



the wyoming game and fish department

May 2016

# CODY REGION newsletter

## Yellowtail wildfire



**A recent wildfire on Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area east of Lovell burned approximately 863 acres.**

A recent wildfire on Yellowtail Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) east of Lovell burned approximately 863 acres of cottonwood riparian habitat and wetlands along the Bighorn River.

The fire began on the afternoon of April 21 after an agricultural burn on private land got out of control. It stayed east of the Bighorn River until the following day when it crossed the river and burned portions on the west side. The fire burned National Park Service land that is managed by Game and Fish. Although no buildings on Yellowtail were lost in the fire, some boundary fences were destroyed.



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*serving the Bighorn Basin*

## In the water

### Tracking shovelnose sturgeon

The Cody region fisheries crew and aquatic assessment crew continue to make progress on an evaluation of a 20-year effort to reestablish a self-sustaining population of shovelnose sturgeon in the Bighorn River. As part of the project, radio transmitters are being surgically implanted into adult sturgeon allowing biologists to track these individuals to spawning sites.

To date, 34 of 50 transmitters have been deployed. Two spawning sites, located 58 and 62 miles upstream of Big Horn Lake, were confirmed last June. Telemetered fish will be tracked over the next four years during the annual spawning migration (April – May) and throughout the spawning season (late June – early July) to better understand the distribution of spawning sites throughout the Bighorn River and whether or not natural recruitment is occurring.

If additional spawning sites are located further upstream, it is possible that stocking shovelnose sturgeon will no longer be necessary to maintain the population – stay tuned.



Above: Fisheries Biologist Joe Skorupski implants a radio tracking device in a shovelnose sturgeon. Below: Radio telemetry is used to detect and track sturgeon with radio transmitters.



Nick Hogberg, fisheries biologist with the aquatic assessment crew, shows off a shovelnose sturgeon.



## On the ground

### Hunter education instructors needed in Cody and Powell!



Greybull Game Warden Bill Robertson conducting a hunter education class in Greybull.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is looking for volunteer hunter education instructors.

Tara Hodges, information and education specialist for the Cody Region, said there is an ever-present need for new volunteer instructors to teach hunter education throughout Wyoming, and recruitment of new instructors to meet public demands is an ongoing task. “Right now, we especially need instructors in the Cody and Powell areas,” Hodges said.

As a hunter education instructor, a person becomes a member of a special group of individuals who have made a strong commitment to educate a new generation of safe, legal and ethical hunters. While volunteers are not paid, many instructors express satisfaction in knowing they have helped enhance hunting traditions and values while promoting ethical hunting practices.

Hunter education classes consist of 12 to 18 hours of instruction covering six major topics: hunter responsibility and ethics, wildlife conservation and management, firearms and firearm safety, wildlife statutes and regulations, field care of game meat and wildlife identification and outdoor survival.

Those interested in becoming an instructor can call the Cody Game and Fish office at 307-527-7125 for more details or go to [wgfd.wyo.gov](http://wgfd.wyo.gov).

## On the ground

### Yellowtail WHMA receives irrigation improvements



Above: Habitat and Access Biologists Eric Shorma and Craig Swanson form walls on an irrigation structure on Yellowtail Habitat Management Area east of Lovell.

Yellowtail WHMA is managed by the Game and Fish through cooperative agreements between the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission, National Park Service, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The primary management goals of Yellowtail are to provide year round habitat for waterfowl and upland game birds and to provide access for hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities.



Completed structure on Yellowtail WHMA.