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### **BECOME A MASTER ANGLER!**

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is pleased to provide a program that recognizes the catch of trophy sized fish from our phenomenal Wyoming waters. There are three levels of achievement; Master Angler, Trophy Angler and Ultimate Angler.

**Master Angler:** Catch one fish of a qualifying length and you will be awarded a Master Angler decal sticker for that species.

**Trophy Angler:** Catch any 5 species of qualifying length and you will be awarded a Trophy Angler Award challenge coin.

**Ultimate Angler:** Catch any 10 species of qualifying length and you will earn the Ultimate Angler award comprised of a prize package and state recognition.

#### **Rules:**

- Open to all Wyoming anglers, Resident and Nonresident.
- Fish must be caught with legal methods and during open seasons in Wyoming.
- Entries must be for fish captured after June 1, 2019.
- Anglers are limited to one Master Angler entry per species per calendar year. Submissions for Trophy Angler and Ultimate Angler have no time limitations.
- Each entry must be accompanied by one side-view photograph, preferably with either the angler or another object (e.g. ruler) that can be used to validate length.



To find more about the Master Angler Program visit: <http://wgfd/wyo.gov/Fishing-and-Boating/Master-Angler>

### Dry Creek Drainage Lakes

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department surveyed waters within the Dry Creek drainage of the Wind River Mountains from August 20 – 26, 2019. The drainage was stocked from 1938 through 1982, but now all fish populations are self-sustaining. The lakes are a little over 26 miles from the Trail Lake trailhead near Dubois and are located within the Fitzpatrick Wilderness of the Shoshone National Forest. Access exists along the Glacier/Ink Wells Trail.

The Middle Fork of Dry Creek is a popular destination for anglers seeking Golden Trout. Our surveys found Golden Trout ranging from 15.1 to 18.3 inches in Golden Lake and 6.5 to 16.5 inches in Lower Glacier Lake.

A barrier at the outlet of Golden Lake protects Golden Trout from hybridizing species (i.e., Rainbow Trout and Cutthroat Trout) downstream. Lower Glacier Lake supported a higher abundance of Golden Trout and wider range of lengths than Golden Lake. The lower abundance of fish and slightly warmer water temperature in Golden Lake allows for better growth and larger fish. Don’s and Cub lakes, downstream from Golden Lake, had high abundances of fish. Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout up to 17.8 and 15.5 inches were captured in Don’s and Cub lakes, respectively. Lower in the Middle Fork of Dry Creek is Moose Lake, which contained high numbers of Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout (up to 16.2 inches) and lower numbers of Brook Trout (up to 11.0 inches).

Two lakes in the South Fork of Dry Creek were surveyed. Rock Lake is the upstream-most lake with fish in the drainage. Rock Lake sampling captured Golden Trout/Rainbow Trout hybrids ranging from 8.0 to 9.4 inches; however, larger fish were observed swimming along the shoreline. Norman Lake is slightly downstream and contained Brook Trout up to 13.2 inches.

The lower portion of the Dry Creek drainage supports a higher diversity of fish including Brook Trout, Rainbow Trout, Cutthroat Trout, and Rainbow Trout/Cutthroat Trout hybrids. Most lakes had good numbers of fish. Survey results showed fish up to 13.6 inches in Native Lake, 15.4 inches in Grassy Lake, 21.7 inches in Phillips Lake, and 14.8 inches in Horseshoe Lake. Splake Lake, located slightly south of these lakes, supported Splake ranging from 10.5 to 17.7 inches. Whitney Lake, which is near the headwaters of the North Fork of Dry Creek and north of Native Lake, had Brook Trout ranging from 8.1 to 11.6 inches.



