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:
- **2016 Hunting Season Open Houses** March 14-17 and Final Public Meeting March 21, 2016.
- **Deadline for moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goat and bison applications** is February 29.
- **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.
- **Preference period for previously registered black bear bait sites** is March 1-20

*Read more about the big game winter surveys on page 2.*
Elk and Moose Winter Range Surveys ~ Good Bull numbers, but heavy winter conditions.

Mountain View Wildlife Biologist Jeff Short, with the help of Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird and Cokeville Game Warden Neil Hymas, completed the West Green River elk herd surveys and the Lincoln moose herd surveys. Short reported, “For elk, we observed the cow: calf and bull: cow ratios were good—at 34:100 and 36.6:100. Our total sample size was 2,970 elk. Some good mature bulls were seen.”

“When we flew the Lincoln moose herd survey we observed that the cow: calf and bull: cow ratios were good—at 42:100 and 38:100. Total moose sample size was 331 moose.”

On a cautious note, Short said, “The winter conditions are heavy out here and I am concerned that this could turn into a bad winter for wildlife. Some deer mortality is currently occurring, especially fawns, throughout the region.”
Collecting shed antlers and or horns prohibited January 1 – April 30 ~ Winter Range Protection

Exciting research technology

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

Kemmerer Game Warden Chris Baird and Mtn. View Wildlife Biologist Jeff Short coordinated on an exciting survey technique for ungulates. “This was part of an assignment from the Moose Working Group, in cooperation with the Governors Big Game License Coalition,” Baird said. “The survey was conducted in the Lincoln Moose herd in hunt area 26. Hunt area 26 was chosen to explore this technique because of its diverse winter moose habitat types that should be comparable to other herd units across the state.”

Owyhee Air was contracted to use their high definition infrared camera technology to survey for moose while WGFD personnel surveyed from another helicopter. The main objectives were to compare the current traditional survey method to infrared technology. Baird and Short are still working on sorting thru a lot of data and look forward to reporting back to the moose working group on the findings.

Photos top to bottom:
Doe deer soaks up sun near Kemmerer; Doe and her fawns near Baggs; snowman to welcome you to the Baggs Warden Station, and a shed antler sits in a snow bank until someone finds it AFTER April 30.
The Green River Region fish crew said farewell to biologist Joe Skorupski the first of February. Skorupski transferred to the Cody Region of the Game and Fish with his wife Erin and their daughter Josie. Joe came to Green River after working with Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and he already had a working relationship with WGFD before he left Utah. Now he is off to Cody and we all wish them well! (photos left, top three)

Troy Laughlin is the new fisheries biologist in Green River, replacing Joe and joining John Walrath. Troy is originally from south central Nebraska; raised on a small family farm where they raised cattle, sheep, and pigs. He earned his Bachelors Degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Biology and Management from the University of Wyoming in 2011. Troy worked as a fisheries technician on the fish management crew in the Green River region for three field seasons. He earned his Masters Degree in Zoology from Southern Illinois University in 2015. He and his wife Chelsea live in Rock Springs and enjoy spending time outdoors with family and friends and their yellow lab Duke. (photos below)
Southwest Access Yes Coordinator Andrew Countryman reports the southwest Wyoming recipient of the Access Recognition Program is Robert “Lynn” Stoll and his wife Kathy from the Burntfork area, located 30 miles southeast of Mountain View, Wyoming.

“The Stoll’s have a parcel of land located on Cedar Mountain in western Sweetwater County,” Countryman said. “The land has been enrolled in the Walk-In Hunting Area program for the last four hunting seasons. Lynn enrolled his land in hopes of protecting much needed water sources, improving wildlife habitat, and providing a place for the public to enjoy hunting opportunities. Lynn took the bull by the horns and encouraged his neighbors to join in the effort by enrolling their lands, resulting in three other neighbors participating in the program.”

“Lynn maintains his leadership qualities today by keeping the participating landowners informed of any new information involving the walk-in area. Due to Lynn’s effort, all four landowners have agreed to renew their lands this year and provide hunting opportunities for the public for another five years. The Cedar Mountain walk in area provides a quality hunt for deer, antelope, and sometimes elk for sportsmen who are willing to leave their vehicles behind. Cedar Mountain is primarily BLM land, with a spider web of roads that cut across the landscape. The walk in area provides a sanctuary from the intense vehicle traffic on surrounding public lands.”

“The landowners recognized the need for hunters to be able to navigate around the mountain, so they use “designated” roads to allow vehicle traffic on specific parts of the walk-in area while completely prohibiting vehicle traffic in others to produce quality hunting and protect the valuable water sources which enhance local wildlife populations.”

