



*Habitat is where it's at!*

*December 2015*



We hope you enjoy reading about the adventures of the **Green River Region** personnel as they work to *Conserve Wildlife and Serve People!*

**Special dates and points of interest:**

- DON'T HAVE A COMPUTER? EVERY REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE GAME AND FISH HAS A COMPUTER AT THE FRONT COUNTER FOR PUBLIC USE.
- DON'T HAVE YOUR HUNTER SAFETY CERTIFICATE? CHECK FOR UPCOMING COURSES ONLINE AT [HTTP://WGFD.WYO.GOV](http://wgfd.wyo.gov).
- REMEMBER: YOU CAN BUY ALL YOUR HUNTING LICENSES, REQUIRED STAMPS AND MANY MORE PRODUCTS AT THE WGFD WEBSITE FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN COMPUTER!
- LOST YOUR HUNTER EDUCATION CARD? YOU CAN PRINT AS MANY COPIES OF YOUR CARD AS YOU WANT, FOR FREE, AT THE WGFD WEBSITE.

*Green River Game Warden Andy Roosa* had an unexpected visitor stop by the warden station. A large mule deer buck wandered into his backyard towing a string of Christmas lights that had become tangled around his antlers. Roosa and *Green River Wildlife Biologist Patrick Burke* immobilized the buck and removed the lights from his antlers. He was last seen heading up the side of Man's Face Formation in pursuit of a group of does. *(below, left)* Burke checks on the deer and reverses the immobilizing drug. *(below, right)* Photos: *Andy Roosa*





*Wintering Wildlife Protection  
Shed Antler Restriction*

*Shed horn and antler gathering* is prohibited on public lands west of the Continental Divide between Jan. 1 and April 30. State lands are also off-limits to shed antler or horn gathering. Public lands in the Great Divide Basin are excluded from the regulation.

*Public lands* are defined as federal lands and lands owned or administered by the Game and Fish Commission.

*The purpose* of the regulation is to minimize harassment or disturbance of big game animals on their winter and spring ranges when animals are most vulnerable to stress as well as potential displacement to less productive habitats. Colorado and Utah have similar regulations.

*The regulation* was made possible by legislation passed by the 2009 Wyoming Legislature that gave the Game and Fish Commission authority to regulate and control the collection of shed antlers and horns of big game animals *west of the Continental Divide*.

*Enforcement Happenings*

*There* are unsolved poaching cases in the Green River Region. If you have any information about any wildlife violation please contact your local game warden or the **STOP Poaching Hotline at:**

**1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847)**

- **You can also report a wildlife violation at the WGFD website <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>**

*Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas and Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas*, son and father, respectively, recently teamed up to solve a poaching case in the Wyoming Range where mule deer are highly sought after by hunters. While enjoying a day off hunting together, the wardens observed suspicious activity, which resulted in an investigation and ultimate apprehension of the violators.

*"In late September*, Green River resident Christopher Galloway, 30, harvested two trophy buck mule deer on one license," said Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas. "Later in the day, Galloway involved a juvenile to tag the second buck mule deer. This incident occurred in deer hunt area 143, in the South Piney drainage. This hunt area is within the Wyoming Range, where deer are managed for higher buck ratios and buck quality."

*Galloway was sentenced* to two days in jail, loss of hunting privileges for three years, fined \$920 for taking an over-limit of deer and accessory to transfer of deer license, in addition to losing both deer. The juvenile was also cited and fined \$40 and will be required to give a presentation at a hunter education class.

*"Regardless of the initial intention of this violation*, the actions that followed, involving a juvenile, intentionally misleading game wardens, and trying to claim both deer made this violation worse," Adam Hymas said. "I applaud Judge Haws on his efforts to let the public know the importance of wildlife to the people of Sublette County and the entire state, his promotion of hunting legally and ethically, and the importance of hunting regulations."