Fisheries Biologist Paul Gerrity with a Golden Trout

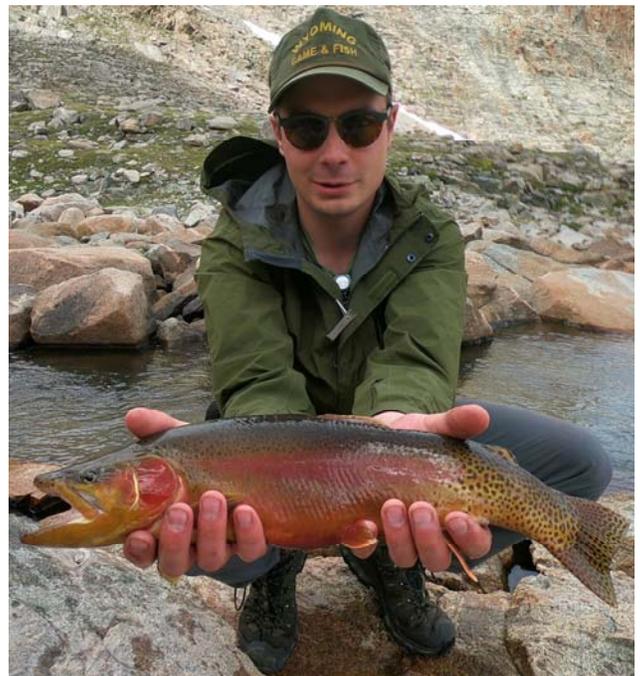
#### Fish length ranges for Dry Creek drainage lakes

Lake	Species	Length Range (inches)
Lower Glacier	Golden Trout	6.5 – 16.5
Golden	Golden Trout	15.1 – 18.3
Dons	Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	10.2 – 17.8
Cub	Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	10.0 – 15.5
Moose	Brook Trout	7.9 – 11.0
	Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	8.9 – 16.2
Rock	Golden Trout	8.0 – 8.1
	Golden/Rainbow Hybrid	8.6 – 9.4
Norman	Brook Trout	6.2 – 13.2
Native	Brook Trout	9.6 – 11.9
	Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	13.5
	Rainbow/Cutthroat Hybrid	13.6
Grassy	Brook Trout	5.0 – 11.7
	Splake	8.2
	Rainbow Trout	15.2 – 15.4
	Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	10.7 – 15.0
	Rainbow/Cutthroat Hybrid	9.5
Phillips	Rainbow Trout	13.6 – 14.5
	Rainbow/Cutthroat Hybrid	21.7
Horseshoe	Brook Trout	10.7 – 13.1
	Rainbow Trout	13.2
	Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	7.9 – 13.1
Splake	Rainbow/Cutthroat Hybrid	10.0 – 14.8
	Splake	10.5 – 17.7
Whitney	Brook Trout	8.1 – 11.6

## Golden Trout in the Wind River Mountain Range

Wyoming Game and Fish Department sampling and angler reports during summer 2019 indicate Golden Trout fishing within the Popo Agie Wilderness is the best in recent memory. The Golden Trout populations in Leg, Thumb, Windy, Upper Saddlebags, Lower Saddlebags, Lower Tayo, and Coon lakes are all doing exceptionally well. Larger, 16 to 19-inch Golden Trout were observed, particularly in Upper Saddlebags, Lower Saddlebags, Lower Tayo, and Coon lakes. Coon Lake contains a naturally-reproducing population, whereas Golden Trout in the other lakes are provided by WGFD helicopter stocking every two years. Although recent sampling has shown that Golden Trout populations in Upper Deep Creek, Upper Tayo, and Upper Valentine lakes were not as abundant as the aforementioned lakes, they are expected to improve in the near future with continued stocking.

Credit for the outstanding Golden Trout fishing goes to the WGFD Culture Section, which has the only captive Golden Trout brood source in the nation at Story Hatchery. From the 1950s through 1993, stocked Golden Trout originated from eggs obtained at Surprise Lake near Pinedale. After a wildfire decimated the Golden Trout population at Surprise Lake, stocking ceased at some lakes until 2006 and most lakes until 2010. Stocking ceased because no suitable wild brood sources could be found, and Golden Trout are notoriously difficult to raise in hatcheries. Through a lot of time, effort, and expertise, the WGFD Culture Section was successful at creating the current captive brood source. Golden Trout stocking resumed at a limited number of Popo Agie Wilderness lakes in 2006, and many other lakes in 2010. Because the WGFD now has its own captive brood source, more fish can be stocked more often, which will help sustain the outstanding Golden Trout angling opportunities that currently exist.



