

In the News - trapper's education class



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Employee trapper education class. Clockwise from top: Alan Sinner skinning a beaver. Jim Pearce fleshing out the beaver hide, Alan setting a snare (2 pictures), Alan's dog caught in a snare to demonstrate release and Dave Fowler showing a leg hold set (center photograph).

Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Lander Region held their first employee trapper education class. Eighteen employees, across divisions, attended this one day class. Instructors travelled from around the state to share their knowledge with our employees. Tom Krause spoke on trapping regulations, Alan Sinner demonstrated snaring and beaver skinning, Dave Fowler taught the group about leg hold traps, Jim Pearce showed the group how to tan beaver hides and talked about the fur industry, and Eric Kregel helped answer questions on avoiding non-target species. This was a very beneficial class for everyone involved.

North Riverton Warden Jessica Beecham felt, "This was a good opportunity to establish positive working relationships with trappers in the area."

Commission President Richard Klouda said, "I would highly recommend it be offered elsewhere in the state. I appreciate being given the opportunity to learn more about the world of trapping."

East Rawlins Warden Brady Frude said, "I found a trap line the other day that I never would have found before the class."



In the Field - habitat work



Mowing fire breaks at Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area.

Following the promotion of Brad Sorensen to Cody Habitat and Access Supervisor, the Lander Region Habitat and Access crew added a new member in January. Miles Proctor started January 20th in Dubois. Miles was raised on a ranch outside Lusk, has degrees in Wildlife and Range Management from Chadron State University and brings a strong background in habitat restoration and noxious weed management. Miles brings a wealth of skills to the department to benefit our wildlife resource.

Habitat and Access folks have been focusing on winter projects through January. Skye Shaw and Derek Lemon rebuilt the floor in the bunkhouse at Whiskey Basin Wildlife Habitat Manage-

ment Area (WHMA). The floor joist required replacement following a flood event a couple of years ago. The joists and subfloor were replaced and the finished flooring was reused. The bunkhouse at Whiskey Basin WHMA is used by seasonal employees during the summer months and department employees year-round, to reduce lodging costs associated with project work.

Derek Lemon has been busy preparing for the scheduled prescribed burn on Pond 6 at Ocean Lake WHMA. This will be the third consecutive year Derek has orchestrated the prescribed fire program at Ocean Lake to reduce cattail densities and facilitate vegetative diversity. The burns could not occur without the generous support, resources and personnel of the Washakie Ranger Dis-

trict, Lander/Worland Zone BLM fire crews and Midvale volunteer fire departments. Prior to the burn, Derek has been cutting fire breaks and coordinating all the required paperwork. Based on weather conditions, the burn is scheduled for later in February.



Miles Proctor, new habitat and access employee.



On the Job - upcoming job opportunities with Game and Fish

The Game Warden Exam now being offered online. Please review the job requirements and other details online at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/web2011/wildlife-1001571.aspx>.

The registration deadline is **June 23, 2015.**



Water for Wildlife and Wyoming Game and Fish Department are looking to hire a *biologist technician intern* for a total of 480 hours between June 1 and August 28. The closing date of the job announcement is February 28.

The intern will be given the opportunity to work with full-time and seasonal employees in multiple divisions within the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's Lander Region and Statewide Sections including Fisheries, Wildlife, Law Enforcement, Aquatic and Terrestrial Habi-

at, Information and Education, Conservation and Hunter Education, Habitat and Access and Non-Game Wildlife.

The intern will also assist in water development project folder/file management for 170+ water development projects that have been completed in Wyoming over the last 30 years. Job duties will include in-field inspections of water development projects (status updates) within 150+/- miles of Lander, preparation of itemized lists of project repairs and cost estimates, creation of files database and nomenclature system for

files, photos and etc.

The applicant must have completed sophomore or greater undergraduate coursework in natural resource management at the University of Wyoming. For questions and instructions on how to apply call Ryan Admundson, statewide habitat biologist, at 307-331-0787.

The funding for this position is provided by Water for Wildlife, a fundraising organization associated with the One Shot Antelope Hunt.



With the Carnivores

Large Carnivore Section personnel investigated a report of a mountain lion sighting just north of Lander, on the outskirts of city limits. No tracks were verified but several landowners and residents were contacted about the potential for mountain lion activity, the importance of not feeding wildlife and provided with informational material.

