



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Jackson Region

October 2016 Newsletter



Flat Creek Cutts

The Jackson fish crew conducted their annual Flat Creek population estimate on the National Elk Refuge. This water is managed as a trophy fishery, so as expected, the population is dominated by some of the largest Snake River cutthroat trout in the valley at 20 inches plus and up to four pounds. Angler reports also backed up the survey results with a lot of large cutthroats being caught, although the fish can be somewhat finicky to the angler's fly. The number of non-native brook trout numbers are down from past sampling events, likely due to continued removals by managers and anglers in recent years. *Photos by Mark Gocke*





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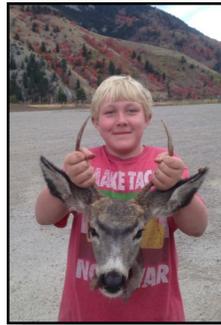
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The Alpine Check Station

Many of the Game and Fish Department's hunter check stations have become something of an institution and the Alpine check station is one of them. South Jackson Wildlife Biologist Gary Fralick runs the Alpine check station for several consecutive days coinciding with the September 15 deer opener. This hunt season, Fralick has contacted some 1,100 hunters and members of the public. Several trophy class mule deer bucks were again taken in the Wyoming Range herd with a number of deer being taken by young hunters (see photos). Gary checked 112 deer, with 96 percent being two years or older. Of those, Gary reports that 47 percent of the bucks had an antler spread of 24 inches or greater and five percent had an antler spread of 30 inches or greater! Gary also checked 16 elk, three moose, eight pronghorn, four black bears and six sage grouse.



Fralick is Wildlife Employee of the Year

South Jackson Wildlife Biologist Gary Fralick has been honored as the Wildlife Division Employee of the Year. Gary began his 30 year Game and Fish career in 1986 as a Biologist Aid in the Green River Region. After a short stint in the Cheyenne office, Fralick earned his own biologist district based in Buffalo, WY. In 1993, Gary transferred to Star Valley at a challenging time due to a recent downturn in mule deer numbers. Through a concerted effort to collect data and openly share it with the public and other constituents, Gary Fralick has become both well known and respected by both sportsmen and wildlife professionals across the country. Gary has initiated landmark research on Wyoming Range mule deer, Sublette moose and the Palisades mountain goat herd. For all that Gary has accomplished as an expert field biologist, he also greatly values our young hunters, teaching over 50 hunter safety classes and countless school programs on local wildlife over the years. Gary is the consummate wildlife professional and exemplifies the best of the best in the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. *Photos by Mark Gocke*





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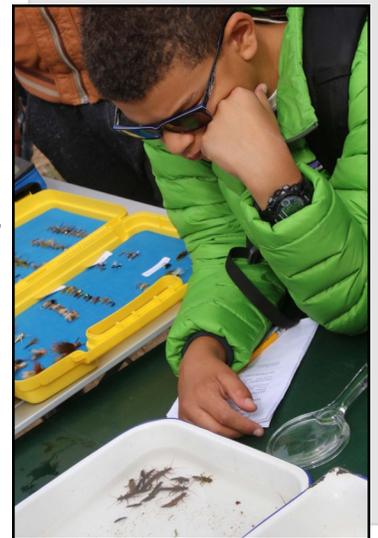


Jackson Hole Adopt-a-Trout

The Jackson fish crew teamed up with the local Trout Unlimited Chapter to continue it's Jackson Hole Adopt-a-Trout Program on the Hoback River this fall. Approximately 200 Jackson Hole Middle School students attended an outdoor day

with six field stations including: electrofishing, radio telemetry, fish surgery, macroinvertebrates, water quality, and food webs.

