



may 2016

LANDER REGION newsletter

Photo by Stan Hart

Behind the Badge

Stop Poaching reward



Karrie Day receives her certificate and check at the Desert Bar in Wamsutter.

warrant was issued. Thank You Karrie!

Reynolds also subsequently failed to appear in Fremont County court to answer for the two Green Mountain deer and another arrest warrant was issued. To this day, Reynolds has still not served his time or paid his fines. We believe he is in either Colorado or Kansas with family.

...More game warden news on page 6.

Lander Game Warden Brady Frude had the pleasure of delivering a Stop Poaching reward check to an individual who called in a tip in 2014. Karrie Day called the Stop Poaching Hotline (1-877-WGFD-TIP) to report that she believed a local from Wamsutter had been either purchasing too many licenses or just flat out poaching deer.

Billy Reynolds was cited for intentionally taking an antlered deer in a closed season for a 6x5 buck and issued two citations for hunting on Green Mountain during a closed season for a doe and yearling buck. He received \$10,040 in fines and restitution, a year in jail and twelve years of suspended hunting privileges.

Reynolds failed to report to the jail at his scheduled time and an arrest



On the leks

Habitat and monitoring



In early March, much of the habitat surrounding Lander seemed destined for another drought with 33% below normal snowfall for the season. However, by the end of April, several snows and rains came, bringing the snow level to near normal, and precipitation levels to over 250% of average. In addition, over five inches of rain fell in a three-day period the first weekend in May, taking the year-to-date precipitation to over three times the average

since 1981! This has made for an extraordinary third wet spring in a row, and should make habitat grow like crazy.

So far, of the sage grouse lek data analyzed for 2016, male attendance has increased substantially over last year, and is on track to be the fourth best year since 1995. However, only about 1/3 of the leks checked this year have been entered into the database, and while these numbers are very optimistic, final totals will probably be a bit lower. Some leks have experienced higher attendance than ever (30-40% higher) this year and some of those have records dating back 30 or 40 years.



Sage grouse photos by Stan Harter.

Final data will be available later this summer, with an update likely to come in the July newsletter.

About the Education

Recruitment in the schools

Rawlins wardens Teal Joseph and Dillon Herman presented at a 5th Grade Career Day for Rawlins Elementary. Joseph and Herman talked about what game wardens do on a day-to-day basis and then allowed the students to collect evidence from a mock crime scene.



In addition, Teal Joseph went on a three-day game warden recruiting trip to her alma mater University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and University of Wisconsin-Madison. Teal spoke at several student organization meetings

including Student Law Enforcement Association and Wildlife Society meetings. The hope is that more students from these universities will apply to take the upcoming game warden exams.

On a local level, Game and Fish worked together with Wyoming Catholic College on a Forever Wild Student Week. Seventeen



Teal presenting on her recruiting trip

college students attended the two-day hunter education/range classes and finished their experience with a pheasant hunt on the Catholic College's property outside of Lander.

Help was received from all divisions within Game and Fish as well as numerous outside volunteers, including many four-legged helpers. The Wyoming Catholic College obtained a Chapter 10 permit for the pheasants and purchased the birds from George Cassel in Riverton.

Some students came into the experience being unsure of hunting, but in the end all students passed and decided to participate in the pheasant hunt.



Under the Water

Pilot Butte fishery



Volunteers Dave Dufek and Kevin Johnson (right) holding rainbow trout caught during the sampling.

If you are looking for a great spring trout fishing opportunity, look no further than Pilot Butte Reservoir, located 6.5 miles NW of Kinnear on HWY 26.

The rainbow trout fishery at the Reservoir was evaluated during the week of April 11 by setting gill nets at eleven sites. The nets revealed a high abundance of large and heavy fish, ranging from 11 to 20 inches. Most fish that were caught were 15 inches or larger as shown in the graph below (several 14-15" fish were already exceeding 2 pounds).

The success of rainbow trout at Pilot Butte seems to be the result of a new stocking strategy that began in 2012.

After studying different stocking practices throughout the 2000's, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department ultimately determined that spring-stocked, 8- to 9-inch trout had higher survival and faster growth than trout stocked at different sizes and times of the year. Since the change, average length and weight of trout has increased considerably. Anglers have been reporting good success already this spring fishing from shore and from boats.

In addition to rainbow trout, Pilot Butte provides opportunities to catch burbot (ling), brown trout, and yellow perch.



Fisheries Technician Clark Johnson holding a fat rainbow trout that was captured during the sampling.

There are many access points along the shoreline of the Reservoir, and a good boat ramp on the eastern end.