*Fisheries Technician Nick Kovacs with a Golden Trout*

All lakes mentioned above can be accessed by trailheads located along the Loop Road (Forest Service Road 300) in the Shoshone National Forest. Thumb, Windy, Upper Saddlebags, and Lower Saddlebags lakes can be accessed from the Christina Lake trailhead at Fiddlers Lake. Thumb Lake is located in the Silas Creek drainage, and Windy, Upper Saddlebags, and Lower Saddlebags lakes are located in the Atlantic Creek drainage. Upper Tayo, Lower Tayo, Upper Deep Creek, and Coon lakes can be accessed using the Stough Creek or Sheep Bridge trailheads at Worthen Meadows Reservoir. The Sweetwater trailhead at the southern end of the Wind River Mountains can also be used to access Upper Tayo, Lower Tayo, Upper Deep Creek, and Coon lakes. Leg Lake is in the Roaring Fork Creek drainage and can also be accessed using the Stough Creek Lakes trailhead. Upper Valentine Lake is in the South Fork Little Wind River drainage, and can be accessed using the Bears Ears trailhead in Dickinson Park.

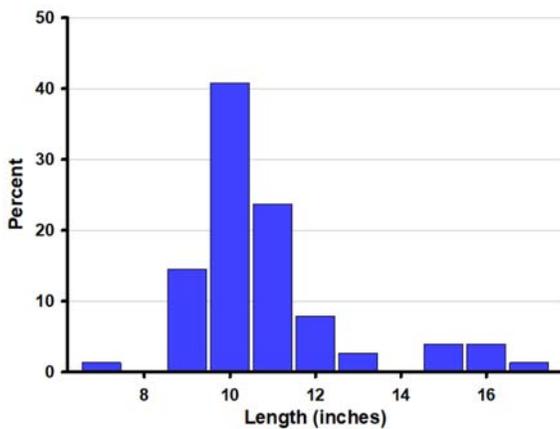
## McIntosh Pond

Wyoming Game and Fish Department netting in May and electrofishing in June 2019 showed that McIntosh No. 2 Pond (formerly known as Western Nuclear Pond) is maintaining an excellent sport fishery. High numbers of 13 to 16-inch Brook Trout (some close to 2 pounds) were observed during the surveys. Rainbow Trout up to 15 inches and 1.5 pounds were also captured.



*Brook Trout from McIntosh Pond*

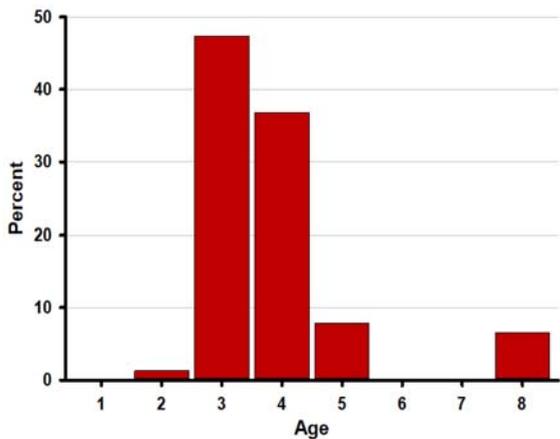
McIntosh No. 2 Reservoir also provides good Largemouth Bass fishing. Largemouth Bass were stocked beginning in 2011 and from 2014-2016 to take advantage of abundant forage (Fathead Minnows and Lake Chubs). June 2019 electrofishing captured high numbers of Largemouth Bass. Most bass were 10 to 12 inches; however, some as large as 17 inches and 4 pounds were captured (Figure 1). Scales were taken from many of the bass to determine their ages. Most were age-3 and age-4 and from the 2015 and 2016 stocking events (Figure 2).



*Figure 1. Length Frequency of Largemouth Bass.*

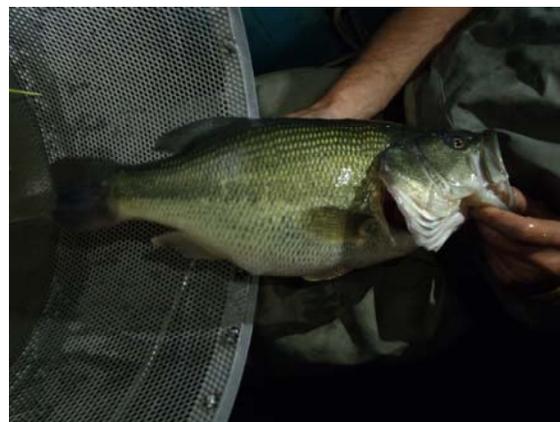
The largest bass were age-8. Only 1 bass (age-2 fish) was captured that hatched during a year in which stocking did not occur, indicating that little natural reproduction occurs and stocking will likely be necessary to sustain a quality Largemouth Bass fishery. The WGFD plans to stock additional Largemouth Bass in 2021 and/or 2022.

