

Rock Creek Mountain Mule Deer Poaching

On October 2, South Riverton Game Warden Brad Gibb received a Stop Poaching call about some questionable activity in the Rock Creek Mountain area. Warden Gibb met with the caller to locate a mule deer buck that had been shot and left as well as obtain a statement about the caller's contact with two suspect individuals in the area. The witness provided an outstanding statement that included a plate number for the vehicle, physical descriptions of the individuals, type/caliber of rifles and type/make of scopes. Warden Gibb used this information to locate the owner of the truck as well as obtain a search warrant for multiple residences and vehicles. During the initial investigation, Warden Gibb learned that one of the suspects was a felon on probation and was not allowed to be in possession of a firearm. With the help of Probation and Parole agents, several Department enforcement officers served the search warrants and interviewed two suspects. During initial interviews, both suspects admitted to elk hunting in the area, but denied shooting at a mule deer. During the search warrants, two rifles were seized matching the caliber of bullet found in the shot and left mule deer. However, wardens did not locate the rifle/scope combination mentioned by the witness. Warden Gibb and the Lander wildlife investigator conducted another interview with the primary suspect at his residence to get more information. During this interview, the suspect asked about the potential penalties he would face if he admitted to the incident and agreed to talk with the Fremont County Attorney about his options. After this discussion and talking with his own attorney, the suspect confessed to shooting the mule deer buck without a license and produced the firearm the deer had been shot with. This firearm/scope combination matched the description provided by the caller. The suspect was charged with one count of intentionally shooting an antlered mule deer without a license and the firearm was seized as evidence. The suspect pled guilty and was sentenced to a \$1,000 fine, \$4,000 in restitution and lost his hunting privileges for three years. He is not allowed to possess firearms or be around anyone with firearms for one year and he forfeited the rifle used in the crime.



