



the wyoming game & fish department

# CASPER REGION newsletter

## Be Bear Aware Casper Mountain

In July, Casper Region Wildlife personnel responded to several calls of a black bear raiding unsecured garbage and other food sources at cabin sites on Casper Mountain. It turns out there were four incidents with at least three different bears. Some homeowners reported a neighbor had intentionally left garbage out to attract bears so they could take photographs. Other cabins and homes had their birdfeeders raided.

Residents and campers on Casper Mountain are reminded to please secure all garbage and other sources of food from bears to reduce food rewards and prevent acclimation and aggression of bears towards people.

### Inside This Month's Issue:

#### On the Ground

Mountain Plover, Hawks, Habitat

#### Behind the Badge

Public Access Areas

#### In the Water

River Check Station

#### Of Interest

Getting Ready for Hunting Seasons, The Casper Parade, Educational Programs

#### In the News

Wyoming Fly Caster's Memorial Access

#### Casper Region Employees

Congratulations!

To avoid conflicts with bears please take the following precautions:

- Secure garbage and attractants in bear resistant containers or inside a secure building or enclosure. **DO NOT OVERFILL** bear resistant garbage



- Feed pets indoors and secure all livestock and pet feed indoors.

- Only feed birds in the winter when they need it the most and bears are denning (December to March), or hang feeders 10 feet high and 4 feet from supporting structures. Clean spillage often and use a catch pan to collect spilled seed.
- Pick all ripe and fallen fruit. Protect berry bushes and gardens with electric fence.
- Clean and properly store BBQ grills.

# On the Ground

## Mountain Plover, Hawks, Habitat

Casper Biologist Heather O'Brien conducted surveys for both mountain plovers and breeding birds in early July. Mountain plovers are a species of special conservation concern in Wyoming, and require very specific habitat features to breed and rear chicks.



Breeding Bird Surveys are conducted annually throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada to track long-term trends of breeding bird numbers and distributions. Other species of conservation concern recorded along the survey route include sage thrasher, burrowing owl, short-eared owl, Brewer's sparrow and lark bunting. Though not a bird species, spadefoot toads, also a species of concern were discovered along the way as well.

Casper Wildlife Biologist Heather O'Brien and Casper Game Wardens fielded a number of calls from concerned members of the public regarding "injured" raptors. The vast majority of these turned out to be juveniles who had just fledged from the nest but were not quite fully capable of flight. Freshly-fledged juveniles are often mistaken for injured when they are clumsy but otherwise fine. Several different species of youngsters were also reported, including young great-horned owls, osprey, and ferruginous hawks. Most were placed in a quiet area away from human and pet activity to allow them time to practice their new flying skills.



Habitat Biologist Keith Schoup led efforts to cut and haul fifteen cords of aspen, limber pine and juniper out of the Johnson Canyon area to regenerate the decadent aspen stands. The aspen and juniper will be hauled to Bolton Creek to be used as "insta-dam" material. The 12 "insta-dams" that were installed in 2014 were maintained during the month with 64,740 pounds of shredded tree material that was hauled into staging areas for use as material in maintaining the new and last year's dams. Most of the "insta-dams" were still intact, but needed maintenance to become fully functional once again. All of the structures had some level of sediment trapped based on their placement within the drainage. This project involves the collaboration of many folks and thanks goes to the habitat and access crew-Matt Pollock and Steve Chapman and the fisheries crew-Al Conder, Matt Hahn and Jake Werner for their assistance.



Habitat Biologist Keith Schoup and Wildlife Management Coordinator Justin Binfet worked with a skidsteer and a Fecon mulching head to thin big sagebrush within the Mud Springs snow accumulation areas. The goal of this project is to thin big sagebrush to release water and nutrients for grass and forbs to use, to improve the hydrologic function within these areas and increase vegetative diversity.

The Casper Region Game and Fish hosted a project tour for both the Bates Creek and Bolton Creek projects. Personnel from the across the state, along with landowners, joined the tour. Thanks to all that attended.

## Behind the Badge

### Public Access Areas

Public Access Areas across the state are usually busy during the summer, but Sand Creek Public Access Area in Crook County was packed full over the 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend.



## In the Water

### River Check Station

On Friday July 24, 2015, Game Wardens Adam Parks, Cody Bish and Fisheries Biologist Matt Hahn conducted a check station along the North Platte River. Approximately 40 anglers from 20 drift boats were stopped and checked for watercraft safety equipment and observance of fishing regulations.

Conducting this check station also allowed valuable creel information to be gathered by Biologist Hahn and it gave him the opportunity to alleviate angler concerns about fish mortality this summer do to the elevated river temperatures.

Fisheries Biologist Matt Hahn conducted an evaluation of our young of the year rainbow trout in the North Platte River below Gray Reef. The reduction in river flow after spawning was very detrimental to this year's spawning success. In response, Game and Fish will provide additional rainbow to stock this fall to mitigate the very poor year class.





Fisheries Biologist Gordon Edwards conducted assessments on Glendo Wetlands and Guernsey Slough that provide habitat for warm water fish species. Tiger muskie have been stocked in Glendo Wetlands; however, we have been unable to find any evidence of their survival. The wetland does continue to produce nice largemouth bass. Guernsey Slough continues to provide diverse warm water fishing opportunities, and the bluegill population is developing nicely.

## Of Interest

### Getting Ready for Hunting Seasons, The Casper Parade, Educational Programs

The Private Lands Public Wildlife program is busy signing different Hunter Management Areas (HMAs) in preparation for upcoming hunting seasons.



Wyoming Game Wardens Cody Bish, Adam Parks and Daniel Beach promoting watercraft safety in the Game and Fish Department patrol boat for the Central Wyoming Fair and Rodeo in Casper.



Casper Region Game and Fish personnel provided educational presentations for summer school and youth camps. Casper Wildlife Biologist Heather O'Brien talked to grade-schoolers from Meadowlark Elementary about flight and migration at Goldeneye Reservoir. Youth campers at the Science Zone learned how to identify common Wyoming snakes, birds, and mammals, and were taught how to be safe in bear and mountain lion country. Many other educational programs were given by various people including boating safety, bear identification, aquatic nuisance species issues and what you can do to help.

## In the News

### Wyoming Fly Caster's Memorial Access

Located about 15 miles outside of Casper is the Wyoming Fly Caster's Memorial Access. The access includes the very popular Jessica's Pond. Over the past few months and for the months to come, the access and Jessica's pond will be getting a much needed face lift. Recent projects completed to date are the installation of ADA compliant restrooms and a new ramp to allow better access to the fishing dock. In the months to come there will be work done to improve the parking area, signage of the area and the installation of almost a mile of walking trails. Jessica's Pond is a fishing area with ADA access where people of all ages come and enjoy themselves and catch a few fish in the process. Wyoming Game and Fish would like to remind visitors to continue to pack out their trash and clean up after their pets. Jessica's Pond is stocked regularly with all types of species of trout and those sportsmen and women using the river access also have high levels of success. For questions or concerns about the access or the pond, please call the Speas Fish Hatchery at 307-473-8890.



# Casper Region Employees Congratulations!

Several of the Casper Region Game and Fish employees received statewide honors during the July Wyoming Game and Fish Commission meeting in Cody. Fisheries Biologist Matt Hahn (top left) was awarded Fish Division Employee of the Year, Mike Choma received the Outstanding Leadership Award (top right), and Matt Withroder was part of the Private Lands Public Wildlife Team of the Year Award (Dan Smith pictured, bottom). Congratulations to all!

