



# Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Pinedale Region

January 2016 Newsletter



## Mule Deer Counts

Every winter Wyoming Game and Fish biologists and wardens climb into a helicopter to conduct their annual deer population survey and classification. December is a good month for this as deer are usually congregated on their winter ranges, bucks still have their antlers attached and there is often snow cover making the animals more visible from the air.

In the Sublette herd, managed by Pinedale Wildlife Biologist Dean Clause and Pinedale game wardens Jordan Kraft and Bubba Haley, there

were 9,932 deer classified this year, which is about 1,000 more deer than the 10-year average. While this number does not serve as a population estimate, it does provide some indication of how many deer are out there on the ground, so it is somewhat encouraging. After a couple of relatively mild winters, managers were hoping the number of fawns would increase, but it was 65 per 100 does, just under the 10-year average of 67. However, the number of bucks was strong again at 43 per 100 does, which is the highest recorded in at least 10 years.

In the Wyoming Range herd, Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas and South Jackson Wildlife Biologist Fralick conducted classifications for the northern portions of the Wyoming Range with overall ratios similar to last year. Buck ratios, and especially yearling buck ratios, were again a bright spot this year. The total number of bucks in the northern Wyoming Range was again strong at 39 per 100 does. Unfortunately, the fawns ratios were a bit below the past few years at 60 per 100 does.

Managers presented the results of their annual mule deer counts, habitat projects and current research at a series of public meetings held in Marbleton, Pinedale and Thayne the first week of January.





# Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

## January 2016

### Brucellosis Business

The Game and Fish Brucellosis-Feedground-Habitat (BFH) personnel have been busy meeting with producers and updating their Brucellosis Management Action Plans (BMAPs).

The development of BMAPs was one of the top recommendations of the Wyoming Governor's Brucellosis Coordination Team, which is a panel of cattle producers, scientists, wildlife professionals, veterinarians, and lawmakers assembled in 2004 to make recommendations related to

brucellosis in wildlife and livestock. BMAPs were first completed in 2006 for all seven elk herds containing elk feedgrounds, were updated in 2011 and are again now in 2016.

A series of five meetings were held with cattle producers in Lincoln, Sublette and Teton counties recently to gather their input on brucellosis management options for elk. Public informational meetings will be scheduled this spring and draft updated plans are scheduled to be posted to the Game & Fish website by this summer.

Brucellosis biologists teamed up with local game wardens and the department's elk feedground personnel in monitoring elk distributions around feedgrounds. With the snow and extremely cold temperatures the potential for elk getting into conflict increased and feeding was initiated at most Game and Fish administered elk feedgrounds in late December.



*Brucellosis-Feedground-Habitat Biologist Eric Maichak presents the Game & Fish Department's current Brucellosis Management Action Plans and gathers input from cattle producers at meeting in Daniel on Dec. 15, 2015.*



*Elk at the McNeel Feedground near Bondurant*



# Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

January 2016

## Behind the Badge

**North Pinedale Game Warden Bubba Haley** monitored elk distribution around the Soda Lake and Black Butte feedgrounds and responded to several complaints about elk in conflict situations. Warden Haley moved approximately 250 elk through the Soda Lake elk fence from private lands west of the feed ground. Haley moved another estimated 150 elk out of haystacks and feed lines along the New Fork River. Warden Haley also called hunters with a 96-4 elk license, directing them to problem elk within the open hunt area.



South Pinedale Game Warden Jordan Kraft watches a group of mule deer on winter range south of Pinedale in mid December. (Below) Kraft investigates a carcass found south of Boulder.



## Winter Range Patrol

**Warden Haley** coordinated the annual mule deer winter range task force, noting that there seems to be significantly fewer mule deer watchers on the winter ranges this year. There are numerous very large deer scattered throughout all winter range complexes and many generated calls from concerned citizens who were afraid these “Once in a Lifetime” bucks would be poached.

**Big Piney Game warden Adam Hymas** reports that even though the snow depth seems to be below average on the winter ranges, the -20 degree temps in early winter could have an impact on some deer. He reports investigating at least seven mature buck mule deer in the last month that have died of natural causes (malnutrition, old age, sparring mortalities from the rut, etc.)

Warden Hymas also has been tagging bobcats that trappers/hunters have started to take, but reports that there seem to be fewer such cats being taken this year.



# Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

January 2016

## Hatchery News...

**The Daniel Hatchery** crew set up eyed egg hatching baskets in the hatchery for receipt of the “fall crop” of fish from the Story Fish Hatchery. Species included brown trout, brook trout and splake.

