



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Sheridan Region August 2015 Newsletter



Sheridan Region

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Game Wardens:

Dayton: Dustin Shorma
Sheridan: Bruce Scigliano
Buffalo: Jim Seeman
Kaycee: Grant Gerharter
N. Gillette: Jackie Otto
S. Gillette: Dustin Kirsch
Moorcroft: J.D. Davis
Investigator: Scott Adell
Damage Tech: Joe Weyant

Public Information Specialist:

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Wildlife Biologists :

Wildlife Management Coordinator:
Lynn Jahnke
Sheridan: Tim Thomas
Buffalo: Dan Thiele
Gillette: Erika Peckham
Terrestrial Habitat: Todd Caltrider

PLPW Program Coordinator:

Troy Tobiasson

Fish Biologists:

Bill Bradshaw
Andrew Nikirk
Aquatic Habitat: Travis Cundy

Habitat and Access Coordinator:

Seth Roseberry

Aquatic Invasive Species:

Greg Downey

Story Fish Hatchery:

Superintendent: Steve Diekema
Senior Fish Culturist: Brad Hughes
Culturist: Jennifer Meineke

Sheridan Bird Farm:

Supervisor: Darrell Meineke
Biologist: Nate Brown
Technician: Kurt Heiser

Mountain Lion Removed From Gillette Neighborhood



South Gillette Game Warden Dustin Kirsch prepares the lion for transport to Sheridan.

On August 19, South Gillette Game Warden Dustin Kirsch received a call about a mountain lion in North Gillette under the floor of a house being remodeled. About 15 minutes later, Kirsch arrived on scene along with North Gillette Game Warden Jackie Otto and Wildlife Biologist Erika Peckham. The young female lion was tranquilized and loaded in the new live trap/trailer that was recently donated by the Gillette based Wyoming Sportsmen Group to the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

The mountain lion was transported to the Sheridan Regional Game and Fish office where it was kept overnight for observation. On August 20, the lion was released in the Bighorn Mountains.



The tranquilized mountain lion (note dart in the hip area of the lion) lies under a building that was being remodeled in north Gillette.



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Sheep Creek Fire Closes Amsden Creek WHMA for 16 Days



The Sheep Creek fire burned approximately 1,700 acres in and around the Amsden Creek WHMA.



Photo above shows the successful back burn on the Amsden Creek WHMA that was set to contain the Sheep Creek fire.

The Amsden Creek Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA), located northwest of Dayton, was closed from August 4 through August 19 due to the Sheep Creek Fire that was burning in and around the WHMA. The area was closed for the safety of the public and the firefighters. The popular WHMA was re-opened on August 20 after it was determined the area was safe for the public to enter.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will monitor the burned area and perform habitat improvements that are deemed necessary to ensure the area provides quality habitat for the wildlife species that use the WHMA. This may include weed spraying, seeding and other treatments.

Approximately 30 years ago, a wildfire burned through the same area burned during the Sheep Creek fire. The photos below were taken within a few yards of the Sheep Creek fire boundary on a hillside that burned in the fire 30 years ago. The photos show how the area recovered from the past fire. Fires “set back” the successional stages of plants, creating habitat types that benefit many species of wildlife.



These two photos show how an area on the Amsden Creek WHMA has recovered from a fire that burned about 30 years ago. The areas shown are just a short distance from where the Sheep Creek fire burned in August.





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Fish Surveys Find Big Fish and Lots of Forage Fish

The Sheridan Region Fish Management Crew completed numerous fish surveys in August and some dandy fish were sampled during those surveys. The photos shown on this page highlight some of the nice-sized fish that were sampled. All of those large fish were weighed, measured and returned to the water alive.

Also interesting was the number of juvenile gizzard shad that were found in Keyhole Reservoir. Adult gizzard shad are captured in Nebraska waters in May and transplanted to Keyhole Reservoir. The adult shad will spawn two or three times during the summer in Keyhole and provide abundant food for predator fish such as walleye, northern pike, smallmouth bass, crappie and channel catfish. This year only 70 adult gizzard shad were captured and transplanted to Keyhole. Spawning conditions must have been ideal for the fish as those 70 gizzard shad produced thousands of juvenile shad.



A Snake River cutthroat trout sampled in Bull Creek in the northern Bighorn Mountains.



Sheridan Regional Fisheries Biologist Andrew Nikirk displays a large lake trout captured in Twin Lakes in the Bighorn Mountains.



Fisheries Technician Stacy Feeken holds a brook trout that was sampled in Clear Creek in the city park in Buffalo.



A juvenile gizzard shad. The result of only 70 adult gizzard shad transplanted to Keyhole in May 2015.



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Black Bears Seeking Food at Lower Elevations

During the late summer when they are trying to pack on weight for winter hibernation, some bears tend to wander into areas where they can cause conflicts with people. This year, with the lack of availability of natural foods, Game and Fish Sheridan Regional personnel have received several reports of black bears in areas where they are not welcome. These bears are typically attracted to items like garbage that have a strong odor. Bears have been reported in the south part of Sheridan, east of Buffalo, at the Paradise Guest Ranch west of Buffalo and in Story. The black bear that was causing concern at the Paradise Guest Ranch was trapped by Buffalo Game Warden Jim Seeman and Buffalo Wildlife Biologist Dan Thiele and relocated to a more remote area of the Bighorn National Forest. The bear that was east of Buffalo and the one in the south part of Sheridan were hazed out of those areas by Game and Fish personnel.



The young black bear that was trapped at Paradise Guest Ranch was relocated to a remote area of the Bighorn National Forest.



The bear that was near some houses east of Buffalo was removed from the tree and encouraged to leave the area.

Antelope Counts Completed in August



Wildlife biologists and game wardens in the Sheridan Region spent considerable time in August “classifying” antelope; that is, counting and determining if the antelope were does, fawns or bucks.

The hunt areas north of Gillette averaged of 84 fawns per 100 does and 32 bucks per 100 does; while the hunt areas south of Gillette averaged 95 fawns per 100 does and 53 bucks per 100 does. Hunt areas near Buffalo averaged 90 fawns per 100 does and had buck ratios averaging 65 bucks per 100 does. The hunt areas near Sheridan averaged 82 fawns per 100 does and 65 bucks per 100 does.

The classifications indicate the moisture received in northeast Wyoming in late 2014 and early 2015 created excellent habitat conditions which resulted in very good recruitment and fawn production.