



# Wyoming Game and Fish Department

## Jackson Region

## June 2016 Newsletter

### Tracking Wyoming's Harlequins

Jackson Nongame Biologist Susan Patla and statewide Waterfowl Biologist Nate Huck joined biologists from Environment Canada, the Biodiversity Research Institute and Grand Teton National Park to initiate an exciting new research project that will reveal the seasonal travels of the rare harlequin ducks of northwest Wyoming. In late May, two mated pairs of harlequins were captured in Grand Teton

National Park with the two males each receiving surgically implanted GPS transmitters to track their travels for the next two years. Each female harlequin was fitted with a geo-locator leg band that will provide less precise data on their whereabouts.

Harlequins are one of the rarest breeding birds in the state, inhabiting swift water mountain streams of northwest Wyoming. This is the southeastern-most population of this decorative duck in western North America. It is a designated "Species of Greatest Conservation Need" and little information is available on the timing and migration routes, as well as important areas for Wyoming's harlequin ducks after they depart their breeding streams. These data are needed to manage for the long-term viability of this species in Wyoming and beyond. Funding was provided by the Jackson-based Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund.



Lucas Savoy, a waterfowl biologist with Biodiversity Research Institute gently untangles a male harlequin duck from a capture net in Grand Teton National Park.



Photos: (Above) Dr. Malcolm McAdie, a private consulting veterinarian from British Columbia surgically implants a GPS transmitter into a sedated male harlequin duck to track its seasonal movements. (Right) Nongame wildlife biologist Susan Patla holds a transmittered harlequin with Dr. Sean Boyd (Environment Canada)(L) and Lucas Savoy (Biodiversity Research Institute). Patla and Dr. McAdie release a pair of harlequin ducks back to their native habitat in Grand Teton National Park. Photos by Mark Gocke, WGFD



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## Kids Catch Fish!

The Wyoming Game & Fish Department, along with its many partners, held the 26th annual Kids Fishing Day event at the recently completed Rendezvous Park between Jackson and Wilson. The event continues to be quite popular with over 220 kids registering this year. The park offers a larger area for kids to spread out a bit more. The pond, a flow-through system with water supplied from the nearby Snake River, was stocked with hundreds of Snake River cutthroat trout hatched and raised at the department's Auburn Fish Hatchery an hour drive south in Star Valley. A fun day was had by all!





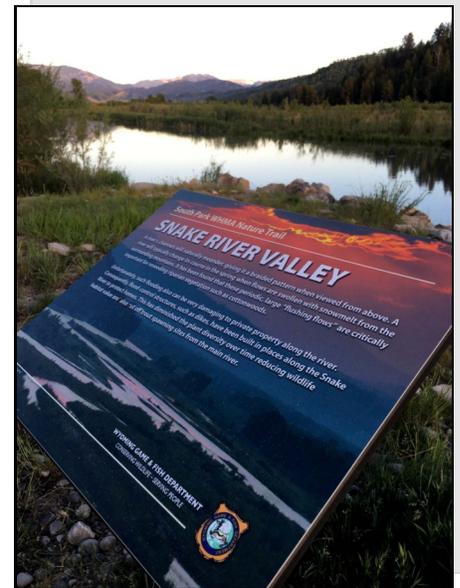
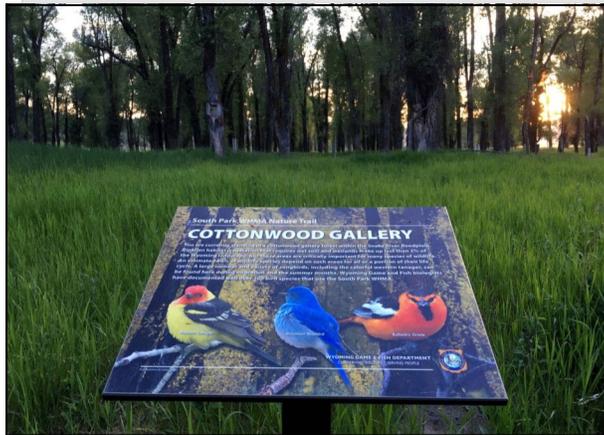
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## New Nature Trail at South Park

Visitors to the Game and Fish Department's South Park Wildlife Habitat Management Area will notice a 1.25 mile nature trail with 12 new full-color interpretive signs. The signs interpret the various sights and sounds hikers will experience along the way. Creation of the signs was coordinated by Regional Education Specialist Mark Gocke and installed by the Jackson Habitat & Access crew Matt Miller and Brandon Werner. Go check it out!



## Fighting Aquatic Invasives

The 2016 boating season has commenced in Jackson Hole and Star Valley. Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) check stations are up and running for the 2016 season. Wyoming state law requires all watercraft entering the state by land from March 1 - November 30 to be inspected for AIS before launching in a water of the state.

