



the wyoming game & fish department

LANDER REGION newsletter November 2015

With the Wardens

Case files



Herman with an illegally harvested mule deer.

dressing the issue. During the first few days, personnel documented a total of 30 violations with issued citations totaling \$6,120.00.

Two additional cases were also detected during the task force. Baggs Wildlife Biologist Tony Mong witnessed a hunter shoot at a large mule deer buck on private land, from the road and in the wrong area. Another case resulted in a \$1000 fine and loss of hunting privileges for one year. This case involved a nonresident hunter who harvested a nice 4x4 mule deer in limited quota area 84 with a general license. The hunters

Wardens in the Lander Region were very busy throughout the month of October. Most of the hunters contacted in the field were enjoying themselves and following all laws and regulations. Unfortunately, several illegal activities were also documented.

East Rawlins Game Warden Dillon Herman coordinated help from outside the region to focus on an observed, several-year increase of general-licensed hunters taking deer in limited quota hunt area 84 south of Rawlins. Therefore, the Miller Hill/Bridger Pass task force was started this year. The task force was intended to address the problem of hunters hunting in the wrong area through increased patrol, a night checkstation and simulated wildlife operations. This first year was very successful in ad-

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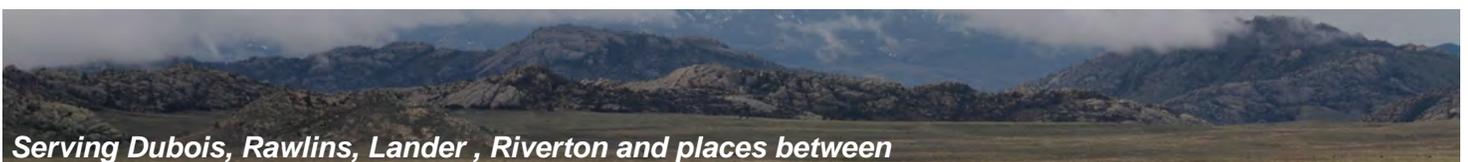
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Serving Dubois, Rawlins, Lander, Riverton and places between

did not field dress the deer in the location it was harvested, leading them to believe something was wrong. Since the deer was not field dressed, Dillon and West Rawlins Game Warden Teal Joseph spent a couple hours crawling on their hands and knees in the dark with flashlights, using pieces of hair to trace the drag trail back to the kill site where they could finally obtain a good blood sample. Dillon then talked to Baggs Game Warden Kim Olson about the vehicle that was involved in the incident. Kim knew right where the hunters were camped and they located them the next day.



Mule deer found shot and left in the Lander area.

losses, but the rest were found to have been hit cleanly and never retrieved. Brady says, "Reports of violations and extreme unethical 'hunting' were very high in the Lander area this fall. I am pretty disappointed overall; these folks sure didn't act like they had any measure of respect or morality."

Brady is also seeking any information in a case regarding a unique bull elk that was shot near Worthen Meadows (pictured at right) on the evening of Oct. 8. Most of the required edible portions were left behind to go to waste. "Someone out there has valuable information about this bull, and I hope they can come forward to help out," says Brady.

Anyone with information on this or any wildlife violation can call the Stop Poaching Hotline at 1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847). Tips may also be reported to Brady Frude at 307-332-2704 , online at wgfd.wyo.gov or at the Lander Game and Fish Office at-307-332-2688. Callers can remain anonymous and may be eligible for a cash reward if the information leads to a conviction.



Elk found near Worthen Meadows.



Under the Water

Tiger muskie stocked



Danny Kurtilla stocks first bucket of tiger muskie in Middle Depres-

Avid muskie angler, Danny Kurtilla, released the first tiger muskie in Fremont County in a move by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to improve the sport fishery in Middle Depression Reservoir and provide anglers with the opportunity to catch a novelty trophy fish. Kurtilla is a member of Muskie Inc. and holds the record for largest catch and release of tiger muskie in Wyoming, Utah, Idaho and Montana. He is extremely excited for anglers in central Wyoming to have the opportunity to fish for tiger muskie.

The Game and Fish raises tiger muskie at Dan Speas Rearing Station for stocking in Wyoming fisheries. Improvements made during renovation at Speas Rearing Station has increased production and made stocking tiger muskie in Middle Depression Reservoir and other waters in Wyoming possible. Not only will the addition of tiger muskie provide an opportunity for anglers, but trophy sized muskie will be beneficial to the Reservoir by controlling the large number of adult suckers and preventing bluegill from overpopulating. Stocked at 10 inches in length, it will take tiger muskie up to 3 or 4 years to reach harvestable size.

Anglers are reminded that regulations require that tiger muskie less than 30 inches in length shall be released to the water immediately. Anglers may harvest three over 30 inches, but it is recommended that anglers voluntarily limit harvest of tiger muskie in Middle Depression Reservoir to provide others the opportunity to catch a trophy sized fish, and to allow the fish to naturally control the sucker and bluegill populations.

