



Laramie Region Newsletter



“Conserving Wildlife - Serving People”

Snowy Range moose study

Assessing nutritional and habitat use

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department teamed up with researchers at the University of Wyoming on a study to look at the health of the Snowy Range moose population.

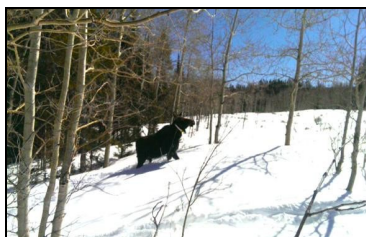
Biologists recently darted cow moose from a helicopter, then drew blood, measured body fat and affixed a radio collar to each animal. The study will help biologists learn the nutritional and habitat uses of the moose, and determine body fat condition and calving rates.



Mark Gocke, WGF

Habitats in the Snowy Range have changed dramatically due to the mountain pine beetle epidemic and the study will help biologists learn how the moose use their habitat and whether the beetle-killed forests are providing sufficient nutrition for their survival.

The majority of the captured moose were pregnant and showed good body fat for late winter. That's great news for this herd, which is heralded as one of the premier moose herds in



Photos by Matt Kauffman and Mark Gocke

the entire state!
You can see more photos from the study on Twitter at: #wyomoose.

2015 Hunting Season Meetings

Meetings to obtain public input to set the 2015 hunting seasons will be held in March throughout the Laramie Region:

Saratoga — Open house. 6 p.m. Monday, March 23 at the Saratoga Town Hall, 110 E. Spring Street.

Wheatland — Open house. 6 p.m. Monday, March 23 at the Platte County Public Library, 904 9th Street.

Torrington — Open house. 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 24 at the Platte Valley Bank, 2201 Main Street.

Cheyenne — Open house. 6 p.m. Wednesday, March 25 at the Game and Fish Headquarters, 5400 Bishop Blvd.

Laramie — Public Information Gathering Meeting. 6 p.m. Thursday, March 26 at the University of Wyoming Berry Center, East Lewis St. & 10th St. on campus.

The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission will finalize 2015 season structures at their April meeting in Casper.

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2015 Winter Workshop
February 24, 2015
Platte Valley Community Center

	9:00-9:15 Welcome & Introduction
	9:15-9:30 USFS Irrigation & Travel Management
	9:30-11:00 Cheatgrass Workshop (University of WY)
	11:15-12:00 Disaster Preparedness—Kellie Chichester (UW Ag Extension)
	12:00-1:00 Join us for Lunch (Free with RSVP)
	1:00-4:00 2015 Private Pesticide Applicator Training - Carbon County Weed & Pest (For more information call 307-324-2642)

If you'd like to join us for lunch, please RSVP by Friday, February 20th by phone (307-254-1374) or email (joc.sercd@gmail.com)

Sponsored By:



Platte Valley winter workshop

The Platte Valley Habitat Partnership helped host the 2015 Platte Valley Winter Workshop in cooperation with the Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District and the Carbon County Weed & Pest.

The workshop included information from the US Forest Service on travel management and irrigation, cheatgrass presentations by Dr. Brian Mealor, agricultural disaster preparedness by Kellie Chichester with the UW Ag Extension, and pesticide applicator training.

Mountain lion removed from bobcat trap



Access Coordinator Jason Sherwood and Wildlife Management Coordinator Corey Class successfully removed this mountain lion from a bobcat trap.

Large Carnivore Workshop set for Laramie

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department will host a free workshop on “Living in Large Carnivore Country,” which is designed to provide people with practical information on how to prevent conflicts and what to do in an encounter with a bear, mountain lion or wolf.

This free public workshop will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, April 11, at University of Wyoming Berry Biodiversity Conservation Center, at the intersection of Lewis Street and 10th Street. Topics will include: bear and lion food habits, where one would expect to encounter them, understanding behavior, what to do in an encounter and the proper use of bear spray. The workshop also will touch on the topic of safety around wolves.

For more information, contact Robin Kepple at (307) 777-4523 or robin.kepple@wyo.gov.

Welcome to the Laramie Region

New game warden in Cheyenne

Game Warden Dillon Herman was recently transferred to Cheyenne and will work alongside Cheyenne’s Senior Game Warden, Shawn Blajszczak.

Herman replaces David Ellsworth, who is now the Senior Game Warden in Wheatland.

Herman was born in Fort Collins, Colo., and moved to Cody as a child. After graduating from Cody High School, he earned a bachelor’s degree in Wildlife Biology and Management from the University of Wyoming in the fall of 2012. The following summer he inspected boats for the Aquatic Invasive Species program in Cody.

“I am really glad I took the job inspecting boats. It opened a lot of opportunities for me,” he said. That fall he worked as a Brucellosis surveillance technician in and around elk hunt area 40 near Greybull, collecting blood and tissue samples from hunter harvested elk for

disease testing.

For seven years prior to that he contracted with Park County Weed and Pest and the Shoshone National Forest, spraying weeds horseback in the backcountry to remove invasive weeds from elk and bighorn sheep habitat.