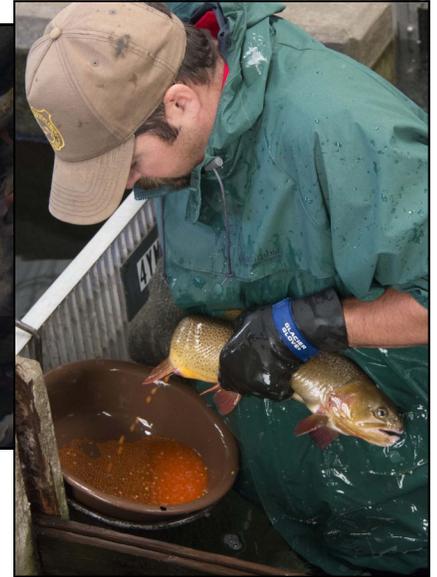
Check station locations in Star Valley include the Salt Pass check station on Highway 89 south of Afton/Smoot, which will run 8 am – 6 pm Thursday through Sunday. The check station located at the Port of Entry on Highway 26 in Alpine will run 7 am – 5 pm Monday through Wednesday and 7 am – 7 pm Thursday through Sunday.

Check stations at the Moose and Moran entrances of Grand Teton National Park will be operated seven days a week by the National Park Service.

Boaters can also stop by the Game & Fish regional office in Jackson (420 North Cache St.) to receive an inspection. A check station on Highway 22 at the top of Teton Pass will begin operation as the summer gets under way.



Jackson Office Manager Niki Johnson seals a boat after inspection.



### Snake River Cutty Spawn

The Auburn Hatchery continues their annual spawning operations for Snake River cutthroat trout. The first spawn was April 19 and they expect it will continue into July this year. They plan to collect approximately 1.2 million eggs from some 1,000 female cutthroats. The eggs will be distributed to other hatcheries in Wyoming as well as traded to hatcheries in other states including Nebraska, Arkansas and Idaho. About 1,600 of the hefty retired brood stock fish will be stocked to popular local fisheries throughout the summer including the R Park (for the recent Jackson Kids Fishing Day), Salt River, Swift Creek Reservoir, Strawberry Reservoir, Murphy Lake (in Star Valley), Kemmerer Community Pond, Diamondville Pond, Herald's Slough (Baggs), Fontenelle Reservoir and Jim Bridger pond.

*Photos: (Clockwise from upper left) 1) A classic male Snake River cutthroat trout. 2) Fish swim in one of the raceways. 3) Fish Culturist Travis Parrell collects eggs from a female Snake River cutt. 4-6) Auburn Hatchery Superintendent Ed Berry measures and carefully packages eggs for transport to the Jackson National Fish Hatchery. 7) A close-up of "eyed" eggs before transport.*





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## Moose Roadblock

Warden Graham responded to a report of a cow moose and its newborn calf that were holding up traffic on the Grey's River road about six miles from Alpine. The cow had just given birth to the calf on the road and was aggressively protecting it, preventing vehicles from driving by. Every time a vehicle would get within 50 yards the cow would pin her ears back and charge the vehicle. Warden Graham spoke with drivers that continued to arrive on site, wanting to allow the calf enough time to get its legs under it, so it could follow its mother away from the road. Bystanders waited patiently for close to an hour before the calf finally followed its mother down the steep embankment and off the road. Warden Graham directed traffic slowly by and observed the cow and calf doing fine in a willow patch.



## Spring Black Bear Season

The spring black bear hunting season runs May 1-June 15 in the Pinedale Region, unless the allotted female mortality quota is reached before season's end. Regional game wardens spend considerable time visiting bait sites before, during and after the hunt season to make sure all hunters are following the rules. Then, as some hunters are successful, regional personnel collect harvest information as bears are brought in for their mandatory check-in. At seasons end, 11 of the allotted 13 female bears had been taken in the Jackson hunt areas (18, 20, 21, 22, 24, 29) and 29 of the allotted 30 female bears were taken by hunters in the Wyoming Range hunt areas (14, 15, 16, 17 and 30).



### Managing Bear Conflict

The Jackson Large Carnivore section is happy to report relatively few bear conflicts so far this summer, but biologists have been busy trying to prevent conflicts by again erecting electric fencing at the Teton County landfill as well as a beehive operation on private land. Biologists also have been busy managing bear-human interactions involving roadside grizzly bears that have been frequenting highway 26 over Togwotee Pass between Moran Junction and Dubois.



(Above) Jackson Large Carnivore Biologist Mike Boyce constructs a solar-powered electric fence at the Teton County landfill. (Left) Boyce and Brucellosis Biologist Ben Wise fence beehives in Teton County.



### Yellowstone's Cutties

The Jackson fish crew made a trip up to Yellowstone National Park to assist the statewide spawning team with the collection of milt from male Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the Yellowstone River. The milt is combined with eggs from Yellowstone cutthroats in the Cody region to provide added genetic diversity.