Habitat improvements by the State of Wyoming Abandoned Mine Land Program have greatly contributed to the McIntosh No. 2 Pond fishery. Modifications to the dam have prevented leaks and allowed for better water retention. Large rock piles were also put in the reservoir for fish habitat, and a parking area was constructed for anglers.



*Figure 2. Age Frequency of Largemouth Bass.*

McIntosh No. 2 Pond is located at the southwest base of Green Mountain, and can be accessed by taking the Big Eagle Road turnoff from Crooks Gap Road. The McIntosh No. 2 Pond access road is approximately 2 miles past the Big Eagle Road turnoff.



*Largemouth Bass from McIntosh Pond*

### Boysen Reservoir Trend Netting

Annual fall gill netting by the Wyoming Game and Fish in 2019 showed that Boysen Reservoir continues to provide an excellent fishery. Walleye numbers were the highest observed since



*Boysen Reservoir Sauger*

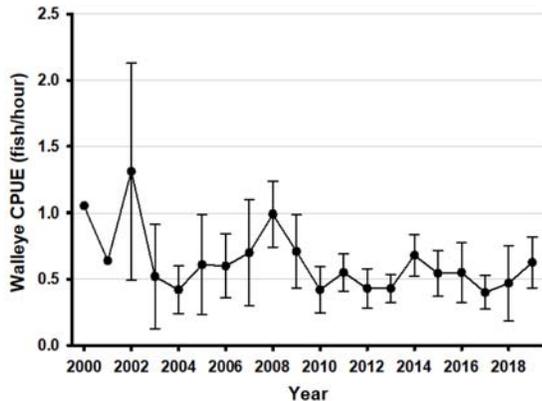


Figure 1. Average Walleye catch rates in gill nets.

2014 (Figure 1). Strong 2014, 2015, and 2016 hatches are providing anglers excellent opportunities to catch 13 to 19-inch Walleyes. High numbers of 9 and 10-inch Walleyes were also captured, indicating a strong 2018 year class (Figure 2).

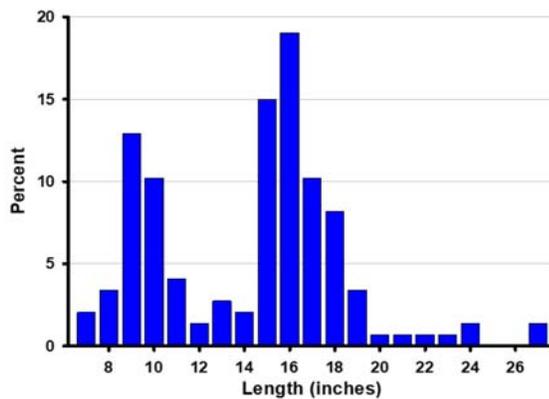


Figure 2. Walleye length frequency.

Similar to 2018, the Sauger catch rate was also good. The 2019 catch rate was the second-highest observed since 2002, indicating the population is continuing to recover from the early 2000s crash that was caused by extended drought (Figure 3).



*Removing otoliths to age fish.*

Yellow Perch numbers dropped from the previous three years. However, 60% of the captured Yellow Perch were 9 to 12 inches (Figure 4).

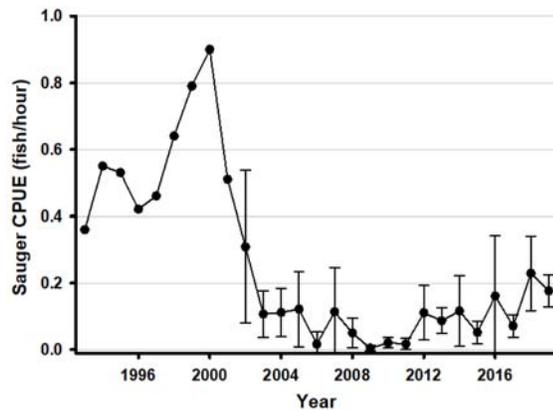


Figure 3. Average Sauger catch rates in gill nets.

