

WYOMING GAME & FISH DEPARTMENT



2021 ANNUAL
LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

“Is this your slow period?”

Game wardens rarely get this question during the peak of fall hunting seasons, but often hear it throughout the remainder of the year. This often sparks the opportunity to highlight the work of the modern day Wyoming game warden and explain fall big game hunting seasons are truly just the proverbial tip of the iceberg.

Big game hunting seasons, while longer today than in years past, eventually end, but the work to protect wildlife does not. Trapping and trophy game seasons, ice fishing, and other wildlife-related pursuits all create a steady hum of enforcement activity for wardens all winter long. When mule deer are visible on their low elevation winter ranges, they become the target of greedy individuals who require constant attention from your red shirt team. As antlers finally drop, the nature of the game changes, but the need for a referee continues and your wardens work hard to keep everyone on a level playing field by enforcing shed antler collection rules. In the spring, as the shed antler season is in the final innings, game wardens transition to fishing and watercraft enforcement. Wyoming game wardens are well aware of two facts: 1) personal flotation devices save lives and 2) boaters who operate watercraft while under the influence of drugs or alcohol put lives in danger. Keeping folks safe while they recreate on Wyoming’s lakes, reservoirs, and rivers requires a major investment of game warden time. Speaking of safe waters, aquatic invasive species (AIS) are knocking on Wyoming’s door and the work to ensure compliance with AIS laws and regulations is imperative.

Conservation law enforcement is only one aspect of the workload your Wyoming game wardens shoulder. Sandwiched in between their enforcement work is the myriad of other duties they are responsible for – investigating and mitigating wildlife damage to crops and livestock, collecting and analyzing wildlife population data, handling wildlife/human conflicts, teaching hunter education, and answering questions from those who value wildlife. It all adds up to a profession with some ebbs and flows, but very few slow periods for most.

While the work is demanding, the selfless, cooperative efforts of many on team Game and Fish help distribute the load. The cases highlighted in this report demonstrate the collaboration necessary to protect Wyoming’s wildlife.

We utilize enforcement task force projects, for example, to provide assistance across the state. Wardens volunteer for these assignments, often requiring significant time away from home, to help their neighboring wardens who may otherwise be overwhelmed at certain times and locations.

The members of our expert Wildlife Investigations Unit (WIU) collaborate and assist with complex cases by preparing search warrants, collecting and analyzing physical and digital evidence, and, when necessary, coordinating with our counterparts across the country to track down suspects. In 2021, the WIU completed several major investigations, uncovering many egregious violations in the process. The state is fortunate to have this uniquely qualified unit on the team. Speaking of specialized units, our Forensics Lab, located in Laramie, utilizes state of the art forensic science to help solve wildlife crime. Finally, once the evidence is collected, sorted, analyzed, and the all the pieces put together in case reports, prosecutors in County Attorney offices across the state ensure those who commit wildlife violations are afforded the appropriate opportunity to make amends for their actions.

Clearly, it takes a team to protect Wyoming’s wildlife.

One of the most important members of our wildlife protection team is you! Please take note of the number of cases originating from a single Stop Poaching report about an out of place vehicle or some suspicious activity. Simply call or text with the information you have and the members of your red shirt team will work hard to ferret out the rest of the story.

Thank you for being a part of the team.



Rick King
Chief Game Warden

INTRODUCTION

The Wyoming Game & Fish Department (Department) is responsible for the conservation and management of over 800 species of wildlife found in the state. Residents and visitors alike value Wyoming's world-class opportunities for hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing. The Department is dedicated to conserving and protecting Wyoming's wildlife to ensure these opportunities for future generations. Enforcement of wildlife laws and apprehension of wildlife violators are critical components of the Department's overall wildlife management efforts.

The Wyoming public has consistently supported the Department's law enforcement officers and programs, giving high marks to game wardens and wildlife investigators for their professionalism and dedication to their work. Department law enforcement officers investigate all types of wildlife crimes and work through the court system to ensure the successful prosecution of violators. Annually, officers dedicate thousands of work hours,

hundreds of thousands of vehicle miles (patrol vehicles, all terrain vehicles and snowmobiles), thousands of watercraft hours and hundreds of horseback days patrolling Wyoming's vast landscapes to enforce the state's hunting, fishing, trapping, boating and general wildlife laws. They also spend countless hours interacting with members of the public to gain support for and ensure compliance with wildlife and watercraft safety laws.

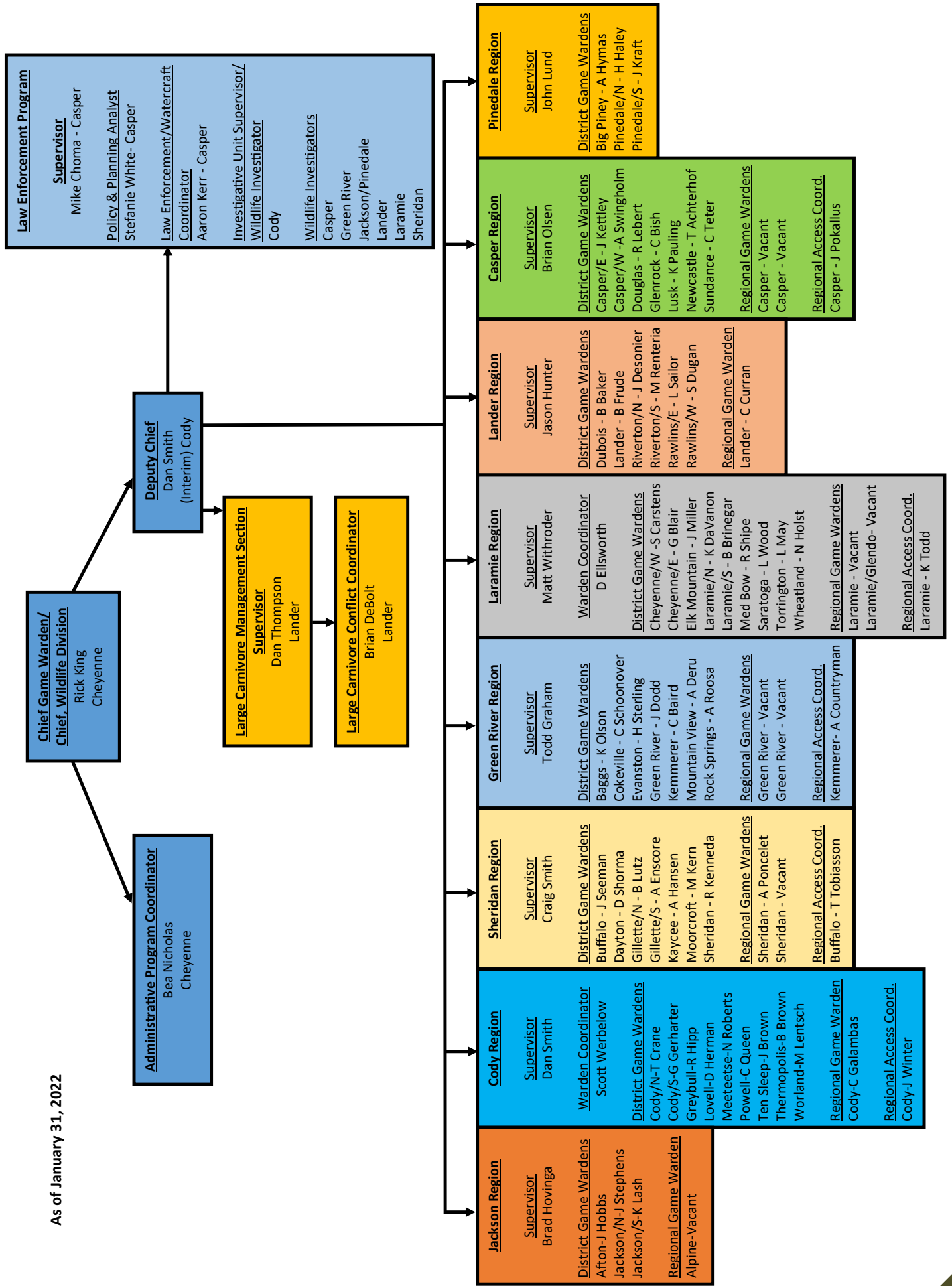
The following report details Department law enforcement efforts and highlights for calendar year 2021. It includes an organizational chart of law enforcement personnel, regional summaries, violation statistics, new game warden testing/hiring results, game warden training and new legislation affecting the law enforcement program. It also discusses Wyoming's Stop Poaching Program, Wildlife Investigations Unit efforts and other aspects of wildlife law enforcement in Wyoming.

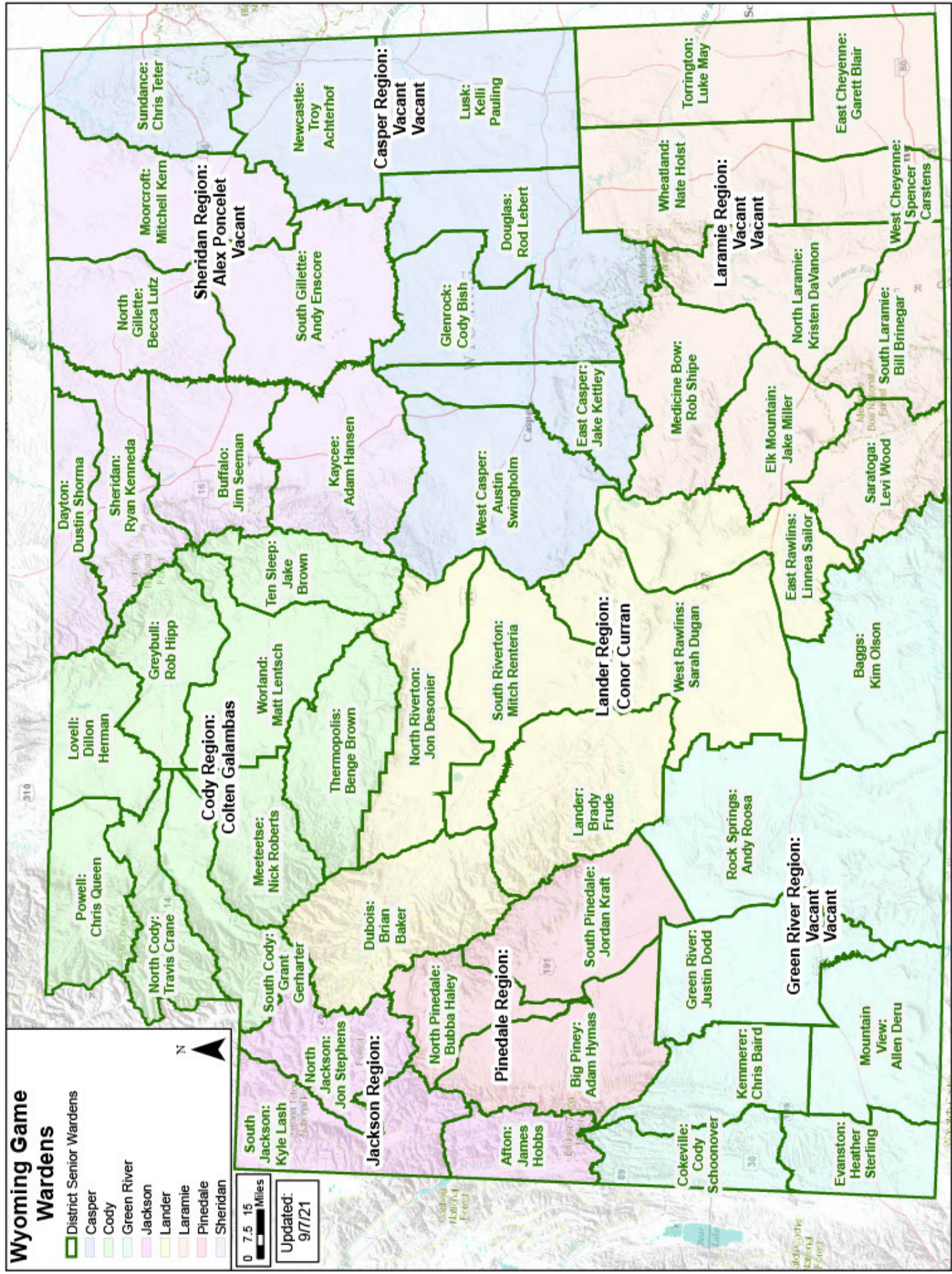


Game Warden Heather Sterling on patrol in the Bighorn Mountains

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

As of January 31, 2022

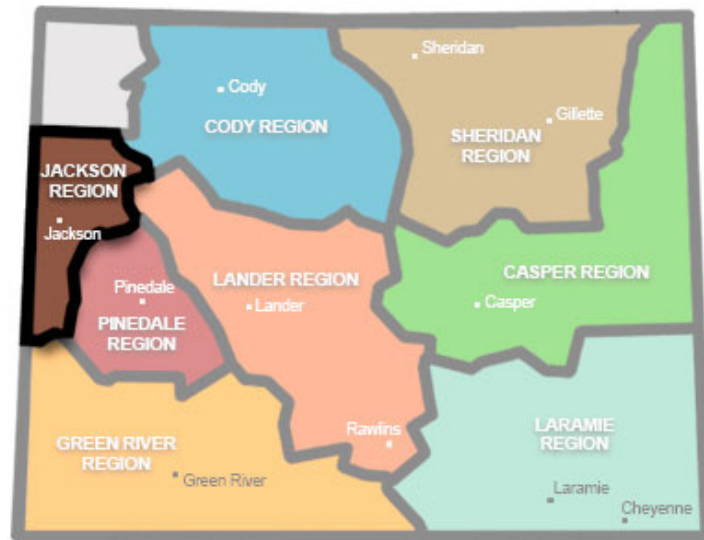




JACKSON REGION

Work Unit Overview

The Jackson Region has up to five law enforcement officers, including three district game wardens, one regional game warden stationed in Alpine on occasion and one regional wildlife supervisor. In 2021, the Jackson Region did not have a regional game warden stationed in Alpine. The Jackson Region is located south of Yellowstone National Park and game wardens patrol the Jackson Hole Valley, Gros Ventre Range and Star Valley, along with the Hoback and Greys River drainages. The district game wardens cover the North Jackson, South Jackson and Afton game warden districts.



2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

Jackson Region law enforcement officers documented 203 violations within the region in 2021. Officers issued 81 citations, 119 warnings and investigated three cases in which a suspect was never developed. Although the Jackson Region is relatively small, the game wardens in the region are extremely busy from a law enforcement perspective. In addition to fall hunting seasons, fishing enforcement, bear baiting and dealing with winter range/antler collection violations, game wardens respond to many calls for service from a diverse public with varying wildlife interests.

Game wardens in the Jackson Region spent a considerable amount of time working horseback in remote backcountry areas and by boat/kayak on the Greys, Salt and Snake rivers. The high public use in these areas keeps wardens busy in their law enforcement efforts. Each year, game wardens detect several fishing violations in some very remote areas of the Jackson Region.



Game Warden on patrol in Jackson

Game wardens were able to spend a significant amount of time conducting watercraft enforcement on Jackson Lake, Palisades Reservoir and the Snake River. Watercraft enforcement on Palisades Reservoir in past years was typically limited as the water level dropped and the reservoir essentially left Wyoming. However, in recent years, the Bureau of Reclamation has maintained higher water levels in the reservoir later into the summer. Game wardens were able to conduct compliance checks throughout the summer and their efforts seem to be having an impact on watercraft violation rates occurring on the reservoir. Palisades Reservoir is currently the region's most significant watercraft enforcement workload.

Game wardens spent time working trapping enforcement and responding to public concerns when traps were encountered along major recreational trails on the Bridger-Teton National Forest. This year, the region saw less conflict with traps being set near trailheads and walking paths.

Unfortunately, due to limited enforcement personnel statewide, the region was not able to have a game warden stationed in Alpine during 2020 or 2021. The addition of this officer is extremely valuable in workload relief for other regional personnel. Having a game warden stationed in Alpine increases enforcement presence in the region and allows district game wardens to diversify work tasks. The position also provides a significant benefit to district game wardens in dealing with damage issues and the public at large on a daily basis. The community of Alpine is growing rapidly and the calls for service there are increasing.