*Anyone with information* on these or any wildlife violation may also call the Stop Poaching Hotline at 1-877-WGFD-TIP (1-877-943-3847). Tips may be reported to your local game warden or online at [wgfd.wyo.gov](http://wgfd.wyo.gov) Tips may also be reported to the Green River Game and Fish Office at 1-307-875-3223 or the Pinedale Game and Fish Office at 1-800-452-9107. Callers can remain anonymous and may be eligible for a cash reward of up to \$5,000 if the information leads to a conviction.

*Boy scouts make a trip to the office ~ Hunter Education Internet Field Day*



*Green River scout leader Becky Iwin and her daughter dissect their own owl pellet. (photo left) Iwin and the "boys" came to learn about what a wildlife scientist does. They learned about predator and prey relationships, habitat requirements for owls, and how owls are uniquely adapted to surviving in their particular habitats. The scouts used a **Project WILD activity called "Owl Pellets"** and they found bones from other birds, mice, and voles. Because owls regurgitate parts of their prey they can't digest, these young scientists were able to determine what the owls were feeding on.*

*Volunteer John Gunyan (photo left next to grizzly bear and moose), GR Office Manager Sheila Watts (photo below, left) and GR Habitat Biologist Kevin Spence assist with the firearms proficiency practical exam during the December **Internet Field Day**. Spence noticed that the first student was not crossing the fence properly. **Can YOU see why this is NOT the way to cross a fence with a shotgun?***



*Mule deer capturing project near Superior, Wyoming ~ Very important deer migration study*



Students and research biologists from the *University of Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit*, along with *WGFD biologists and game wardens* recaptured mule deer they captured and collared in December 2014 near Superior, WY. The collar data was downloaded to be used to monitor the deer movements.

*UW Professor Kevin Monteith* does an ultrasound on one of the mule deer. (photo left, center) *UW Professor Matt Kauffman and his son Gus Kauffman* (photo left, bottom) take a blood sample. Gus (red jacket) was the youngest member of the research team on that very cold December day.

*Wildlife researchers* have discovered that each spring, an estimated 500 mule deer leave the Red Desert and follow the snowmelt north. After some 50 miles they merge with 4,000 to 5,000 mule deer that winter in the foothills of the Wind River Range and the whole herd follows a narrow 100 mile corridor north. The deer migrate through the high mountains near Hoback Junction, just south of Jackson Hole. *This is one of the longest land mammal migration in the lower 48 states.*



*Mule deer capturing project near Superior, Wyoming ~ Very important deer migration study*



*Rock Springs Game Warden Dave Hays (above photo, left) and Green River Wildlife Biologist Patrick Burke (rear, right) are assisted by the Kauffman Team.*



*Every mule deer captured and collared is also weighed. (above photo, right)*



*Each mule deer is sprayed with florescent paint to mark the animals captured/collared. Volunteer Shauna Lockwood (photo above left) assists Green River Wildlife Management Coordinator Mark Zornes (center) and Dr. Matt Kauffman.*



*Kauffman and Zornes undo the leather hobble straps and release a collared mule deer.*

*Hunter education in Kemmerer ~ Are you interested in becoming an instructor? Call us! 307-875-3223*



*Twenty-four students and their parents took part in a three-day hunter education course in Kemmerer. Southwest PLPW Access Coordinator Andrew Countryman (photo top, left) instructed the students on safe firearms handling. Volunteer instructor Annemarie Albins assisted with teaching the course and is working towards becoming fully-certified to teach future hunter education classes in Kemmerer. (photo center, left) Green River Regional Information and Education Specialist Lucy Wold taught the students about survival. (photo bottom, left) Countryman, Albins and Wold not only like to teach about hunting, they actually love to hunt for real! Countryman with his son hunting turkeys in November, near Lusk. (photo below, right)*



*Nice buck deer Annemarie!*



*Wold with a fall turkey near Alcova.*

*Getting ready for ice fishing... ..we hope! Come on ice. ~ Don't litter with burbot, please.*



*Anyone who fishes for burbot* in south-west Wyoming can't deny the excitement they feel when they land one of those huge, slimy, eel-like, invasive burbot. They're invasive because someone or some group of people illegally introduced the fish into area waters at least 12 years or so ago and it has been a fisheries management challenge for Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) biologists ever since. Although there is no limit on burbot, the Game and Fish reminds anglers to properly dispose of all burbot they catch.

