



Laramie Region Newsletter



“Conserving Wildlife - Serving People”



Game Warden Dillon Herman holds a mule deer fawn that was removed from a home where it was being kept as a “pet.” In Wyoming it is illegal to possess big game animals and many other species. More info at wgfd.wyo.gov.

Fawn crop looking great

2015 is shaping up to be a great year for fawn and calf production.

Fawn production appears to be high among all big game species in the Laramie Region. Lots of babies are on the ground and many doe antelope with triplets have been observed around the Medicine Bow district. Elk also appear to be having a stellar calf crop.

Forage production is also fantastic across the region due to the substantial amount of precipitation this spring. Adequate amounts of forage mean big game animals will go into the fall and winter months with good fat reserves, which will give them a much better chance at survival if the upcoming winter is severe.



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Calendar

July 21- Free photography workshop. Laramie G&F office, 528 S. Adams; 2-4 p.m. RSVP to : jessica.grant@wyo.gov

Wildlife surveys in Laramie Region

More than 800 species of wildlife exist in Wyoming, but only around 100 of them are pursued by hunters and anglers. While game species are regularly monitored, information is also needed on the distribution and abundance of non-game species, many of which have been termed Species of Greatest Conservation Need, or SGCN.

SGCN designation is intended to identify species whose conservation status warrants increased management attention, and funding, as well as consideration in conservation, land use, and development planning in Wyoming. At right, biologists in Wheatland monitor populations of the Plains pocket mouse and the upland sandpiper. Below, native fish biologists sample Lodgepole Creek near Cheyenne to determine populations of native non-game fish species such as long-nosed dace, brassy minnow, common shiner, white sucker and others.



WGFD escorts moose out of Cheyenne



He was a little early for Frontier Days, but that didn't stop a young bull moose from wandering around the intersection of Interstate 25 and Happy Jack Road on a bright, sunny morning on June 8.

The moose was spotted near the Frontier Days overflow parking lot and posed a serious risk to motorists and itself. But help quickly arrived from the Laramie Game and Fish office, Wyoming Department of Transportation, Wyoming Highway Patrol, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and F.E. Warren Air Force Base.

The moose was successfully tranquilized and then loaded into a horse trailer. On its way to the release site in the Snowy Range, biologists stopped off at the Laramie Game and Fish office to spray the moose with water to cool it down before continuing the journey. It was like a day at the spa for the young moose, who seemed to actually enjoy the impromptu shower.

The moose was then safely relocated to habitat much more suitable than a busy intersection on the edge of Cheyenne.



Birds



Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood returned this young kestrel to its nest after it was turned in as an "injured owl."



North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd discovered this lark bunting nest after the adult bird faked an injury to lead him away from the nest.

Torrington angler sets new gizzard shad record



Torrington resident Dawson Reifschneider caught the new state record gizzard shad out of the North Platte River in Torrington on June 25.

Reifschneider was fishing for walleye and catfish when he caught the fish. He said he was just going to throw it back, but his brother and fishing buddies convinced him to weigh the fish, believing he may have caught a record breaker.

They were right: the shad weighed 2.74 pounds and was 19.25 inches long, easily besting the previous record caught out of Glendo Reservoir in 2013. The previous record was 2.65 pounds and 18 inches long. Congratulations, Dawson!

To qualify for a new fish record, anglers need to get the fish weighed on a certified scale and have it verified by the Game and Fish Department. A listing of state record fish is on the Game and Fish website at

wgfd.wyo.gov.



With Lake Hattie water levels as high as they have ever been, there are lots of plankton to keep Kokanee salmon spread throughout the lake. Anglers might want to try their luck. Photo by Bill Brinegar

How to release fish the right way

As the summer fishing season progresses, waters in streams and lakes naturally start warming, which increases the importance of following fish-handling steps to help improve survival of fish that are to be released. At this time of year, waters are lower and warmer than they were a month ago. The resulting higher water temperatures can place extra stress on fish.

Fish that are to be released should be played and landed as rapidly as possible to reduce exhaustion stress. This means anglers may wish to choose heavier tippet or leader sections to enable to play the fish more quickly and get it back in the water in a timely manner.

