

# Wild Times

A Free Publication of the Wyoming Game & Fish Department

Summer 2009

## THE HABITAT CONNECTION

Summer is a great time to see all the habitats you have been learning about during the school year. Whether you look out your back door or travel to another part of the state, Wyoming is full of important habitat for wildlife. Habitat can be small or large, and different animals



need different things from their habitats. Do you think a grizzly bear needs the same size habitat as an ant?

If you answered

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then you are right. A grizzly bear needs as much as 500 miles to call its territory or habitat, while an ant needs a much smaller space.

Pronghorn antelope depend on the sagebrush prairies for survival. They like areas where there are few trees and they can see predators coming from a long way away. Pronghorn antelope can also run very fast and for long distances, so they like the wide-open spaces.



Cutthroat trout like cool, clean streams where there is plenty of water and food for them to live. You might find these streams in any of Wyoming's mountain ranges.



A beaver likes riparian areas. Riparian areas are the areas near the bank of a river, pond or stream. When they build their dams, beavers create even more habitat for other wildlife. They are important animals to have in the riparian habitat.



We have listed just a few of Wyoming's habitats. How many different habitats can you see this summer?

# FIELD Wildlife Journal

**BRIAN KING**

**Wild Fish Spawning Coordinator**

The hatchery system in Wyoming is unique. Not only do hatcheries raise fish to stock for anglers, but they also do native fish restoration. This means our native fish will always be in our waters. Also, in order to keep healthy populations of fish, we need to continually add wild fish into our captive fish populations. We have a crew that does both those important jobs.

Brian King, the wild fish spawning coordinator, travels all over the state to spawn wild fish.



This means he captures live wild fish in lakes and streams, collects and fertilizes the eggs, and then releases

the fish unharmed. He and his crew then take the eggs to a Wyoming Game and Fish hatchery to be raised. There are many species of fish in the wild that are important to Wyoming—for example, our cutthroat trout. They are Wyoming's only native trout.

Wild Fish Spawning Coordinator King has known since sixth grade that he wanted to work with fish. "We took a class

fish hatchery, and the work they were doing really piqued my interest. From that point on I was sure I wanted to work with fish," says Wild Fish Spawning Coordinator King. "I also come from a family who loves to be outdoors, especially fishing, so I knew I wanted a job where I could work outside."



Wild Fish Spawning Coordinator King and his crew really make a difference in Wyoming's fisheries. Maybe there is a job in your future with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.



# WILDLIFE PROFILES



# WILDLIFE PROFILES

## Tiger Swallowtail Butterfly

**Size:** About 2 1/2 to 3 3/8 inches

**Eats:** Nectar

**Lives:** In areas with deciduous trees, forest edges and river valleys

These beautiful insects can be seen almost everywhere in the summer. They feed from flower to flower. Before the summer's end, a female will find a mate and lay her eggs. From the eggs will hatch the young butterflies, which are caterpillars. Caterpillars do not look anything like their butterfly parents, but they will go through complete metamorphosis and change into butterflies. The swallowtail butterfly is colorful with a yellow body and black stripes. Swallowtails get their name from their tail, which is forked like the tail of some swallows, which are birds.

## Porcupine

**Size:** Head and body 18 to 22 inches

**Eats:** Buds, twigs, bark and inside layer of trees

**Lives:** In forest

Summer is a great time to see the porcupine, but keep your distance! Did you know it has 30,000 quills on its back and tail? The quills are actually hairs that are spongy and hollow. The tip of the quill is pointed and has small barbs that can only be seen under a microscope. These quills are a form of protection from predators. Sometimes porcupines will swing their tails to protect themselves, too. Not many animals like having a nose full of quills! If you are walking in the forest, you can often see where a porcupine has ripped off tree bark and eaten the inside layer of the tree.

## Gray Jay

**Size:** 12 inches tall

**Eats:** Bugs, berries and food scraps, but also mice, carrion (dead animals they find), grasshopper, bits of fish and even bird eggs and young birds

**Lives:** In forest

Did you know the Gray Jay is also known as the "camp robber"? That is because they often visit campsites during the summer and rob people's food! They are smart birds that learned they can find food near humans. They have glands in their mouths that secrete a sticky fluid, which coats soft masses of chewed food. Gray Jays then store their food in places called caches, and since it is sticky, the food stays there until the bird returns to eat it. They build their nests on a horizontal tree branch anywhere from six to 28 feet off the ground. Gray Jays make their nests in late winter with twigs, bark and mosses and even line them with feathers!

## Splake

**Size:** Can grow up to around 30 inches in Wyoming, but most are 12 to 15 inches or smaller

**Eats:** Mainly other small fish

**Lives:** In areas of Wyoming where the Wyoming Game and Fish Department stocks them

Did you know splake are a cross between a male brook trout and a female lake trout? This is called a hybrid. They can be found in many lakes around Wyoming. Most of the fish you will catch have been stocked from a fish hatchery. Splake feed on other fish for the majority of their diet, so the Wyoming Game and Fish Department uses them to manage troubled fish populations. For example, if there are too many minnows, suckers or even yellow perch, splake might be stocked in the waters to help keep the population healthy. Try and catch one when fishing this summer. They are exciting to catch!

