



Photo by Stan Harter

Under the water

A surprise



Luke Whelan with his prize rainbow trout from Luckey Pond.

Some fortunate anglers may receive quite a surprise while fishing at Luckey Pond this year. Luke Whelan, an 11 year-old from Hudson, is one of those lucky anglers.

While fishing with his grandfather on March 25, Luke landed a 21.5-inch rainbow trout that probably weighed close to four pounds. The trout even broke his fishing rod before he was finally able to land it!

The fish Luke caught was likely one of 35 brood cull rainbow trout stocked in Luckey Pond in December 2015. The trout ranged from 2.5 to 5.0 pounds when stocked.

Brood culls are fish that reside in a hatchery for a few years to provide eggs before they are stocked. After a few years of spawning the egg quality of these fish decreases, so they are stocked by the Game and Fish in various waters across Wyoming to provide sport fishing opportunities.

Luke's rainbow trout also provided evidence that an aerator installed at Luckey Pond to increase fish survival is working. The aerator was installed in August 2015 because low dissolved oxygen levels caused periodic fish kills, particularly over the winter.

Luckey Pond is located on public land near the Wyoming Life Resource Center and is considered Lander's community fishery. Sport fish found in Luckey Pond include stocked rainbow trout and channel catfish and naturally-reproducing green sunfish/bluegill hybrids.

..see page 6 for more on area fish stocking

Species spotlight

Spotted skunk



Spotted skunks

Most of us are familiar with that pungent, distinct smell associated with skunks. But many people do not realize Wyoming is home to three different species of skunk. There is the commonly known and widespread striped skunk, but the state also has two species of the more elusive spotted skunk: the eastern and western spotted skunks.

Spotted skunks are much smaller than striped skunks and have distinct markings consisting of many white patches on a black background. Visually, the two species of spotted skunk are indistinguishable from each other. We have limited information on spotted skunk habitat use in Wyoming and can use your help in finding out more (see below). They seem to show a preference for wooded areas with rock outcrops and little canopy cover. Both species are omnivores, eating a variety of foods, including: insects, small mammals, carrion, birds, bird eggs, reptiles and amphibians, and plant material such as fruits and berries.

One of the unique behavioral traits of spotted skunks is their distinctive hand-stand when spraying their odor. But, as with all wildlife, it is best to keep a safe distance so you don't see this performance in person!

For more information on spotted skunks and other nongame wildlife in Wyoming please visit: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Wildlife-in-Wyoming/More-Wildlife/Nongame-Birds>

<u>Western Spotted Skunk</u>		<u>Eastern Spotted Skunk</u>
8 – 11 inches	Head & Body Length	8 – 17 inches
4 ½ - 6 ¼ inches	Tail Length	5 – 11 inches
0.43 – 1.94 lbs	Weight	0.56 – 1.94 lbs



We need your help!

The Game and Fish and the University of Wyoming are initiating a survey of spotted skunks across the state. To help us optimize the search, we are requesting your help. If you have seen a spotted skunk over the past 20 years please let us know. Location and date would be extremely helpful!

Please contact the Nongame Program at WGF-RareAnimal@wyo.gov to report sightings.

About the Education

Education center addition



Local artist and high school student, Kami Deromedi, recently helped update the Lander Region Education Center with her in-painting of a bison. Rather than hanging a shoulder mounted bison against a white wall, Game and Fish decided to commission Kami to paint around the mount to make it appear as if the bison is walking through the sagebrush habitat. Come and visit the Education Center to see this new addition.

Kami says she feels, "This was such a great opportunity and blessing to bring this beautiful animal back to life."

To see more of Kami's work visit: kamideromediart.crevado.com



Above: Kami Deromedi working on painting the bison body. At right: the finished bison on display.

In the schools

Education specialist Rene Schell visited several schools recently. Jupiter, the great horned owl, sat for every 4th and 5th grade class in Lander. This was a rare opportunity for these students to learn about owls in Wyoming and to draw one using Jupiter as their live model. Many teachers and parents have followed up with Rene to say that this opportunity made a big impact with their children.