In addition, personnel worked to produce an interim report for departmental wolf management activities from Jan. 1-September 23, 2014. Game and Fish continues to maintain a

high level of communication with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Governor's office, Wildlife Administration and all of Wyoming's stakeholders regarding wolves that reside in our state. This Interim Report will be available to the public when finalized and will also be put forth by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Annual Wolf Report.

Specific questions as to wolf status and authority should still be directed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



An photo from 2012 of Bob Trebelcock, Ken Mills and a black yearling wolf. Bob is restraining the wolf who is caught in a leg hold trap, while Ken prepares to inject immobilization drugs so they can then collect samples and collar the wolf.

On their Hands - spotted skunk research in the Lander Region



Two different spotted skunks captured on trail cameras in the Sweetwater Rocks area.

“THEY STAND ON THEIR HANDS WITH THEIR BACK LEGS AND TAILS IN THE AIR”

During the month of January, Non-game Biologists Jesse Boulerice and Brian Zinke continued surveys for spotted skunks throughout the eastern two-thirds of the state.

Baited camera stations were deployed around the Sweetwater Rocks near Jeffery City and throughout the western slope of the Bighorn Mountains. Two individual spotted skunks

were detected in the Sweetwater Rocks, one near Devil's Gate and another near Split Rock. Survey efforts continue to be met with high success.

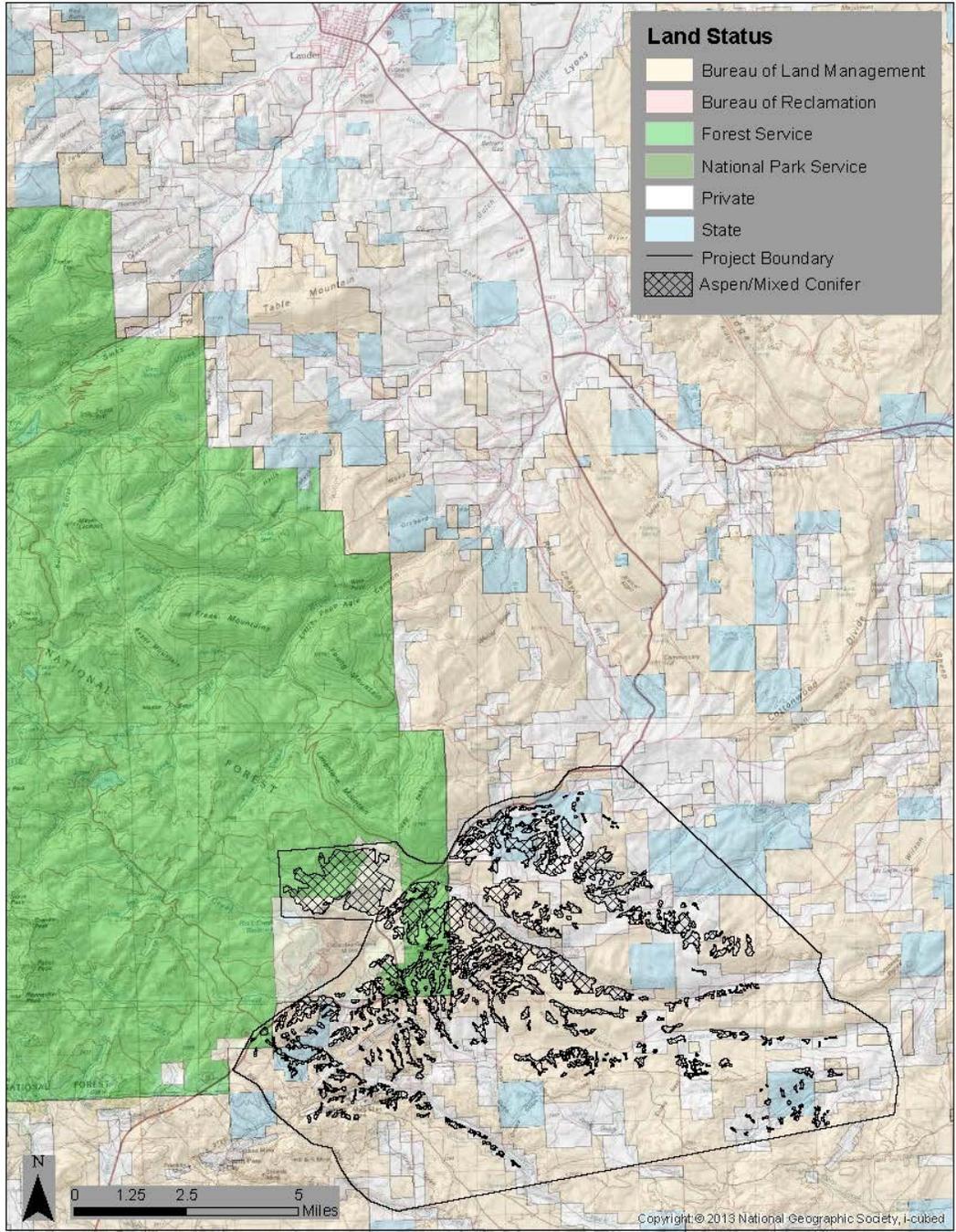
To date, over fifteen individuals have been detected as part of this project, adding substantially to our understanding of the distribution and habi-