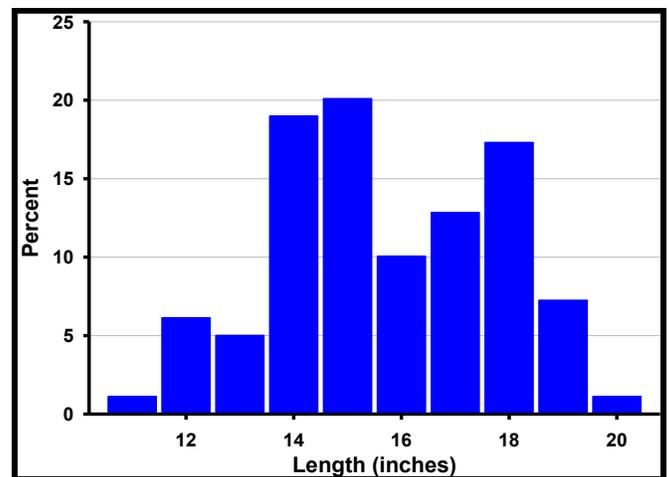
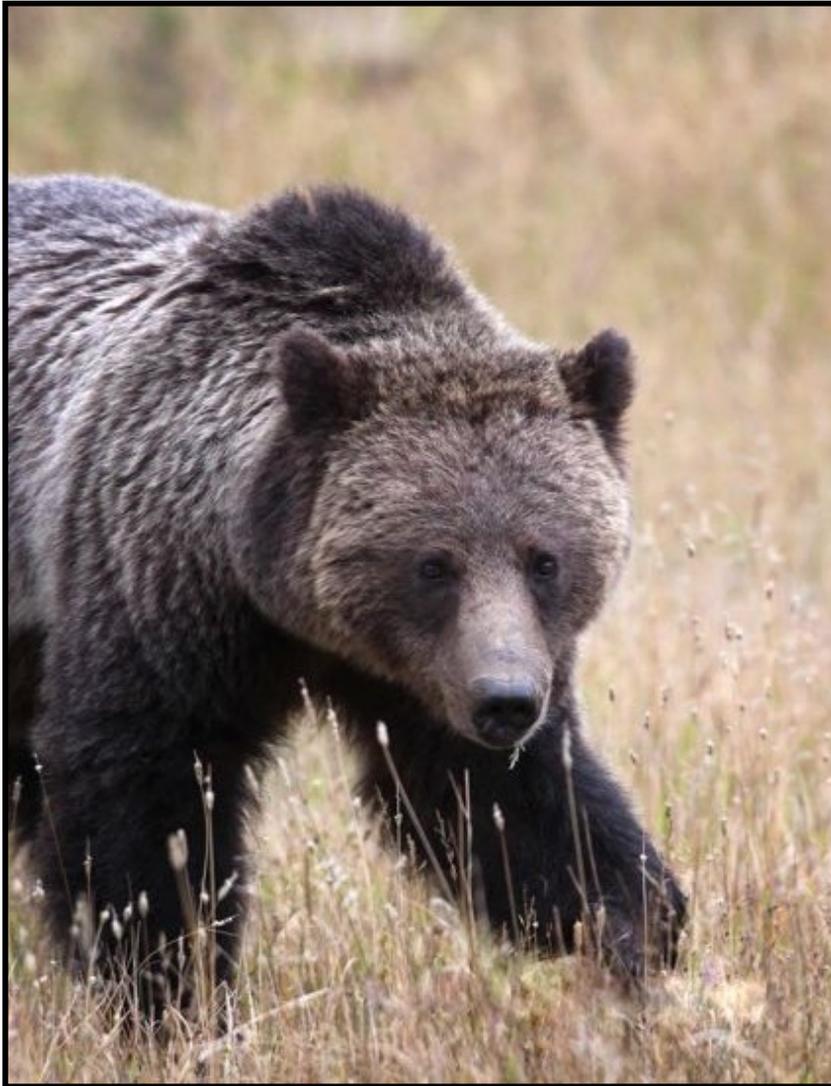


Figure 1. Length frequency of rainbow trout caught during the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's April 2016 survey of Pilot Butte Reservoir.



With the bears

Grizzlies



Grizzly bear photo by Mark Gocke.

The large carnivore section's work with grizzly bears has been busy from proposed delisting to updating of the management plan to resolving conflicts.

Working towards delisting, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently released its proposal to delist the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear. Then, the Wyoming Game and Fish (working together with Idaho and Montana) developed and brought out for comment the Grizzly Bear Draft Management Plan. The Plan was presented across the state and open for comments. After a few revisions, it was approved on May 11 by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission.

Now, in the next few weeks regulations that provide definitions and general management framework for grizzly bears upon delisting will be posted for public comment. These regulations (Chapter 67) will be taken to the July Commission meeting in Pinedale.