The Adopt-a-Trout Program educates students about their local watershed and fisheries while also providing important data to resource managers with tracking the seasonal movements of radio-tagged fish. The Hoback study radio-marked 30 fish, with 15 in the mainstem and another 15 in the tributaries of the Hoback River, to study winter habitat use and spring spawning movement as well as identify areas of conservation need. Local fish managers will also participate in additional classroom visits throughout the year and another field day in June where the kids will do a conservation "service" project. *Photos by Mark Gocke*





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Photos: Jackson Game Warden Kyle Lash and Jackson Wildlife Supervisor Brad Hovinga set up a deer decoy on the west side of the Tetons, with by Jackson Hole News & Guide reporter Mike Koshmrl who accompanied for a story. As a result, the operation received significant regional media coverage.

Keeping it Legal

Wyoming Game and Fish law enforcement officers from the Jackson Region conducted a deer decoy operation on the west side of the Teton Range, near the Wyoming-Idaho border, in an effort to reduce the number of hunting violations occurring there. Game and Fish officials have received several complaints of out of season deer hunting occurring in the area. The buck mule deer decoy was set up two miles from the state line on October 10 in deer Hunt Area 149, which closed to Wyoming deer hunting on October 7.

During the eight hours the decoy was set up, a total of 10 vehicles passed by. It is believed only one of those observed

the decoy and they shot at it. The individual was cited for taking a deer out of season, which carries a \$790 fine and given a warning for shooting from a public roadway.

“We don’t use decoys a lot,” says Jackson Game Warden Kyle Lash.

“But when we have certain problem areas such as this, they have proven to be pretty effective. They’re effective in that they put the wildlife, the game warden and the violator all at the crime scene at the same time. They’re just a good tool to

keep hunters playing by the rules.” *Photos by Mark Gocke*



Bummer Moose Story

Jackson Wildlife Coordinator Doug Brimeyer and Jackson Game warden Kyle Lash responded to a call of two bull moose that had drowned in a pond at a subdivision near Wilson, WY. The two apparently sparring bulls

had locked antlers and ended up in the pond and drowned. Warden Lash paddled out to the moose (upper left), unlocked the antlers and hooked them up to a cable so that they could be winched out and onto a trailer. It was an unfortunate way for these two magnificent animals to go.

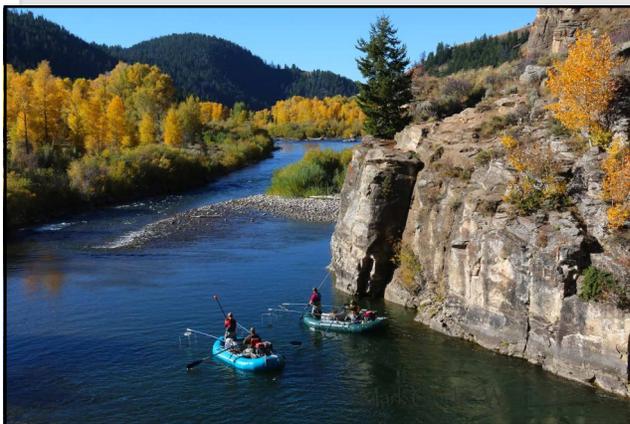


Photos by Doug Brimeyer



Gros Ventre Cutties

The Jackson fish crew conducted their annual sampling of the Gros Ventre River above the town of Kelly. An actual population estimate hasn't been made yet as managers typically don't analyze the data until the field season is over, but biologists believe the Snake River cutthroat numbers seemed similar to past years which show over 300 fish (greater than five inches) per mile. The river also holds some rainbow trout and some rainbow-cutthroat hybrids, but the belief is that numbers of both of these non-native fish seemed down. Similarly, sampling of Flat Creek on the National Elk Refuge also showed strong cutthroat numbers and fewer non-natives. *Photos by Mark Gocke*



Swan Flight

Jackson Nongame Biologist Susan Patla completed the annual fall trumpeter swan survey which provides a count of the resident, non-migratory swan population in western Wyoming, including the number of mature young produced in 2016. In Wyoming, outside of Yellowstone National Park, the total number of swans was 274 (213 adult/subadults and 61 cygnets). This number was just three shy of the 2015 count, which was a historic high and a 27 percent increase over the previous year.