tat requirements for this uncommon and secretive species in Wyoming.

The title of the article eludes to the pre-spray warning behavior of spotted skunks. When spotted skunks feels threatened, they stand on their hands with their back legs and tails in the air, so they appear bigger to scare off any perceived threat.



In the Habitat - improvement projects



Map above shows the aspen restoration project on South Pass.

Aquatic Habitat Biologist Nick Scribner was busy this last month preparing grant proposals for five different habitat projects including restoring aspen habitat on South Pass, stream restoration on the Middle Fork Popo Agie through Lander City Park, a diversion and tributary enhancement on the East Fork Wind River, and for work on wetlands around Ocean Lake Wildlife Habitat Management Area. Funding from grants outside of Wyoming Game and Fish is vital to completing these and other statewide habitat projects.



With the Wardens - harassment of wildlife case



Wintering pronghorn photo by Stan Harter

On February 4, Mick Albright, 22, of Riverton, Wyoming pled guilty to two charges in Riverton's Ninth District Circuit Court to harass/pursue pronghorn antelope from a motor vehicle and littering.

The incident occurred on March 10, 2014, when six young adults were out with two all terrain vehicles (ATV's) on Bureau of Reclamation and Wind River Reservation lands in the Madden Draw area north of the Riverton airport near the Paradise Valley Road. The group came upon a small herd of pronghorn antelope and one ATV, driven by Albright and carrying three passengers, decided to pursue two doe antelope. Albright started chasing the animals on a two track road and then turned into the sagebrush and pursued the animals at high speed cross-country. One of the passengers took a video of a portion of the chase and

posted it to their Facebook page.

After viewing the Facebook post, concerned citizens started calling the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Wyoming Game and Fish Department to turn in the illegal harassment and off road travel violations. Game and Fish Wildlife Investigator Scott Browning, Riverton Game Warden Brad Gibb, and BLM Ranger Tom Howe, cooperatively followed up on the report and conducted an investigation with close coordination with the Wind River Tribal Fish and Game.

A search warrant resulted in officers obtaining the full length video of the chase that showed Albright pursuing the two does at high speed through the sagebrush with the animals running hard, leaping over sagebrush, and frequently changing directions

to avoid and escape the ATV. It appeared the ATV was as close as twenty yards from the animals at one point. The occupants of the ATV could be heard laughing and yelling in the background. The officers were able to back track the entire chase route and found that Albright had chased the two does at least 643 yards.

Warden Gibb said, "this is late in the winter when big game animals are at their weakest as they have expended all reserves surviving the winter. Extra stress is particularly harmful to animals at this time." In addition, both does were likely pregnant (94-99% of all female pronghorn have been found to give birth to fawns each spring in previous Wyoming studies) which again, adds to the stress on animals.

Wildlife Investigator Browning believes there is a big difference between when a prong-

horn chooses to run and when forced to run with an unshakable threat on its tail. "I do not know if there is a difference physiologically between the two types of stress and runs, but I certainly know that from an ethical perspective, big game animals in late winter should not be run, if possible. Multiple events of stress could certainly be detrimental to an individual animal."

