



the wyoming game & fish department

LANDER REGION newsletter september 2015

Under the Water

Fishing in Upper Bull Lake Drainage

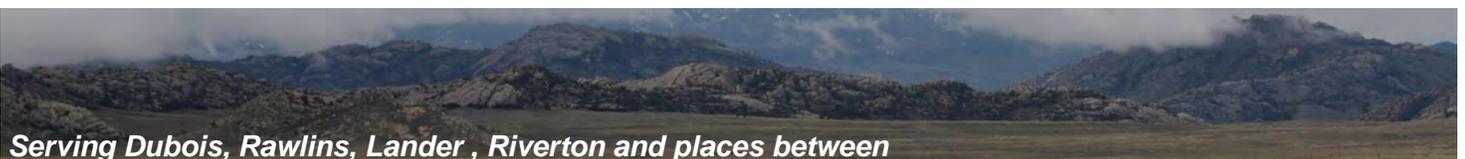


Golden trout from Bull Lake Creek drainage

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department sampled fisheries in the upper Bull Lake Creek drainage within the Fitzpatrick Wilderness in early August. Twelve lakes were surveyed and only one, Shield Lake, had no fish. Golden trout were found in all other lakes that were visited. Fish up to 19.4 inches were found and good numbers were discovered in most lakes (Table 1). Four Creek Lake and Sassafras Lake provide the best opportunity to catch a trophy golden trout. Marked Tree Lake, the lowest lake sampled in the drainage, also supports cutthroat trout. The creek upstream of Marked Tree Lake has natural barriers that prevent cutthroat trout from migrating to other lakes with golden trout populations.

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Serving Dubois, Rawlins, Lander, Riverton and places between

Under the Water, continued

The upper Bull Lake drainage is a good area for anglers seeking golden trout. For those thinking about planning a trip, it is important to note that this is a rugged drainage with few trails and lots of fallen trees. The most popular route is over Hays Pass from the west side of the Wind River Mountain Range.



Upper Golden Lake in the Bull Lake Creek drainage.

Table 1. Number, mean length (inches) and length range (inches) of fish captured by gill nets in lakes sampled in the Bull Lake Creek drainage in the Fitzpatrick Wilderness July 31 – Aug 8, 2015.

Lake	Trout Species	Number	Mean Length (inches)	Length Range (inches)
Dennis	Golden	12	11.3	6.2 – 15.7
Four Creek	Golden	23	8.8	5.1 – 19.4
Golden	Golden	13	12.2	7.2 – 15.9
Knife Blade	Golden	27	10.0	7.1 – 14.4
Lake Louise	Golden	2	11.1	8.6 – 13.5
Marked Tree	Golden	2	11.1	9.2 - 13.0
	Cutthroat	10	11.6	7.5 – 14.4
Pitcher	Golden	24	7.6	5.1 – 13.3
Three Creek	Golden	21	8.3	3.5 – 11.0
Sassafras	Golden	24	7.4	2.8 - 19.3
Upper Golden	Golden	13	8.7	6.5 – 13.3
Warrior	Golden	24	8.2	6.4 – 10.3



In the Air

Bat blitz



On August 28 and 29, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Nongame section held a Bat Blitz at Central Wyoming College's Sink's Canyon Center in Lander. The Bat Blitz was part of a national trapping and outreach effort coordinated by the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network. This was the second annual national event, but the first year Wyoming participated.

Almost everyone who came out got to learn about these fascinating creatures and see a bat up close. Several local school children brought their parents out and an enthusiastic group of college students visited on the second night. The event was spearheaded by Nongame Technician Alexandria Marquardt with help from Nongame biologists Laura Beard, Nichole Cudworth, and Zack Walker and Game Warden Linnea Sailor.



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Lander Region Webpage!

Visit:

[wgfd.wyo.gov/Regional-Offices/
Lander-Region](http://wgfd.wyo.gov/Regional-Offices/Lander-Region)

Photos clockwise from top left: Alexandria Marquardt setting up a mist net to capture bats; retrieving a bat from a net; holding a little brown bat; spreading out the wing membrane to age a bat.



In the Mountains

Atlantic Creek drainage survey



Trophy brook trout from Saddlebag Lakes.