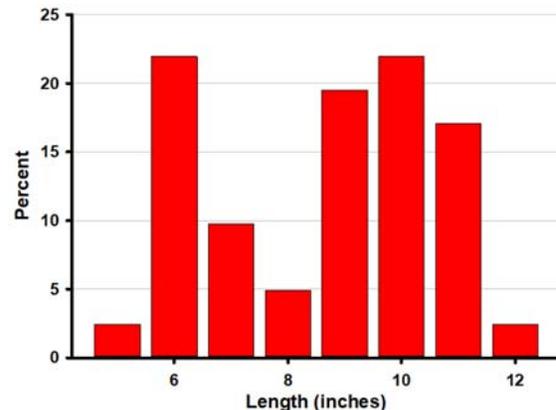
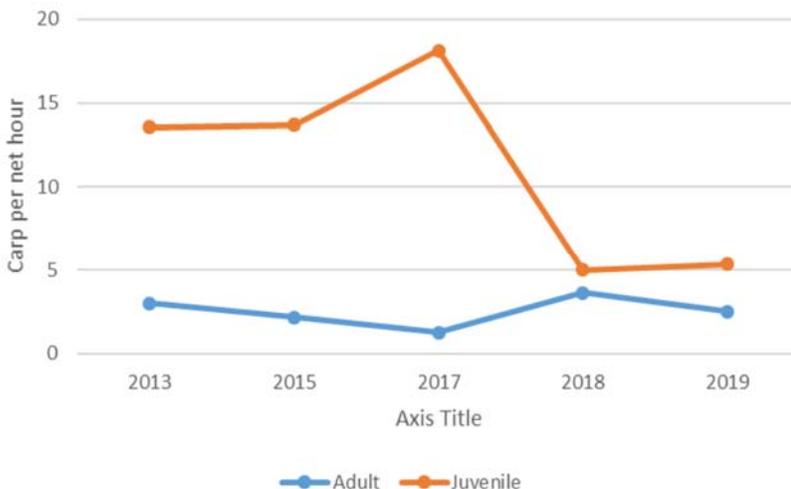


Figure 4. Yellow Perch length frequency.

### Tiger Muskie to Control Carp in Bad Water Pond

Tiger Muskie are a sterile hybrid cross between Northern Pike and Musellunge. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department raises Tiger Muskie at the Dan Speas Fish Hatchery. The statewide regulation limits harvest to one, all Tiger Muskie less than Thirty-six (36) inches in length shall be released immediately.



Mean catch rates for Carp in nets at Badwater Pond



Angler Danny Kurttila helping stock Tiger Muskie

Adult Tiger Muskie feed primarily on fish. They grow to over 40 inches in length and are stocked to control other fish species. Because Tiger Muskie don't reproduce, their abundance is control through stocking rates and frequency. The conservative statewide regulation allows Tiger Muskie time to grow and forage on fish before being vulnerable to harvest by anglers. They are lurking predators, meaning they sit and wait for prey. Fishing for them requires anglers to search for them rather than hoping for one to swim by. The qualifying length for Wyoming's Master Angler Award is 38 inches.

There are three waters in the Wind River Basin that were stocked with Tiger Muskie from 2015 to 2019. Close to 1,560 were stocked in Middle Depression Reservoir, 1,500 in Lake Cameahwait, and 750 in Badwater Pond. In 2019, Tiger Muskie ranged from 20.3 to 28.6 inches in Badwater Pond and 13.2 to 25.9 inches in Middle Depression Reservoir. No Tiger Muskie were sampled in Lake Cameahwait in 2019, but they are thought to be present based on angling reports.



Tiger Muskie from Badwater Pond

The abundance of juvenile carp has decreased in Badwater Pond following the introduction of Tiger Muskie in 2015. Tiger Muskies are typically 10 inches in length by October when they are stocked. It took two years in Badwater Pond for Tiger Muskie to grow large enough to eat juvenile Carp that are around 4 to 5 inches in length.



## Popo Agie Healthy River Initiative

Challenge: Improve Water Quality & Water Quantity

Question: What can we do now?

**The Mission:**  
*Facilitate a strategic, stakeholder driven initiative that ensures the vitality of the Popo Agie River by improving water quality, quantity and the biological health of the River so that it better supports domestic, agricultural, recreation, fish and wildlife uses.*

Management

- User education and outreach
- Impacts from subdividing lands
- Timing release of water
- Shared Management
- Investigate innovative practices

Water Supply

- Expanding reservoirs
- Reuse of process water from the City
- Groundwater storage and recharge
- Off channel and micro storage

Conservation

- Cooperative agreements
- Improving conveyance infrastructure
- Incentivizing conservation
- Restoration