Browning added "I do not know what Mr. Albright's intentions were that day as he declined to say, but other passengers in the ATV's that were interviewed said they were just seeing how fast the animals could go and had no intention of harming them." The officers found no evidence that a pronghorn had been killed or injured with an ATV or otherwise. Browning added, "I have the impression that most of the people in the group from that day had remorse about the chase and will not repeat the incident."

Circuit Court Judge Roberts sentenced Albright to \$540 for the harassment charge and \$220 for the littering charge in fines, court costs, and victim's compensation costs. In addition, Albright had his hunting privileges suspended for all of 2015 in Wyoming and 43 reciprocal states.

Wildlife violations, may be reported to the **"STOP POACHING" Hotline: 1-877-WGFD-TIP** by sending a **text to 847411 (TIP411)** with WGFD as the first word of the subject.



With the Wardens - elk violations in 108, elk in town, Alaskan brown bear

West Rawlins Game Warden Teal Joseph received a report that several individuals had hunted and harvested elk on private land without permission in elk hunt area 108 south of Rawlins. The reporting party also suspected elk had been harvested at that location before shooting hours. When Teal arrived at the reported location, she discovered several individuals field dressing a calf elk. There were also several other elk gut piles on the roadside. As she interviewed the individuals on scene, it was apparent that no one who har-

vested elk that morning had permission to hunt on the private land. Eight elk in total were harvested on private land without permission. Teal also detected other violations while interviewing the suspects including fail to purchase conservation stamp, hunt in wrong area and shooting wildlife from the roadway.

None of the elk were seized, however three hunt without permission citations, two hunt in the wrong area citations and several warnings for other violations were issued.



Picture of the scene where elk violations occurred in elk hunt area 108.



Cow elk picture by Mark Gocke.

The heavy snow and cold weather that started around Christmas seemed to force elk closer to the town of Lander than usual. Warden Brad Hovinga spent quite a bit of time monitoring potential damage situations, visiting with landowners and making plans for damage prevention if needed. The elk stayed close to Lander for about three weeks until the weather moderated and they drifted back to the west.



Grizzly bear picture by Mark Gocke.

Wildlife Investigator Scott Browning coordinated with Alaska's wildlife department and the Boone and Crockett club regarding the return of an Alaskan brown bear full body mount to Game and Fish. The bear was seized from a Jackson man who had taken the bear in violation of Alaska's game laws. The man was also charged with violations in several other states, including Wyoming.

The bear has been on display in the Boone and Crockett (B&C) Heads and Horns at the Buffalo Bill Museum in Cody. The B&C collection is moving to Missouri, therefore the bear mount will return to Game and Fish and be displayed at Cheyenne headquarters in the near future.



Opportunities for you- how to engage with game and fish



COFFEE WITH A WARDEN

Hosted by Topline General Store
570 Garfield St., Lander
February 28
9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m.

Please come and enjoy coffee and conversation with Game Warden Brad Hovinga and guest, **Fish Biologist Joe Deromedi.**

Call Brad at 307.332.2704 or Topline at 307.335.3455 with questions.

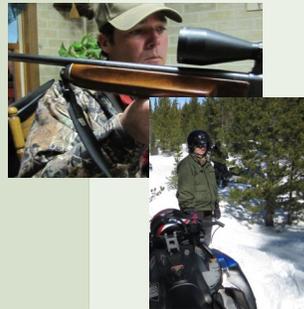


COFFEE WITH A WARDEN

Hosted by High Country Sporting Goods
2125 E. Monroe Ave., Riverton
February 23
4:00 -6:00 p.m.

Please come and enjoy coffee and conversation with Game Wardens Brad Gibb and Jessica Beecham. No agenda, just a time to visit.

Call Brad at 307.856.9005, Jessica at 307.856.4982 , or High Country Sports at 307.856.8661 with questions.



The Lander/Green Mountain Mule Deer working Group met in January to begin diving into their work on long term recommendations to the WGFD for arresting the decline of mule deer in the Sweetwater and South Wind River herd units. They also had a guest presentation from Josh Coursey with the Muley Fanatics Foundation.

Lander/Green Mtn. Mule Deer Working Group meeting on February 24 at 6:15 PM, Lander Regional Office, 260 Buena Vista Dr.

Open to the public.

For job opportunities—see page 3

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