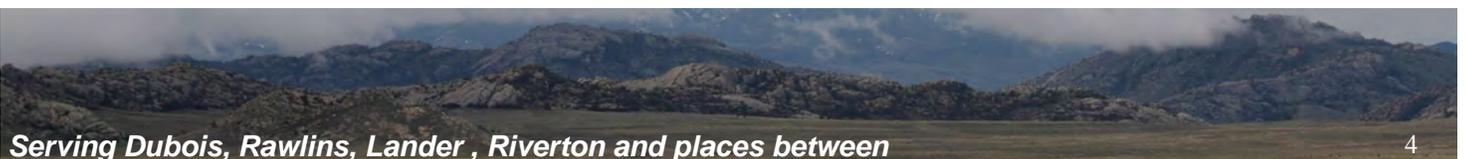
Every year Game and Fish samples different groups of alpine lakes in the Wind River Mountains. The Atlantic Creek drainage, a tributary to the Little Popo Agie River located within the Popo Agie Wilderness of the Shoshone National Forest, was the focus of sampling efforts in 2015. Three lakes historically managed for golden trout were surveyed; Windy, Upper Saddlebags, and Lower Saddlebags lakes.

Windy Lake was once consistently stocked with golden trout from the 1950s through 1993. Stocking ceased after 1993 because a large wildfire decimated Wyoming's golden trout brood source. Game and Fish eventually re-established a golden trout brood source, and stocking of Windy Lake resumed in 2006. Sampling in 2015 showed that the Windy Lake golden trout fishery is again flourishing. A gill net set in the lake had a high catch rate of golden trout. Additionally, fish were sampled across a broad size range (7 to 16 inches), indicating that stocked fish are surviving and growing.

Similar to Windy Lake, the golden trout fisheries at Upper Saddlebags and Lower Saddlebags lakes (hereafter referred to as the Saddlebags lakes) were temporarily lost after 1993. Golden trout were restocked in 2006; however, a mistake caused the accidental stocking of brook trout along with golden trout. The brook trout soon out-competed and consumed the golden trout until only a small number of goldens survived after 2009. Meanwhile, the brook trout grew big and by 2012 fish over 6 pounds were reported. In recent years, more anglers have visited the Saddlebags lakes to try to catch these trophy brook trout but the rigorous hike (the lakes are located at almost



Golden trout from the Atlantic Creek drainage.



11,300 feet) keeps angling pressure fairly low.

Biologists assumed that most or all of the brook trout originally stocked in 2006 would be gone by 2015, which would again make conditions favorable for golden trout in the Saddlebags lakes. Therefore goldens were helicopter-stocked again in 2014. Unfortunately the 2015 gill net survey did not find any surviving golden trout from the 2014 stocking event. However, three large brook trout were captured in the gill net and two additional brook trout were observed cruising the shoreline. The fish captured in the gill net bottomed out a 5-pound scale and were estimated to be 6-7 pounds. It is likely that these large, old (age-10) brook trout that have survived since the 2006 stocking event consumed all the golden trout stocked in 2014.

So what's next for the Saddlebags lakes? Opinion surveys show that anglers are split on management preferences. If you would like to have input about the Saddlebags lakes fisheries, please contact the Lander Fisheries Management Crew at 307-332-2688.

Behind the Badge

Bucks stuck



Brad Gibb works to separate two bucks whose antlers were entangled.

Game wardens Jessica Beecham and Brad Gibb responded to a landowner report of two buck whitetail deer whose antlers were locked together. Gibb and Beecham successfully darted the larger of the two bucks and separated the two by sawing a portion of an antler off the smaller buck. Both deer eventually recovered from the ordeal and left the area.



In the Field

Antelope surveys



Antelope near Oregon Buttes, photo by Stan Harter.

Most people in Wyoming realize wildlife is a public resource belonging to all citizens of the state. The Wyoming Game & Fish Department is tasked with monitoring and managing the wildlife resource for the public's enjoyment. One of the most popular ways of enjoying the state's wildlife is big game hunting each fall. Because of the number of people interested in big game hunting, Wyoming Game & Fish personnel spend a considerable amount of time each year conducting big game surveys. These surveys may include winter counts, spring mortality surveys, investigating disease die-offs, and assessing the productivity of herds (fawn and calf births). All of these surveys help biologists and wardens determine herd population size and whether a particular herd is likely to increase or decline during the upcoming year.