To address hunter crowding, the Lander Green Mtn Mule Deer Working Group is recommending limited quota split seasons in areas 92, 94, & 160 and 96 & 97. For more detailed information on their recommendation and to complete the survey follow the link below.

We need your thoughts before Nov 30: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/lander-mule-deer-survey>

The Group will present recommendations and discuss feedback from the surveys at the following meetings from 6 - 9 pm: **Lander, Nov. 30** at the Inn at Lander; **Riverton, Dec. 1** at the Riverton Library; **Rawlins, Dec. 2** at the Jeffrey Center.



Beside the Families

Big game hunting



Forever Wild Families went afield in October for both deer and elk hunting. No animals were harvested but success was gained by learning more about hunting



and spending family time together. Families will have additional opportunities to hunt waterfowl, pheasant, elk and deer in November and December.

At left: Ian Carruth on an elk hunt. Above: Chris and Brett Jones on a deer hunt.

With the Carnivores

Recent science on grizzly bears



Grizzly bear under anesthesia for collecting research samples.

Game and Fish is continually collecting data in order to make informed management decisions. Data collection for mountain lions and bears falls on the Department's Large Carnivore Section (LCS) in order to better understand their ecology and increase efficacy as managers. A few papers were recently published using data collected by the LCS on grizzly bears in northwest Wyoming. "Density Dependence, Whitebark Pine, and Vital Rates of Grizzly Bears" was published in the *Journal of Wildlife Management (JWM)* and authored by LCS personnel, Dan Bjornlie and Dan Thompson. It was demonstrated that "slowing of population growth during the last decade was associated more with increasing grizzly bear density than the decline in whitebark pine."



A second article was also recently published in *Molecular Ecology* based on Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear genetics entitled "Multiple estimates of effective population size for monitoring a long-lived vertebrate: an application to Yellowstone grizzly bears." This article stated, "our results suggest that the Yellowstone grizzly bear population has increased substantially over the past three decades, supporting demographic evidence that conservation measures implemented under the ESA have thus far aided the recovery of this population," in addition to the fact that, "current effective population sizes are sufficiently large to avoid substantial accumulation of inbreeding depression, reducing concerns regarding genetic factors affecting the viability of Yellowstone grizzly bears." These types of peer-reviewed findings using data collected by Game and Fish personnel on grizzly bears throughout Wyoming are critical in demonstrating recovery of the population.

Realities of the job

There is always an inherent interest in large carnivores. That interest and public opinion runs the gamut from idolization to demonization, but nearly everyone has a piqued curiosity. Large Carnivore Section personnel are extremely fortunate, excited and thankful to have the jobs that put them on the frontline of carnivore management, something few people in the world can say; and following are examples of what is often the realities of the job...



Some examples of large carnivore/livestock damage evidence and investigations. Axes and pulaskis are common tools of the trade.



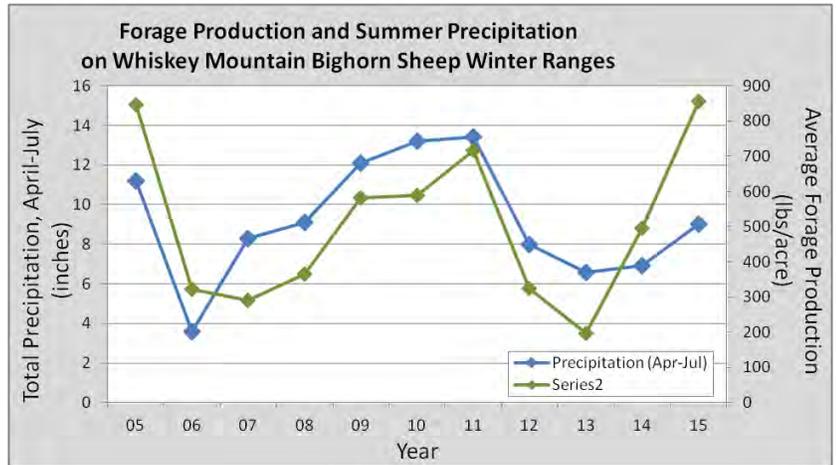
In the Field

Habitat production



Tools for clipping habitat production samples.

Each year the Game and Fish, Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service sample the forage production on Whiskey Basin Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), Inberg-Roy WHMA, and Spence-Moriarity Wildlife Management Area (WMA) to determine the amount of forage available for wildlife going into winter. 2015 was a banner year



This graph shows trends in growing season precipitation (April-July) and average forage production on Whiskey Mountain Bighorn Sheep Winter Ranges.

for grasses on these habitat areas. The average production across all three habitat units was the highest ever recorded. The precipitation amounts for these areas were not above average, but again, as in previous years, the timing of the precipitation along with the Department's hard work on habitat improvements are likely the factors that boosted vegetation growth. The graph below shows the trends in average production across the Whiskey Basin WHMA over a range of years. To see similar graphs for the other WHMA/WMA, – please contact Amy Anderson at 307-332-2688.