"This is an amazing story of success and the people of Wyoming should be proud of their contributions to the recovery of an iconic species once on the brink of extinction." –Dan Thompson, large carnivore supervisor

In addition to delisting work, bears are out of their dens, and work on "Bear Aware" programs and conflict resolutions are already underway. Springtime bears are sometimes observed at lower elevations, depending on snowpack, searching out quick and easy nutrients and working out the kinks of a long winter's sleep. Large carnivore personnel have been busy working with Atlantic City and Dubois to obtain bear resistant containers, giving safety presentations and trainings to public and businesses, investigating conflicts in Dubois and Cody, and capturing and relocating several grizzly bears already this year.

For more on grizzly bear safety, delisting information and information on other large carnivores see wgfd.wyo.gov/Wildlife-in-Wyoming/More-Wildlife. Also please make sure to report any grizzly bear sign and/or activity to someone from the large carnivore section and spread the word of awareness.



Behind the Badge, continued

Floating check station



Above: Game Wardens Dylan Bergman, Dillon Herman, and Adam Parks check fishing licenses and live wells at the Pathfinder Fish Check Station. Below: Happy anglers on Pathfinder in April.

Game wardens and fisheries biologists from the Casper and Lander Regions conducted a floating check station on Pathfinder Reservoir again this year in response to concerns of over limits of fish being taken. Although the weather and walleye did not cooperate, personnel participating in the check station were able to contact several fishermen and watercraft operators and they did detect several violations. Overall, most of the anglers were very pleased with our presence and thanked us for being out there.



Case of the stolen rifles

Dubois Game Warden Brian Baker found two rifles alongside a road near the Inberg Roy Wildlife Habitat Management Area while conducting winter range patrol in the area. Brian ran the serial numbers and found out both firearms had been reported stolen last fall. The Sheriff's Department contacted the owners of the rifles and it appears the two non-resident hunters had harvested elk last December and left their guns next to the road while loading the elk in their truck. After learning where the rifles were found, they figured out they must have forgotten to pick up their guns before heading back into town. Both individuals were very happy to get their guns back.



Rifles discovered outside of Dubois.



On the Ground

Habitat work with beavers

Terrestrial Habitat Biologist Amy Anderson and Lander Game Warden Brady Frude set snares to live trap beavers on the Paralda Ditch south of Lander. Unfortunately the beavers won this time and they were unsuccessful in their live trapping effort. However, their presence forced the beavers to move on, effectively helping out the landowner experiencing the problems in the first place.

These snares utilize relaxing locks so beavers can be caught and released. Any beavers successfully trapped will be moved to Wyoming Game and Fish Commission owned lands in East Fork area near Dubois to help re-establish beaver populations there.



Snare sets on Paralda ditch.

WE SUPPLY THE
TROPHIES
YOU MAKE THE
MEMORIES

Wyoming's
Super Tag raffle
offers 9 species
and 10 chances
to win.



THE ULTIMATE WESTERN
HUNTING ADVENTURE

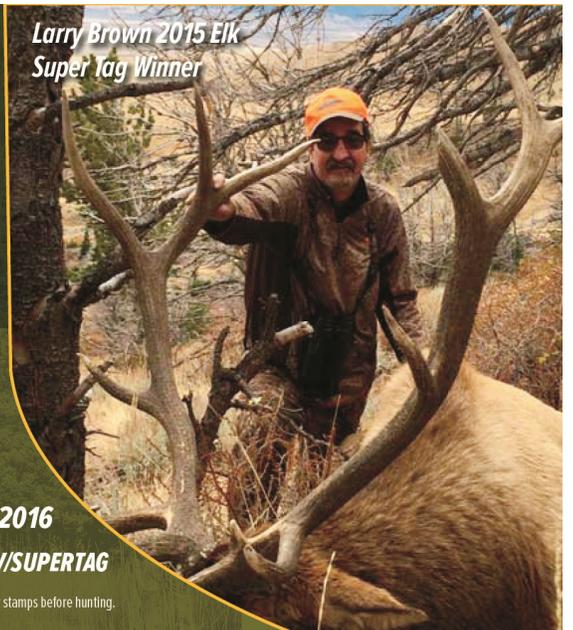
Super Tag tickets: \$10
Super Tag Trifecta: \$30

Deadline to apply is July 1, 2016

APPLY ONLINE: WGFD.WYO.GOV/SUPERTAG

Raffle winners must purchase any applicable licenses and/or stamps before hunting.

Larry Brown 2015 Elk
Super Tag Winner



Serving Dubois, Rawlins, Lander, Riverton and places between

From the field

Here are some spring visitors seen afield this last month. Are there birds that make you think spring has arrived?



From top, clockwise: Sandhill cranes in flight, western meadowlark, chukar, great blue heron rookery, mountain bluebird. Photos by Stan Harter.

