

# LARAMIE REGION



"Conserving Wildlife - Serving People"

## Damage increases as winter progresses

In a severe winter, deer and elk often hang around stored crops and livestock feeding operations. South Laramie Game Warden Bill Brinegar and Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton have both had cases dealing with haystack damage. Brinegar reported that despite most of the Simon Ranch haystacks being fenced off over the last year, the elk simply found the next inadequately fenced haystack down the line to feed on.

Burton experienced similar complaints in his district, so elk were discouraged from feeding on haystacks by licensed hunters, pyrotechnics, lights and vehicles. Emergency fencing was provided to several landowners to protect haystacks from elk and deer damage throughout the Laramie Region.



*Above: Damage to a haystack in the Encampment area ended when the hay was fed out to cattle. Left: Damage to haystacks in Game Warden Bill Brinegar's district.*

## New year, new stamp

Hunters and anglers are reminded to purchase a new conservation stamp for 2016. Medicine Bow Game Warden Jake Kettley wrote several citations in January to people elk hunting who forgot to buy new stamps. He stated that this is a common violation for January. Conservation stamps must be purchased annually.

## Warm temps and high winds to blame for declining ice

Wheatland Game Warden David Ellsworth reported that ice fishing initially picked up at the start of the new year. Ice at Wheatland 1 was over 12 inches thick and clear. Towards the end of the month, however, with high wind and warmer temperatures, shore ice became very unstable and most ice fishermen directed their efforts toward Wheatland 3 and Toltec where the ice quality was higher. Declining ice conditions and slow fishing surveys led to a decline in fishing presence at Glendo as well.

Cheyenne Game Warden Shawn Blajszczak monitored ice fishing at Curt Gowdy and the local lakes. He observed some fishermen utilizing the open water to fish. He reported that Crystal Reservoir appeared to have a higher success rate than Granite Reservoir.

Fishermen are reminded to stay safe while ice fishing. Remember to always check the thickness of the ice; 4 inches or more are suggested. Also, avoid fissures and large cracks in the ice.



*Nice trout taken out of Leazenby Reservoir. Photo taken by Game Warden Bill Brinegar.*

## Tom Harpstreith Memorial Youth Goose Hunt a success

On January 24, 2016, Torrington area landowners, waterfowl outfitters and volunteers banded together to host the 2016 Tom Harpstreith Memorial Youth Goose Hunt. Over 40 kids participated in the event and with cooperating geese, the youth hunt was a huge success. Thank you to all those involved for recognizing the importance of passing on the hunting tradition to our young people and taking the time to instill in them the ethics and values associated with the sport. More information on the annual Tom Harpstreith Memorial Youth Hunt and photos can be found at:



*Tom Harpstreith with a good days kill and his lab, Ornyx. Photo credit: <http://www.tomyouthbhunt.com/abouttom.btm>*

## Sage grouse on the strut

While patrolling northern Albany County one cold morning, Game Warden Jason Sherwood encountered a large flock of sage grouse sunning themselves on a main road. As he was watching them, two males took turns trying out their mating dance, which is unusually early for this time of year. Sage grouse have an

elaborate courtship which includes the males “dancing”, strutting and fanning their tails, and inflating and deflating their bright yellow throat sacs to make a popping sound. Males return and congregate at the same grounds each year (leks) to perform their courtship rituals in order to attract a mate.



*Above: Photo of sage grouse sunning on road in Albany County, January 2016.*



*Right: Male grouse displaying tail during courtship in 2015.*

## Four charged in Canada Goose waste case in Goshen Co.



Four Florida men were cited in Goshen County for the waste and abandonment of 11 Canada Geese. The case resulted from a tip from a local ranch hand who witnessed the violation and reported an accurate license plate

number and vehicle description to the local game warden. This case, yet again, exemplifies the key role played by the public in the detection of wildlife crimes and apprehension of offenders in the state of Wyoming.

## Tips lead to convictions

Each year, hundreds of animals are taken illegally in Wyoming, and without tips from concerned members of the public, many of these crimes would go undetected. Game wardens follow up on all information received through the Stop Poaching program and in many cases these tips lead to successful

prosecutions of perpetrators. Tips can be submitted by phone, text or online and reporters can choose to remain anonymous. Individuals submitting information leading to a conviction can be eligible for a reward through the Wyoming Wildlife Protector's Association.

