



WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT



LARAMIE REGION newsletter

APRIL 2016



Prescribed fire at Springer WHMA

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department burned 280 acres at Springer Wildlife Habitat Management Area in March to improve habitat for pheasants and other wildlife.

The burn will provide opportunity for forbs (wildflowers) to flourish. The Game and Fish Department's Habitat Access Maintenance crews will be following up the burn with some light disking and interseeding of forbs to help increase diversity this spring.

The area that was burned provides nesting cover for wild pheasants and migratory waterfowl. The prescribed burn will help set back succession and remove years of accumulated plant litter, allowing more diversity of plant life for these and other species.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department extends its gratitude to several volunteer fire departments in Goshen County that assisted with the burn.



Man charged with taking a pheasant from the road

Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood completed reports and submitted information for discovery regarding an unusual case in February in which a man turned himself in for having “accidentally” shot a rooster pheasant that he claimed he had misidentified as a jackrabbit as it crouched under a rock on a state section of land.

When Wardens Sherwood and Bill Brinegar tracked the suspect back to the scene, they found the pheasant and another animal were both illegally shot from different locations on the Sand Creek Road south of Laramie.

The pheasant, likely the product of a licensed bird farm nearby, had been in a stand of willows, not under a rock, and the suspect had not even made it to the state section he had described.

The suspect eventually pleaded guilty to shooting from a public road and will pay \$220 in fines and his hunting privileges are suspended for six months.



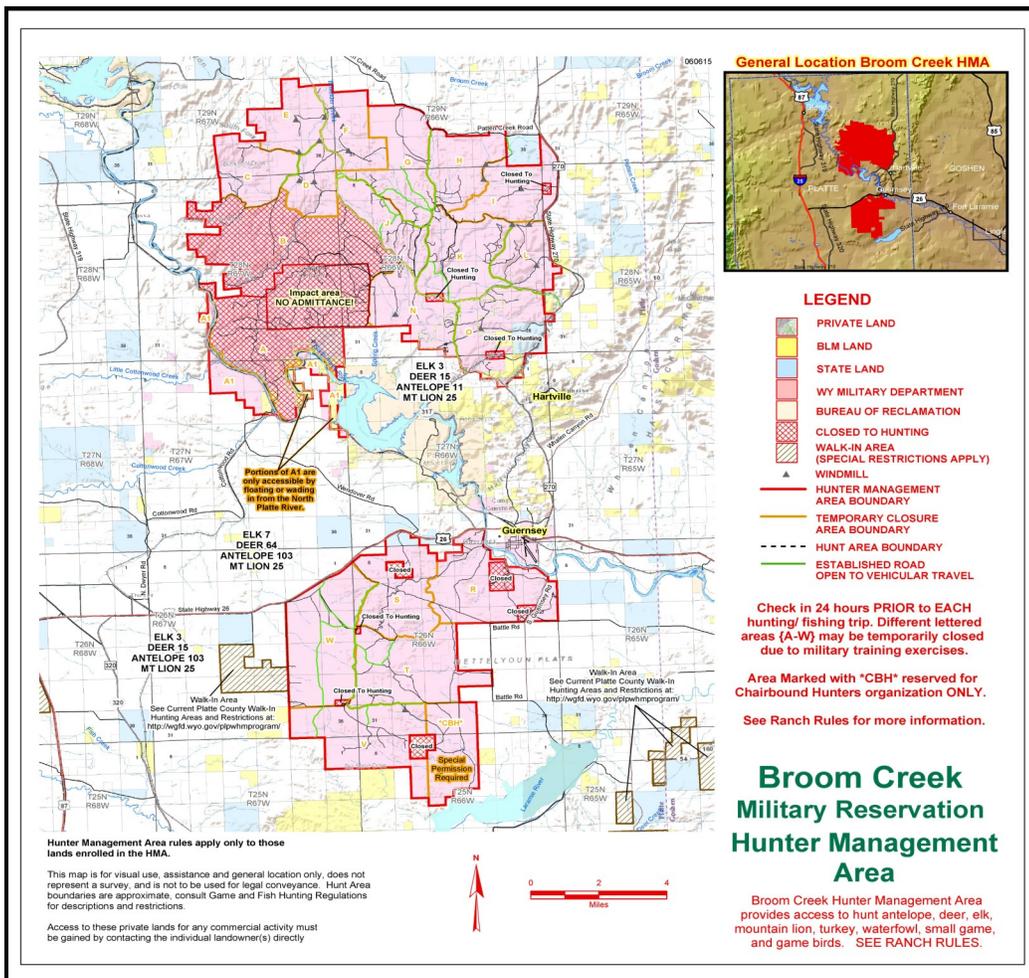
Changes at Broom Creek HMA

Hunters should note significant change at The Broom Creek HMA (Camp Guernsey/Wyoming Military Department) for this fall.