The Grand Teton National Park (GTNP) elk reduction program and the elk/wild bison hunting season on the National Elk Refuge (NER) continue to be a considerable workload for law enforcement personnel in the region. During 2021, elk harvest in GTNP and the NER decreased substantially due to the late onset of snow and cold weather in the region. Wild bison harvest was low in 2021 due to mild weather conditions and all wild bison harvested in 2021 were taken on surrounding United States Forest Service (USFS) lands.

Game wardens continued to invest significant effort into the enforcement of the shed antler and horn collection regulation. Game wardens detected several violations of this regulation and local winter range closures. In 2020, a discrepancy in the opening time for winter range use and antler collection time caused frustration among antler collectors, game wardens and federal land management agencies. Many antler collection violations occurred when people began collecting antlers early, but game wardens chose to issue warnings in many cases due to the confusion caused by the rules discrepancy. In 2021, state and federal agencies aligned on the opening time and date for antler collection and access to federal lands. This resulted in an uneventful antler collection season opener and the public was very satisfied with the change.

Task Forces

The region conducted its annual Antler Rendezvous task force in Alpine from June 19-26, 2021. In 2020, the antler sale was rescheduled from the standard date in May due to COVID-19 and the NER/Boy Scout antler auction in Jackson being canceled. The date change for the Alpine Antler Rendezvous was so beneficial to antler dealers in terms of increased business traffic that they maintained this date change for 2021. The task force is designed to monitor the sale and transfer of antlers, heads, taxidermy mounts and other wildlife parts during the Antler Rendezvous. This is an excellent opportunity to work closely with participating antler dealers/vendors while issuing interstate game tags (IGT) for antlers/horns on skull plates prior to and during the week-long event. A modest number of minor violations centering on IGT requirements were documented during the rendezvous. No major violations were detected.

Notable Cases

Residency Violations

On June 27, 2019, Jackson Game Warden Kyle Lash received a report from Pinedale Game Warden Herb Haley of a suspect possibly obtaining resident licenses illegally. Warden Haley had received an anonymous report stating the suspect was a professional fishing guide and owner of a fishing charter boat in the Provincials of Turks and Caicos (islands in the Atlantic Ocean). The suspect was also reported to have recently lived in New York. The reporting party was suspicious when the suspect posted information on social media about being a resident of Wyoming and elk hunting in Wilson, WY.

Warden Lash found that the suspect had purchased several Wyoming resident hunting and fishing licenses in 2017, 2019 and 2020. The address he claimed on the licenses was for a home belonging to the suspect's father. Warden Lash used a variety of investigative techniques and worked with the Jackson wildlife investigator to attempt to verify the suspect's

claim of Wyoming residency. On social media and other websites, the suspect advertised himself as a full time fishing guide based in Turks and Caicos. He had also purchased resident inland fishing licenses in Connecticut in 2016 and 2020. Ultimately, the investigation determined that the suspect had spent about a month and a half in Wyoming in 2020. Prior to that, he had never lived in Wyoming for the full year required to establish residency for hunting and fishing licenses. He also had made claims of residency in more than one state in the same time period he was claiming to be a Wyoming resident.

In July 2021, the suspect pled guilty to three charges of making a false statement to obtain resident licenses, one charge each for fishing, elk and deer. Additional charges were dismissed as part of a plea agreement. The suspect was fined \$3,165 and had his license privileges suspended for two years.

More Residency Violations

Over the course of 2021, Afton Game Warden James Hobbs issued 11 citations or warnings for false statement violations to seven different suspects. The largest case involved a suspect who had never lived in Wyoming and was purchasing resident licenses using his in-laws' address in Auburn. Warden Hobbs was able to make contact with the suspect at the end of April when he came to town to pick up a vehicle he had left in Wyoming. The suspect was unwilling to talk but was issued citations for three years of making a false statement to obtain an elk license and one year of making a false statement to obtain a fishing license. He plead no contest and was sentenced to a fine of \$2,470, 20 days in jail (all suspended) and suspension of hunting privileges until January 1, 2023.

Mule Deer Violation

On September 20, North Jackson Game Warden Jon Stephens received a call that a suspect had called the Stop Poaching hotline to report that he shot and wounded a buck mule deer with

his bow. The buck ran from National Forest land onto private property, where it died, and the suspect was seeking permission to retrieve the buck. The dispatcher heard yelling in the background and it appeared there was potential for a confrontation between the suspect and private property owner. Warden Stephens and two deputies from the Teton County Sheriff's Office responded to the scene. When they arrived, the officers separated the parties and calmed everyone down before investigating the incident. The suspect explained that he had seen the buck deer feeding near the road on National Forest land when he was driving through the area. He didn't have any of his hunting gear, so he went home to get his bow and returned to find the deer still in the area. It was still on National Forest land but had moved closer to private property. The suspect stepped to the edge of the road and just prior to shooting the deer, the owner of the private property began yelling at him not to shoot. The suspect yelled back that he could hunt there and shot the deer, which jumped the fence onto the private property. Warden Stephens determined that the suspect had shot the deer from a public roadway and had not been wearing fluorescent orange or pink clothing, which was required since the regular deer season was open. The suspect was fined \$350 and the deer was donated to a family in need.

Illegal Wolf Case

In 2017, a suspect from Casper shot a collared and trackable wolf, known by his identification number, 1080M, on a hillside about 100 yards away from Flagstaff Road. The suspect possessed a wolf license, but the hunting season didn't start for another couple of days. He cut off its GPS tracking collar, tossed it a few feet off the north shoulder of the road, loaded up the carcass and set off for the four-plus-hour drive back to Casper. He skinned Wolf 1080M and salted the hide, otherwise discarding the animal's remains, save for its skull. The discarded collar gave off a mortality signal and a contract pilot flying over the area two days later picked up that signal. He didn't see the carcass and sent word to the state about the

wolf collar somewhere near the road at Skull Creek Meadows. A biologist retrieved the collar two days later and noticed that the collar had been cut off, but little other evidence to go on. Wolf 1080M, for the time being, was just another casualty of wolf poaching likely to go unpunished.

Two weeks after the wolf was killed, the suspect reported to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department that he had legally harvested a wolf seven days into the legal hunting season. He followed the agency's protocol, bringing its pelt and skull in for inspection by a warden and biologist. The man reported that he had shot the wolf in an area south of Togwotee Pass, although he falsified the kill site a handful of miles to the east of the real location. The Department employees collected a DNA sample and filled out a harvest report and sent the suspect on his way.

The breakthrough in the case happened in early

2020. Game and Fish forensic specialists set out to cross-check DNA samples from wolves legally registered by hunters with DNA samples from wolves that have been caught, collared or poached and fit the same physical profiles. The lab results came back in early 2020 for the DNA from the suspect's wolf. It was Wolf 1080M, the same animal that had been an impressively large 123-pound gray pup from the Phantom Springs Pack when it was first captured for Grand Teton National Park biologists in January 2019. The genetic evidence was irrefutable, according to a forensic specialist.

Game wardens served a search warrant on the suspect's house and seized the mounted Wolf 1080M, along with other evidence. The case was adjudicated in July of 2021. The agreed-to sentence included guilty pleas for poaching the wolf and discarding its collar, including fines and restitution added up to more than \$3,000, plus a 4-year suspension of hunting and fishing privileges.

CODY REGION

Work Unit Overview

The Cody Region has 12 law enforcement officers, including nine district game wardens, one access coordinator, one game warden supervisor and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Cody Region is located in northwest Wyoming and wardens patrol from the Montana state line south to Boysen Reservoir and from Yellowstone National Park east to the divide of the Bighorn Mountains. The region includes the North Cody, South Cody, Powell, Lovell, Meeteetse, Greybull, Ten Sleep, Thermopolis and Worland game warden districts.

2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

Cody Region law enforcement officers documented 292 violations within the region in 2021. Officers issued 106 citations, 174 warnings and investigated 12 cases in which a suspect was never identified. During 2021, the most common citations issued in the Cody

Region were for hunting on private property without permission, failing to properly tag big or trophy game animals and fishing without a license. Wardens spent the majority of their time patrolling their districts and assisting neighboring wardens with locating suspects and conducting several search/arrest warrants. The Cody Region wildlife investigator worked on several high priority cases and assisted region wardens on investigations involving search/arrest warrants.

The Cody Region has a great deal of rugged backcountry with a diverse amount of both trophy game and big game animals. Wardens spent considerable time patrolling these areas with horses and pack animals. Although often rewarding, patrolling backcountry areas can be difficult and dangerous. In addition to the dangers of law enforcement duties, there is potential for inclement weather, downed trees across trails, grizzly bear encounters, horse accidents and other hazards. Wardens must be thoroughly prepared and ready to respond to

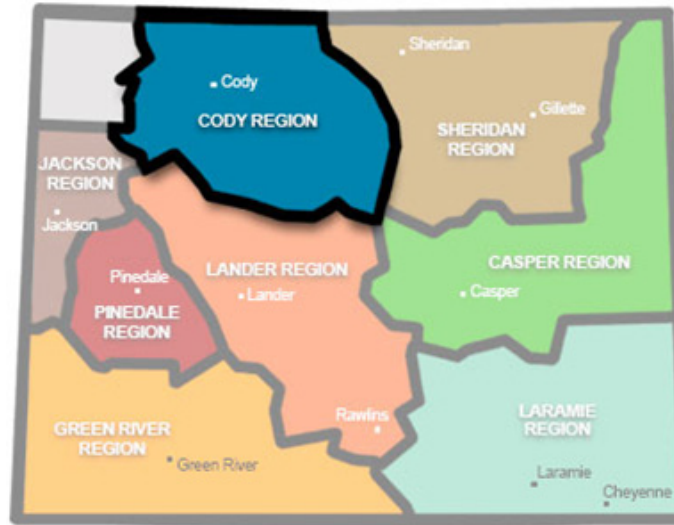
these hazards as they arise.

The Cody Region continues to utilize late season antlerless elk hunting seasons for population management. These late antlerless elk seasons are needed to obtain harvest in areas that are over their population objectives and where hunter access is limited due to large numbers of elk congregating on private properties that allow

no public access. Most elk seasons close on December 21, but one hunt area remained open until January 15. In these late season hunts, wardens typically deal with trespassing calls, over-limits of elk and shooting wrong sex of elk violations. Several hunt areas around Cody have large numbers of elk congregated on private property with little to no cover. Long range shooting in these situations is common. These circumstances can lead to hunters wounding and killing over-limits of elk and killing spike bulls on licenses valid only for cow or calf elk.

In general, the deer and elk hunting was difficult in 2021. It was an extremely dry summer and fall with very little moisture in the low lands and not much snowfall in the high country. With the drought and poor habitat conditions, many hunters were forced to hunt near or on private properties, particularly properties that contained river or creek bottoms. Consequently, Cody Region wardens dealt with an increase in trespassing calls involving hunters trespassing on private property to harvest an animal. The biggest increase of trespassing occurred in the south Cody warden district up the South Fork of the Shoshone River, involving primarily non-resident deer hunters. Hunters were desperate to kill a deer, most of which were located on private properties. Additionally, many mature mule deer bucks migrate into this area during the hunting season and are visible from the

main South Fork road, tempting some people to trespass to hunt.



Wardens in the Cody Region have encountered an increase of issues regarding cell phone mapping apps. These apps are very popular and replacing traditional GPS units. However, hunters should be aware that sometimes there are discrepancies between ownership data on these apps and county assessor records, especially for parcels

with "unknown" ownership and some state land sections. Some hunters have tried to take advantage of these situations and ended up trespassing on private lands. Although mapping apps and GPS units are excellent tools, hunters are ultimately responsible for hunting where there is legal access available to them.

Task Forces

The North Fork of the Shoshone River and Buffalo Bill Reservoir continue to be popular fisheries. A portion of Buffalo Bill Reservoir is closed to fishing from April 1-July 14 each year and the July 15 opening day of the reservoir's west end is popular among anglers. On opening day, several wardens from throughout the Cody Region patrolled the reservoir in plain clothes via boat to document fishermen with over-limits of trout. Other wardens patrolled in uniform from shore checking fishermen as they came off the reservoir in their boats at all boat launching areas on the reservoir. During this task force, no over-limits of fish were detected. Overall compliance was very good and only a few minor violations were detected. Anglers and recreational boaters were generally happy to be contacted by wardens during the opener and many thanked the wardens for their efforts.

Several wardens were assigned to work the July 1 fishing opener on the North Fork of the

Shoshone River. This is a very popular fishery and receives a great deal of fishing pressure on the opening day if water conditions are good for fishing. Wardens would check all fishermen for compliance from Gibbs Bridge upstream to the Yellowstone National Park boundary. This year, water conditions were not very favorable for fishing on the opener due to high runoff from snowmelt. However, it should be noted that wardens in the Cody Region spent a great deal of time patrolling this stretch of water during the closed season because of the increased number of people out fishing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notable Cases

Trespass Deer Case on TE Ranch

In early November, South Cody Game Warden Grant Gerharter contacted an individual who had been hunting at the Bobcat/Houlihan Trailhead. Warden Gerharter asked him if he had harvested anything. He stated that he had shot a little white-tailed buck the previous night and he was now heading back home to Laramie. Warden Gerharter checked his deer that was located inside his horse trailer. The buck white-tailed deer was not field-dressed and the antler size was larger than average. The deer was bloated and stiff. The man stated he harvested the deer to the north of the trailhead, on BLM land, and had dragged the deer out on the horse trail. He stated that he did not want to gut the deer in the area to attract bears. The man also stated he loaded the deer in the back of his truck where the trail hits the parking lot, but changed his story and said he must have parked on the gravel where tire tracks wouldn't show up. Warden Gerharter let the man leave the area while he conducted his investigation. Warden Gerharter looked on the horse trail for drag marks and it was obvious there were no drag marks on the trail or anywhere else in the area.

Warden Gerharter then contacted a ranch hand from the TE Ranch and had him look in their adjacent hayfield, while he looked east of the trailhead. Minutes later, the ranch hand reported that he had found a drag mark in the hayfield.

Warden Gerharter met with the ranch hand to investigate and found deer hair in the drag mark and followed it to the kill site, along with narrow tire marks (approximately two inches wide) several hundred yards out in the hayfield in a bare dirt area on the TE Ranch.



Cody Game Warden Colten Galambas with seized deer

Game Warden Colten Galambas and North Cody Game Warden Travis Crane stopped the suspect at the Cody check station as Warden Gerharter headed that direction. Warden Gerharter re-interviewed the suspect, who admitted to trespassing to kill the deer around the end of legal shooting hours and using a bicycle to drag the deer out of the hayfield after dark. The suspect was cited for hunting on private land without permission and the deer head, antlers, and cape were seized as evidence



Bike inside of horse trailer

The suspect pled guilty to trespassing and received a \$450 fine, \$1,000 in restitution, and his hunting privileges were suspended for one year.

CWD Samples Identify Suspects in Waste Case

On October 17, 2021, Greybull Game Warden Rob Hipp received a report of a carcass dump just north of Hwy 31 on BLM land west of Hyattville. The following morning, Warden Hipp investigated the dump site and found a total of 10 fresh white-tailed deer carcasses in the pile. Two were bucks that had been skull-capped and the rest were does and fawns. Most edible portions were taken, but one fawn carcass had been wasted with no meat taken.

Warden Hipp noticed that the two buck deer had been sampled for CWD. He contacted Wyoming Game and Fish employees who had manned the Hyattville check station over the opening weekend of deer season, hoping to get a list of hunters who had harvested white-tailed bucks that had been sampled for CWD. The check station attendants provided Warden Hipp with a relatively short list of hunters that had harvested white-tailed bucks, and offered additional details and some photographs that narrowed down the search even more.



Wasted fawn deer

License information pointed Warden Hipp toward a group of nonresident hunters that had been hunting on private property southwest of Hyattville. During a series of phone interviews, these hunters admitted to dumping the deer carcasses on BLM land. One member of the hunting party admitted to wasting the white-tailed fawn, explaining that it had been gut shot and was a "stinking mess." Warden Hipp informed the individual that he had examined the wasted deer, and most of it would have been

easily salvageable if given proper care. The hunter admitted that he knew what he had done had been wasteful and wrong. The suspect was cited for waste of edible portions of big game and fined \$450.