*"Piles of dead burbot* have shown up recently in a couple of odd locations," said *Green River Fisheries Biologist John Walrath*. "Like, the parking lot at the Firehole boat ramp and the borrow ditch along the access into the Buckboard boat ramp. Although we really appreciate everyone's effort to catch and remove burbot from Flaming Gorge Reservoir and other waters in the Green River drainage, we remind anglers that discarding unwanted burbot in this way constitutes littering and they will be cited and fined according to Wyoming littering statutes."

*Burbot are very active in the winter*. So, it follows that winter is a time of high harvest on burbot populations due to the large number of anglers fishing through the ice. As fall gives way to winter and anglers start catching numerous burbot, it raises the question of what to do with so many fish.

*"The first and tastiest option is to fillet the burbot*; they don't call them 'poor man's lobster' for nothing," said Walrath. "If you don't want to eat them and you have a friend or neighbor who will, take them the burbot. For those really large burbot be aware that they contain higher levels of mercury. You can find detailed information on fish consumption rates at the Game and Fish website. If those methods don't work for you, remove the internal organs of the burbot and sink the fish in the water from which it was caught, dispose of it in your trash at home, or take them to an approved landfill."

*Anglers travel to the region from all over* the state and out-of-state to fish specifically for burbot. Burbot derbies are becoming increasingly popular and some local fishing guides cater to burbot anglers.

*"We are excited that anglers are willing to take long trips* to have great times fishing for burbot in the Gorge," Walrath said. "We work to ensure that all anglers have the opportunity to come out and enjoy our fisheries, but no one enjoys fishing next to a pile of dead fish or seeing dead fish along boat ramps; it is unpleasant and unethical. As fisheries biologists, it is our job to maintain a high standard when managing your fisheries. However, we all, anglers and fisheries managers alike, have to work towards keeping our fishing experiences positive and that they are not tainted by piles of decomposing burbot along boat ramps, barrow pits and shorelines."



Office managers Sheila Watts (left) and Regina Dickson (right) invite you to come on into the Green River Region Office to buy your loved ones a wildlife-related gift from their gift shop. You can also pick up 2016 licenses and Conservation Stamps.

<http://wgfd.wyo.gov>  
Office Phone: 307-875-3223  
Office Fax: 307-875-3242  
Toll Free In-State 1-800-843-8096

### Conserving Wildlife-Serving People

We are on the web! <http://wgfd.wyo.gov>



stay connected



~Critter Spotlight~  
White-tailed deer  
By Mark Zornes a.k.a. Leopold

- **One of two native "deer"** or members of the genus *Odocoileus* found in Wyoming; the other being the familiar mule deer. White-tailed deer are one of the mostly widely distributed species in the western hemisphere. There are three subspecies found in Wyoming: *O. virginianus ochrourus*, *O.v.dakotensis* and *O. v. texanus*. *O. virginianus ochrourus* are found in western Wyoming.
- **White-tailed deer** primarily inhabit treed or large shrub dominated river bottom habitats in western Wyoming. Limited large acreages of cultivated crops and limited prime habitat keep densities of this species relatively low in southwestern Wyoming compared to other portions of the state.
- **Sportsmen are often concerned** "white-tails are taking over (mule deer)" or will "breed them (mule deer) out." Hybrids can occur, but there is no evidence white-tailed deer densities or hybrid densities are increasing in western Wyoming beyond where they have historically occurred.
- **Hybrids** (white-tailed deer X mule deer) make up a very small percentage of the population during any given year and tend to be sterile. Hybrid characteristics are quite variable, **sometimes** affecting antler conformation, tail appearance, and facial appearance. The only characteristic common to all hybrids is an intermediate length on metatarsal gland length. This gland is located on the outside of the hind leg above the dew claws.
- **White-tailed deer** can have very high reproductive rates in areas of the best habitat and large areas of significant cultivated crops. In western Wyoming, fawn production does not exceed that observed in mule deer, and is often less. Sportsmen and other wildlife enthusiasts should rejoice on the variety of deer in Wyoming.