Instead of having permission slips during the deer season only valid for two- or three-day periods, this year there will be 50 slips valid for the first week and 50 more valid for the second week.

As always, hunters are required to call in the day prior to each hunting trip. No more than 35 hunters will be allowed on base at any one time, with limitations to distribute everyone across the portions of the base which are open for that day's hunt.

More information on the Broom Creek HMA can be found online at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/>





Wayward bighorn sheep

A young bighorn sheep ram wandered into Chugwater and paid a visit to the Mary Queen of Heaven Catholic Church. As per Department protocol, the young ram was euthanized. Necropsy results showed he had severe nasal tumors and was shot at some point with a larger caliber bullet.



Necropsy to be performed on study moose

Elk Mountain Game Warden Ryan Kenneda observed an emaciated cow moose along Pass Creek between Elk Mountain and Code Mountain in early March. The moose was wearing a collar marked #15 and was unfortunately not moving.

Warden Kenneda informed the biologists who are heading the Snowy Range moose study. The following day the biologists decided to euthanize the moose to gather biological data. Warden Kenneda met with Wildlife Disease Specialist Terry Creekmore at Pass Creek where the moose was last seen and discovered that the moose had already died. The moose was taken to the lab for necropsy to determine its cause of death.



Studying bighorn sheep diseases

The wildlife disease laboratory staff joined the University of Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit in March to capture 33 bighorn sheep for disease research and body condition monitoring.

This cooperative project is designed to determine how body condition may influence which species of respiratory pathogens a particular sheep (or herd) may carry. This research involves capturing bighorn ewes twice a year (December and March), sampling for respiratory pathogens, and assessing body condition by measuring their fat depth ultrasonically.

Several northern herds were selected for this research including Whiskey Basin, Jackson and Absaroka. This is the second year of this project, and to date, no direct relationship between body condition and pathogen presence has been established.



Hank Edwards collects samples from a bighorn sheep to detect pathogens that can cause respiratory disease.



Chute system inside the handling building.

Sheep handling facility complete



Funnel for herding sheep into the handling building



Catwalk on the back side of the funnel

The crew at the Thorne/Williams Research Facility is proud to announce the completion of the bighorn sheep handling facility.

The catch pens, alleys and a funnel into the building were completed with 8-foot walls and a catwalk for working sheep. Plastic paneling was finished on the walls and ceiling creating a watertight room for cleaning and disinfecting.

The interior electrical was finished and the room heater and hot water heater were installed. We installed a stainless steel sink and counter tops along one wall and a built-in scale was installed and calibrated in the alley.

Positive changes at Grayrocks Public Access Area

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department wants anglers and other sportsmen to be aware of some changes at Grayrocks Reservoir Public Access Area (PAA).

Outdoor enthusiasts should note that all off-road recreational vehicle use will be prohibited on the Grayrocks PAA. Personnel with the Game and Fish Department and Basin Electric expressed concern about risks to public safety from having off-road vehicles on the small access area. "We have seen a sharp rise in the use of off-road vehi-

cles on the access area and we feel there is a real risk to public safety if we don't do something," said Rick King, Regional Wildlife Supervisor in Laramie.

The limit for camping will be also reduced from 14 days to seven days to address overcrowding issues. Grayrocks Reservoir PAA has become popular for campers, especially around holidays. The changes went into effect on March 31. Two new boat docks will be installed and improvements will be made to the parking lot.



The Laramie Region Habitat and Access crew has been busy installing boat ramps for the summer boating season. Shown are the West dock at Grayrocks Reservoir (at left) and the boat dock at Lake Hattie.

Photos by Mark Worth



Free fishing workshop in Wheatland

If you need some fishing tips and ideas, join employees from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department at a workshop called “Tacklin’ the Basics of Fishing” on Saturday, April 30 in Wheatland. The workshop will begin at 10 a.m. at the Platte Valley Bank, 200 16th Street, and will later move to Wheatland Reservoir #1 for an afternoon of fishing.

Laramie Region Fish Biologist Steve Gale will present a slide-show to help anglers learn about the local fishing spots around Wheatland; the history of fish stocking in these water bodies; common angling tactics for various fish species; best times of year to fish and more.

Following the slide show, join WGFD personnel for a few hours of fishing at Wheatland Reservoir #1. Poles, tackle and bait will be available for use at no charge. All anglers over age 14 are reminded to purchase a 2016 fishing license and conservation stamp. For more information call Robin Kepple at (307) 777-4523.

