody Schoonover - Cheyenne;

Rob Shipe - Medicine Bow; Derek White - West Rawlins

FALLEN OFFICER MEMORIALS

On May 17 a memorial ceremony was held at the WLEA to honor fallen law enforcement officers from across the United States. Game wardens joined officers from other Wyoming law enforcement agencies at the ceremony. The names of the 167 law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty in the United States in 2018 were read, as well as the complete list of names of the 63 fallen officers from Wyoming killed in the line of duty since statehood.

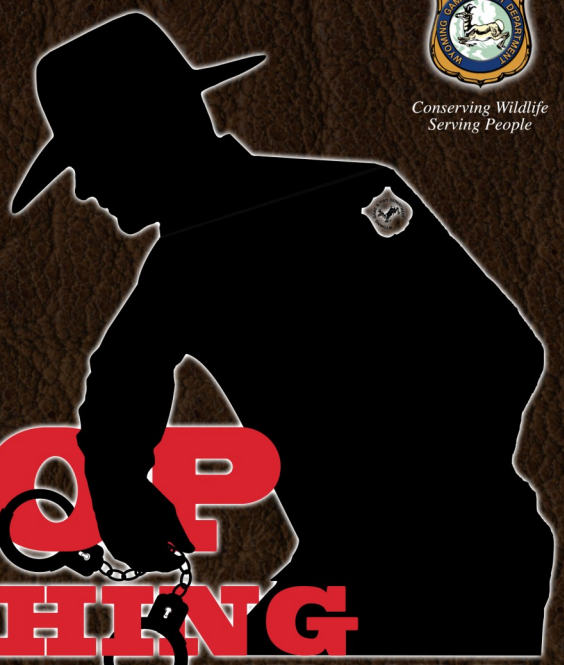
Also on May 17, the Wyoming Game Wardens Association (WGWA) Honor Guard joined officers from other Wyoming law enforcement agencies in a fallen officer ceremony in Cheyenne.

There are nine Wyoming game wardens on the Wyoming Peace Officer Memorial in Douglas.

John Buxton - 1919
Charles "Ted" Price - 1921
Bill Lakanen - 1945
Don Simpson - 1945
Charles Calvert - 1965
Francis Gradert - 1973
Cliff Stevens - 1983
Kirk Inberg - 1991
Kay Bowles - 1992

Conserving Wildlife
Serving People

Wyoming's wildlife belongs to you. Help protect it!
Report all wildlife violations.



STOP POACHING

Help us Stand Watch 1-877-WGFD-TIP

Call the Stop Poaching Hotline
or text to TIP411
(text keyword WGFD and message)

Rewards are provided
by the Wyoming Wildlife
Protectors Association