Over-Limit of Sheep

North Cody Game Warden Travis Crane investigated a case in September involving a hunter on an outfitted bighorn sheep hunt that took an over-limit of bighorn sheep. The outfitter reported seeing what looked like a wounded ram after his client had harvested a bighorn sheep ram near that location.



Bighorn sheep ram killed in over-limit case

Several days later, Warden Crane rode into the area and discovered a dead bighorn sheep ram a short distance from the carcass of the ram killed by the hunter. Warden Crane saw that the ram had died from a bullet wound and recovered a bullet from the carcass. Warden Crane later contacted the hunter and the outfitter and advised them of the dead ram. The bullet matched the ammunition the hunter was using. The outfitter and the hunter stated there were nine rams in the area and the hunter had

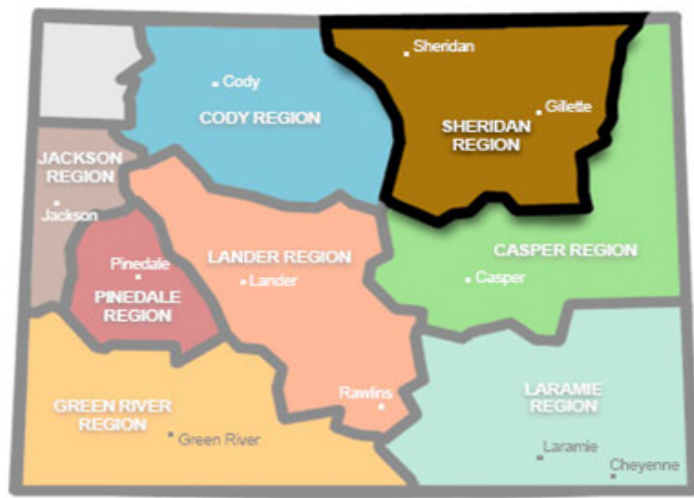
fired three shots. At the time, the outfitter was using a spotting scope to watch the ram he had intended his client to shoot, but during one of the shots, the client must have been aiming at

a different ram. The hunter was charged with taking an over-limit of bighorn sheep and pled guilty in court. He was required to pay fines and restitution totaling \$2,000.

SHERIDAN REGION

Work Unit Overview

The Sheridan Region has nine law enforcement officers, including seven senior game wardens, one access coordinator and one regional wildlife supervisor. This year, the region also had one game warden who attended the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy and spent three months patrolling Keyhole Reservoir prior to being promoted to a district in another region. The Sheridan Region encompasses the east slope of the Bighorn Mountains, the Powder River Basin, the Rochelle Hills, portions of the Little Missouri River drainage and the western edge of the Black Hills. The region includes game warden districts in Dayton, Sheridan, Buffalo, Kaycee, North Gillette, South Gillette and Moorcroft. The regional access coordinator is stationed in Buffalo, but conducts law enforcement throughout the region as needed.



shooting from a public roadway, 21 failure to tag big game animals before leaving the site of kill and 36 violations for wasting a big game animal. The region also employs liberal hunting seasons for doe/fawn white-tailed deer, which inherently results in the increased take of young male animals or wrong species. In 2021, wardens documented 31 violations for taking the wrong sex or wrong species of big game animal.

The region did not have a dedicated watercraft/fishing enforcement game warden assigned at Keyhole Reservoir this year, resulting in a reduction in the number of watercraft violations documented. The Moorcroft and Gillette game wardens did patrol Keyhole on weekends

and holidays, as did the Buffalo game warden at Lake Desmet. Game wardens documented 149 watercraft violations in the region during 2021. Regional efforts indicate 51 violations for failure to provide life jackets or throwable flotation device aboard watercraft, 14 violations for failure to require children 12 and under to wear flotation device, 34 violations for fishing without a license, 23 violations for operating an unnumbered watercraft and a few other watercraft violations. The enforcement of aquatic invasive species (AIS) regulations is important in the region and statewide, and the Sheridan Region documented 39 AIS violations. A total of 29 boats were documented without an AIS decal, six boats launched without an AIS inspection and four vehicles hauling watercraft were apprehended after passing an AIS check station without stopping for an inspection.

2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

Sheridan Region law enforcement officers documented 782 violations within the region in 2021, an increase of 233 violations (42%) from 2020. Officers issued 243 citations, 458 warnings and investigated 81 cases in which a suspect was never developed. Due to the amount of private land in the region, game wardens receive regular complaints of trespassing, shooting from a public road and failure to tag violations. During the 2021 calendar year, wardens documented 48 trespassing violations, 10 instances of hunters

Task Forces

One task force was conducted in the region again this year to address the problem of illegal take of elk and deer in the vicinity of the Kerns Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) and is referred to as the State Line Task Force. Two-officer teams were assigned to the area during the winter. Operations were focused on nighttime and early morning hours. Wardens drove 11,074 miles and worked 783 hours during this task force. They made numerous public contacts but for the first time ever, no violations were detected. The information gathered and contacts made during this task force are worth the effort in order to identify and deter violations. Based on public comment, area landowners and the sporting public appreciate the Department's work to address the historic illegal killing of elk and deer.

Notable Cases

Two Time Elk Poacher

A case involving two poached bull elk was adjudicated in May 2021. The case began in 2020 when antler hunters observed a large group of magpies and crows fly off what they thought was an elk carcass. They called Dayton Game Warden Dustin Shorma to report what they saw. Warden Shorma and Sheridan Game Warden Ryan Kenneda investigated the crime scene and discovered two dead bull elk. One of the bulls had recently shed its antlers. This bull had been shot and left to rot. The other bull had the head, hindquarters and back straps removed. Both front shoulders had been removed and were found hidden under a nearby juniper tree. Warden Shorma began an intensive investigation and identified a suspect. A man from Lodge Grass, Montana (who incidentally was convicted and fined from another elk poaching case in 2014) was believed to have been involved.

After serving several search warrants and recovering the bull elk head from an antler buyer, it was determined he had poached both bull elk. The suspect was cited for wanton destruction

of a big game animal and taking an antlered big game animal during a closed season. He appeared in Sheridan County Circuit Court on May 14, 2021 and pled guilty to both counts. The suspect was sentenced to \$12,570 in fines and restitution and 180 days in jail, which was suspended.



Shot and left bull elk

Self-Reporting Leads to Exoneration and Other Poachers

On December 16, 2020 Dayton Game Warden Dustin Shorma received a call from a hunter who believed he made a mistake and was calling to turn himself in. The man stated while following up on his shot at a cow elk, he discovered a crippled spike elk. Warden Shorma told the man to euthanize the crippled bull and he would head that direction to meet him. Warden Shorma met the man in the field and was able to hear the rest of the story. Earlier that morning, approximately 500 elk crossed a section of public land intersected by a county road. The hunter stated there were several groups of people shooting into the herd of running elk as they made their way across the roadway. Warden Shorma examined the bull and saw it was shot in the hindquarters. He saw other hunters in the field so he left the man and the spike and interviewed these other groups. Very quickly, a theme began to develop. Everyone mentioned a group of hunters driving around in a red Dodge pickup truck. Each group stated these individuals had shot multiple times from the county road and then left the area.

Warden Shorma returned to help the hunter with the spike bull when he observed a red Dodge pickup truck slowly driving down the county road. Believing this may be the vehicle other hunters had mentioned, he ran back to his truck and eventually caught up to the vehicle



Cell phone video of the elk calf caught in the right of way fence

down the road. The vehicle was stopped and Warden Shorma identified four occupants, three of whom had been elk hunting. Additionally, there was a dead calf elk in the truck bed. After a short discussion, it was determined a woman from North Dakota had killed the calf and the other hunters had shot at elk but were unsuccessful. It was also determined during the conversation that the hunters had all shot from the county road and had not made any effort to see if they had hit or killed any of the elk they shot at.

Warden Shorma seized a cellular phone during the conversation that contained incriminating evidence. Video on the phone showed the group shooting their rifles until empty at the group of running elk over 550 yards away and using the right-of-way fence as a rest. It also showed the North Dakota woman shooting and killing a calf elk that had become entangled in the right-of-way fence further down the road.

Warden Shorma briefly left these hunters and met back up with the original reporting party. An examination of the spike elk resulted in the recovery of a bullet lodged in the hind quarters. After a quick inspection of his rifle and locating no other gunshot wounds on the spike, Warden Shorma determined the reporting party was not responsible for crippling the spike.

Warden Shorma met back up with the suspects to return the cell phone and to address the violations. During the contact, it was determined

the rifle owned and used by the North Dakota woman was the same caliber as the bullet recovered from the spike elk. The rifle was seized and after a forensic examination by the Wyoming Division of Criminal Investigation, it was determined the bullet recovered from the spike elk was fired from her firearm.

The group was cited for shooting from a public roadway, failure to make a reasonable effort to retrieve a big game animal, taking an over-limit of big game and taking an elk without a license. In total, the group was sentenced to \$6,560 in fines and restitution and lost their hunting privileges for six years. Additionally, another suspect not affiliated with this group was cited for shooting from a public roadway.

Johnson County Joyride

Buffalo Game Warden Jim Seeman received a report on October 31 that a buck mule deer had been shot northeast of Buffalo. The witness had called the Johnson County Sheriff's Office after observing a mule deer buck on a flatbed



Buck mule deer killed out of season

truck in an area that was closed to mule deer hunting. The witness was following the suspect vehicle, but the vehicle was traveling at a high rate of speed and driving through fence gates, destroying them in the process. Warden Seeman responded to the area, where he met several sheriff's deputies who had just apprehended the truck and driver. Warden Seeman and the deputies interviewed the suspect, who admitted to killing the deer in a closed area and trespassing to hunt. The suspect was assessed \$9,000 in fines and restitution for his actions.

Illegal Game Bird Farm

Moorcroft Game Warden Mitchell Kern had a new landowner who purchased property in the Moorcroft district. The landowner was thrilled about his newly acquired ranch and was enthusiastic to operate a commercial game bird farm in addition to several other projects. Warden Kern had multiple conversations with the landowner about the necessary procedures to obtain a game bird farm license. After conducting a few site visits and talking to the public, Warden Kern began to suspect the landowner had already released birds on the property without possessing a game bird farm license. Upon further investigation, Warden Kern discovered the landowner had released

over 500 birds within the previous year. The released pheasants and chukars came from a bird farm in Kansas and two separate bird farms in Wyoming. The case resulted in nine citations and six warnings issued to eight individuals. Violations included operating a game bird farm without a license, failing to keep game bird farm records, taking game birds without a license, illegal importation of live wildlife and failing to purchase conservation stamps. All of the suspects entered guilty pleas. This case resulted in total fines of \$2,300. After taking care of his court obligations, the landowner went through the legal process and obtained a game bird farm license.



GREEN RIVER REGION

Work Unit Overview

The Green River Region has 11 law enforcement officers when at full staff, including seven district game wardens, two regional game wardens stationed in Green River, one access coordinator and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Green River Region covers southwest and south central Wyoming and includes the Baggs, Rock Springs, Green River, Mountain View, Evanston, Kemmerer and Cokeville game warden districts. The region started the year with one regional game warden who left the region in May. Both regional game warden positions were vacant the remainder of the year.

2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

Green River Region law enforcement officers documented 281 violations in 2021. This is a decrease from 2020 when violations totaled 421 and is similar to the 294 violations documented in 2019. The five-year average number of violations for 2017-21 is 379. Officers issued 97 citations, 158 written warnings and investigated 26 cases in which a suspect was never identified.

Flaming Gorge Reservoir (FGR) is the largest and busiest body of water in the region. Since the region did not have regional game wardens

during the summer to focus enforcement effort on this reservoir, all of the district game wardens, the access coordinator and the regional wildlife supervisor worked watercraft, fishing and aquatic invasive species (AIS) enforcement



on the reservoir. The majority of this workload fell on the Green River, Mountain View and Rock Springs game wardens. Wardens documented 44 fishing violations across the entire region with the most common violations being fishing without a license (18) and fishing without a reciprocal stamp on FGR (7). Wardens documented 11 watercraft violations in the region with the most common violations encountered being failing to provide life jackets (5) and failing to provide a throwable flotation device (5). Wardens continued to see increased use of paddleboards on regional waters.

Green River Region game wardens continued to focus effort on AIS violations. In particular, there has been a collective effort to prevent people transporting watercraft from failing to stop at AIS check stations. There are four primary AIS check stations in the Green River Region. These are located at the Evanston Port of Entry (POE), Kemmerer, Anvil Draw and Firehole. In 2021, game wardens documented 74 AIS violations, 68 of which were failing to stop at an AIS check station. Most of these violations occurred at the Evanston POE, the busiest check station in the state. A task force was also used to increase enforcement at the Evanston POE check station.

Violations of the shed antler and horn collection regulation continued to be a focus for game wardens in the region. While game wardens in the region responded to several reports and

worked a considerable amount of time patrolling for violators, the number of violations remained low, with four violations documented in 2021, up one from the previous year.

Task Forces

Green River Region game wardens and AIS personnel planned and conducted a task force aimed at apprehending watercraft failing to stop at the Evanston POE AIS check station. The task force utilized one out-of-region officer on Memorial Day Weekend, the Fourth of July Holiday weekend and the Pioneer Holiday weekend in July. The task force served to educate members of the public and heighten enforcement of AIS laws. During the three weekends, officers documented 36 violations for boaters failing to stop at the check station for an AIS inspection. The public in the area appreciates the extra effort put in by the Department to protect Wyoming from aquatic invasive species.

Green River Region game wardens also planned and conducted a task force aimed at monitoring shed antler gathering activity in the Baggs area during the dates of April 29 – May 2, 2021. The task force was conducted utilizing out of region officers to apprehend violators collecting shed antlers before the May 1 opening date, along with documenting off-road violations on Forest Service and BLM lands and reporting them to the appropriate federal officers. During the task force, four total violations were documented. The task force went very well, with 78 public contacts made, and the public in the area appreciated the extra effort by the Department to enforce the shed antler regulation.

Notable Cases

A Taxidermist and a Nonresident

Green River Game Warden Kelli Pauling received a report from Baggs Game Warden Kim Olson about a taxidermist in Green River, Wyoming who did not renew the required resident taxidermist license for 2021 and did not turn in

required records for the previous year of 2020. Taxidermists are required to possess a valid taxidermist license that must be renewed by January 1 of each year. Taxidermists are also required to turn in their records by January 31 of each year for the previous year's work. Warden Pauling also received several public complaints regarding this taxidermy business. Specifically, the complaints were about not being able to get in touch with the taxidermist and get their items back that were said to be completed.



Evidence seized during taxidermist investigation

In the next few weeks, game wardens contacted the taxidermist at her residence in Green River. The taxidermist showed game wardens the mounts that she had in her possession, which included bobcat, coyote, antelope, deer, elk and moose. The taxidermist also showed game wardens one completed antelope European mount and her records for 2020. Game wardens asked for proof of her renewed taxidermist license and records to be turned in within three days.

After not receiving taxidermy records for 2020 or proof of a 2021 resident taxidermy license, game wardens obtained a search warrant and seized over 70 unfinished wildlife specimens from the taxidermist, along with all taxidermy records and the taxidermist's cell phone. The taxidermist was cooperative in assisting game wardens in identifying the owners of each item.

The taxidermist was charged with operating without a license, failing to submit records in a timely manner, and ship/transport game without a game tag within Wyoming. The taxidermist pled guilty to failing to submit

records and ship/transport game without a game tag within Wyoming. The third charge was dismissed as part of a plea agreement. The taxidermist was fined \$435 and will pay restitution back to clients/victims totaling \$2,858.55. The taxidermist was placed on one year unsupervised probation.

During the course of the investigation, it was discovered that a male suspect was not a resident of Wyoming at the time of purchasing his resident deer license in the fall of 2018. The suspect had purchased a Utah resident license in April 2018, and in September 2018 purchased a Wyoming resident general deer license. The nonresident male suspect's 5x4 mule deer shoulder mount was seized during the search of the taxidermy business. The suspect was charged with making a false statement to obtain a deer license and plead guilty. He was fined \$750 and was placed on six months unsupervised probation.

