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the wyoming game & fish department

# CASPER REGION newsletter

## On the Ground Mule Deer Habitat Projects

The Area 66 Mule Deer Working Group, which was part of the statewide Mule Deer Initiative efforts, was formed in July of 2014 with the purpose to engage in a collaborative process to ultimately provide the Wyoming Game and Fish Department with recommendations to consider improving mule deer population performance and habitat in Hunt Area 66. One of the final recommendations proposed by the citizen working group was habitat projects in the Little Red Creek area.



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Since June 1, 2016, Game and Fish has mulched 52 acres of juniper that have invaded the Little Red Creek riparian area. In addition to the juniper treatment, seven acres of basin big sagebrush plants were thinned that invaded the Little Red Creek riparian area. The goal of this Mule Deer Initiative project is to remove all juniper plants and thin basin big sagebrush plants that invaded the riparian area allowing for the release of those nutrients and water that would otherwise be used by these plants. The released nutrients and water will now be available for cottonwood, willow, boxelder, sedges and other riparian plants to utilize, making the Little Red Creek riparian area healthier and more diverse.



Since July 15, 2016, Game and Fish has thinned 21 acres of mountain big sagebrush plants within snow accumulation areas. By reducing mountain big sagebrush canopy cover and density, the existing native grasses and forbs will be able to use additional resources, primarily water, for increased production, plant composition, canopy cover, density and diversity. These areas are small relative to the landscape they inhabit. Furthermore, the mountain big sagebrush communities immediately adjacent to these areas will not be treated, which will result in a mosaic of treated and untreated mountain big sagebrush communities.



Wild turkeys usually have their broods in spring. This allows poults the maximum time to grow before the next winter. This photo of a wild turkey hen and poults was taken in August, showing these poults hatched later than most, likely mid-summer. To see the entire video of this hen and her poults, you can go to the WGFD Casper Regional Office webpage.

## Of Interest

### Storms and Night Surveys



Lusk Game Warden Brady Vandenberg photographed this storm as it approached the town of Manville in early August. The storm dropped golf ball sized hail and flattened grass and habitat as it went through. Vandenberg was concerned about injured birds that are often caught in these storms with no cover, but was glad he didn't receive any reports of bird injuries. The storm caused extensive damage to the town with many north facing windows destroyed.



Sundance Game Warden Chris Teter spent some time with the nongame biologists doing bat surveys. This silver-haired bat was seen north of Sundance and was just one of 27 bats netted that evening. The silver-haired bat eats insects such as moths and spiders and mainly has black hair with white tips and roosts in tree cavities or cracks in the bark of trees. In total, the biologists found four to five species of bats while conducting studies near Sundance.

## In the News

### Fences and Highways

During dry summers, such as what the northeast corner of Wyoming is now experiencing, highway right-of-ways can be very attractive to big game animals. This is because they often provide green forage made available by collecting rain water runoff in the ditches along the roads. This food source at times can really draw in deer and antelope, which often leads to increased collisions with vehicles. These fenced right-of-ways can act to temporarily trap panicked animals causing them to dart unexpectedly in front of passing vehicles

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department reminds motorists to slow down in areas where game may be found along our highways, especially in the low light conditions of early morning and evening when these animals are most active and hard to spot. In addition, we ask that motorists contact the Game and Fish Department or local law enforcement agency if they see an injured or entangled animal along the highway. This is the safest and legal way to best handle these situations.

