Poaching in Northwest Sheridan County Remained High In 2015

The number of deer and elk illegally killed in northwest Sheridan County continued to increase during 2015, despite efforts by Game and Fish to boost enforcement efforts in the area. Game wardens from Dayton and Sheridan spent an inordinate amount of time investigating reports of poached animals. Game wardens from other parts of Wyoming were brought in to enhance patrols of problem areas.

In an area along the Wyoming-Montana state line, 17 elk (nine bulls and eight cows) and eight deer (two buck mule deer, one doe mule deer, three buck white-tailed deer and two doe white-tailed deer) were illegally killed in 2015. Game wardens were able to make cases on five of the poached elk with four individuals being issued citations resulting in fines of $6,130. The remaining cases are still being investigated.

A white-tailed buck deer shot and the head removed in northern Sheridan County.

Bull elk shot and left along Pass Creek Road in March 2015

Illegally killed bull elk with head and some meat removed.

A mule deer buck was killed and only its head removed.
On December 11, John Woller, an employee at Sheridan College, notified the Sheridan Regional G&F office that a bald eagle on the college campus could not fly. The eagle was captured and transferred to Ironside Bird Rescue in Cody where it was determined it had intestinal parasites and a bacterial infection. After a month of rehabilitation at Ironside, the eagle was transferred back to Sheridan. On Friday January 8, John Woller had the honor of opening the door on the transport cage and letting the bald eagle fly free again. Approximately 30 people from the Sheridan area came to watch the bald eagle being released.
Pheasant Releases in 2015 From the Sheridan Bird Farm

From November 3 until December 24, 2015, Sheridan Bird farm personnel along with other game and fish personnel and volunteers sorted, loaded and released 14,519 pheasants onto 12 publicly accessible hunting sites in Sheridan, Johnson, Campbell, Bighorn and Fremont counties. During that period, 100 individual stocking events, or about 2.5 events per weekday took place. Vehicles used to haul and release birds logged approximately 11,800 miles during the months of November and December. The vehicles traveled an average 1,475 miles per week to release an average of 1,815 pheasants per week. The total pheasant production at the Sheridan Bird Farm in 2015 was 15,869, of which 1,200 hens and 150 roosters were kept at the farm for breeding purposes to produce pheasants for the 2016 season.

Veterans from the VA facility in Sheridan spent an afternoon volunteering at the bird farm.

Biologists and Game Wardens Complete Deer Classification Surveys

Deer classification surveys were completed in the four Sheridan Region mule deer herd units in December. In the Powder River Herd Unit (HU) there were 50 bucks per 100 does and 79 fawns per 100 does, while in the Upper Powder River HU there were 43 bucks per 100 does and 67 fawns per 100 does. The Pumpkin Buttes HU had 45 bucks per 100 does and 71 fawns per 100 does. The Sheridan Region contains only the hunt areas on the east side of the North Bighorns HU where 31 bucks per 100 does and 83 fawns per 100 does were classified. The fawn ratios ranged from 53 fawns per 100 does in Hunt Area 32 to 92 fawns per 100 does in Hunt Area 17. While the fawn to doe ratios were down slightly this year compared to 2014, the ratios observed are still considered good.

Almost the entire Sheridan G&F Region is considered one white-tailed deer herd unit. The Powder River White-tailed Deer HU had 41 bucks per 100 does and 71 fawns per 100 does.
Moose in Hunt Area 34 Counted From Helicopter

A Bell Jet Ranger helicopter was used to conduct a winter moose survey in Hunt Area 34 west of Buffalo. The survey was done to gather information on current moose numbers and herd composition. Herd composition, or classification surveys, provides information on calf production and survival as well as the proportion of bulls in the herd. A total of 24 moose were counted and classified during the survey, including 9 bulls, 9 cows and 6 calves. These totals compared to 33 moose in 2014 and 32 moose in 2013. The lower counts this year could be due to a combination of lower moose numbers and a lower detection rate. Moose often occupy conifer habitat adjacent to willow habitats which makes them difficult or impossible to observe. Survey results and other data will be used when setting the 2016 fall hunting season. Management direction has strived to decrease moose numbers to a level compatible with available habitat. Willow habitat is generally in poor condition, thereby providing reduced moose carrying capacity.