Video Evidence

On April 30, 2021 at approximately 7:30 pm, Cokeville Game Warden Cody Schoonover received a report of people collecting shed antlers on Raymond Mountain before the season opener (6:00 am on May 1). The reporting party provided a video they shot on their cell phone of two male subjects picking up elk sheds in the South Fork of Raymond Creek. The following morning, Warden Schoonover hiked into the Raymond Mountain Wilderness Study Area and was able to locate the suspects' camp. He found two teenagers asleep in their tent and a pile of elk sheds stacked around camp. Both suspects admitted to picking up elk sheds while they were hiking in to set up camp on April 30. The suspects were issued citations for violation of antler collection regulations and had their antlers seized. Each suspect paid a \$450 fine.

Some People Never Learn

Rock Springs Game Warden Andy Roosa received an anonymous report that a former Rock Springs resident who had moved to Utah approximately two years prior had applied for

and drawn a resident deer license in limited quota area 102 for the 2021 season. Warden Roosa began investigating the report and found that the suspect had applied in a party of three with his father and stepmother, who knew he had been living and working in Utah for close to two years. During the initial investigation, the suspect claimed to be doing temporary work in Utah and still residing in Wyoming, but later changed his story and admitted to living in Utah for close to two years. The suspect was charged with making a false statement to obtain a resident deer license, paid a fine of \$820 and forfeited the unused deer license. Warden Roosa also issued the suspect's father

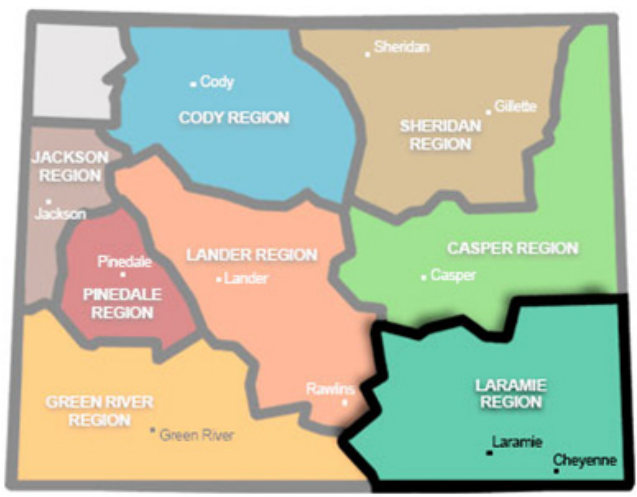
and stepmother written warnings for accessory to false statement to obtain a resident deer license.

The day after closing this case, Warden Roosa was made aware of a previous case in which the suspect's father was convicted at trial of the wanton destruction and illegal poaching of two large mule deer and acting as accessory to false statement to obtain a deer license in the early 1990s. In that case, the father was ordered to forfeit the illegally taken deer, assessed a \$3,120 fine, 10 days in jail and received a lengthy license suspension that ended in 1996.

LARAMIE REGION

Work Unit Overview

The Laramie Region has 14 law enforcement officers, including nine district game wardens, two regional game wardens, one access coordinator, one game warden supervisor and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Laramie Region covers southeast



Wyoming, including the eastern Sierra Madre Mountains, Snowy Range, Shirley Basin, Laramie Range and eastern plains to the Nebraska state line. The region includes the East Cheyenne, West Cheyenne, Torrington, Wheatland, Medicine Bow, North Laramie, South Laramie, Elk Mountain and Saratoga game warden districts. In addition, the two regional game wardens have regional responsibilities while stationed in Laramie and Cheyenne.

In 2021, the Laramie Region experienced turnover in personnel, specifically in the Saratoga, Elk Mountain, and East Cheyenne game warden districts (new position), and regional game warden positions. The East Cheyenne Game Warden district was created in

November 2021 to address additional workloads in and around Cheyenne. The regional game warden positions were vacated in February and June, with one regional game warden position being refilled in September – November.

2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

Laramie Region law enforcement officers documented 577 violations, issuing 156 citations, 396 warnings, and investigating

24 violations in which a suspect was never developed or charged. The region's game wardens have a diverse enforcement workload demonstrated by the array of violations documented. Laramie Region officers recorded 97 watercraft and 69 AIS violations. Fishing opportunities abound in the region, as evident by the 113 total documented sport fish related violations. Of the documented sport fish violations, 45% (50) were fishing without license violations.

Big game populations in the region are generally stable to increasing and game wardens remained busy during the lengthy big game seasons. In 2021, 45 violations were associated with pronghorn, 69 violations were associated

with elk, 46 violations were associated with mule deer, and five violations were associated with white-tailed deer. These four big game species accounted for 29% of violations, sport-fishing violations accounted for 19%, AIS violations accounted for 12%, and watercraft violations accounted for 17% of the region's total violations. In addition to these violations, Laramie Region game wardens and wildlife investigators continue to investigate several open cases involving big game animals and multiple suspects. Charges are pending in several of these cases.

Task Forces

Officers from outside the region assisted with fishing enforcement in the Snowy Range Mountains during the summer months. The Snowy Range contains dozens of high mountain lakes and receives significant fishing pressure during the short summer season. In addition, two mountain reservoirs, Lake Owen and Rob Roy Reservoir, are popular summer fishing destinations. The Snowy Range task force focused on these lakes and reservoirs for four weekends in June & July, beginning targeted enforcement Friday-Sunday. During each weekend, one officer patrolled from a pickup and on foot, working primarily in plain clothes. The task force officers documented 17 violations, including nine violations for fishing without licenses, one violation for making a false statement to procure a fishing license, four violations for failure to purchase a conservation stamp and three violations for failure to purchase an AIS program decal.

The Laramie Region is home to several high profile mule deer herds. Effective management requires an effective enforcement program. Again this year, the Laramie Region requested assistance from officers outside the region to assist in patrolling mule deer winter ranges in the South Laramie and Saratoga game warden districts. Patrols focused enforcement efforts in November when mule deer are most susceptible to illegal harvest. These officers concentrated their patrol efforts on winter ranges near the Wyoming-Colorado border. Task force officers

documented one violation for intentional take of an antlered mule deer during a closed season. The region considers the task force a valuable deterrent and worth the investment in time and personnel to protect wintering wildlife.

Additional officers were requested to assist with recreational boating, fishing, ORV and fireworks enforcement at Grayrocks Reservoir and Grayrocks Public Access Area (PAA). Grayrocks has seen an increase in recreational activity in recent years and continues to see increased activity with Wyoming State Parks limiting camping at neighboring parks. One officer assisted regional enforcement personnel of the 4th of July holiday. Task Force officers documented 37 violations for fishing, watercraft and other PAA violations.

Notable Cases

Intentional Illegal Take of Bull Elk

While this case occurred in 2020, the investigation and prosecution continued into 2021. In late September of 2020, Medicine Bow Game Warden Rob Shipe received a tip about an individual who was reported to be hunting in the wrong area and with the wrong license type for elk. Warden Shipe began his investigation and identified the background in the photographs and video was not consistent with the suspect's comments. The suspect advised he had harvested the 6x6 bull elk in the Snowy Range Mountains, near Laramie. With Warden Shipe's knowledge and familiarity of his warden district, he was able to identify specific drainages and topography, which indicated this bull was taken in the highly coveted elk hunt area 16, Shirley Mountains. Based on the elevation and the landscape view in the picture, Warden Shipe knew the location where the photograph was taken, which was on private land.

With the permission of the ranch, Warden Shipe began looking for the specific site of kill, which had an unusual tree in the background. He was able to confirm the exact location of the kill site, collecting physical evidence for prosecution and matching the unusual tree in the background

of the photo. Warden Shipe was able to secure a search warrant for the suspect's residence based on the evidence. He and other game wardens served the warrant and interviewed the suspect and his girlfriend. Warden Shipe presented the suspect with pictures both he and the suspect had taken from the same location, asking the suspect if these two pictures looked the same and specifically pointing out the drainages in each of the photos. The suspect confessed to intentionally harvesting the bull elk without the proper license.

The suspect was charged with the intentional illegal take of antlered elk and hunting on private land without permission. The suspect pled guilty and was assessed a \$5,070 fine, \$546 in restitution and five years suspension of hunting and fishing privileges.

Illegal Take of Antelope

This case began in 2020 with the investigation and prosecution completed in 2021. On December 20, 2020, Cheyenne Game Warden Spencer Carstens received information regarding an individual with an antelope in a cooler. With assistance from the Laramie County Sheriff's Office, Warden Carstens contacted the individual who was reported to have harvested the antelope. Warden Carstens interviewed the suspect, who initially denied knowledge of the antelope in his possession and then made up a story of how he came into possession of it. The suspect eventually confessed to shooting the antelope with a 9mm pistol without a license, on private property, and shooting from the roadway.

The suspect was determined to be a felon in possession of firearm and the firearm violation was referred to another agency. The suspect was found guilty of taking antelope without a license, hunting on private land without permission, shooting from a roadway and using an illegal firearm for taking big game. The suspect was sentenced to \$1,500 in fines,

\$3,000 in restitution and five years suspension of hunting and fishing privileges.

Today Isn't Your Day

On September 26, 2021, Wheatland Game Warden Nate Holst received a call about two suspects trespassing to hunt elk on private land south of Glendo Reservoir. Warden Holst arrived on scene, where he discovered the suspects had killed a 5x6 bull elk and were in the process of field dressing it. The suspect who killed the bull elk was not wearing any orange when he shot the elk.

Warden Holst offered to give the suspect a ride back to his vehicle, as the landowner did not want the suspects to walk through their property anymore. The suspect accepted Warden Holst's offer. During the ride, the suspect realized he had forgotten his favorite hunting knife at the site of the kill. Warden Holst advised he would have to go back to the site of the kill to retrieve the head and told the suspect he would look for the knife then. Warden Holst dropped the suspect off at his vehicle and they parted ways. As Warden Holst was driving away, he heard a clinking sound coming from the passenger seat where the suspect had been sitting. Warden Holst, figuring it was empty brass, reached down and picked up what he quickly discovered to be a meth pipe and lighter. Warden Holst contacted the Platte County Sheriff's Office and the suspect received a citation for the drug paraphernalia.

In addition, the suspect was charged with hunting on private land without permission and issued a warning for failing to wear fluorescent orange/pink clothing. The suspect received \$700 in fines for the hunting violations and forfeited the bull elk. Warden Holst found the suspect's knife and returned it to him later.

LANDER REGION

Work Unit Overview

The Lander Region has eight law enforcement officers, including six district game wardens, one regional game warden and one regional wildlife supervisor. District game wardens are stationed in Dubois, North Riverton, South Riverton, Lander, West Rawlins and East Rawlins. The Lander Region is located in central Wyoming and game wardens patrol from the Red Desert north to the Owl Creek Mountains and from the Gas Hills west to the Wind River Range and southern Absaroka Mountains.



2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

Lander Region law enforcement officers documented 258 violations within the region in 2021. Officers issued 65 citations, 161 warnings and investigated 32 cases in which a suspect was never developed or charged. The Lander Region focused efforts on issues ranging from illegal antler collection in Dubois to deer shot and left near Riverton and Crowheart. The region also focused on watercraft and fishing enforcement on Boysen and Seminoe reservoirs as well as several other smaller bodies of water and high mountain lakes. Progress was made in these areas using task force operations and coordinating with the region's wildlife investigator.

Task Forces

The Lander Region conducted one task force using out-of-region officers this year to focus on human presence violations on the Spence/Moriarity Wildlife Management Area (WMA) and Inberg/Roy Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA) near Dubois. Over the past several years, there have been reports of individuals violating the human presence closure to collect antlers. In 2021, the areas opened one day early to 25 permitted individuals and up to three additional guests. Game wardens contacted two individuals without early access permits, in violation of the human presence closure and driving off road on Commission-owned land.



Antler hunter on WHMA near Dubois

Notable Cases

Dubois WMA/WHMA Early Opener

On May 15, 2021, the region opened the Spence/Moriarity WMA and Inberg/Roy WHMA a day early for 25 lucky permit holders.



Helicopter patrol for antler hunting violators

A helicopter was used as part of the Department's enforcement efforts and game wardens were able to document two individuals violating the human presence closure and driving off road with a UTV on Commission-

owned land. Observers in the helicopter were able guide enforcement personnel to the violators' location while ensuring they did not get away. The driver was given a citation for off road travel on Department lands and warned for violating the human presence closure. He was fined \$250.



Antler hunting violators on WHMA

Out of Season

On opening weekend of elk season near the Green/Crooks Mountain area of Carbon County, Game Wardens Mitch Renteria and Sarah Dugan were called to investigate two buck mule deer in the bed of a truck. Deer season didn't open for another two weeks on Crooks Mountain. When the game wardens questioned the suspects in their camp on Crooks Mountain, they explained how they were in an open deer area, as they harvested the deer "west of the Crooks Gap road". While the suspects did harvest the deer west of the Crooks Gap Road, the closest open deer hunt area was nearly 15 miles south of where they harvested them. Unfortunately, they did not bother to read the entire boundary description or notice that there was a northern/southern boundary that divided closed and open hunt areas. Both suspects were cited for taking deer in a closed area and the deer were seized as evidence. The suspects were fined \$250 each and forfeited the deer heads and antlers.

CASPER REGION

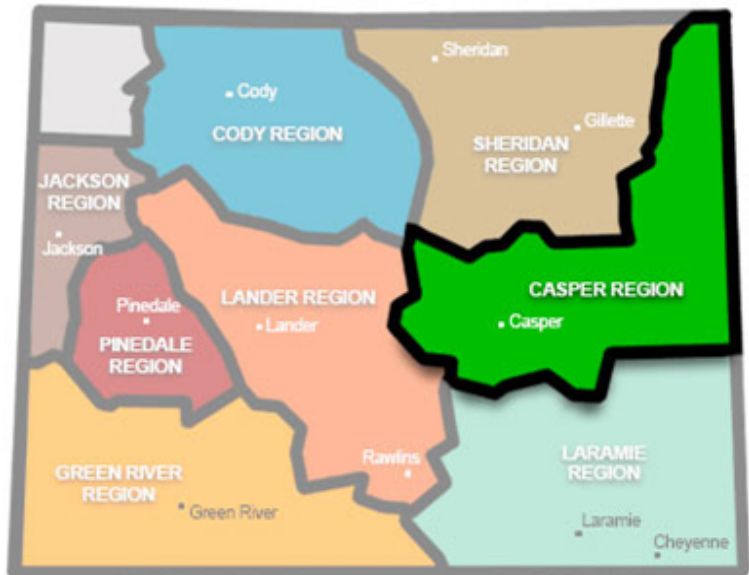
Work Unit Overview

The Casper Region consists of nine law enforcement officers, including seven district game wardens, one access coordinator and one regional wildlife supervisor. The Casper Region is in east-central Wyoming with game wardens patrolling from the Rattlesnake Hills and southern Big Horn Mountains, east to the Nebraska state line, along with a portion of the Thunder Basin National Grasslands and the Black Hills. Casper Region has district game wardens stationed in Glenrock, Douglas, Lusk, Newcastle, Sundance and two in Casper.

2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

In 2021, Casper Region law enforcement officers documented 651 violations. Officers issued 254 citations, 369 written warnings, and investigated 28 cases in which they were unable to identify a suspect. The Casper Region continues to place emphasis

on watercraft safety, fishing violations, and boating under the influence (BUI) enforcement on Alcova, Pathfinder, and Glendo Reservoirs, and on the North Platte River. Enforcement



efforts on these bodies of water have the goal of increasing safe boating practices and reducing the potential for boating-related

injuries and deaths. Casper Region game wardens contacted hundreds of families and over a thousand individuals recreating on the water during the summer boating season. Game wardens documented 306 violations in the region through their watercraft enforcement efforts. Of these, 133 were watercraft violations, 100 were fishing violations and 35 were AIS violations.

Game wardens made four arrests for BUI during the boating season. Officers put several other operators through preliminary BUI testing and found they were within legal limits to operate their watercraft. Although game wardens

frequently detected alcohol from contacts made during summer boating season, most boats utilized a sober operator. Because of the potential for a deadly boating accident, BUI enforcement remains a high priority for Casper Region game wardens.

During the summer boating season, game wardens responded to multiple reports of stranded floaters on the North Platte River and assisted the Natrona County Sheriff's Office and Fire EMS with search and rescue operations. Common calls included floaters separated from their watercraft, float tubes losing air and stranded floaters.