North Lander Wildlife Biologist Greg Anderson says, "One of the more common surveys conducted by biologists and wardens each year is antelope classifications in each herd throughout the state. Most commonly these surveys are conducted in August and early September prior to the start of antelope hunting seasons. During the surveys, personnel record the number of does, fawns, mature bucks, and yearling bucks observed. This data allows biologists to determine how many fawns are present in the population for every 100 does. It also details the percentage of bucks in the population. The data are used in conjunction with harvest data and winter mortality data to calculate whether the population will grow or decline prior to the next fall's hunting season."

Overall numbers look great so far with some of the areas completed listed below:

Game Warden Linnea Sailor counted a total of 1225 antelope in hunt area 106 with a fawn ratio of 73 fawns / 100 does. The buck numbers and quality also seemed improved from previous years at 40 adult bucks / 100 does as well as many more yearling bucks to be seen with 21 yearling bucks / 100 does. Linnea says, "If this trend continues, area 106 will look good going into the future."



Game Warden Brady Frude finished classifying pronghorn in hunt area 65. Brady says, "The number of fawns and yearling bucks is promising and, barring any major winter or disease events, shows good recruitment for this population." The number of mature bucks, although low, is consistent in this hunt area over the past five-plus years. Brady counted a total of 1109 pronghorn and observed 73 fawns / 100 does, 27 adult bucks / 100 does and 23 yearling bucks / 100 does.

Game warden Brad Gibb finished up classifications in area 67 and he ended up seeing ratios 61 fawns / 100 does, 40 mature bucks / 100 does and 13 yearling bucks / 100 does.

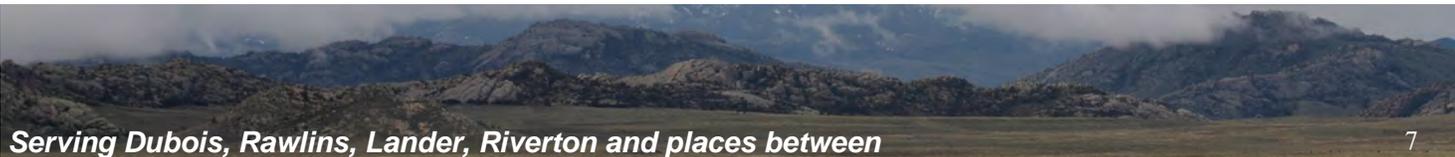
From the Families

Forever Wild fly fishing camp



Fly casting practice, dutch oven cooking, gearing up and fishing were just some of the fun activities the Lander Forever Wild families enjoyed in August.

In August, Lander Forever Wild Families gathered for an overnight trip to the Whiskey Mountain Conservation Camp in the Torrey Valley outside of Dubois. With help from the local Dubois Anglers and Wildlife Group, volunteers and staff, Lander families learned about large carnivore safety, how to fly fish and how to cook a dutch oven dessert. Learning new skills and figuring out how to make hunting and fishing a family activity is one goal of this program. Our amazing volunteers made this happen and made this a successful event. If you would like to be a part of the Forever Wild Family program, please contact Rene Schell at rene.schell@wyo.gov.



Outreach



Visit the Wonder Cabinet, an exhibit and hands on learning project brought to you by Game and Fish, Lander Art Center, Lander Arts and Sciences Center, PALS and the Wyoming Community Foundation.

Wonder Cabinets were precursors to museums in the 14th to 17th centuries and were encyclopedic collections of natural history, geology, archeology, relics and artwork.

Local school groups have also been visiting to learn about the melding of art and science.

Exhibit dates and locations:

Lander Art Center Aug 28- Oct 24

Frank B. Wise Building, Fort Washakie Oct 30 - Nov 14

CWC/ Riverton Nov 20 - Dec 19



Hunters and anglers please remember to be bear aware! Visit our website to learn more about bear safety this fall: wgfd.wyo.gov