Fishing regulations meeting

Anglers are invited to attend a public meeting to discuss proposals for the 2017 fishing and watercraft regulations. The meeting will be at 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 20 at the Game and Fish Department Headquarters, 5400 Bishop Blvd in Cheyenne. Learn about:

- A proposal to add Wheatland Reservoir #1 in Platte County to the list of waters managed for the Special Winter Ice Fishing Provision.
- A proposal to eliminate the special size limit on bass at Rock Lake.
- Other proposed changes across the state

Video will help black bear hunters during spring season

With spring black bear season upon us, bear hunters are encouraged to check out an online video that will help them distinguish between male and female black bears.

“It is often very difficult to determine the gender of a black bear,” said Robin Kepple, public information specialist in the Laramie Region. “And when the female quota is reached in a bear hunt area, the season closes for that area.”

There are several ways to help a hunter distinguish male and female black bears and to selectively hunt mature male bears. Tracks, differences in body size and shape, group size, and certain behavioral characteristics all provide evidence of sex.

Adult male bears are usually larger than females. A large male bear often weighs between 200-250 pounds but they can grow to over 300 pounds. Adult females are typically 130 to 150 pounds.

Females appear smaller and leaner looking, appearing as long as they are tall, while mature males have more blocky and rectangular bodies. Because they are larger overall, adult male bears usually have larger feet than female bears.

The front foot tracks offer the best clues as to whether the bear is male or female. Adult male tracks are usually wider than 4.5 inches, but females are usually less than 4.5 inches wide.

But size alone is not enough to determine if a bear is male or female. Hunters can learn more about distinguishing the sex of a black bear by watching the entire video online at: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Regional-Offices/Laramie-Region>.

Remember, black bear gender cannot always be determined easily or with certainty while in the field.





“Meet a Warden” was a success

Cheyenne Game Warden Shawn Blajszczak worked with Dan Baker, the store manager at Sportsman’s Warehouse, to set up a “Meet a Warden Day” at the store on March 19.

Game Warden Kelly Todd was recruited to assist Blajszczak for the event. Wardens Blajszczak and Todd said the event went well and they were able to answer questions from many people.

Warden Blajszczak is planning on doing more Meet a Warden events at Sportsman’s Warehouse thru July. A special thank you goes to Sportsman’s Warehouse and Dan Baker for allowing us to hold this event at their store.

Meeting with local landowners

Wildlife personnel with the Laramie Region attended the elk Area 6 landowner meeting in Horse Creek in early March.

Several landowners attended the meeting and were able to talk with Game and Fish biologist and wardens about big game management including elk, deer, antelope, moose and bighorn sheep.

Meetings such as these also allow landowners to visit with one another about wildlife on their lands. The Game and Fish Department holds these meetings periodically to get landowners’ perspectives on various wildlife topics. March is a busy time of the year for the landowners because of calving season and the overall cooperation is a true testament to how well Wyoming Game and Fish personnel and landowners work together to cooperatively address big game management. A special thank you goes out to landowner Dave Berry for allowing us to hold the meeting in his house. Photo by Kelly Todd.

Sheep Mountain Mule Deer Initiative Meeting

A meeting for the Sheep Mountain Mule Deer Initiative will be at 6:00 p.m. Thursday, April 28, at the Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center room #227. The Berry Center is located at the corner of 10th Street and Lewis Street on the University of Wyoming campus.

WE SUPPLY THE
TROPHIES
YOU MAKE THE
MEMORIES

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



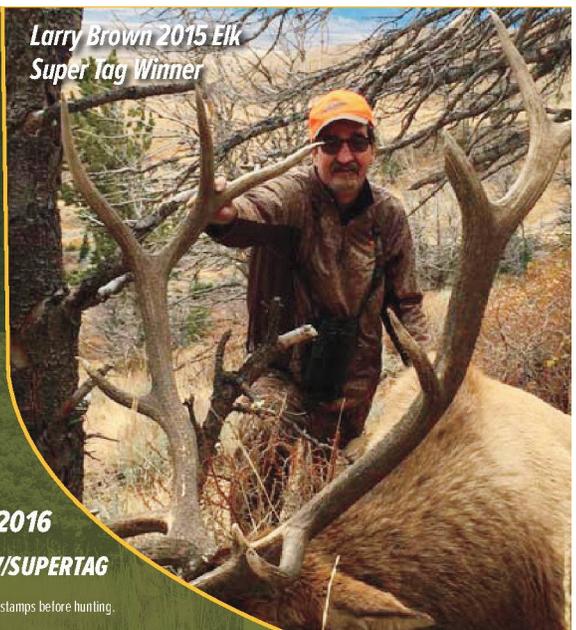
THE ULTIMATE WESTERN
HUNTING ADVENTURE

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.