Rene also visited with second grade students at the Arapahoe School to talk about turtles, eagles and wolves. This fits in with school curriculum for the students as they learn more about animals that are spiritually important for the Shoshone and Arapahoe tribes that reside on the Wind River Reservation.



Jupiter, the great horned owl in art class



In the Field

Collaring with partners



Multiple partners help hold a doe mule deer while an ultrasound is performed.

Lander Region personnel coordinated and participated in mule deer, bighorn sheep, and elk captures and collaring in March. These captures were done in cooperation with the Wyoming Cooperative Research Unit at UW, the Nature Conservancy, the Lander/Green Mountain Mule Deer Working Group, the 10 Country Chapter of the Muley Fanatics Foundation, Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, National Bighorn Sheep Interpretive Center, area landowners, and a host of volunteers.

Mule deer captures were conducted in Dubois (Dubois herd unit) where 15 deer were caught and in Lander (South Wind River herd unit) where 20 deer were caught. They were fitted with satellite based radio collars to learn their migration routes, stopover areas, and habitats they use and when they move between winter and summer ranges.

Thousands of mule deer winter in the upper Wind River basin and we believe they move into the Dubois area to winter from almost every point on the compass. In the Lander area, deer were captured and collared from the North Fork of the Popo Agie to Beaver Rim – a huge geographic area again with thousands of wintering mule deer and though we anticipate the majority of these deer simply move down in elevation off the Wind River mountains, it may be possible they move to and from other areas as well. These collared deer will provide critical information needed to better understand migration routes/corridors used to best manage and conserve these important habitats. Doing so will enable the Game and Fish and our conservation partners to protect important movement bottlenecks, mitigate any migration impediments such as fences and highways, and ensure these migrations paths are maintained across the landscape.

In addition to mule deer, two elk were captured to re-deploy radio collars north of Dubois in a similar effort to better understand migrations of elk in the Wiggin's Fork herd unit.



Ultrasound from a doe deer showing her fetus' heartbeat.



Bighorn sheep on Whiskey Mountain were re-captured as part of the on-going nutritional carrying capacity work initiated last spring. Five sheep in the “Dubois badlands” in Area 22 were captured and collared to assess their movements and disease status as part of statewide bighorn sheep disease monitoring program.

Finally, as part of efforts to better understand the current status of bighorn sheep in the Temple Peak herd unit in the southern Wind River Mountains, two sheep were captured and collared to assess their disease status and to learn whether these sheep use only the North Fork canyon or if they migrate to other parts of the Wind River Mountains during the summer. These sheep are in addition to 12 sheep captured and collared on the Wind River Reservation last month for the same purposes.



Doe mule deer released after being captured and collared .

WE SUPPLY THE
TROPHIES
YOU MAKE THE
MEMORIES

Wyoming's
Super Tag raffle
offers 9 species
and 10 chances
to win.



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HUNTING ADVENTURE

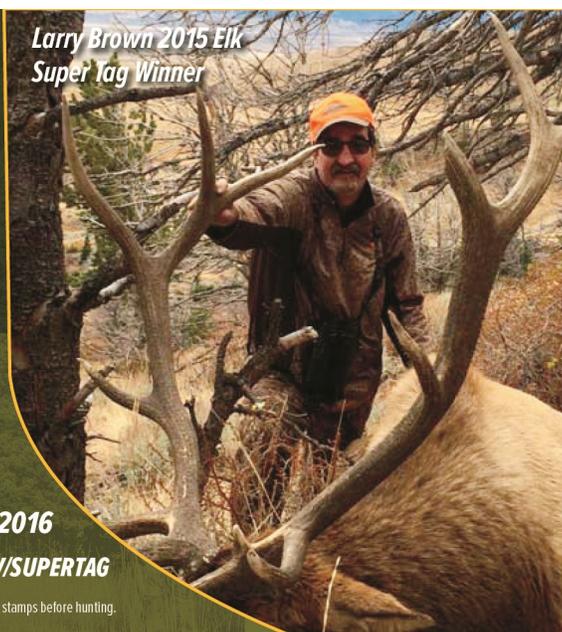
Super Tag tickets: \$10
Super Tag Trifecta: \$30

Deadline to apply is July 1, 2016

APPLY ONLINE: WGFD.WYO.GOV/SUPERTAG

Raffle winners must purchase any applicable licenses and/or stamps before hunting.