Herman completed the Wyoming Law Enforcement Academy in July 2014 and was stationed in Green River before being transferred to Cheyenne. His current position serves as a training ground for new game wardens. It involves overseeing the falconry program and assisting the Wildlife Division with a variety of duties. He is currently helping with the administration of the online game warden exam.

“The diversity of the game warden job really appeals to me. It’s not just law enforcement,” he said. He also enjoys the biology work and interacting with the public. “You



Dillon Herman

learn something new every day in this position. There are a lot of phone calls and each one brings new questions and I have to find the answers. It’s a learning opportunity for me,” he said.

Herman and his fiancée, Alyssa, will marry in June and reside in Cheyenne.

Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative meeting



The Laramie Region hosted the annual Platte Valley Mule Deer Initiative meeting in Saratoga on Feb. 26. A few highlights from the meeting include:

Population management: The Platte Valley mule deer herd is estimated between 10,000 and 11,000 animals. The 2015 hunting season will mark the third year of limited quota in the Platte Valley. With that, hunter success increased to 57 percent in 2014. Hunter satisfaction increased to 62 percent, up from 57 percent in 2013 and just 46 percent in

2012.

Predator management: Attempt to increase mule deer recruitment and survival by reducing predation from mountain lions and black bears by liberalizing hunting seasons, and by removing coyotes.

Habitat: Completion of several projects, including 13 miles of fence conversion and two spring developments on Bureau of Land Management lands; one mile of fence conversion in the French Creek area; Established burn units, mowed burn lines and at-

tempted a prescribed burn on the ZN Ranch in October 2014; Fencing riparian areas and willow sprigging on the ZN Ranch; Completed 200 acres of aeration and seeding, aspen pre-treatment monitoring, and soil samples for Spike application on the Big Creek Ranch.

Travel Management: The U.S. Forest Service reported that travel management has been completed across most of the Brush Creek-Hayden District. The Bureau of Land Management is working on the northwest area.

Laramie Region Law Enforcement

North Laramie Game Warden Kelly Todd solved a case in which two brothers trespassed and abandoned a big game animal.

Brandon Bustos, 31, of Rawlins, and Robert Bustos, 37, of Laramie, were approached by a landowner after Brandon Bustos shot a 6x6 bull elk on private property in Sybille Canyon on Oct. 2, 2014. The men did not have permission to hunt the private land.

The brothers left the area and abandoned the elk. Following an investigation, Brandon Bustos was fined a total of \$7,300 including \$270 for failure to tag a big game animal; \$500 for waste of a big game animal; \$6,000 in restitution for the elk; \$500 for hunting on private land without permission; and \$30 for failure to wear fluorescent orange. He must also pay \$240 in court costs and his hunting privileges were revoked for three years.

Robert Bustos was charged with accessory to trespass and accessory to waste a big game animal. He was fined \$400 plus \$100 in court costs, and his hunting privileges were revoked for one year. Warden Todd said Robert Bustos had received a citation for trespassing in roughly the same area in the summer of 2014.

Saratoga Game Warden Biff Burton investigated a report of two dead pronghorn antelope along Jack Creek Road west of Saratoga. While on his way to investigate them, he received a Stop Poaching hotline tip about another dead pronghorn about four miles away from the first two. All three pronghorn appeared to have been shot from a public road and abandoned. The case is under investigation.

Medicine Bow Game Warden Jake Kettley received a call about a man who had picked up a road-killed deer south of Rock River. Warden Kettley discovered the man had hit the deer with his vehicle on the way to work and then picked it up and took it home. Using a license plate number and a witnesses' report, Warden Kettley located the man's residence and place of employment. The man was in possession of a white-tailed deer buck that he had hit that morning. The deer was seized and the suspect stated that in his home state of Indiana it was okay to pick up road kill. The man received a citation from the Game and Fish Department and also from the Wyoming Highway Patrol for transferring licenses plates onto a pickup that was not registered.



This bull elk was shot and abandoned after the suspects were caught trespassing on private land.

FOREVER WILD families



Ice fishing!

Forever Wild Families participants took to the ice at Granite Reservoir in early February to learn how to ice fish. Laramie Region personnel and volunteers from Laramie Peak Anglers and Muley Fanatics Foundation shared their knowledge and skills on the ice. Wind gusts well over 50 mph sent equipment and sleds flying and anglers skidding across the ice, but the sun was shining, the fish were biting and the hot dogs were cooked to perfection.

Kudos!



Two-Shot habitat day

A hearty thank you to Two-Shot members who convened at Springer and Table Mountain Wildlife Habitat Management Areas on Feb. 21 for their annual habitat day.

The group bedded dozens of goose nesting structures with hay for the upcoming breeding season. Despite the inclement weather, they completed the task before noon and then met for lunch at Table Mountain. Several nesting structures were inaccessible this year due to high water levels on the habitat units.

2015 Angler Newsletter now online!

Did you know there are rainbow trout in Lake Hattie and Alsop Lake that are in excess of 24 inches, or that there are 1,470 brown trout per mile at the Jelm Wildlife Habitat Management Area west of Laramie? You can read all about these stories, and much more, in the 2015 Laramie Region Angler Newsletter.