Careful handling of the fish can also reduce mortality. Fish should not be squeezed and anglers should take care to keep their fingers away from the gills. A landing net is helpful in handling a fish and

facilitates getting the hook out quickly. Anglers may also consider using barbless hooks, which minimizes the handling of the fish and the time the fish is out of the water. Regular hooks can be made barbless by flattening the barb with a pair of pliers.

Once the fish is caught it can be revived by holding it gently in an upright position facing upstream in fairly calm water. Move the fish slowly back and forth to get water moving through the gills. The fish can then be released in quiet water after it has regained its strength and is able to swim from your grip.

Anglers fishing in a water where bait fishing is allowed who plan on releasing their fish, may consider using artificial flies or lures as survival of released fish is five to ten times greater using artificial, as opposed to natural bait.



Thank you, volunteers!

More than 100 volunteers helped stock 18,000 brook trout in beaver ponds in the Pole Mountain area of the Medicine Bow National Forest on June 6. The annual event helps fish biologists stock about 180 hard-to-get-to ponds in only one day.



At left, children carry buckets containing fingerling brook trout to stock in the beaver ponds. Above, fish biologists transfer trout from the hatchery truck to smaller vehicles equipped with oxygenated tanks for transport to their new homes.

Information & Education



Fishing was one of the activities during the 4-H Showcase Showdown in Cheyenne on June 26. Game and Fish personnel helped kids from around the state try their luck fishing in Absaraca Lake in Cheyenne.



Native fish study

Albany County students in the OAK program (Outdoor Adventure and Knowledge) joined Fish Biologist Bobby Compton's crew to learn about native fish species in Wyoming. They learned to identify several native minnows, why biologists sample streams, and some of the equipment and methods used to catch the native fish.



Habitat for the future

Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton helps Saratoga Elementary School students plant a spruce tree at Veteran's Island Park as part of Arbor Day activities. National Arbor Day is celebrated every year on the last Friday in April. The customary observance is to plant a tree. On the first Arbor Day, April 10, 1872, an estimated one million trees were planted across the United States.

Free photography class

Would you like to learn how to take better photographs of Wyoming's stunning wildlife and scenery? If so, plan to attend a free photography workshop hosted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

The workshop will teach you to capture compelling stories, create dynamic compositions and control the technical aspects of your images. The two-hour workshop includes a classroom presentation and the opportunity for you to shoot photos under the guidance of the instructor.

The workshop will be held from 2-4 p.m. on Tuesday, July 21, at the Laramie Game and Fish office at 528 S. Adams St.

Grab your camera and come to this free workshop. Please RSVP to Jessica Grant at jessica.grant@wyo.gov.

Take hunter education this summer

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department is reminding hunters that now is a good time to take a hunter safety course in preparation for the upcoming hunting seasons.

It is often difficult to find a class and complete the course in a short time frame before hunting seasons.

The instructors for these courses are often volunteers and they generously give a lot of their time to help the public become ethical and safe hunters. With a minimum of 12 hours required for course

work, and the voluntary work of instructors who have to schedule classes, it can be hard to find a course at the last minute.

Information on locations and dates of new courses is listed on the Game and Fish website at wgfd.wyo.gov. The online course schedule is updated continually as instructors make arrangements for upcoming courses.

Check the website often for updates. Once they are listed, most of the courses fill very quickly.

Law enforcement

Hunter, outfitter guilty in mountain lion poaching

A hunter from Pennsylvania and a Wyoming outfitter were both found guilty of knowingly killing a mountain lion without a license.

Edward Mazur of Blakely, Pa., and his friend Joseph P. Chaya of Shickshinny, Pa., were on an outfitted elk hunt with Timothy Millikin, owner of Millikin Ranch Outfitters, of Glendo.

Mazur said while hunting elk on Oct. 19, 2014, a mountain lion came within 20 yards of him. He asked his guide what he should do, and Millikin told him to shoot the lion.

Mazur killed the lion at approximately 8:30 a.m. He did not possess a mountain lion license at the time. Millikin instructed Mazur and Chaya on how to proceed after the lion was killed. Mazur and Chaya then drove to Glendo, where Mazur purchased a nonresident mountain lion license at 10:22 a.m.

Mazur was cited with knowingly taking a mountain lion without a license, and fined \$5,040 and ordered to pay \$2,500 in restitution. His hunting privileges were suspended for five years and he forfeited a Clymer's rifle with an attached Swarovski scope, a firearm valued at more than \$5,000.

