



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Jackson Region

September 2015 Newsletter

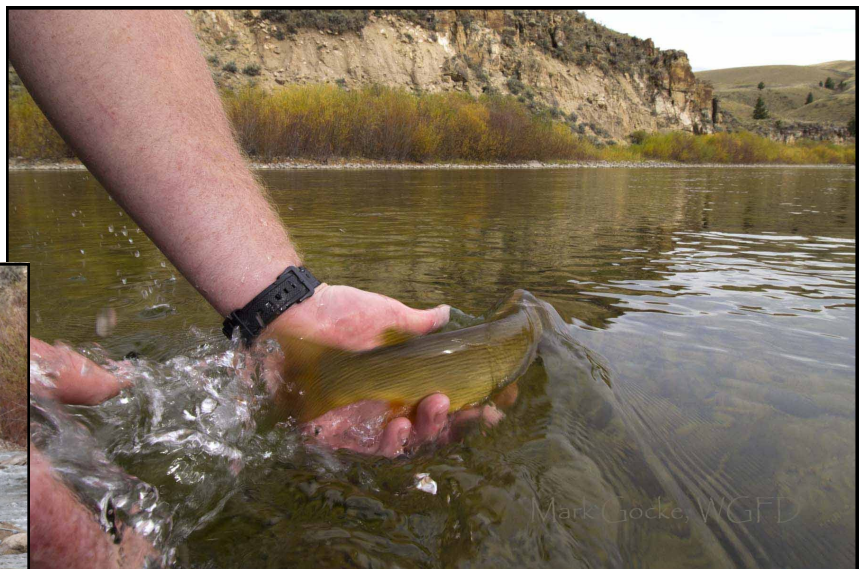
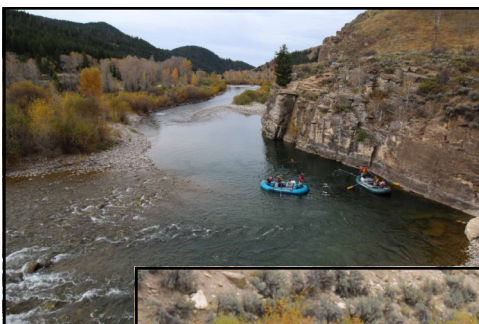


Gros Ventre Cutties

The Jackson fish crew conducted their annual sampling of the Gros Ventre River above the town of Kelly. Water levels were higher than normal making things a little more challenging. An actual population estimate hasn't been made from the data collected yet, but biologists believe the Snake River cutthroat numbers seemed similar to last year which showed over 300 fish (greater than 5 inches) per

mile. The river also holds some rainbow trout and some rainbow-cutthroat hybrids, but the belief is that numbers of both of these non-native fish seemed down.

Photos: (Right) Jackson Fish Supervisor Rob Gipson measures a trophy class Snake River cutthroat (Below) Fish crews shock a deep pool beneath the Kelly Cliffs and negotiate rapids downstream.





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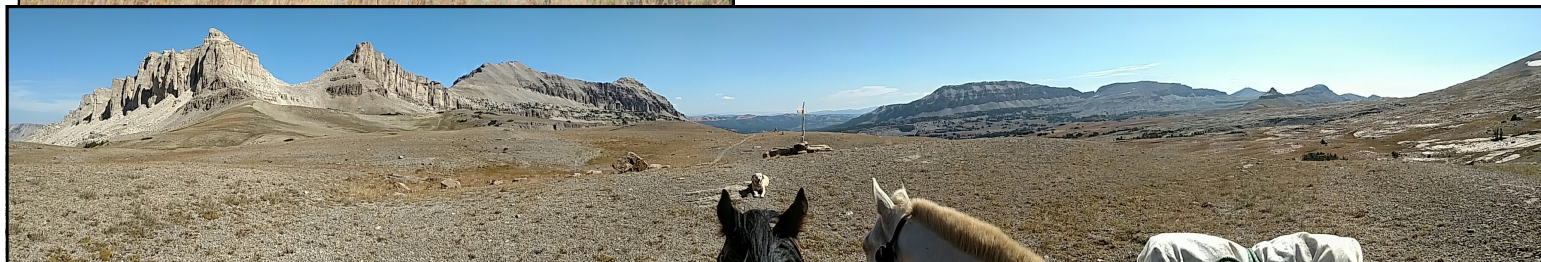
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Backcountry Patrols

Jackson Game Warden Jon Stephens and Jackson Wildlife Biologist Aly Courtemanch spent several days in the Teton Wilderness northeast of Moran visiting with elk hunters while working the September 20 rifle season opener (Hunt Area 70). Warden Stephens also made trips in to the Gros Ventre Wilderness for the sheep and elk openers there. He was able to contact several hunting parties and reports that hunting compliance was good.