Game wardens provided informal watercraft safety awareness during contacts with the public. Game wardens also participated in the cooperative children's life jacket awareness program sponsored by the Department, Alcova Marina and Sloanes General Store, which provided children 12 years of age and under a free ice cream cone when they were "caught"



Alcova

wearing their life jacket. Additionally, the Respect Our River organization donated life jacket loaner stands placed along the North Platte River and at Alcova and Pathfinder Reservoirs. The Department, along with other organizations, donated numerous life jackets to each stand. These stands appeared to be beneficial as recreationists borrowed many life jackets each weekend.

Task Forces

The Casper Region conducted its annual Alcova July 4 task force, which included six Casper Region game wardens. These six game wardens worked Alcova and Pathfinder Reservoirs as well as the North Platte River over the July 1-5, 2021 holiday weekend. The task force recorded approximately 350 public contacts and 67

violations, including two arrests for BUI. Game wardens on the task force also assisted local law enforcement officers on several occasions, including rescuing stranded boaters on the North Platte River.

The Casper Region also conducted a July 4 task force at Glendo Reservoir. This task force documented numerous violations again this year. Two game wardens recorded eight violations and over 71 boat contacts. Overall, the holiday weekend had great weather with little wind. Task force operations seem correlated with greater awareness of safe boating practices by the public. Since the first task force operation on Glendo Reservoir in 1996, the annual number of BUI arrests has decreased dramatically. The increased law enforcement presence during the July 4 holiday has contributed to fewer boats with alcohol on board and more boats having designated sober operators.

Notable Cases

Casper Family Nearly Drowns at Alcova Reservoir

One of the Casper game wardens was checking hunters on Poison Spider Road when he received a call about a watercraft incident on Alcova Reservoir. By the time he arrived, Natrona County Sheriff deputies were on scene at Okie Beach and informed him everyone that was in the sinking boat made it to shore. However, two children were receiving medical treatment from EMTs. Eight people were on board the boat when heavy waves capsized it and it began to sink. The occupants in the boat included two adult males and six children. The life jackets on board were too large for the children, so they had to utilize an inner tube attached to the boat as a flotation device in order to stay above water. Private individuals on two fishing boats in the area helped get everyone out of the water and to shore. They then called for medical assistance. EMTs took two children to the hospital for water inhalation where they were treated and soon released.

Further investigation determined the operator of the boat had been drinking beer and tequila, in addition to smoking marijuana, before getting on the water that day. The operator had a blood alcohol content (BAC) of 0.14%. The legal limit in Wyoming for operating a watercraft or other motor vehicle is a BAC of 0.08%. Wardens placed the boat operator under arrest for operating a watercraft under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The Natrona County Circuit Court found the defendant guilty. The judge fined the defendant \$870, suspended his privileges to operate a watercraft for two years, placed him under supervised probation for six months and assessed a suspended jail sentence of six months.

Repeat Offender Receives Jail Time

On May 31, 2021, Game Warden Austin Swingholm arrested a Casper man for boating under the influence (BUI) while operating his boat with eight passengers on board on Alcova

Reservoir. The operator of the boat had a BAC of 0.12%. The operator had a previous arrest for BUI on the same reservoir. In 2002, he had crashed his boat into an island while operating the watercraft late at night. The crash resulted in several injuries and the death of a Colorado woman whom the operator had just met. After his court hearing in 2002, the judge dismissed his BUI charge. However, the court convicted him of one count of aggravated vehicular homicide and six counts of reckless endangerment. He served seven years in prison. In Natrona County Circuit Court on October 27, 2021, the offender pled guilty to BUI. The judge sentenced him to 30 days in jail and six months of supervised probation. He also suspended his privilege to operate watercraft in the State of Wyoming for two years.

Poachers Caught on Video

The Stop Poaching hotline received a call concerning two individuals shooting from the Poison Spider Road at a herd of elk as they ran across the road, approximately 45 miles west of Casper. The caller was taking a video of the incident as he was calling the hotline number. He promptly sent the video to Game Warden Austin Swingholm. The video showed two suspects shooting seven times at a herd of elk as they ran across the county road. The video also showed one of the elk being shot and falling in the middle of the road. The suspects shot and killed three elk during the incident. When wardens Swingholm and John Pokallus arrived on scene, they discovered that two of the elk had not been tagged. The game wardens confiscated the dead elk and the firearms used in the poaching. They arrested one of the suspects for being a convicted violent felon in possession of a firearm. Further investigation revealed both suspects had several past Game and Fish violations. Based on the video evidence and the investigation, one suspect was cited for shooting from a public roadway and two counts of failing to properly tag big game. He was fined \$750 and had his license privileges suspended for three years. The second suspect was cited for shooting from a public roadway, fined \$250 and had his license privileges

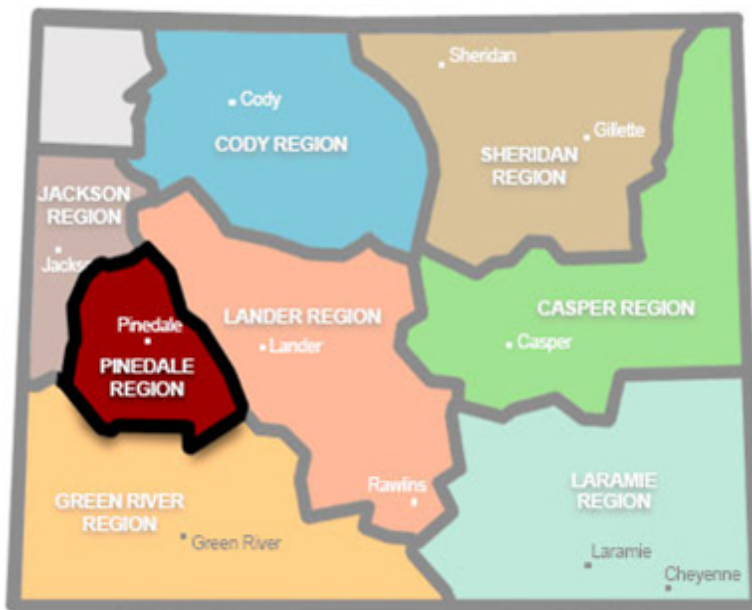
suspended for three years. The person who called the Stop Poaching hotline has reported multiple hunting violations in the last year. His decision to video the incident and contact the

local game warden was instrumental in the detection and prosecution of these wildlife crimes.

PINEDALE REGION

Work Unit Overview

The Pinedale Region has four law enforcement officers, including three district game wardens and a regional wildlife supervisor. The region is in western Wyoming and covers Sublette County from the west slope of the Wind River Range to the east slope of the Wyoming Range. The Pinedale Region includes the North Pinedale, South Pinedale and Big Piney warden districts. The regional wildlife supervisor and the Green River access coordinator also assist with enforcement efforts in the region.



2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

Pinedale Region law enforcement officers documented 139 violations in 2021. Officers issued 67 citations, 68 warnings and investigated four cases in which suspects were not identified. The region is home to a very diverse wildlife and aquatic resource with high desert habitat as well as three major mountain ranges and several cold-water lakes, streams and river systems. Law enforcement

efforts vary depending on the season. Typical enforcement duties include desert and front country small and big game enforcement, watercraft, fishing and backcountry patrols.

Late fall and winter enforcement efforts included mule deer winter range patrols, monitoring trapping activity and patrolling the antler hunting season closure and WHMA closures. Antler hunting complaints continue to increase as more people become interested in the activity. Game wardens receive many reports of illegal antler hunting activity every year, however many of the reports are vague and only report suspicious activity. Apprehending violators can be difficult and wardens continue to explore new ways to effectively and efficiently detect and apprehend violators. A team approach involving the region's entire enforcement staff as well as the assistance of other local agencies has proven effective and as a result, compliance was good in 2021, although four violations were documented. In 2021, the May 1 opening time was changed from noon to 6:00 am. This resulted in increased compliance, reduced confusion and conflicts between antler hunters and it was well supported by the public.

In addition to antler hunting enforcement, wardens focused attention on black bear bait compliance checks in the spring. Summer efforts were focused on fishing and watercraft enforcement on lakes and rivers, including backcountry fishing enforcement. Several typical fishing violations were detected on Pinedale area lakes and rivers, as well as in remote backcountry areas. Angler use continues to increase on the Green and New Fork rivers, resulting in the need for increased law enforcement efforts. The use of drift boats

and kayaks to patrol local rivers has resulted in increased effectiveness and efficiency in fishing enforcement. While the region has several large lakes, recreational watercraft activity is minimal compared to other areas in Wyoming. Cold water temperatures discourage water skiing and personal watercraft activity, so documented watercraft violations remain low compared to other regions. Enforcement of AIS regulations remains a priority in the region and six violations were documented in 2021.

Reduced deer population numbers from the 2016-2017 and 2019-2020 winters combined with mild conditions throughout the fall made hunting difficult again in 2021. The mild fall conditions also delayed deer and elk movements toward winter ranges, reducing late season vulnerability to harvest, which resulted in a below average number of violations detected. Several cases resulted from hunters turning themselves in after accidentally harvesting the wrong sex or over-limits of big game animals. This trend in self-reporting is encouraging. Compliance with Elk Special Management Permits improved significantly in 2019, with only six violations documented, however an increase in violations (25) was noted in 2020. In 2021, 15 violations were detected.

In 2020, COVID-19 health orders throughout the country resulted in a significant increase in recreational activity in the region, especially in the Bridger Wilderness Area. This increase in activity was again noted in 2021. While unprecedented numbers of people from around the country visited the Pinedale area throughout the entire summer and into fall, there did not seem to be a significant increase in violations. However, enforcement personnel documented slightly increased violations for fishing without a license, which is likely attributed to this increased activity.

Task Forces

An annual mule deer winter range enforcement task force has been ongoing in the region for over 20 years and continued in 2021. The number of documented violations and suspects apprehended tends to fluctuate from year to year. Few violations have been documented over the last several years, indicating its success in deterring many potential violators. The task force involves personnel from around the state, who each spend four to five days in the region throughout November and into mid-December.



This task force remains very important to the public and continues to have significant public support. One doe mule deer was illegally taken near Big Piney. No suspects have been identified to date. The results of this task force are encouraging and can be attributed to years of consistent enforcement coverage and engagement with the public. Due to its success, as well as public concern for mule deer in western Wyoming, this task force will continue well into the future.

Notable Cases

Residency Violation

North Pinedale Game Warden Bubba Haley received a report of a possible residency violation case from the Stop Poaching Hotline. The report stated a man who lived and worked in Morgan, Utah was buying resident Wyoming hunting licenses. The anonymous tip claimed this person hadn't lived in Wyoming for nearly 30 years and used his parent's post office box to apply for and receive dozens of resident licenses over two decades. After a nearly two-year investigation with the assistance of the Utah Department of Wildlife Resources and the Sublette County Attorney's Office, the man pleaded guilty to eight counts of residency violations. He was ordered to pay \$25,000 in fines and his hunting privileges were revoked for six years. He also received a suspended jail sentence of eight years. This case is an example of the importance of the Stop Poaching Hotline, where one anonymous tip can lead to the discovery of serious violations, and lead to the violator's apprehension when it may have otherwise gone undetected.

License Transfer

On November 21, 2021, Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas received a report of suspicious activity from an elk hunter. The following day, Warden Hymas was able to investigate the area and discovered a broken down snowmobile trailer and followed tracks and birds to the remnants of two cow elk. Suspects were developed and interviewed, and Warden Hymas concluded that one suspect fired several shots across a canyon at a herd of elk, killing one and wounding another. The suspect left the area to get help to retrieve the elk. When they arrived

at the kill site, they located the wounded elk and the second suspect killed it. Even though both suspects had legal elk licenses, neither of them tagged the elk. Instead, one of the suspects tagged the elk with licenses from his wife and grandfather. Five citations and two warnings were issued for failure to tag big game, transfer of license, and taking an over-limit of elk. While this type of case is not uncommon, one suspect had a couple of previous violations, one of which was for accessory to illegally taking a buck deer in February 2009. For that violation, he lost hunting privileges for three years, in addition to significant fines. In this case, his poor decisions led to another three years hunting privileges lost, over \$2,000 in fines and 10 days in jail.

Illegal Moose Shooting

In April, 2021, South Pinedale Game Warden Jordan Kraft received an anonymous report from a concerned citizen that a moose was shot in Daniel, Wyoming. Subsequent investigation discovered that a calf moose was mortally injured in a pasture at a residence near Daniel. Upon contact, the suspect denied shooting the moose with a firearm but shortly thereafter admitted to shooting the animal with a .410 shotgun. Warden Kraft's investigation revealed that the moose was not an imminent threat to the suspect at the time of the incident. The suspect told Warden Kraft he had left the moose encounter and went to the house to retrieve a firearm to scare the moose away. Instead, the suspect shot the moose in the stomach after it had damaged unprotected stored hay. The suspect was involved in a previous case involving the illegal take of a moose at the residence by a family member a decade prior. The suspect was fined \$805 for taking a moose during a closed season.

WILDLIFE INVESTIGATIONS UNIT

Work Unit Overview

The Wildlife Investigations Unit (WIU) is comprised of six wildlife investigators stationed at the Casper, Green River, Lander, Laramie, Jackson and Sheridan regional offices and one supervisor/investigator stationed at the Cody regional office.

The WIU is responsible for investigating large scale, complex, lengthy, overt and covert cases. The WIU places its highest priority on cases with commercial involvement, multiple suspects, multiple violations and wildlife violations taking place across several jurisdictions. Investigators also assist game wardens with larger enforcement cases, task forces and other special projects. The WIU maintains several intelligence databases. WIU members operate with unmarked vehicles and typically out of uniform. The WIU is equipped with digital media forensics, modern evidence collection and equipment for surveillance, tracking and covert operations. The WIU also works closely with other states' wildlife investigators and with several federal agencies, including the USFWS.



50 SD cards/flash drives, two computers and several GPS units seized by game wardens and investigators as evidence were forensically examined by WIU personnel in 2021. The WIU also coordinated forensic extractions of additional cell phones for other Wyoming law enforcement agencies in several cooperatively worked cases. The WIU wrote and executed cell phone, Google geofence and social media preservation letters and search warrants as well as search warrants for premises and property in 2021.

Notable Cases

Organic Yes, Legal...No

In July 2021, a West Casper man entered a plea of guilty to multiple wildlife crimes involving the illegal take of deer, antelope and small game. During the 2018 hunting season, the West Casper game warden received a tip from the public about an individual suspected of taking multiple antelope and mule deer without licenses and potentially selling his own version of hunting licenses. This tip was turned over to the Casper wildlife investigator and multiple wildlife violations were discovered by the team.

2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

The WIU initiated at least 15 major investigations in 2021 and assisted game wardens throughout Wyoming and officers from other jurisdictions across the country with over 100 other cases. Investigators spent significant time working ongoing investigations across Wyoming.

The WIU continues to explore new technologies related to tracking suspect activity, covert operations and digital forensics. The WIU analyzes all cell phones, computers and other electronic devices seized from wildlife violators in Wyoming. Approximately 25 cell phones,



Illegally killed antelope and deer jerky packaged as organic beef jerky and sold to the public

In December of 2019, search warrants were served on the suspect's ranch and the suspect confessed to illegally killing multiple mule deer and antelope. He then detailed how he disguised the meat as organic beef and substituted it into his jerky business, selling game meat to the unsuspecting public out of his truck and online.

The suspect was charged with illegally killing 20 big game animals without licenses and during closed seasons along with six other violations. In addition to the \$45,000 in fines and restitution, three firearms, everything associated with the jerky making business and all illegal wildlife were forfeited to the state. The suspect also received a minimum of five years license suspension and he is ineligible to purchase licenses until his restitution has been paid in full.

Craigslist Caper

In April 2021, West Cheyenne Game Warden Spencer Carstens received a tip from a concerned citizen about an online advertisement offering day-old pheasant chicks for sale. After conferring with the WIU, officers located similar ads on a number of websites serving Nebraska, northern Colorado and Idaho.



Pheasant chicks illegally transported into Wyoming and sold across several states

On the morning of May 19, 2021, the suspect made his way into Wyoming with more than 2,000 live pheasant chicks in the back of his van. He was contacted by officers after they observed him selling chicks in a south Cheyenne gas station parking lot. The suspect's wife was found to have been pre-arranging the sales and delivery locations. Neither had made any apparent attempt to obtain importation permits for any of the states traveled or retain a health certificate for the birds. They had already sold well over 300 pheasant chicks in Nebraska and Colorado and planned to illegally sell hundreds more in western Wyoming and Utah.