*Larry Brown 2015 Elk
Super Tag Winner*



Under the water

Stocking the region and beyond



Fish crew at Bog Lake.

Many of Wyoming's lakes and reservoirs benefit from hatchery stocking and here in the Lander Region that holds true as well. In 2016, the Lander Region will receive in excess of 294,000 trout totaling over 42,000lbs. Seven of the Game and Fish's ten hatcheries will visit the region to stock fish in the upcoming months. Species of trout to be stocked include brook, brown, rainbow, golden and tiger trout (brook trout, brown trout hybrid), splake (brook trout, lake trout hybrid), and grayling as well as Snake River and Yellowstone cutthroat.

The Lander Region also benefits from trades the Fish Culture Section makes with other states. The Wyoming Game and Fish will trade eyed eggs as well as catchable size (8"-9") trout in order to import and stock a variety of cool and warm water fish such as bluegill, channel catfish, green sunfish/bluegill hybrid and walleye. In 2016 the Lander Region is scheduled to be stocked with just under 336,000 cool and warm water fishes.

The Game and Fish wild sauger spawning program is also expected to return high numbers of sauger to the Lander Region. Personnel will begin collecting sauger from the Little Wind River in May to spawn. Those fertilized eggs will then be shipped to Garrison Nation Fish Hatchery where they will be hatched out and reared up to approximately two inches in length. The fingerling size sauger will then be transported back to Wyoming and stocked into the Wind River as well as the Little Wind River. In total, 250,000 sauger are scheduled to be stocked the latter part of the summer.

With spring and summer right around the corner, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's ten fish hatcheries and rearing stations have been busy over the past year rearing numerous species of salmonids that will be stocked into Wyoming waters this spring and summer. Here in the Lander Region, the Dubois Fish Hatchery is set to raise and stock over 260,000 fish totaling over 30,000 lbs. The facility is currently rearing four strains of rainbow trout, brook trout, Yellowstone and Snake River cutthroat as well as arctic grayling. Not only does the Dubois Fish Hatchery raise fish for the Lander Region, but they are also scheduled to stock fish in the Cody, Pinedale, Green River and Laramie regions.

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Above and clockwise: eyed eggs, newly hatched Yellowstone fry, fish at Dubois hatchery in circular tanks.



With the wardens

Case files



Jessica Beecham responded to a call about a collared mule deer that was hit by a vehicle near Riverton. She initially thought it could have been one of the mule deer that was recently collared as part of the mule deer migration project in the Dubois and Lander areas. Upon further investigation, Jessica found the deer was wearing a florescent orange dog collar that appeared to be custom made. It was apparent the deer had been kept as a pet, which is illegal in the state of Wyoming. The investigation is ongoing.

A local Riverton resident captured a wayward muskrat that had set up residence in her yard. She contacted Warden Beecham, who relocated the muskrat to a more suitable location away from homes and irrigation canals.



Please leave newborn wildlife alone!



Mule deer fawn waiting for mom to return.

Wyoming Game and Fish urges people who find young animals this spring to leave wildlife newborns alone. Most animal mothers hide their young and return to them periodically to nurse. People finding young animals often assume these newborns have been abandoned, but this is almost never the case. The mother knows where her young are, and will almost certainly return.

State and federal laws forbid possession of game and many nongame animals, so adopting newborn wildlife is illegal. The best solution is to leave the young animals alone. If children bring home a wild "orphan," immediately return it to the exact spot it was found.

If you question whether an animal has been abandoned or in the rare instance when you know the mother to be dead, contact the nearest game warden, biologist, or regional office and do not attempt to capture these animals yourself.



On the back page

Moments from the field



Jessica Beecham observed this red fox hunting in the Wind River Canyon. It was using the rock as a perch to spot and pounce on unsuspecting rodents.



Stan Harter observed many wildlife species toughing out the deep snows of March. Although storms were quick, snow was deep creating struggles for some species during the last bits of winter.