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Managing Moose

With the onset of the fall rut, moose become more active and tend to rub their antlers on anything they can find. Consequently, this time of year the Jackson office typically receives numerous calls of moose in town or bull moose with their antlers entangled in a variety of objects ranging from Christmas lights to ropes, fencing, hammocks, etc. This September nearly all of the regional

Wildlife Division personnel got to respond to a number of reports of moose with a variety of things in their antlers, injured moose or moose in potentially dangerous settings including subdivisions and city parks.



(Above left) Jackson Wildlife Biologist Aly Courtemanch prepares to land a tranquilizer dart in the rump of a bull moose near Wilson. (Above) Courtemanch and Jackson Warden Kyle Lash remove plastic fencing from a moose's antlers. (Left) A bull moose with rope wrapped around its antlers near Wilson. (Below) Jackson Brucellosis-Feedground-Habitat Biologist Ben Wise hazes a pair of moose from Miller Park in Jackson.





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It's Huntin' Season

With the start of most big game hunting seasons in September, regional Wildlife Division personnel spent many hours checking hunters in the field or at established check stations.

South Jackson Wildlife Biologist Gary Fralick contacted nearly 700 hunters and members of the public. Several trophy class mule deer bucks were again taken in the Wyoming Range deer herd (see photo). Gary checked 93 deer, with 83 of those being two year old bucks or older. Gary reports that 40 percent of those bucks had an antler spread of 24 inches or greater and five percent had an antler spread of 30 inches or greater!

Outdoor Life magazine writer Andrew McKean was one who killed a nice buck and you can read about it in his blog here: <http://www.outdoorlife.com/blogs/open-country/buckmarks-first-animals-brand-new-browning-ammo-are-high-country-whoppers-taken>

Gary also checked 11 elk, two moose, two pronghorn, one mountain goat, three black bears, three sage grouse, two ruffed grouse and three cutthroat trout.



Field Checks

Jackson Game Warden Kyle Lash checked several hunters in the field including this group of non-resident deer hunters (left) that backpacked into the head of Cliff Creek for the September 15th deer opener and elk hunters (below) heading into Arizona Creek. Lash also helped search for a missing hunter in the Granite Creek area and followed up on a reported buck mule deer that had been shot and left in the area (lower left). Lash is still investigating the violation, but otherwise reports good hunter compliance so far this fall.





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Patrolling Star Valley

Afton Game Warden Todd Graham investigated two dead bull moose in September. Neither of the mortalities were hunting related and it appeared that after further investigation the carotid arterial worm *Eleophora* was responsible for the death of both moose. One bull appeared to be at least partially blind, and as a result, had apparently run into an electric range fence. The tongue of the moose was cut almost in two from the electric wire which had been strung for about 100 yards. The bull was found lying up next to a tree (right).

Afton Game Warden Todd Graham spent considerable time conducting field compliance checks of fishermen, bird hunters, big game hunters and also conducted watercraft and AIS field checks. Graham made a total of 39 field harvest checks consisting of 23 big game animals, nine black bears, two sandhill cranes and five ruffed grouse.



Owl in the Garage

Jackson Information & Education Specialist Mark Gocke responded to a call from his neighbor that an owl had taken up roost in his garage. The owl turned out to be the tiny flammulated owl which are fairly rare visitors to Wyoming. The owl was not doing too well so was taken to the Teton Raptor Center in Wilson for fluids. Unfortunately, the owl did not make it.





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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 mature 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 numbers 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.



Kokanee Eggs for Auburn

Auburn Hatchery Superintendent Ed Berry (left) and Fish Culturist Travis Parrill made the trip over to New Fork Lake to help the statewide spawning crew with the kokanee salmon spawn. After two good takes, the Auburn Hatchery now has 336,750 fertilized eggs in their incubators.

Aspen Check-up

Jackson Wildlife Biologist Aly Courtemanch and Jackson Game Warden Kyle Lash conduct an evaluation on an aspen stand in the Granite Creek drainage (right). Aspen communities are extremely important to a plethora of wildlife species and it is estimated that over half of all aspen has been lost across the West due to fire suppression. Thus they have been identified as a high priority habitat type to maintain and promote in Wyoming.