The couple were each sentenced to \$450 fines in Laramie County Circuit Court after the suspect was cited for importing live wildlife without a permit and his wife was similarly charged as an accessory for her part in arranging the sales of live wildlife. They were also warned for failing to produce a certificate of veterinary inspection and failing to provide a certificate of origin to their customers, as well as other record-keeping and game bird farm permitting requirements. They were allowed to retain the unsold birds at their home in Idaho. Neighboring states were advised of associated violations in their jurisdictions and at least one other state has issued similar charges to the couple.

Wind River White-Tailed Deer Baiting Case

In 2011, game wardens with the Wind River Reservation (WRR) Tribal Fish and Game seized game cameras on lands disputed by the Tribes and non-native private landowners. These game cameras had images of a local landowner from Kinnear putting out large piles of corn during the fall deer hunting season. The cameras and corn were located on the ground in shooting lanes in front of large, elevated, permanent hunting blinds located on the edge of the boundary between the WRR and non-native private lands.

The Tribal Fish and Game asked the Department for assistance with the case, as it appeared the suspect was illegally hunting deer over bait both on the WRR and on state lands. The Department enlisted the help of the USFWS

and the agencies worked together to bring the case to its conclusion. The suspects were the owners of an outfitting business that catered to nonresidents hunting white-tailed deer. Over the next five years, the investigation showed the suspects placed bait so nonresident and resident hunters could kill deer more easily, in violation of Wyoming hunting regulations.



WILDLIVE 08-20-2005 03:14:48

Suspect placing illegal bait

Clients were contacted in 11 different states and one foreign country during the course of the investigation. The suspects charged clients up to \$3,000 for each deer hunt. The value of the outfitted hunts and transportation of illegally taken wildlife by nonresidents led to charges for violation of the federal Lacey Act. In addition to the baiting violations, some clients took over-limits of deer, without a license and other violations. Following the closure of the federal aspect of the case, the Fremont County Attorney's Office will be reviewing the case and charging up to 30 hunters for various wildlife violations in state court.



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Deer feeding on illegally placed bait

The couple from Kinnear plead guilty in federal court on November 15, 2021 and agreed to a plea deal for violations of the federal Lacey Act. They were ordered to pay \$60,000 in restitution to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department for the value of the wildlife killed illegally. Both defendants were placed on one year of unsupervised probation and had their hunting privileges suspended worldwide for one year.

The case was a cooperative effort between the Department, USFWS, WRR Tribal F&G, Fremont County Sheriff's Office, FBI, U.S. Attorney's Office and Fremont County Prosecutor's Office.

DFS Delinquent....

On October 7, 2020, a contact by game wardens developed information showing that an individual committed 16 counts of purchasing game and fish licenses while under a court-ordered suspension for failing to pay child support. Through interviews of the suspect and his girlfriend by the Green River wildlife investigator, Green River game wardens and the Green River Probation and Parole Office, the suspect admitted to purchasing licenses and killing buck mule deer on illegally procured licenses. As of October 2020, the suspect owed over \$100,000 in back child support. On November 17, 2021, the suspect entered into a plea agreement dismissing 14 of 16 charges. The suspect was sentenced to \$70 in court costs, two years suspension of license privileges, and 365 days incarceration to be served concurrently with jail time assessed in a felony stalking case.

LARGE CARNIVORE SECTION

Work Unit Overview

The Large Carnivore Section (LCS) is responsible for the management and conflict resolution of mountain lions, black bears, grizzly bears and wolves (where classified as trophy game animals) in Wyoming. The high profile nature and inherent controversy associated with large carnivores requires a working knowledge of the species and their interactions with humans and other wildlife. The LCS law enforcement officer, stationed in Lander, serves as the LCS Conflict Coordinator. The LCS conflict coordinator is also responsible for reviewing all trophy game damage claims in the Pinedale, Lander, Cody and Jackson regions. The LCS conflict coordinator focuses on managing conflicts between humans and carnivores and law enforcement situations with these animals. In addition, the LCS conflict coordinator serves as the lead of the Department's Predator Attack Team (PAT) and conductive electrical weapons (CEW, also referred to as Tasers) trainer. The LCS conflict coordinator works cooperatively with regional wardens and investigators, federal agency law enforcement officers and LCS personnel on all human attacks by carnivores. The LCS conflict coordinator provides an advisory and investigative role in statewide trophy game law enforcement activities.



game wardens in multiple ongoing grizzly bear enforcement cases. In addition to grizzly bear investigations, LCS personnel assisted with multiple wolf, mountain lion and black bear investigations. The LCS provided localized assistance to game wardens with a variety of cases involving watercraft safety, big game, fishing and other wildlife related incidents. Although most cases are referred to local game wardens, the LCS conflict coordinator cited several individuals for misdemeanor wildlife violations.

The PAT responded to the one grizzly bear-caused human injury this year near Cody. These conflicts, when they occur, require an immediate response by trained, equipped law enforcement personnel. The Department will continue to prioritize reducing conflicts between grizzly bears and humans and maintain an immediate and efficient response in all wildlife/human attack situations. The LCS conflict coordinator provided certification training of all users for CEWs in 2020. CEW deployments were conducted on one black bear, one mule deer and one grizzly bear in 2021.

Notable Cases

One interesting case for the LCS conflict coordinator involved an illegal black bear bait. The suspect involved had moved to Fremont County within the past few years and quickly befriended the LCS conflict coordinator. The prodigious interest of the suspect in all things related to large carnivores and more included asking for ride-alongs, donations of confiscated bear and lion meat and requests to join the church where he was the minister. This zealous nature of the suspect drew suspicion by the LCS conflict coordinator, who decided to monitor

2021 Law Enforcement Efforts

LCS and regional law enforcement personnel were active in investigating eight reports of aggressive grizzly bear encounters. Four of these resulted in bear mortalities and four bear injuries, in addition to one human injury. The LCS conflict coordinator served as the lead assistance contact to USFWS agents and

the suspect's activities more. Interestingly, the suspect seemed unconcerned about leaving all the bait materials, hunting blind, trash, chairs from the church, trail cameras and even his hunting rifle at the site. Investigation into his activities resulted in multiple bear bait violations including failure to remove his bait after the season and littering. He was fined \$400 for the violations.



Items left behind at illegal bear bait site

WATERCRAFT SAFETY PROGRAM

The Department is the state agency primarily responsible for watercraft safety education and enforcement. In a typical year, Wyoming game wardens spend much of their time patrolling water bodies, from major reservoirs to small ponds and streams, enforcing fishing and boating safety laws and regulations and promoting safe boating activities. Game wardens throughout Wyoming continued to see high participation by the public in watercraft-related activities after a significant increase in 2020, including many non-motorized watercraft like kayaks, canoes and standup paddleboards.



Game wardens worked approximately 4,400 hours and contacted thousands of boaters during their watercraft safety enforcement and educational efforts. At full staff, the Department has 11 regional game warden positions assigned primarily to watercraft duties between Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends. However, due to turnover and retirements, many of these positions were unfilled for much of the summer boating season. District game wardens in many parts of the state worked additional watercraft safety enforcement along with their other duties

to ensure an enforcement and safety presence on Wyoming waterways.

To accomplish the Department's boating safety mission, game wardens work in partnership with county sheriff's offices, municipal police departments, local fire departments and volunteer search and rescue organizations. The Department also partners with the United States Coast Guard (USCG) and other boating safety organizations throughout the country to work toward consistent regulations and education messaging among the states. According to USCG statistics, on average, drowning accounts for nearly 70% of all boating related fatalities nationwide in a given year.

In approximately 85% of these cases, the victims were not wearing life jackets. Many of these deaths could have been prevented with life jacket wear. For this reason, game wardens emphasize the importance of carrying and wearing properly fitting life jackets aboard watercraft when contacting the boating public.

Casper area game wardens assisted a local volunteer organization, "Respect Our River," with maintaining several life jacket loaner stations along the North Platte River and at Alcova

and Pathfinder reservoirs. Wardens observed many people taking advantage of this program, especially in the area of the Casper Whitewater Park on the North Platte River, which has been the scene of several drowning fatalities in the past few years.

Watercraft incidents that occur in the state are investigated by game wardens. To develop the skills necessary for these investigations, the Department sends game wardens to advanced training in watercraft incident investigation techniques. This training aids wardens in conducting thorough, professional investigations to determine the causes of watercraft accidents ranging from those involving minor property damage to incidents involving serious injuries or death. One game warden was able to attend a week of this training hosted by Colorado Parks and Wildlife in Denver.

In 2021, there were seven reportable boat incidents investigated by game wardens, up from four in 2020. These included one boating-related fatality on the Snake River near Jackson in July. In this incident, three individuals were on a fishing trip aboard a drift boat and the boat capsized while the rower was attempting to navigate through an eddy in the river. Two of the occupants were able to swim to shore but one passenger drowned. The victim was wearing an inflatable life jacket, but it was not inflated and investigators believe that it may have been improperly armed. Four other incidents: two on Glendo Reservoir, one on Pilot Butte Reservoir, and one on Alcova Reservoir, resulted in injuries to five individuals. The other two incidents involved boats that suffered damage in excess of \$500.

Alcohol and drug use has been a contributing factor in many of the most serious watercraft accidents in Wyoming over the past several years. Game wardens keep a watchful eye for boat operators under the influence of alcohol or drugs, with the goal of intervening before an accident occurs. During 2021, eight boat operators were arrested for BUI, all related to alcohol use. Four arrests occurred at Alcova Reservoir, two at Keyhole Reservoir, one at

Glendo Reservoir and one at Dull Knife Reservoir. The Department again participated in Operation Dry Water, a nationwide effort to educate the public about the dangers of BUI and encourage boaters to designate a sober operator.

The Department continues to improve the training of game wardens related to boating safety, including specialized boating law enforcement and water survival techniques. The initial training that all new game wardens receive includes general boat operations, review of Wyoming boating laws and regulations, boat-to-boat arrest tactics, BUI detection and enforcement, an officer survival pool session and training on the effects of cold water immersion. Wardens also routinely participate in scenario-based training to evaluate their skills and decision-making abilities in a variety of situations they may encounter on the water.



4H Boat Safety

The Department remained involved in national and regional associations dedicated to safe boating. Law Enforcement Coordinator Aaron Kerr served as executive board president of the Western States Boating Administrators Association, which is dedicated to collaboration among western states in the interests of recreational boating safety enforcement and education. He also sits on the executive board for the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators and works on the association's Enforcement and Training Committee, which is dedicated to developing and providing training resources to marine law enforcement officers nationwide.

STATE LAND ENFORCEMENT

In addition to wildlife and watercraft law enforcement, the Department assists the Wyoming Office of State Lands and Investments by enforcing certain statutes applying to Wyoming State Trust Land (state land). Department game wardens have the authority to enforce prohibitions of off-road travel, overnight camping, open fires and littering on state land. Most state land enforcement was incidental to hunting and fishing patrol duties. On many state land parcels throughout Wyoming, off-road travel is an ongoing issue and has caused considerable resource damage to some areas. Much of this off-road use occurs in the early

spring or fall when soils are wet or when roads are blocked by snow and people attempt to drive around the drifts. Illegal overnight camping on state lands occurs throughout the year and can contribute to resource damage and littering. Open fires, typically associated with overnight camping, were of particular concern this year due to very dry conditions in most of Wyoming. Many of the state land violations discovered by game wardens were handled with verbal or written warnings to educate the violators, although several more serious violations causing resource damage were addressed with citations.

Violation	Written Warnings	Citations	Total
Off-Road Travel	12	14	26
Camping	13	10	23
Open Fires	7	1	8
Littering on State Land	0	2	2
Total 2021	32	27	59
Total 2020	36	27	63
Total 2019	39	35	74



REGIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS

The Department utilizes an electronic case management system (CMS) to document wildlife violations and create individual law enforcement case reports. The CMS allows for the compilation of wildlife violation data and associated law enforcement action. Personnel work hours are tracked through a Daily Activity Report database. Both of these Department databases were utilized to compile the statistics included in this report.

Some law enforcement positions were vacant for part of the year due to retirements and personnel moves. The number of law enforcement positions listed for each region or work unit represents the total number of positions that documented law enforcement activity while assigned to a region or work unit.

Jackson Region - 4 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	2209	0	25,266
Watercraft Enforcement	266	47	2,178
Total	2475	47	27,444

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	55	34	3	92
Sport Fish	36	42	0	78
Non-Wildlife	11	3	0	14
Aquatic Invasive Species	17	2	0	19
Total	119	81	3	203



Game Warden Jon Stephens investigates a wolf carcass



Wolf tracks

Game Warden Nick Roberts



Cody Region - 12 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	6,702	0	99,372
Watercraft Enforcement	236	21	3,395
Total	6,938	21	102,767

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	121	79	12	212
Sport Fish	34	24	0	58
Non-Wildlife	11	2	0	13
Aquatic Invasive Species	8	1	0	9
Total	174	106	12	292

Sheridan Region - 9 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	5,269	57	80,031
Watercraft Enforcement	985	267	12,093
Total	6,254	324	92,124

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	273	173	80	526
Sport Fish	40	27	1	68
Non-Wildlife	108	41	0	149
Aquatic Invasive Species	37	2	0	39
Total	458	243	81	782



Game Warden Andy Enscore and Wildlife Biologist Erika Peckham at youth event in Gillette

Green River Region - 10 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	4,972	27	70,476
Watercraft Enforcement	438	98	6,052
Total	5,410	125	76,528

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	90	72	26	188
Sport Fish	28	16	0	44
Non-Wildlife	8	3	0	11
Aquatic Invasive Species	32	6	0	38
Total	158	97	26	281

Laramie Region - 14 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	5,920	33	101,639
Watercraft Enforcement	758	115	11,452
Total	6,678	148	113,091

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	190	84	24	298
Sport Fish	66	47	0	113
Non-Wildlife	77	20	0	97
Aquatic Invasive Species	64	5	0	69
Total	397	156	24	577

Lander Region - 8 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	3,066	0	50,176
Watercraft Enforcement	323	33	4,554
Total	3,389	33	54,730

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	87	35	30	152
Sport Fish	31	22	2	55
Non-Wildlife	30	6	0	36
Aquatic Invasive Species	13	2	0	15
Total	161	65	32	258

Casper Region - 9 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	4,729	43	64,870
Watercraft Enforcement	914	205	9,142
Total	5,643	248	74,012

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	222	135	26	383
Sport Fish	32	68	0	100
Non-Wildlife	87	45	1	133
Aquatic Invasive Species	28	6	1	35
Total	369	254	28	651

Pinedale Region - 4 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	1,806	14	23,774
Watercraft Enforcement	103	24	1,291
Total	1,909	38	25,065

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	55	44	4	103
Sport Fish	6	19	0	25
Non-Wildlife	3	2	0	5
Aquatic Invasive Species	4	2	0	6
Total	68	67	4	139

Law Enforcement Administration

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	1,002	1	6,930
Watercraft Enforcement	370	13	1,480
Total	1,372	14	8,410

Game Warden Dustin Shorma on patrol near the Wyoming-Montana state line.



