



# Wyoming Game and Fish Department

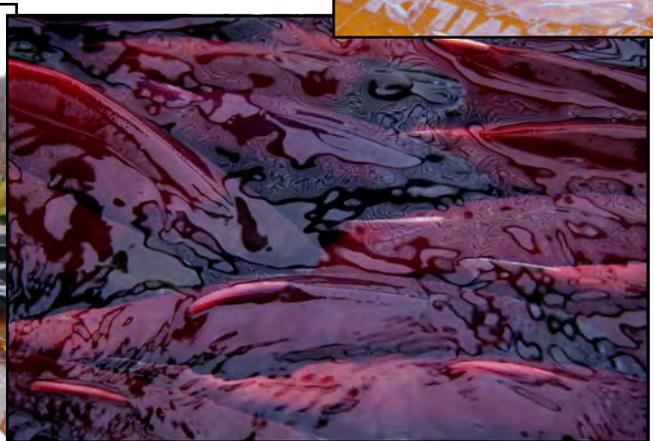
Pinedale Region

September 2015 Newsletter



## New Fork Lake Kokanee

Statewide fish spawning personnel Jim Barner and Pete Feck were joined by Ed Berry and Travis Parrill from the Auburn Hatchery for the annual New Fork Lake Kokanee Spawn. The run was somewhat depressed for the second straight year, but crews were able to get two good takes and 336,750 green eggs went into the Auburn incubator. Eggs will be hatched and fish will be reared for stocking at New Fork lake, Flaming Gorge and Green River Lake.





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### Hunting with Heroes

Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas had the distinct pleasure of meeting and spending some time with five disabled veterans who got to come out on an antelope hunt sponsored by Hunting with Heroes. They utilized the special regulations for early hunting and were all successful in harvesting nice buck antelope thanks to numerous folks in the Big Piney area. A special thanks goes out to all those that donated antelope licenses, time, goods, money, and expertise to make this happen!

### Patrolling Piney Country

Big Piney Game Warden Adam Hymas reports several nice mule deer bucks were taken from the Wyoming Range this fall. He also noted several youth hunters harvesting does and **many** hunters expressing support for the youth regulations.

Hymas reports an above average enforcement month with violations, stop poaching reports, injured animals, and wounding losses (See photos).

Hymas reports seeing and hearing about several of black bears in the WY Range. Hymas investigated one report of a black bear killed in self defense. While the harvest was legal, the person who shot the bear failed to immediately report the incident. Hunters are reminded that if anything



goes awry while on a hunting trip, the best option is to contact a game warden as soon as possible.



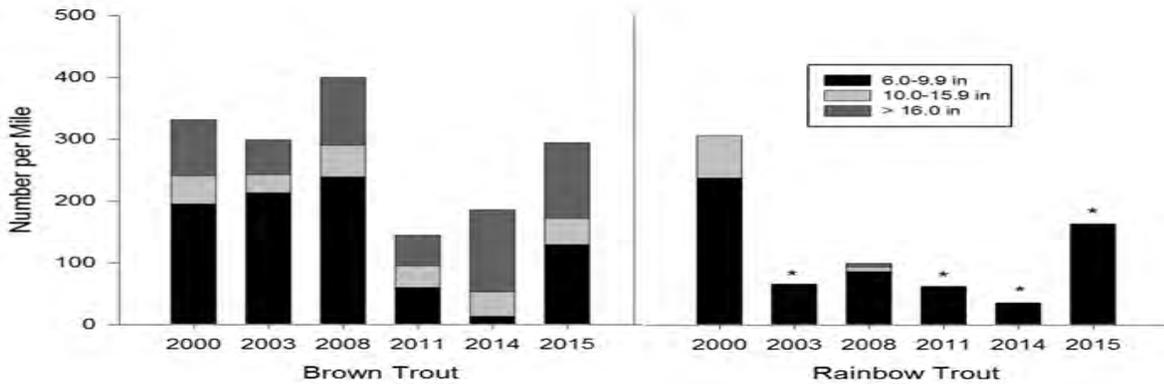
(Right) An illegally taken deer near Bondurant, which was a mule deer/white-tail hybrid with a unique set of antlers.





### Green River Check-up

The Pinedale fish crew completed fish estimates on two reaches of the Green River in September at Warren Bridge and Forty-Rod Access. Numbers were up from previous estimates especially in juvenile fish (6-10 inches), following a couple years of below average estimates. Low recruitment will likely impact adult fish numbers in coming years, but future rebounds will be expected as age classes mature.