“Lynn believes in providing access and opportunities to people. Not only does he participate and lead in the PLPW program, but he provides opportunities to disabled veterans through the Sgt. Daniel Gurr Foundation. Lynn purchases his landowner antelope license and donates it to a well deserving veteran. He also personally guides these heroes and has housed them at his ranch the last two years during their hunt.”
Green River (GR), Lander and Pinedale Region staff worked with local sponsors of the annual Burbot Bash and Burbot Classic fishing derbies. Green River Fisheries Biologist John Walrath reports the following derby statistics for the Burbot Bash:

- 678 participates registered (204 teams)
- Over 3604 burbot were removed from Friday afternoon through Sunday morning.
- 157 burbot were caught by the most successful team earning them $1800.
- The top ten teams caught 1201 burbot and shared in the $8050 of prize money distributed for this category.
- The biggest burbot caught was 33.1 inches and weighed 7.93 pounds earning that angler $1300.
- The top ten burbot entered ranged from 33.1 to 30.9 inches and earned the respective anglers a share of $5500 in prize money.
- Ten youth anglers shared in the $750 of youth prize money for biggest and smallest burbot caught by a youth. The largest youth burbot was 32 inches and weighed 6.09 pounds.
- Teams turned in seven tagged burbot. One was a fish tagged in 2016 - the other six were tagged in a previous year, including one fish from 2011. The Burbot Bounty, worth $1400, was split by the 7 teams. The three insured tags, worth over $13,500 are still swimming around in Flaming Gorge Reservoir.

Colby Rich
Jim Jensen
Pinedale Region’s Darren Rhea
Jackson Region’s Diana Miller (right) and GR Office Manager Sheila Watts collect data.

GR Habitat Biologist Kevin Spence
Bottom, left to right: GR Fisheries Supervisor Robb Keith (crazy scanner-guy), GR Fisheries Biologists Joe Skorupski and John Walrath work fish and crowd at Manila Fairgrounds closing ceremony.
Green River Fisheries Biologist John Walrath reported the following statistics for the annual Burbot Classic:

- First Days catch - 737
- Second Days catch - 583
- Total BBT removed - 1,320
- Total pounds removed - 1,655

“A total of 2,800 angler hours were spent to remove the 1,320 BBT; not including hours spent from teams that were skunked,” Walrath said. “Only 11 (15.5%) of the teams were skunked, 21 (29.6%) of the teams caught less than 10 burbot, and 16 (22.5%) teams caught between 10-20 burbot. The remaining 26 (33%) teams caught over 20 burbot and five of those teams caught over 50. Of the teams that checked in burbot and that creel data was collected from, 32 teams were fully comprised of WY residents, 15 were from UT, five were a combination of WY/UT residents, and one team was comprised of members from CO.”

Photos bottom, left to right: AIS Crew Leader Wes Gordon and Baggs Game Warden Kim Olson collect data, Green River Fisheries Supervisor Robb Keith works wish WWCC students to remove odoliths from fish to use for aging, Robert Curtis Jr. with a tagged fish. Photos below, left to right: Connar Smith, Lander Fisheries Supervisor Craig Amadio scans fish, winners of the “best team name” Two Hookers and a Pole. (You can’t make this stuff up!)
Office managers Sheila Watts (right) and Regina Dickson (left) have been busy since the new year, answering questions about current ice conditions, Life Time Licenses, and boat registrations. The girls invite you to stop in and pick up your 2016 licenses and Conservation Stamps.

http://wgfd.wyo.gov
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~Critter Spotlight~
River Otter
By Mark Zornes a.k.a. Leopold

- A large member of the weasel family (Mustelidae) that spends the bulk of its life in an aquatic environment. River otters can dive and hold their breath for four to five minutes while searching for their main source of food; fish and crayfish.
- River otters are a fairly common site along some drainages in western Wyoming, especially along the lower Green River. While river otter populations have declined throughout much of its range, otters appear to be fairly secure and increasing in this lower portion of the Green River drainage and its larger tributaries, like the Black's and Hams Forks, and within Labarge and Fontenelle Creeks.
- As mentioned above, river otters prey heavily on fish and crayfish, and (contrary to worries of some human anglers) have very limited impact on overall fish populations. River otters also consume other animals, ranging from frogs and large aquatic insects, to muskrats, voles, and the occasional small beaver.
- River otters are very social within their family groups, an adult female and her pups. Adult males are solitary except during breeding. River otters groups can often be seen in bouts of "chase" or sliding repeatedly on snow banks, apparently for no reason but play.
- While this species is a heavily regulated furbearer in much of its range, due to relatively low numbers and limited distribution, river otters are currently a protected species in Wyoming, with no legal harvest.
- River otters are sensitive to pollution and can be eliminated from some drainages or portions of drainages during chronic or acute pollution events.
- River otters typically produce one to five young, born totally dependent in a bank den of some form, typically constructed by beavers. Pups are weaned at about 12 weeks.