Kris Holmes assisted two Pinedale Middle School students with a science fair project and provided fish “slime” from our fish. The students want to see if mucous from fish is a protective barrier to algae growth. These students placed second at state science fair last year on a similar topic.

**The Boulder Hatchery crew** teamed up with statewide fish distribution staff and other regional personnel to stock out a total of 3,315 fall rainbow trout brood culls in December, totaling 7,280 pounds of fish!

The annual fall rainbow trout spawning operation concluded with a total green egg take of 2.6 million.

Boulder Superintendent Chip Moller transported male fall-spawning rainbow trout to Lucky pond in Lander to make FFR cross with female FHR fish from Tillett. Fish were spawned on site and released into the pond with the assistance from Dubois Junior High School students & teachers.

The Boulder Hatchery also received 133,000 eyed Kokanee eggs from Dubois and Daniel hatcheries. These fish will be reared at Boulder and later transferred to the Flume Creek facility for release into the Green River.

Habitat & Access crews worked at McNeel feedground making emergency repairs to fix a stackyard fence that was damaged by elk. Habitat & Access Supervisor Miles Anderson and crewman Kyle Berg (below) transformed an old worn out snowmobile trailer into a much needed welding trailer.





# Pinedale Region Monthly Newsletter

## January 2016

### Talk of the Town...

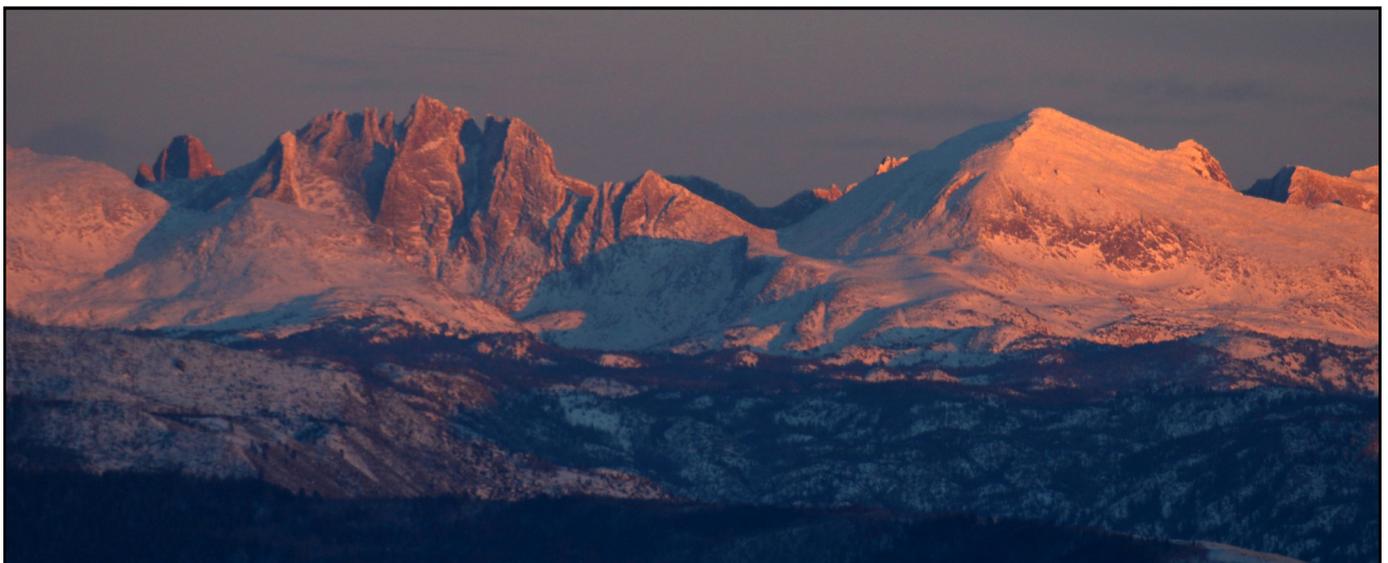
The buzz in Pinedale in December was all about ice. Is there ice? Where is there ice? How thick is it? Is it fishable yet? Those were the common questions heard by office manager Lori Johnson (right) during the mild December weather.



Fortunately for the frustrated anglers the weather turned in their favor. By end of December, most area lakes are frozen over and there's plenty of opportunity to fish for the catch of the day!

Anglers are encouraged to stop by the Game & Fish office and pick up their Anglers Diary to record their success this season. Diaries can then be turned in at the office at the end of the season. The Fisheries Division will use this data to aid in population statistics and fish management on area lakes. Happy Angling!

As always, all ice anglers are encouraged to be safe and **Check Ice Conditions As You Go!**



Sunset on the Wind River Range