**The Vision:**  
*The Popo Agie River and its tributaries are free from water quality impairment and sustain healthy flows that support all uses of the watershed for future generations.*



For more information contact Popo Agie Conservation District 332-3114

The Healthy Rivers Initiative (HRI) was founded in 2016 with a vision for the Popo Agie River watershed to be free from water quality impairment and sustain healthy flows that support all uses of the watershed for future generations. The Lander Aquatic Habitat Biologist is a member of the working group for this stakeholder-driven initiative which pulls together water users and community members to identify, develop, and implement voluntary measures and best practices for managing water during times of low flows. Anyone who has walked along City Park in Lander in August has likely noticed that stream flow in the Middle Fork often drops low enough in the summer to limit fish habitat. In June 2019, the average stream flow in the Middle Fork coming out of Sinks Canyon was over 900 cubic feet per second (cfs) but the average flow in town in August was 9 cfs.



HRI has funded several studies to identify projects that could improve water use efficiency and is now assisting with the implementation of some of those projects. HRI decided they needed a data-driven target flow, specific to the habitat and fisheries of the Middle Fork Popo Agie River, to use as a long-term goal for the initiative. In 2019, a study was conducted to determine the amount of stream flow that is necessary to support the trout fishery in the Middle Fork Popo Agie River through the town of Lander in late summer. Continuous stream flow data was measured at multiple locations along with trout cover, evaluation of fish passage, and sampling of aquatic macroinvertebrates to estimate food availability. The results will be used to develop a late summer target flow recommendation for the Middle Fork Popo Agie River as one of the long-term goals for the initiative.

## Bountiful Benefits of Beavers

Lander's Aquatic Habitat Biologist Joanna Harter has been busy the last two years working with other biologists to use beavers to improve stream habitats for fish and other wildlife. Beavers are aquatic mammals that build dams for their own uses, just like people. They cut down trees, eat the outer layer of branches, and use the branches along with mud, rocks, and other debris to build dams. Dams create pools that protect beavers from predators and increase their access to more trees to use for building and eating. But these beaver ponds do so much more than just keeping beavers safe.

Beavers are a keystone species, which means that other species in the ecosystem depend on them and the system would change drastically without them. In Wyoming, where only 2% of our land is covered with wetlands, beaver ponds provide productive habitat that benefits many wildlife species including birds, amphibians, deer, and moose. They also enhance habitat for trout by providing deep water for overwintering habitat. These ponds also moderate diurnal fluctuations in water temperature during the summer. Beaver ponds recharge groundwater which can increase the amount of water in streams later in the summer and mitigate the effects of drought.

Beaver ponds also filter sediment and excess nutrients out of the water and raise the water table, which benefits streamside vegetation.

Fall is the best time to live trap and relocate beavers because they are more likely to stay where they are released as they feel the need to quickly prepare for winter. It is important to trap and relocate as many family members as possible because beavers are very social animals. If they are separated they tend to leave the release location and search for their mates or other family members. Game and Fish often attempts to relocate a family group to the same location and works with landowners who want beaver on their property where they are not likely to be a nuisance to infrastructure.

In September 2019, biologist trapped a family of beavers that were building dams in an irrigation ditch in Lander. This family of beavers was moved to a stream in the headwaters of the Popo Agie River watershed where plenty of willows and aspen are available for food and dam building (see photos). When the release site was checked two months after the relocation, the beavers had already built two dams that created ponds! We will check the site again in summer 2020 to evaluate if the beaver survived and accomplished their mission to revive wetlands and improve habitat for other fish and wildlife.



## Be Prepared — Know the Regulations

Once it warms up for the summer, many people look forward to getting out on the water with their boats and other watercraft. Wardens are also busy this time of year heading to the waters for watercraft and fishing enforcement. Some of the most common violations include fishing without a license, failure to get an Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) inspection prior to launch, failure to require children to wear life jackets, and fishing with more than two poles. Here are some highlights that may help you avoid mistakes, but always check the full regulations before you recreate.

### Where can I find fishing regulations?

1. You can find them online at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Fishing-and-Boating/Fishing-Regulations>
2. Wyoming Game and Fish regional offices
3. License selling agents

### What do I need in my boat?

1. A personal flotation device (life jacket) available for each individual on board. Life jackets must be properly-sized, U.S. Coast Guard approved, and readily accessible; children 12 years old and under are required to wear theirs while underway. Anyone being towed by a boat is required to wear a life jacket as well.
2. An approved throwable flotation device is required on boats 16 feet and longer.
3. A proper fire extinguisher is required on any boat with an inboard engine, compartments that store fuel tanks or other combustible materials, bottoms that are not sealed to the hull, closed living spaces, or permanently installed fuel tanks. Check for details and full regulations online.
4. Lights are also required when boating from sunset to sunrise. The types of lights required differ based on the size of the boat. Check for details and full regulations online.