Law Enforcement Administration/ Wildlife Investigations Unit

Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	29	5	2	36
Sport Fish	11	13	0	24
Non-Wildlife	5	2	0	7
Aquatic Invasive Species	8	0	0	8
Total	53	20	2	75

Wildlife Investigations Unit - 7 Enforcement Personnel

Activity	Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	11,469	67,864



Statewide Law Enforcement Statistics

Activity	Hours	Watercraft Hours	Miles
Wildlife Enforcement	47,144	175	522,534
Watercraft Enforcement	4,393	823	51,637
Totals 2021	51,537	998	574,171
2020	52,906	1,292	636,730
2019	52,042	1,346	709,330

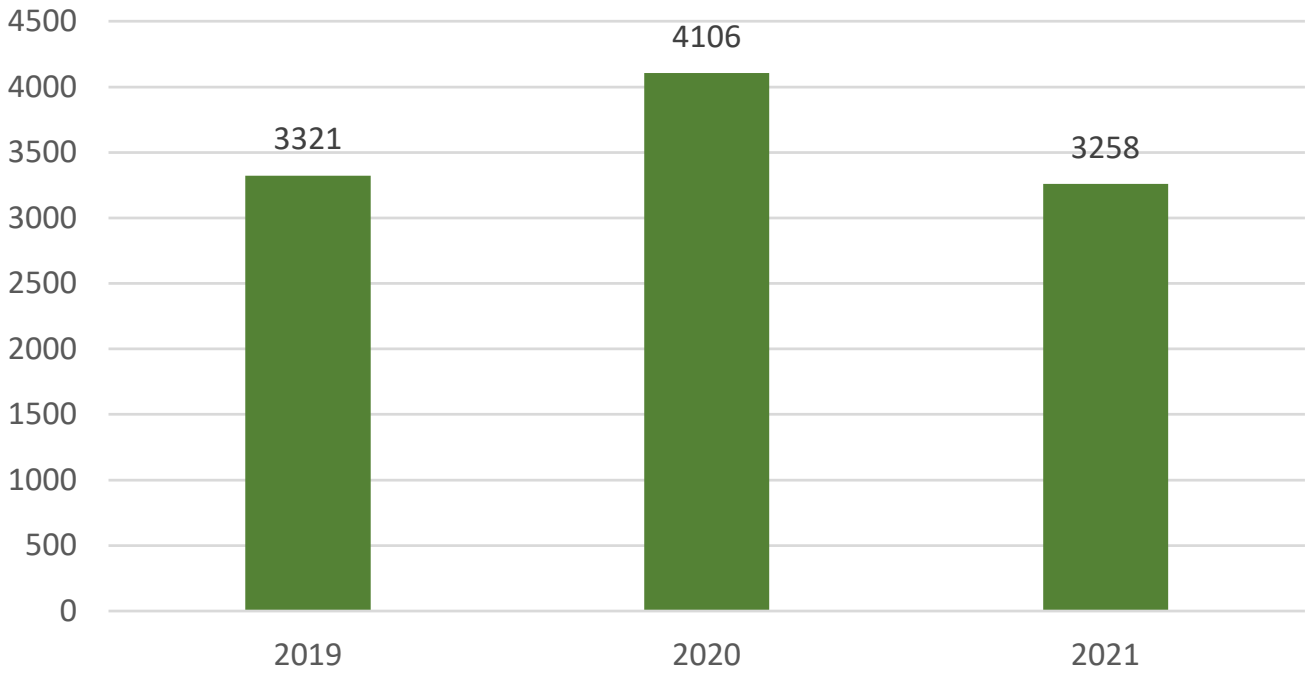
Program Enforcement	Warnings	Citations	Unknown Suspect	Total Law Enforcement Actions
Terrestrial Wildlife	1122	661	207	1990
Sport Fish	284	278	3	565
Non-Wildlife	340	124	1	465
Aquatic Invasive Species	211	26	1	238
Totals 2021	1,957	1,089	212	3,258
2020	2,342	1,485	279	4,106
2019	1,700	1,365	256	3,321

Game Warden Kelly Todd investigates a poached elk

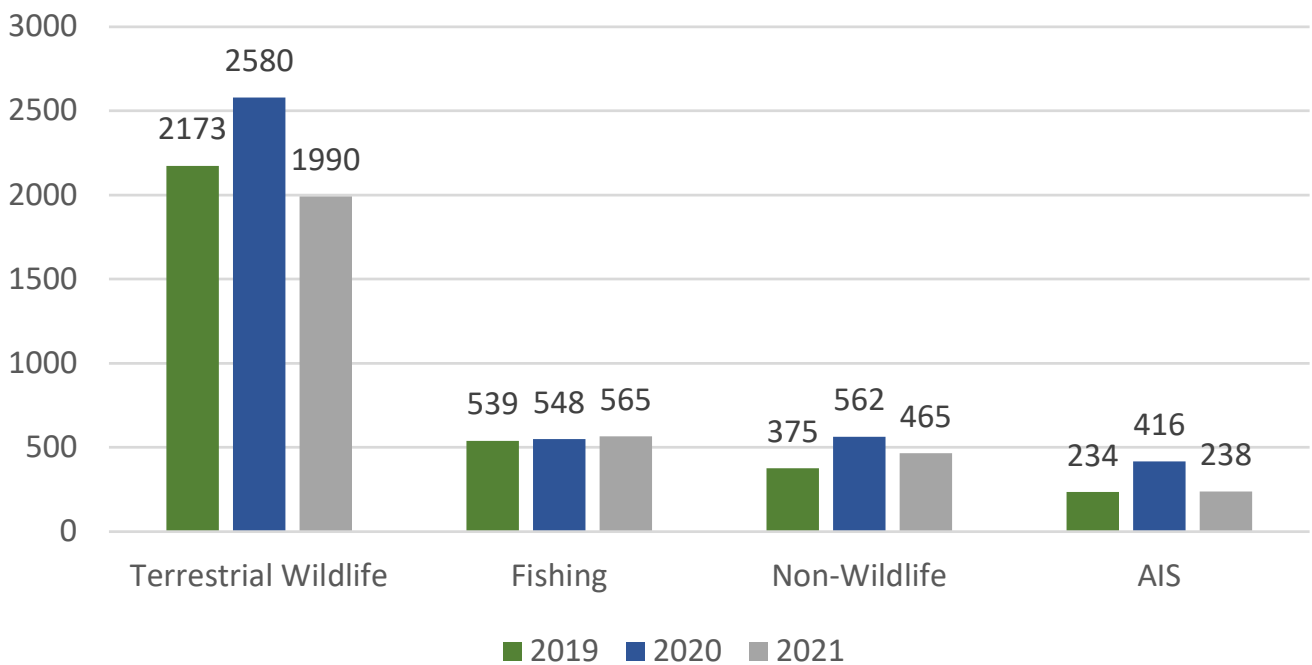


Game Warden Levi Wood collecting evidence from a poached moose

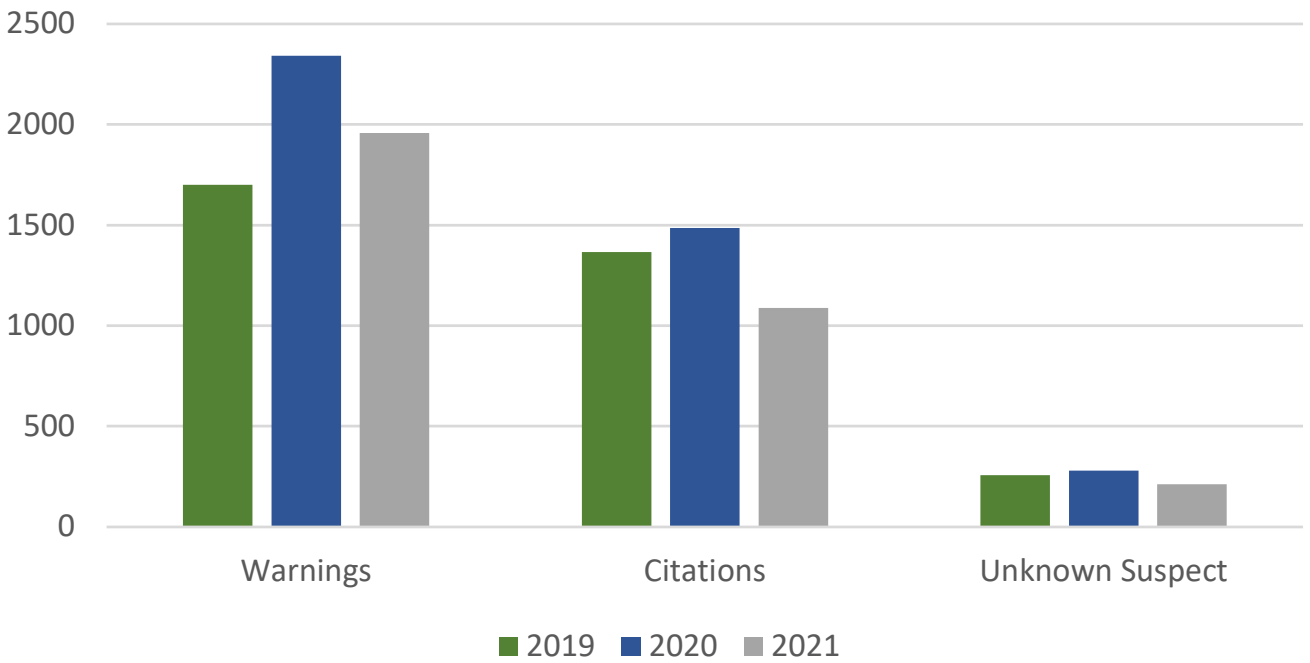
Total Violations by Year



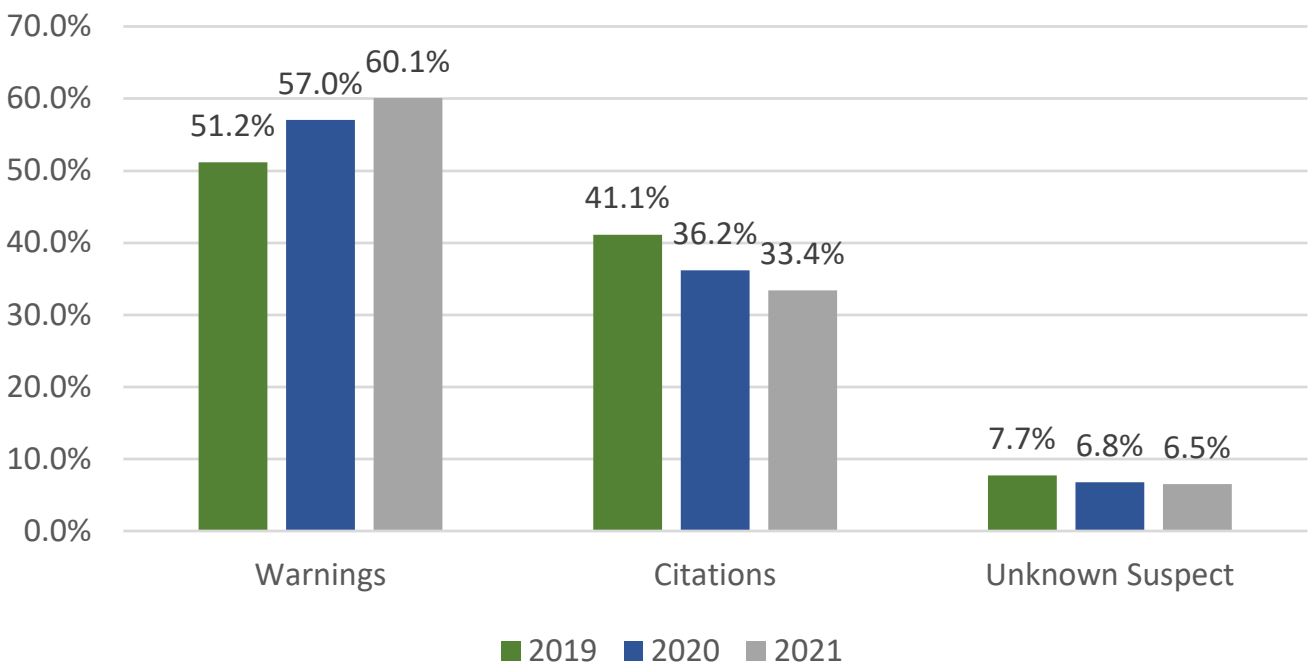
Violations by Category



Law Enforcement Actions



Percentage of Law Enforcement Actions



TOP 10 VIOLATIONS

In 2021, the top ten violations documented by Department law enforcement officers accounted for approximately 44% of all violations encountered. With few exceptions, the most common violations have not changed over the past several years and much of the Department's enforcement effort is geared toward these violations.

Fishing without a license is consistently the most common violation in the state and was again this year. This is due to recreational anglers being the largest user group that game wardens contact in the field during the year. Many of these violations are committed by individuals who simply forgot to purchase a license, while others fish without licenses intentionally and take their chances on getting caught. Even with the ease of obtaining fishing licenses online with a smart phone, fishing without a license accounted for approximately 9% of all violations detected.

Responding to hunting, fishing and trapping trespassing complaints is a major part of the job for many game wardens. 2021 was the fourth year where the collection of shed antlers on private land without permission was also a specific violation of the state's trespassing statute, and several illegal antler hunters were cited for trespassing. Several of the trespassing violations wardens respond to are unintentional by a suspect, but in many instances the violators knew they were trespassing. Trespassing incidents accounted for approximately 7% of all violations.

Hunters and anglers, with some exceptions, are required to purchase a conservation stamp in addition to their license. The revenue generated from these sales is used to fund various Department projects, including the Access Yes program and wildlife habitat improvement projects. Due to new legislation passed in 2021, the conservation fee was raised from \$12.50 to \$21.50 in July, with proceeds from the increase dedicated to improving access to private lands or difficult to access public lands

for hunting and fishing. Failing to purchase a conservation stamp made up approximately 5% of all violations.

The most common boating safety violation continues to be having inadequate life jackets aboard watercraft. Game wardens patrolling the water emphasize the enforcement of this requirement due to the life-saving potential of proper life jacket wear. Many of these violations occur early in the boating season. Additionally, game wardens encounter many watercraft with an adequate number of life jackets, but lacking jackets of the proper size for everyone aboard. Of particular concern are children provided with adult-sized life jackets, which can easily slide off them in the water or be pushed up in their face, making it difficult to breathe. These violations made up approximately 4% of the total.

Department administered lands include properties owned by the Wyoming Game & Fish Commission (Commission) and private lands enrolled in the Access Yes Program. Various regulations apply to these properties and are enforced by Department law enforcement officers. Several of the Commission owned lands are closed to human presence during the winter months to protect wintering wildlife. Over the past few years, several individuals have been cited for entering these properties during closures, mostly to gather shed antlers. Other common violations on Department administered lands include off road travel, open fires in restricted areas, lighting fireworks, failing to obey regulatory signs and violations of "ranch rules" on Access Yes areas. Violations on Department lands made up almost 4% of the total.

Preventing AIS such as zebra and quagga mussels in Wyoming waters continues to be a high priority for the Department. Violations of the AIS regulations remained high in 2021. The Department continued increased enforcement efforts at AIS check stations this year and stopped over 100 boaters who failed to stop as required. Failing to purchase an AIS decal for

a watercraft also remained prevalent. Many AIS violations are by non-motorized watercraft users, who are not required to register their watercraft. Motorized watercraft owners tend to be more familiar with the boating and AIS regulations because they receive a watercraft regulation brochure when they register their watercraft. The Department continues to expand awareness of the AIS program and the importance of preventing species like zebra mussels and invasive vegetation from becoming established in Wyoming waters. These AIS violations combined comprised almost 6.5% of total violations.

Failing to tag big game animals, trophy game animals and wild turkeys continues to be a common violation. Licenses for these species contain carcass coupons, commonly referred to as tags. When one of these animals is harvested, the hunter is required to properly fill out the tag prior to leaving the site of the kill. Proper tagging entails detaching the carcass coupon from the license, signing the coupon and cutting out the month and day of harvest to show when the animal was killed. Game wardens often encounter hunters in transit from the kill site who have failed to take one or more of the steps to properly tag their animals. In these situations, it is difficult to know whether the tagging violation was simply an oversight or if the person was trying to get their animal home without tagging it so they could go hunting again using the same license. The Department has

added diagrams into the regulation brochures for these species to remind hunters of proper tagging procedures at the kill site. Fail to tag violations made up 3% of the total.

Hunting regulations specify limitations on the sex and species of animals that can be taken by a hunter holding a specific license. Each year, game wardens investigate incidents where a hunter has killed the wrong sex of animal. These typically involve taking an antlered or horned big game animal on a license valid only for antlerless animals. Most commonly, yearling buck antelope are taken by hunters with doe/fawn antelope licenses or spike deer or elk taken by hunters with doe/fawn or cow/calf licenses. The Stop Poaching hotline receives calls from multiple hunters each year who are reporting themselves for making this mistake in the field. Self-reported violations often result in reduced penalties imposed by the courts. Taking the wrong sex of animal made up just under 3% of total violations.

Most of the waste of big game violations are situations where hunters fail to retrieve all of the edible portions from their animal. The Department has added a diagram to the big game hunting regulation brochure to educate hunters on what meat must be retrieved from a harvested big game animal and taken out of the field. Approximately 2.5% of total violations were for waste or abandonment of big game.