The Angler Newsletter is developed by the Laramie Fisheries Crew each year as a way to share information about fish management and fishing opportunities throughout the region. In addition to the stories mentioned above, the newest edition also contains information on changes to the 2015 fish regulations; Lunkers on the Laramie Plains; the importance of stocking to fish management; Improving the health of stream banks; and other stories to help keep anglers up to date with current fish management issues in the Laramie Region.

The newsletter can be found on the Game and Fish Department web page at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov>. Click on "Fishing and Watercraft" and then on "Regional Angler Newsletters" under "Fish on the Line."



The fight against the invaders: AIS update

by Travis Kinsell

As the 2015 boating season gets underway, here is an update on what has been happening with the aquatic invasive species (AIS) program.

In 2014 we continued focusing inspection efforts on border locations to help people meet the inspection requirement as they enter Wyoming. As was the case last year, any watercraft entering Wyoming is required by law to get an inspection before launching on Wyoming waters from March through November. Resident boaters who have not left the state do not need to get an inspection unless they encounter a check station on their route of travel.

Perhaps the most important thing to be aware of this year is there are two new suspect waters within a short drive of the Wyoming border. Veligers (larval mussels) were recently detected in Angostura Reservoir, South Dakota, and Deer Creek Reservoir, Utah. As with any infested water, if you boat on either of these waters you must have your boat inspected before launching in Wyoming again regardless of the time of year. A list of known infested waters can be found at: https://wgfd.wyo.gov/web/2011/images/QRDocs/AIS_INFESTED_WATER.pdf. In Wyoming, check stations will continue to operate at port of entries, and on a rotating basis at major waters during the peak boating season from April 25 through mid-September.



During the 2014 boating season, WGFD AIS inspectors performed over 43,000 inspections on watercraft originating from all 50 states and Canada. Of those, 2,087 were considered high risk and 880 required decontamination. The majority of decontaminations were performed on boats with standing water in the motor.

Ten watercraft had confirmed zebra or quagga mussels attached and were completely decontaminated. The mussels were determined to be dead on all of those vessels.

Zebra and quagga mussels are not the only threats to our waters. New Zealand mudsnails, Asian clams, brook stickleback and curly pondweed are already present in some of our waters. While curly pondweed has not been detected in the Laramie Region yet, it has been discovered in at least one new water each year since 2012.

It is important that everyone does their part to keep invasive species from spreading. Please remember to Drain, Clean and Dry your watercraft and fishing equipment: √DRAIN water from live wells, ballast tanks and the bilge; √CLEAN mud from wading boots and anchors, and plants from the trailer; allow your equipment to √DRY before taking it to another water.





CWD Vaccine study continues

In February biologists vaccinated and bled the elk that are part of the Chronic Wasting Disease vaccine study at the Tom Thorne/Beth Williams Wildlife Research Center and Sybille.

There were originally 42 elk in the study: 21 vaccinates and 21 controls. The elk were brought to the facility in 2013 and are vaccinated yearly. After two years, biologists are starting to see some of the research elk develop clinical signs of CWD. They are now down to 35 elk in the study.

The next two years will be interesting as biologists look to see if the vaccine is able to prolong the period between exposure to CWD and clinical disease. Blood is drawn from all study elk twice a year to evaluate titers to the vaccine. Additionally, blood from all control elk is sent to a researcher in Colorado to assist with development of a blood test for CWD.

Bighorn sheep disease surveillance

Personnel at the Game and Fish Department Wildlife Disease Laboratory prepared for a statewide bighorn sheep disease research/surveillance project. The goal is to sample just over 100 bighorn sheep and approximately 20 mountain goats.

Preparing for such a large trapping effort requires a tremendous amount of planning; including double checking equipment and supplies as well as the assembly of sample collection kits. Each kit contains over 20 items that enable biologists to collect biological data, DNA samples, blood, feces, nasal and tonsil swabs from each animal.

Downed power lines close East Allen Lake

East Allen Lake Public Access Area near Medicine Bow is under an immediate emergency closure due to downed power lines and poles.

Carbon Power and Light, Inc. discovered the downed power lines and notified the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Bureau of Land Management, who jointly manage the property. A decision was made to immediately close the access area for public safety.

The poles were damaged by the frost/freeze cycle of the lake and a combination of wind that forced the poles out of the ground. With an increase in moisture in the past year, the lake has filled to the



point that the poles are now in the water. The access area will remain closed until crews can repair the poles.

Wardens complete firearms training

Laramie Region wildlife law enforcement officers met in Cheyenne in early February to train with firearms instructor Shawn Blajszczak.

This was the first time the Game and Fish Department used the Laramie County Shooting Sports Complex in Cheyenne for law enforcement training. The complex allowed Game and Fish personnel to use the facility on a Monday, when they are normally closed.

The wardens enjoyed using the new shooting complex, especially the fact that pistols could be shot in the indoor range when wind conditions impeded putting targets up outside. They hope to use the facility again in the future.



**Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.
Laramie Region Office
528 S. Adams St.
Laramie, WY 82070
(307) 745-4046**