### Do I need an AIS inspection?

1. Any watercraft transported into Wyoming from March 1 through November 30 must undergo a mandatory inspection by an authorized inspector prior to launching in any water of the state. Additionally, if you pass an open AIS watercraft check station on your route of travel, you must stop for an inspection, even if your boat has already been inspected and documented.
2. If your boat has been in a mussel suspect/positive water (such as Lake Mead, NV; Lake Powell, UT; Great Lakes, etc.) in the last 30 days, you must have your boat inspected before launching in Wyoming during all times of year.
3. And, just as a reminder, all watercraft must have a valid Wyoming AIS decal before boating on any waters of the state. Decals are available online, at regional offices and at automated license vendors.

**Don't Move a Mussel**

**BEFORE YOU LAUNCH  
IN ANY WATER,**  
*protect your water resource and  
boat motor from invasive zebra  
and quagga mussels by doing a*  
**SELF-CHECK**

**Follow these simple steps to protect your waters:**

✓ **DRAIN** All water must be drained from your boat. This includes the ballast, bilge, livewell and motor. Leave wet compartments open.

✓ **CLEAN** Remove all plants, mud and debris from equipment and boat.

✓ **DRY** Dry your boat or equipment 5 days in the summer, 18 days spring/fall or 3 days of freezing.

**Help protect Wyoming's  
waters by making sure you  
Don't Move a Mussel!**



Please contact the Wyoming Game and Fish Department if you see attached mussels on your equipment or in Wyoming waters. We can provide more information and assistance in removal. Call 1-877-WGFD-AIS - (877-943-3247)


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DEPARTMENT**  
"Conserving Wildlife Serving People"


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HITCHHIKERS!**  
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## Wyoming Game and Fish Department

*Conserving Wildlife  
Serving People*

Lander Regional Office  
260 Buena Vista Dr.  
Lander, WY 82520  
Phone: 307-332-2688

### Important Dates in 2020

- **June 6 — Wyoming's Free Fishing Day** *The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission has declared June 6, 2020 Free Fishing Day to coincide with the beginning of the National Fishing and Boating week. Residents and nonresidents may fish Wyoming waters (excluding Wind River Indian Reservation and Yellowstone National Park) without a fishing license or conservation stamp.*
- **June 15 — Shoshone Lake and Shoshone Creek opens to fishing** *Closed to fishing from September 1 to June 14.*
- **January 1, April 1, June 1 — Wind River Indian Reservation waters open to fishing** *Reservation waters that are open to the general public (with a valid tribal fishing license) have various opening and closing dates. Make sure to consult tribal fishing regulations.*

### Unfortunately due to the Covid-19 pandemic the following events have been cancelled for 2020:

- **May 8, 9, 10 — Wyoming Outdoor Weekend (Lander) and Wyoming Outdoor EXPO (Casper)**
- **June 6 — Kids Fishing Day at Luckey Pond (Lander) and Big Bend ponds (Riverton)**
- **June 13 — Pete's Pond Dubois Kids Fishing Day** *(Pete's Pond is a new community fishing pond in Dubois located near the rodeo grounds. The pond was completed in 2018 and it is stocked with catchable size Rainbow Trout, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, and Grayling.)*

### Lander Region Fisheries Staff

**Craig Amadio — Regional Fisheries Supervisor, 307-335-2608**

**Joe Deromedi — Fisheries Biologist, 307-335-2605**

**Paul Gerrity — Fisheries Biologist, 307-335-2622**

**Joanna Harter — Aquatic Habitat Biologist, 307-335-2645**

**Nick Scribner — Statewide Fish Passage Coordinator, 307-335-2641**

**Alex LeCheminant — AIS Specialist, 307-527-7125**

**Brad Hughes — Dubois Hatchery Superintendent, 307-455-2431**

**Bill Yaracz — Dubois Senior Fish Culturist, 307-455-2431**

**Matt Yorgason — Dubois Fish Culturist, 307-455-2431**