Millikin was cited for accessory to knowingly taking a mountain lion without a license, fined \$5,040 and ordered to pay \$2,500 in restitution. Millikin's hunting privileges were suspended for five years.



Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton rides his horse Kookaburra to check anglers at Stovepipe Gulch in the North Platte River Wilderness Area. He met a group of Australian visitors who were delighted to meet a Wyoming game warden on a horse named after a bird native to Australia.

Seeking information on poaching crimes

Laramie Region game wardens are seeking information on two poaching cases.

Wardens are seeking the owner of a red pickup truck that was possibly used in a poaching case involving two pronghorn antelope near Medicine Bow on June 6. Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda said two pronghorn were shot along Marshall Road northeast of Medicine Bow sometime between 4 and 7 p.m. that day.

One of the pronghorns was gutted and the lower legs were cut off and placed in a star or cross formation with the animal's heart placed inside. No meat was taken from either animal.

Wardens are looking for a red pickup truck with aggressive tires, possibly Goodyear Dura-Tracs or something similar.

Wardens are also seeking info on three pronghorn antelope that were killed south of Laramie sometime between June 30 and July 2.

The three does were discovered by an Albany County Sheriff's deputy along Sand Creek Road south of the Mountain Cement Company plant on Thursday, July 2. South Laramie Game Warden Bill Brinegar had patrolled that area on Tuesday, June 30 and the pronghorn were not there at that time. "They were killed sometime between Tuesday night and Thursday," Warden Brinegar said.

Anyone with information on this crime is asked to call the Stop Poaching Tip Line at 1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847). Tips may also be reported online at <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>. Informants can choose to remain anonymous.

A reward is being offered for tips leading to a conviction in either of these crimes.



Teamwork solves poaching case

Cheyenne Game Warden Shawn Blajszczak assisted South Gillette Game Warden Dustin Kirsch on a case involving taking antelope without a license, transfer of license and numerous false oath charges during June.

Blajszczak worked with Colorado Parks and Wildlife Game Warden Jeff Behnke to interview one of the suspects in Colorado. The wardens got full confessions and seized a great deal of evidence.





Stay safe out there

On June 6, North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd was traveling west on Highway 34 when a storm hit and the road became covered with rain and hail. Warden Todd had already helped a couple people whose vehicles had become stuck due to the wet conditions. A couple miles later he came across a truck that had gone off the road due to the accumulation of hail on the road. Nobody was injured, but it does remind you that there are many hazards that can occur on Wyoming's roads throughout the year so please drive care-

Aquatic Invasive Species update

Throughout the Laramie Region there were 3,897 watercraft inspected for aquatic invasive species through June 30. Nearly half of the watercraft, 1,929, came through the Cheyenne I-25 Port of Entry and 91 percent were nonresident watercraft.

A total of 541 high risk inspections and 77 decontaminations were conducted, most on watercraft that were last used in high risk waters in various other states. The majority of the high risk inspections and decontaminations took place at the Cheyenne I-25, Cheyenne I-80 and Laramie Ports of Entry.

One watercraft at the I-25 Port Of Entry was found to have attached live mussels and was decontaminated before being released to travel to Washington. The mussels were analyzed and later determined to be Conrad's false dark mussels, a species related to zebra/quagga mussels that live in saline environments.

Inspection locations in the Laramie Region include the Cheyenne Game and Fish Department Headquarters, Laramie Regional Office, Cheyenne I-25 Port of Entry, Cheyenne I-80 Port of Entry, Granite Reservoir, Grayrocks Reservoir, Guernsey Reservoir, Hawk Springs Reservoir, Lake Hattie, Laramie Port of Entry on US 287, Saratoga Lake and Seminoe Reservoir.



Searching for sheep

Wildlife biologists in the Laramie Region conducted bighorn sheep lamb surveys and summer range surveys in June. At left, Wheatland Wildlife Biologist spotted this herd of ewes and lambs in his district. Far right, Saratoga Wildlife Biologist Will Schultz looks for bighorn sheep at Green Mountain Falls on the North Fork Encampment River in the Huston Park Wilderness. Photos by Martin Hicks and Biff Burton.

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