# Our Wildlife Heritage

Long ago before Wyoming was a state, trappers and settlers would hunt and fish with no limits or laws that would have helped keep the wildlife populations healthy. Beavers were trapped close to extinction, and other herd populations were dangerously low. This included Wyoming's fish. In 1883, it was

**"BEAVERS WERE TRAPPED CLOSE TO EXTINCTION"**



recorded, "It is an admitted fact that a majority of our streams are sterile of good food fish, whilst the remainder in many places are nearly exhausted of a once bountiful supply." This

meant Wyoming didn't have many fish left. This was due to more people fishing (some even used explosives!) and the construction of barriers that would not allow for fish to pass to critical habitat to feed, spawn and live over the winter. So, in 1884, a fishing season was established, allowing people to fish from June 1 to November 1. It was also the year the construction of the first Wyoming Fish Hatchery began. It was built at Soldier's Springs

in Albany county and was to be built "at a cost not to exceed the sum of five hundred dollars." That was not much money, so they started out small with a 24- by 16-foot building. Between 1885 and 1890, the hatchery produced more than 1.7 million brook trout, 450,000 lake trout, and 220,000 rainbow trout. Wow! That's a lot of fish, and all before Wyoming became a state in 1890.

**"IN 1884, A FISHING SEASON WAS ESTABLISHED"**



**TODAY, THE  
WYOMING GAME  
AND FISH  
DEPARTMENT**

**HAS TEN FISH HATCHERIES  
ACROSS THE STATE.  
MAYBE THIS SUMMER YOU  
COULD TAKE A TRIP TO  
ONE NEAR YOU!**



# Around Wyoming



Did you know that Wyoming has a **FREE** fishing day? That's right. On June 6, 2009, you and your family can fish for free! Sounds like a great day to go fishing! In addition, there are towns all across Wyoming that

celebrate Free Fishing Day by having Kids' Fishing Day events. You can learn about what kind of fish you might catch, how to catch them and what different fish parts are called, just to name a few of the fun things you can do! Be sure

to check in your town to see if you have a Kids' Fishing Day. If not, grab your tackle and head to nearest pond or stream with your family and friends!

## Wyoming Hunting and Fishing Heritage Expo

Don't forget to attend the Wyoming Hunting and Fishing Heritage Expo. At the Expo, you can learn outdoor skills like fishing, shooting rifles or bows, camping, canoeing and wildlife watching. You will see live demonstrations by experts who will show you lots of different things. You can have your class come to the Expo as a field trip on September 10th, 11th and 12th, 2009. What a way to come back to school in the fall!



# Outdoor Classroom

**D**id you know you could make your own fishing pole using fishing line and a pop can? All you need is an empty pop can, some monofilament fishing line, a sinker, hook and bait or spinner.

## Here's How:

1. Take an empty pop can and slightly smash the can in the middle, so it is an hourglass shape.
2. Take monofilament fishing line and wrap it around the can a few times, then tie a knot.
3. Wrap the line in one direction until you have enough line on the can (remember, you will need a lot!)
4. To fish, attach a sinker about two feet from the end of the line. You can then attach a hook for bait, or you can use a spinner.
5. Unroll a bit of line (your hook should be just above the ground), hold the pop can in your non-dominant hand (if you are right-handed, hold the can in your left hand). With your dominant hand (if you are right-handed, this is your right hand), swing the line out over the water and drop the hook into it.

6. To pull the line up, just wrap it around the pop can. If you catch a fish, make sure to bring it in with a net!

If you want to practice casting before heading to the water to fish, you can tie on a washer or nut from the hardware store instead of a sinker and hook.

This will add weight to the line without the danger of hooking yourself while you practice! Place a hula-hoop a few feet away; can you cast into the hoop?

**Kids** OUTDOOR Classroom



Remember - ALWAYS protect your skin from the sun during outdoor activities!

# ▶ TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ◀

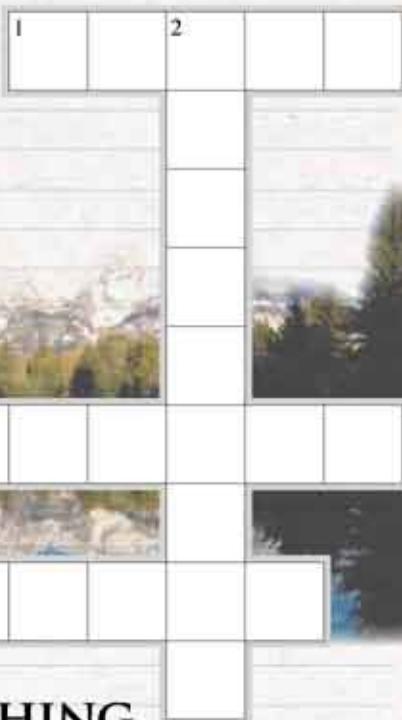
## Crossword Puzzle

### ACROSS

1. A place where birds often hide their food is called a...
3. Splake is known as a ...because it is a cross between a brook trout and a lake trout.
4. The food, water, shelter and space an animal needs to survive is called its...

### DOWN

2. What is Wyoming's only native trout? The...



1. Cache 3. Hybrid 4. Habitat

ACROSS

2. Cutthroat

DOWN



**B**EFORE YOU HEAD OUT FISHING, THIS SUMMER, MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT KIND OF FISH YOU MIGHT BE CATCHING. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO HELP YOU FOLLOW FISHING REGULATIONS.



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