Congratulations to new game warden graduates!

Five new game wardens completed their initial law enforcement training at the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy in Douglas in April.

Game Warden Kristen DaVanon, who is assigned to the Laramie Region, received a merit award for academic achievement after finishing in the top 5 of her class of 35 students. Good job, Warden DaVanon!

Graduate Mitchell Renteria, also assigned to the Laramie Region, will join DaVanon on Glendo Reservoir this summer where they will work to enforce watercraft safety and fishing regulations.

The Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy is the only law enforcement training facility in the state, ensuring that officers have consistency in all areas of training.

Jerry Cowles Jr. leads Laramie Habitat and Access crew

For the past several months, Jerry Cowles Jr. has been leading the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Habitat and Access crew in the Laramie Region.

In this role, Cowles is responsible for managing 11 Wildlife Habitat Management Areas and more than 25 Public Access Areas throughout the Laramie Region, which includes Platte, Goshen, Laramie, Albany and Carbon counties. Three full-time employees and two seasonal employees help him maintain the properties. The crew has a variety of duties, including public safety, installing fencing, maintenance of facilities, habitat treatments, irrigation, planting and maintaining food plots, and many other tasks that are necessary to provide habitat for wildlife and recreation for humans.

Cowles says the job is a good fit. Growing up on a farm near Cody, he wanted to be a game warden when he was a boy. It was on the farm where he learned to irrigate, install fence, cut hay and various other chores that are a part of farm life. Pursuing his goal of becoming a game warden, he received an Associate's Degree in General Science from Laramie County Community College in 2010 and pursued a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Biology from South Dakota State University.

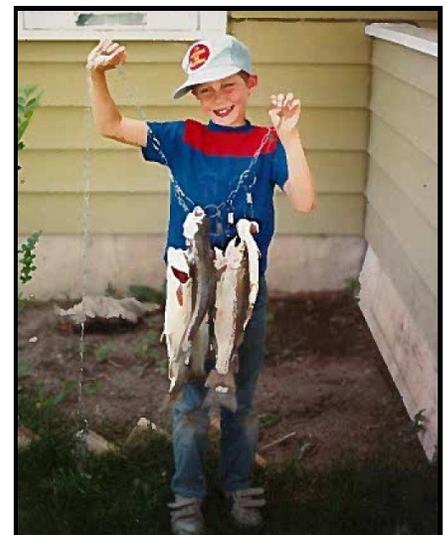
In 2009 he was hired as a seasonal Habitat and Access biologist in Laramie, He was offered a permanent position on the statewide Habitat and Access crew in Lander in 2010. He moved into the habitat biologist position in Yoder in 2013, and into his current role as Habitat and Access Supervisor in August 2015.

As an avid hunter, angler and wildlife photographer, Cowles says the best part of his job is working with NGOs (non-government agencies) to obtain more public access. "I enjoy providing new areas for Wyoming sportsmen to hunt, fish and explore," he said.

Cowles lives in Laramie with his wife, Luann, and their four children.



Jerry Cowles, Jr., today and at age 7.



Lemmy gets a hoof trim

Although it was a busy time at the Thorne/Williams Wildlife Research Center at Sybille, biologists still found the time to trim hooves and give an annual exam to our hand-reared bighorn sheep, Lemmy. She is the only lamb we've been able to successfully rear out of a group of chronically ill bighorn ewes.

While she is not a research sheep, her presence at our facility helps to remind us what we are working towards: finding ways to improve the health of our wild bighorn sheep populations in the face of respiratory disease.



Large Carnivore Workshop

Twenty-seven people attended the "Living in Large Carnivore" workshop in Saratoga on April 2.

The participants learned how to react if confronted by a bear, mountain lion or wolf. There were presentations on bear and mountain lion food habits, where one would expect to encounter a bear, mountain lion or wolf, food storage regulations, understanding large carnivore behavior and what to do in an encounter. In the photo at left, Laramie Region Information Specialist Robin Kepple demonstrates how to properly use bear spray. Photo by Dan Thompson.

Personnel training

Game Wardens David Ellsworth, Rob Hipp and Cody Bish attended a watercraft accident investigation course taught by National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. This course concentrated on the physical characteristics of watercraft crashes, the unique behavior of colliding watercraft, and how to conduct in-depth investigations of crashes.

Game warden Shawn Blajszczak trained with Wyoming State Parks law enforcement and attended the legal updates class (new case law). Blajszczak and Warden Kelly Todd also gave a boating safety and regulations presentation to Wyoming State Parks officers. Blajszczak then assisted Wyoming State Parks officers with simunitions training.

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