In the Snake River drainage, Patla documented 61 adults and 16 cygnets, with a total of six successful nests: three on the National Elk Refuge, and one each on the Bridger Teton National Forest, Grand Teton National Park and private land. Since 1996, the numbers of adult swans has ranged from a low of 40 to a high of 73 (average 50).





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Happy Hunters

Afton Game Warden James Hobbs reports a good hunting big game season so far, with no major violations. Hobbs has made several good contacts with hunters so far in his first hunting season as the Afton warden. He and Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas (upper right) helped a young wounded veteran with a deer hunt in Region G. The hunter, Anthony Grimaldi of Bowdon, Georgia (right), was able to take a nice deer in the Salt River Range with the free help of Ryan Merritt of Smokey Canyon Outfitters.



A happy hunter with his licenses.

Photos by James Hobbs



Bear Activity Before Hibernation

Jackson Large Carnivore biologists Mike Boyce (right) and Sam Stephens received several reports of black bears in residential areas and campgrounds this fall, but fortunately most involved black bears foraging on berries rather than human foods or garbage. In such cases, the bear activity and bear biologists work with landowners to secure or remove potential bear attractants. Biologists did capture and relocate two adult black bears, one from the Indian Trails Subdivision and another from the Tucker Ranch subdivision that had been feeding on garbage exhibiting bold behavior around people.



In a continued effort to proactively reduce human-bear conflicts, Jackson Wildlife Division personnel make countless hunter contacts, both in the field and at the Jackson Game and Fish office, talking bear safety and making sure hunters have bear spray. This fall, if hunters in grizzly country do not have bear spray, free canisters have been provided. The supply of bear spray has been made available through a cooperative effort involving the Jackson Hole Wildlife Foundation and Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

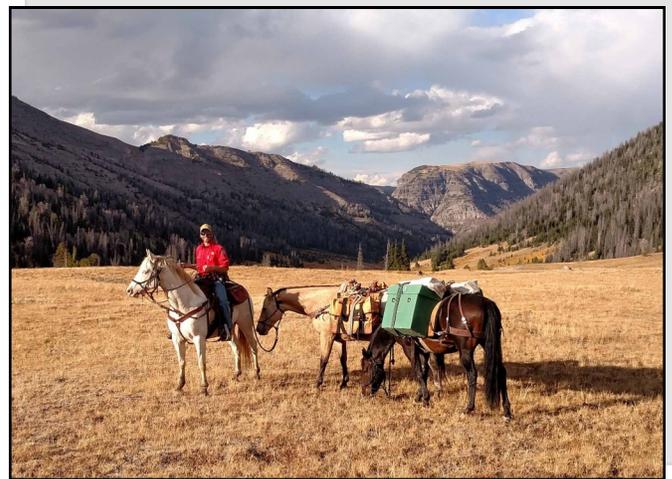




Hunting: the Good and the Bad

South Jackson Game Wardens Kyle Lash and Jon Stephens both made several trips on horse-back to contact backcountry hunters, including trips into the Absaroka, Gros Ventre, Teton and Snake River Ranges. Both wardens report generally good compliance this hunting season. However, thanks to a tip from a helpful hunter, Warden Stephens did make a case on a nonresident hunter for wanton waste when he

failed to recover the front shoulders of his elk. Then, after a lengthy discussion, the hunter confessed to a transfer of license charge when he had his hunting buddy tag his elk, so he could keep hunting after the buddy went home. He was also cited for attempt to take an over limit of elk because he kept hunting after he had already killed an elk. The three charges resulted in approximately \$1300 in fines. *Photos by Lash and Stephens*





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WILD Science Festival

Jackson Game and Fish personnel Lauren Flynn, Cory Abrams, Chance Roberts, Aly Courtemanch, Mark Gocke and volunteer Jessie Stirling spent two days teaching several hundred kids about fish and wildlife, the importance of habitat and how we learn more about that relationship by tracking these animals through radio telemetry.

Photos by Mark Gocke





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Fall Photos

By Mark Gocke