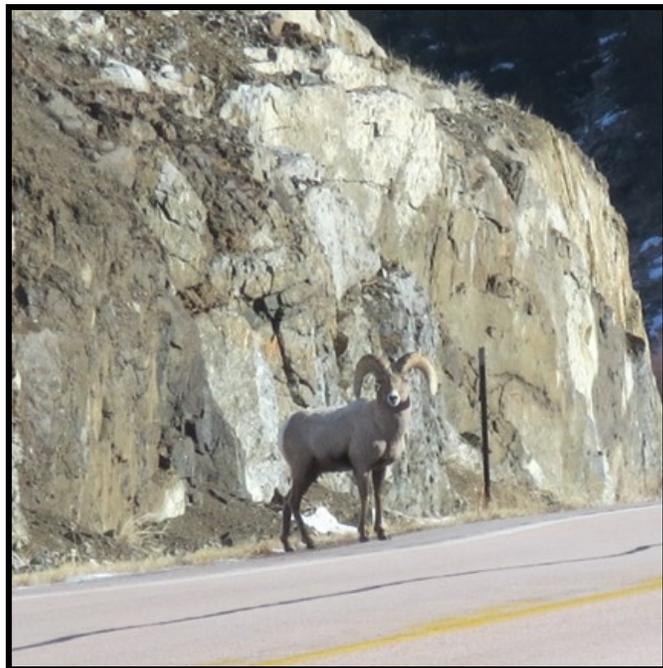


*Canada geese from a waste and abandonment case in Goshen County.*

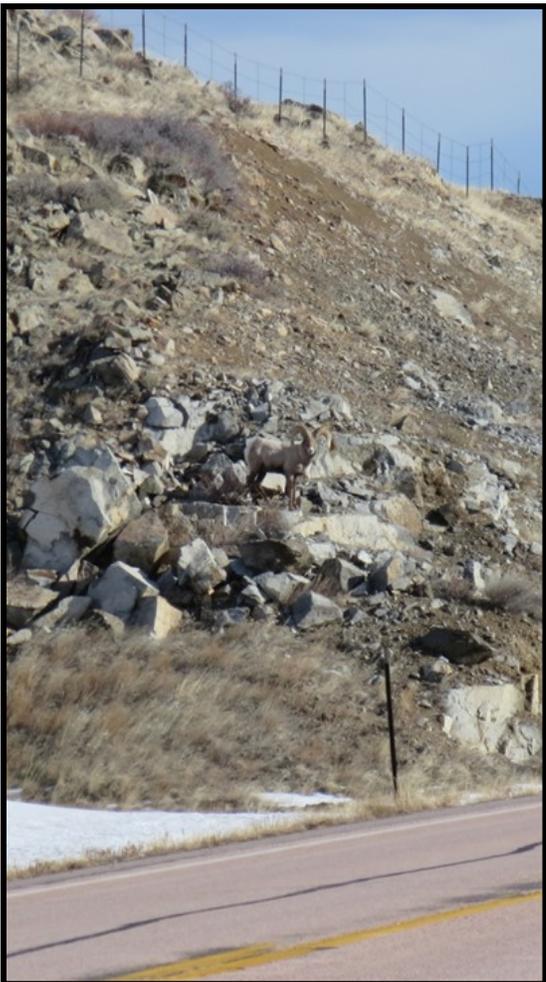
# Spotting the Bighorn Sheep in Sybille



North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd was driving through Sybille Canyon in late January when he spotted several bighorn sheep about a half a mile off the road. He observed a couple of ewes and a lamb feeding on a hillside and then noticed a nice ram on top of the hill. He wanted to get a closer look when suddenly the ram started coming towards the road. The ram descended to the road in about ten minutes. When he started to cross the road, Warden Todd remembered a joke he had heard from a family friend thirty five years prior. “Why did the bighorn ram cross the road? To see Ewe”. Kelly was appreciative the ram decided to pay him a visit and give him an optimal view.



## Why did the big-horn ram cross the road?



Bighorn sheep, making their way through Sybille Canyon, often go undetected by travelers due to how well they blend in with their habitat. Warden Todd stated that he is amazed by how many animals are killed due to vehicle collisions in the canyon each year. It is a good reminder for us to be aware of our surroundings, follow posted speed limits and slow down when you see animals near the road.



## Uncontrolled dogs continue to cause problems

Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton received three complaints of dogs chasing and killing deer in the towns of Saratoga and Encampment. Police departments in those towns assisted in the investigation and prosecution of dog owners who allowed their dogs to run at large and attack big game animals.

North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd had reports of a dog chasing antelope in Kiwanis Park. A husky dog caught a young pronghorn, but luckily a man in the park was able to stop the dog before it was able to injure or kill the pronghorn. Albany County animal control cited the owners for dog at large and Warden Todd issued a warning harassing wildlife. Owners are reminded to maintain control of your dogs at all times as failure to do so can result in citations and injured wildlife.



*An uncontrolled dog accused of chasing deer in Saratoga.*

## Hunting requires effort from the hunter

South Laramie Game Warden Bill Brinegar reported talking to an unhappy hunter from Hunt Area 9 who was upset at the lack of elk on the X Bar Hunter Management Area west of Laramie. Warden Brinegar said that he found that complaint odd considering that he had witnessed 350-400 elk nearly each time he patrolled the area. It turned out that the hunter wasn't putting in his fair share of work to have a successful hunt and was showing up too late in the morning.



*Photo taken during recent elk classification flight in Laramie Region near Sybille.*

## Game Warden exam being offered

Cheyenne Game Warden Brooke Weaver and WGFD wildlife division administration successfully edited and updated the Game Warden exam for 2016. The exam is now being offered online. Duties include enforcement of hunting and fishing laws, wildlife management, data collection and analysis, watercraft safety, interacting with the public and landowners and wildlife damage/conflicts.

If you are interested in a rewarding career as a game warden in Wyoming, you can find out more information at: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/law-enforcement>.

A valid driver's license and a Bachelor's degree in wildlife management, range management, biology, zoology, ichthyology or other closely related field is required.



## Two new game wardens hired in Laramie region

Five new game wardens were hired in the last round of interviews and two will be stationed out of the Laramie Regional office beginning in mid-April. Kristen DaVanon graduated from New Mexico University with a Masters in Biology and Mitchell Renteria graduated with a Bachelors Degree in Fisheries and Wildlife from the University of Nebraska.

They are currently attending the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy in Douglas, WY. They will spend the majority of their time this summer on Glendo Reservoir enforcing watercraft safety and fishing regulations. Welcome to the region Kristen and Mitchell; we are looking forward to your assistance.



*Kristen DaVanon*



*Mitchell Renteria*

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