### Other Local Waters..

Two sites were sampled on the New Fork River producing several hefty browns and rainbows. Trout were more numerous at the East Fork Confluence site this year than the last sampling attempt. A kokanee salmon (below left) was also captured near the East Fork confluence. Kokanee are only found there during spawning season. Unfortunately, illegally introduced burbot (below middle) were also more numerous. Duck Creek is a spring-fed stream that doesn't produce many trout, but it does have some large fish. The biggest fish handled was nearly 24 inches long and weighed 4.44 pounds (below right).





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### Behind the Badge

South Pinedale Game Warden Jordan Kraft and Pinedale Wildlife Biologist Dean Clause spent several days checking hunters in the Wind River Range backcountry. At right, Kraft investigates the scene of a dead trophy bull elk.

North Pinedale Game Warden Bubba Haley checked hunters and recorded harvest of antelope, deer, elk, sheep and moose. Haley thought it appeared the number of deer hunters was lower this year than previous years. Hunters also reported seeing more deer and better quality bucks this year. Success has been fair with several nice bucks taken during the hunt. Warden Haley also spent several days working archery hunters with several large bulls taken in all areas. Overall compliance has been good with only a few enforcement actions taken.

Pinedale Region wardens also report sage grouse hunters having great success this fall.



Fall Photos by Jordan Kraft

### At the Hatcheries...

The crew at the Boulder Rearing Station stocked 85,280 fish in September, which added up to a total of 8,884 pounds. Daniel Hatchery personnel conducted 14 tours to a total of 27 people during the month of September. The Daniel hatchery also installed two new generators, a 100 Kw unit for the hatchery and rearing building and a 60Kw unit for the pump house for the water supply to the rearing building raceways and ponds.





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### Swans Surveyed

Jackson Nongame Biologist Susan Patla completed the Trumpeter Swan annual fall aerial survey which provides a count of the resident, non-migratory swan population in western Wyoming including the number of young produced in 2015. This survey contributes to the coordinated range-wide survey conducted every five years in the Pacific Flyway to track the population trend of this recovering species. In Wyoming, outside of Yellowstone National Park, the total number of swans was 277 (212 adult/subadults and 65 cygnets).



This is a historic high count. The number of adult/subadults increased 27% compared to the previous year indicating excellent overwinter survival. Swan numbers continue to increase in the Green River expansion area. The number of successful nests in the Green River increased from 13 to 20 this year, which produced 55 cygnets. However, in the Snake River, the number dropped from six to three successful nests with 10 cygnets fledged.



Construction work was initiated on the Wild Red Wetland Project in the Cottonwood drainage west of Daniel, WY (Left). This project is one of several in the Upper Green River drainage funded through a federal grant provided by the North American Wetlands Conservation Act. These wetlands will further benefit trumpeter swans and many other water birds and wildlife.

### On the Ground

The Pinedale Game and Fish Habitat & Access crew built two new haysheds with new gravel and completed access road and gravel pit reclamation project at the Bench Corral Feedground. Crews also repaired fences at various public access areas and general maintenance at the Sommers boat ramp on the Green River.





### Improving Habitat for Wildlife

The Pinedale Game and Fish Habitat & Access crew ripped the edges of aspen stands that lack the desired number of young trees on private land near the Rim. Ripping is done by dragging a two foot long claw through the soil and breaking apart roots (See photos). Aspens respond to this disturbance by

producing more young trees from their roots, called "suckering". Aspens

stands are a crucial habitat for wildlife because they allow more light to the understory than conifers do, thereby supporting a very health understory of nutritious forbs and grasses.

Pinedale Habitat Biologists Jill Randal and Dylan Bergman also worked with a private land owner to mow decadent sagebrush in order to promote the growth of new, young sagebrush and promote the growth of antelope bitterbrush (right). Bitterbrush is a very palatable and nutritious shrub that mule deer browse heavily during the fall and winter. On this site the sagebrush was heavily competing with the bitterbrush, and by mowing we can generally kill the sagebrush but leave bitterbush intact and alive.



### Teaming up for Mule Deer

Workers from several organizations gathered to remove obsolete fence from the Whittaker property near Fremont Lake. The Conservation Fund recently protected the property with a conservation easement to maintain an important mule deer migration corridor.





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### Talk of the Town...



#### It's a buck... no, it's a doe !

A local father and son team went out on what they thought was a routine deer hunt. Dad shot a buck, son shot a spike... or did he? Closer inspection revealed something was amiss! This doe is sporting two well developed spikes. Dad immediately contacted the office to see what to do. Turns out the young man was in possession of a youth deer license. The regulation for the hunt area states "antlered deer". The youth license says does are legal. Covered on both counts! Congratulations guys. You can bet this story will be retold around the campfire for years to come.

### Volunteerism

Pinedale Game and Fish personnel joined Teton Science School personnel and other volunteers to build sage grouse fence markers to prevent bird collisions with fences. The group also installed markers on some 1.5 miles of area fences. Another four miles will be done later this year and next year as fences are rebuilt.