Top 10 Violations Documented in 2021

Top 10 Violations Documented in 2021	
1. Fishing without a license	302
2. Hunt, fish, trap, collect shed antlers on private land without permission (trespassing)	237
3. Fail to purchase conservation stamp	173
4. Fail to provide life jackets aboard watercraft	136
5. Violation of rules governing use of Department-administered lands	122
6. Fail to stop at AIS check station for inspection	108
7. Fail to purchase AIS decal	102
8. Fail to tag big or trophy game animal	98
9. Take wrong sex of animal	91
10. Waste or abandon big game	83

WILDLIFE FORENSICS LAB

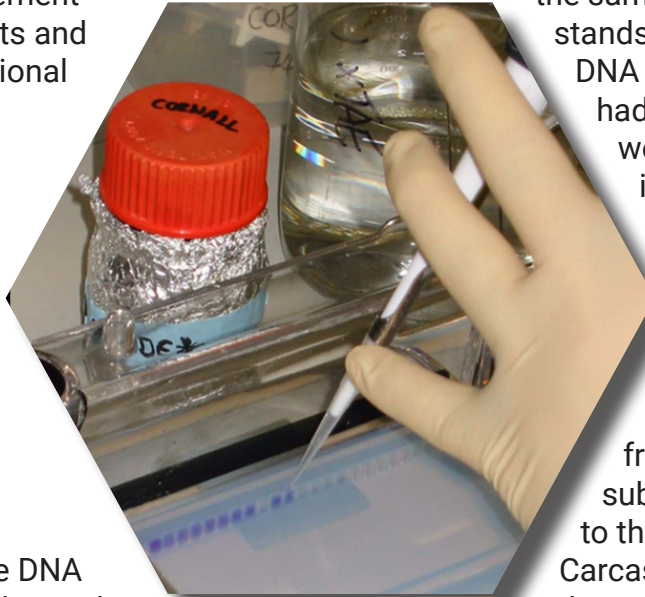
The forensic section of the Department's Wildlife Forensic and Fish Health Laboratory provides law enforcement forensic services (analytical and technical) to aid Wyoming wildlife law enforcement personnel, Wyoming biologists and wildlife managers in an additional twelve states.

Wyoming's forensic lab personnel employ a variety of techniques to test evidence items collected during investigations of wildlife crimes. Species determination, sex identification and DNA analyses are performed on blood, hair, saliva, tissue and bones. Analyses also include DNA matching of submitted samples and determining the minimum number of animals represented in submitted samples. A detailed report of each test is compiled and provided to the requesting officer. Lab personnel are often called upon to testify in court during trials of defendants charged with wildlife violations.

In 2021, various physical and biological properties were tested on 470 samples in response to 69 requests. A total of 16,290 tests were conducted on meat/tissue samples, skulls, antlers, bones, heads, arrows, knives, saws, blood, hair, hide, gut piles, saliva, clothes and numerous other sample types. Results from forensic tests were used to obtain a minimum of \$54,148.14 in fines and restitution, which does not include pending fines, restitution or forfeitures. Many of these cases also resulted in the suspension of hunting privileges and forfeiture of firearms and other equipment used in the commission of wildlife crimes.

Two cases stand out over the last year. First, a Wyoming game warden requested the forensics lab to match WY Wolf 1080, a sample that was received by the lab in October of 2017, to

tissue and hair samples from a wolf mount (see "Illegal Wolf Case", pg. 9). The DNA analysis of these two items resulted in identical genotypes, indicating the items originated from the same male wolf. This case stands out because it is the first DNA matching case the lab has had the opportunity to run on wolves that resulted in two items originating from the same individual.



The second case that stands out is an elk case from Dayton, WY. A tissue sample from a bull elk head was submitted to match back to the Wyoming Headless Carcass Database (WYHCDB).

When game wardens investigate poached big game animals with their heads removed, they collect DNA evidence to add to the WYHCDB. The database was created more than 15 years ago and currently holds 231 samples from across the state. The DNA analysis of the bull elk head resulted in a genotype that was identical to WYHC #201. This indicated that the submitted item originated from a male elk that was previously submitted to the WYHCDB. This holds significance as it is only the fourth case the lab has matched back to the headless database and it is the second case for Wyoming (see "Two Time Elk Poacher" on pg. 15).



GAME WARDEN TESTING

All game wardens are selected by competitive examination, per Wyoming statute. The first step to becoming a Wyoming game warden has traditionally been to earn a bachelor's degree in wildlife management, biology, zoology or a closely related field. Applicants with other degrees, such as criminal justice, are now being considered, as long as they also have a minimum amount of college credits in wildlife fields or several years of wildlife experience. This change in the minimum qualifications allows the Department to consider applications from game wardens in other states who are looking to move to Wyoming. Many states do not require their game wardens to have a wildlife management degree as a prerequisite for hiring, and Wyoming could benefit from recruiting and hiring experienced game wardens from other states. Applicants must pass an online written exam consisting of general wildlife management knowledge, wildlife identification, legal terminology and questions about Wyoming wildlife statutes and regulations. Candidates who successfully pass the online written exam must complete a life history questionnaire, after which they may be invited for a preliminary online interview using Google Hangouts. This determines which candidates will complete an in-person interview, personality profile testing, psychological testing and polygraph examination. Candidates offered a game warden job undergo a thorough background investigation and must successfully graduate the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy (WLEA) 14-week, 595-hour Peace Officer Basic (POB) course prior to working as a Department law enforcement officer. Individuals who successfully

complete this hiring process can take great pride in the fact they have achieved the high standards required to become a Wyoming game warden.

In 2021:

- Testing was offered online only
- 184 people applied (163 met education qualifications based on transcript)
- 114 took exam
- 71 Passed (pass rate 62%)
- 71 online interviews conducted
- 27 attended in-person interview
- Four candidates were hired



GAME WARDEN TRAINING

For the most part, the Department's law enforcement training program was able to return to normal after a challenging year in 2020. All officers must qualify with their duty handguns, rifles and shotguns twice a year. Officers are also required to demonstrate proficiency with non-deadly force weapons and core skills used for self-defense and controlling suspects, such as handcuffing and takedown techniques. Starting in the late spring of 2021, officers were able to interact in person to complete these training sessions. Officers continued to utilize both online and in-person courses to complete other training and legal updates necessary to maintain their peace officer certification.



Several new game wardens hired in 2020 attended necessary in-house Department training in 2021 after completing their basic training at the WLEA. Training topics included watercraft accident investigation techniques, watercraft patrol, BUI detection, fishing enforcement and watercraft/fishing statutes and regulations. They received practical training in officer water survival, cold-water immersion, boat handling and patrol scenarios. The wardens attended a second training session to prepare for the fall hunting seasons. Training topics included review of Game and Fish statutes and regulations, patrol techniques, interstate game tag guidelines and issuance, game check stations, the Access Yes Program, general wildlife law enforcement, collection of evidence, crime scene investigation and various other game warden duties. In addition to these intensive training sessions, new game wardens

spent a considerable amount of time in their respective regions receiving on-the-job training from other Department employees.

The Department worked in partnership as a sponsoring agency with the WLEA on a project to review the training curriculum taught by the academy to Wyoming peace officers. This curriculum review was conducted by the International Association of Chiefs of Police Collaborative Reform Initiative Technical Assistance Center (CRI-TAC). Staff from CRI-TAC traveled to Wyoming in August to interview staff from the WLEA and several law enforcement agencies, including Deputy Chief Game Warden Scott Edberg and Law Enforcement Coordinator Aaron Kerr. CRI-TAC staff will use information gathered from these interviews to review the WLEA training program and make recommendations for possible changes to law enforcement training in Wyoming. Upon completion in 2022, the WLEA will use the project's findings to update training programs to benefit law enforcement throughout Wyoming.



STOP POACHING PROGRAM

The Stop Poaching Program began in 1980 as a means to provide an opportunity for the public to help protect their wildlife resource by reporting suspected poaching activity. This program is an excellent and necessary enforcement tool for helping to identify wildlife violators throughout the state. All information on the reporting party is kept strictly confidential.

In 2021, 245 tips were received from members of the public via the Stop Poaching Hotline, a

text tip line and the Department website. Game wardens followed up on all of these tips, and in many cases, no violation could be determined. However, in numerous instances, wardens were able to identify wildlife violations and possible suspects. Investigations led to 26 citations and 23 warnings being issued to violators. Defendants charged as a result of tips made to the Stop Poaching Program paid \$8,190 in fines and restitution to date, with nine cases still under investigation or pending court disposition.



WYOMING WILDLIFE PROTECTORS ASSOCIATION

To encourage reporting of wildlife violations by the public, the Department has partnered with the Wyoming Wildlife Protectors Association (WWPA). The WWPA began in 1983 and is a registered non-profit organization. The sole purpose of the WWPA is to manage a reward account and provide monetary rewards to citizens who report suspected poaching activity. The WWPA is funded by restitution payments as ordered by the courts at sentencing of wildlife violators and from private donations.

Many of the successful investigations and prosecutions of wildlife violators in Wyoming would not

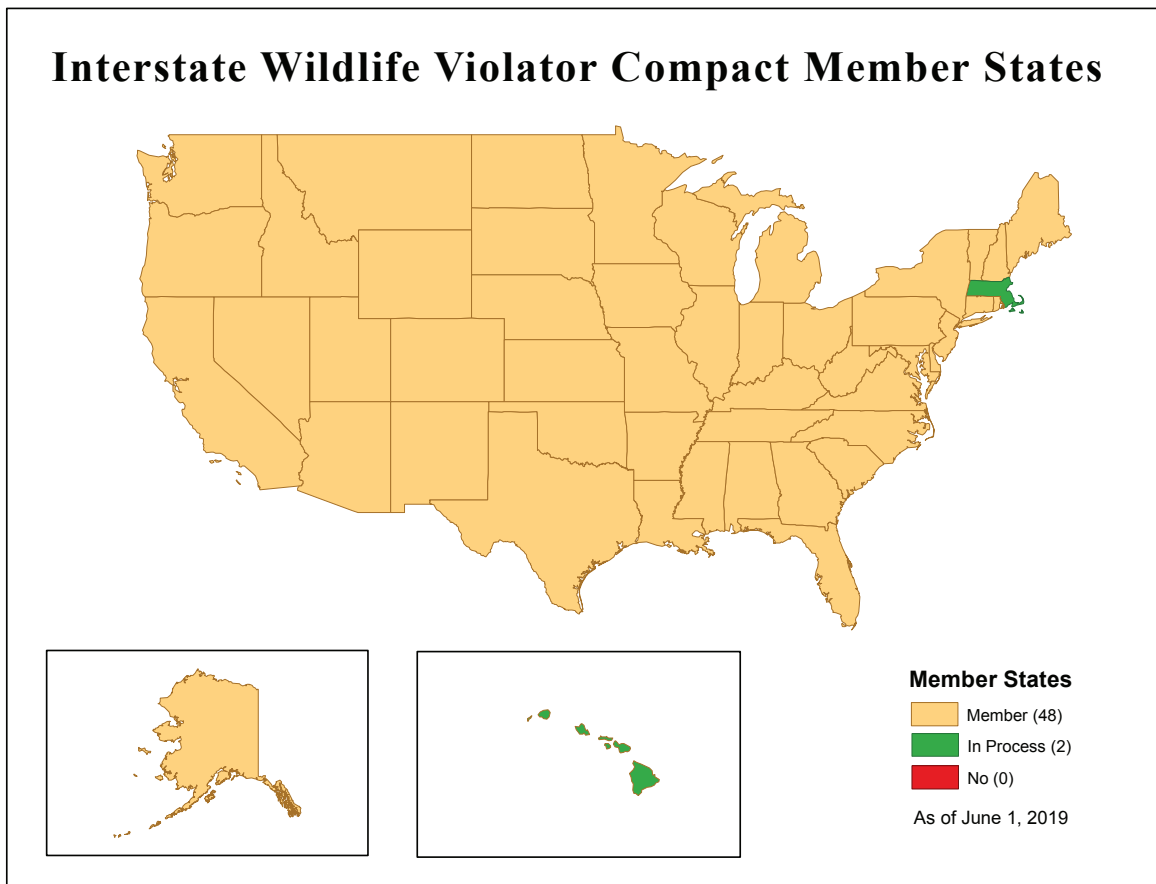
have been possible without the information provided by concerned citizens. Often, informants are turning in a friend or family member, which can be difficult and shows their genuine concern for Wyoming's wildlife resource. Department enforcement officers may submit a reward recommendation request based on a reward payment schedule listed in the WWPA Constitution. In 2021, a total of \$13,500 in rewards was paid to individuals who provided information leading to the conviction of wildlife violators.



WILDLIFE VIOLATOR COMPACT

Wyoming has been a member state of the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact (Compact) since 1996. The Compact is a reciprocal agreement between member states to honor suspensions of hunting, fishing and trapping privileges for convicted wildlife violators. Individuals who are suspended in one member state may also have their privileges suspended in the other member states. The Compact acts as an additional deterrent to violating wildlife laws and strengthens the consequences of illegal hunting, fishing or trapping activities. The Compact is also an effective tool for ensuring that violators meet their court obligations, as those who fail to do so also have their privileges suspended until their case is resolved. The law enforcement coordinator routinely fields calls from individuals asking what they need to do to have their license privileges reinstated.

There are now 48 member states and two more, Massachusetts and Hawaii, are finalizing the process of joining. Nationwide, there were 5,346 new license suspensions entered in the Compact in 2021, including 42 from Wyoming. Several cases initiated in 2021 are awaiting court proceedings and may lead to further license suspensions once completed. With nearly the entire United States having joined the Compact, the loss of privileges in one state effectively amounts to a nationwide suspension.



NEW LEGISLATION AFFECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT

Bills enacted during the 2021 Legislature:

HB0095 Game Road Kill

Signed into Law by the Governor 4/5/2021
 Summary: This bill creates a new state statute, W.S. 23-3-310, requiring that the Commission shall, in consultation with the State Transportation Commission, adopt rules to establish a system for any person to possess wildlife killed as a result of an unintentional motor vehicle collision on any public road or highway, provided the person commits to putting the road killed wildlife to a beneficial use.

HB0112 Lifetime Trapper Pioneer License

Signed into Law by the Governor 4/5/2021
 Summary: This bill provides a lifetime pioneer trapping license for \$20 to residents who are at least 65 and have resided in Wyoming for at least 30 years.

HB0115 Big Game or Trophy Animal – Minimum Hunting Age

Signed into Law by the Governor 4/5/2021
 Summary: This bill modifies W.S. 23-2-102 to allow youth hunters to take big or trophy game animals at eleven (11) years of age if they turn twelve (12) years of age by the end of that calendar year.

HB0122 Hunting and Fishing Access – Reliable Funding

Signed into Law by the Governor 4/2/2021
 Summary: The purpose of this bill is to provide a mechanism for funding the purchase of access easements to land-locked or otherwise difficult-to-access public lands through an increase in the price of a conservation stamp from \$12.50 to \$21.50.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Two Wyoming game wardens were recognized in 2021 for their outstanding service to the state by the Department and other organizations.

2021 Shikar-Safari Club Wildlife Officer of the Year – Jordan Kraft, South Pinedale Game Warden

2020 Wyoming Game Wardens Association Officer of the Year – James Hobbs, Afton Game Warden



Jordan Kraft



James Hobbs

RETIREMENTS

Congratulations to three game wardens who retired in 2021 with a combined 93 years of service to the State of Wyoming and its wildlife. Their experience and dedication will be missed!

Biff Burton, Saratoga Game Warden - 41 years of service
Gary Boyd, Green River Game Warden - 29 years of service
Jim Olson, Meeteetse Game Warden - 23 years of service



Biff Burton



Gary Boyd



Jim Olson

PROMOTIONS

Game Warden to Senior Game Warden

Heather Sterling - Evanston
Adam Hansen - Kaycee
Mitchell Kern - Moorcroft
Sarah Dugan - West Rawlins





Help protect Wyoming's wildlife
Call the Stop Poaching Hotline or text TIP411
(text keyword WGFD and message)



**STOP
POACHING**

1-877-WGFD-TIP

