



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Sheridan Region

March 2016 Newsletter



Sheridan Region

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Sheridan: Bruce Scigliano
Buffalo: Jim Seeman
Kaycee: Grant Gerharter
N. Gillette: Vacant
S. Gillette: Dustin Kirsch
Moorcroft: J.D. Davis
Investigator: Scott Adell
Damage Tech: Vacant

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Wildlife Management Coordinator:
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Sheridan: Tim Thomas
Buffalo: Dan Thiele
Gillette: Erika Peckham
Terrestrial Habitat: Todd Caltrider

PLPW Program Coordinator:

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Fish Biologists:

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Andrew Nikirk
Aquatic Habitat: Travis Cundy

Habitat and Access Coordinator:

Seth Roseberry

Aquatic Invasive Species:

Mike Locatelli

Story Fish Hatchery:

Superintendent: Steve Diekema
Senior Fish Culturist: Brad Hughes
Culturist: Jennifer Meineke

Sheridan Bird Farm:

Supervisor: Darrell Meineke
Biologist: Nate Brown
Technician: Kurt Heiser

Keyhole Ice Fishing—Pine Haven Derby



Moorcroft Game Warden J.D. Davis (on right) checks ice anglers that were participating in the Pine Haven Chamber of Commerce Fishing Derby held February 20 and 21 at Keyhole Reservoir.

An unusually dry and warm February signaled the end of ice fishing for most of the lowland lakes and reservoirs. However, ice anglers gathered at Keyhole Reservoir on February 20th and 21st to participate in the annual Pine Haven Chamber of Commerce Fishing Derby. Overall the derby was considered a success as some nice stringers of fish were caught (see photo).

Moorcroft Game Warden J.D. Davis and South Gillette Game Warden Dustin Kirsch conducted ice fishing enforcement during the 2016 Pine Haven Fishing Derby. The wardens found fishing regulation compliance was higher this year than in 2015, as no anglers were found in violation of ice fishing regulations.



A stringer of fish caught during the Pine Haven Chamber of Commerce Fishing Derby held February 20 and 21 at Keyhole Reservoir. The stringer included a 43 inch northern pike and a 14 inch walleye.



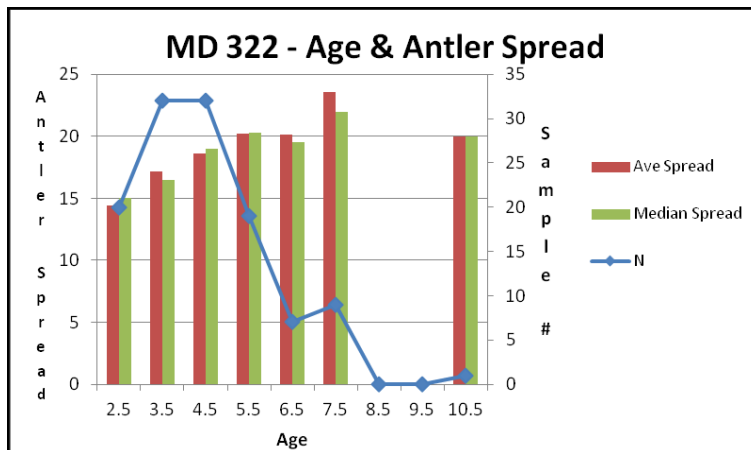
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Upper Powder River Mule Deer Herd Unit—Post Hunting Season Information

The Upper Powder River Mule Deer Herd Unit (MD322) was selected for the Sheridan Region’s Mule Deer Initiative in late 2014. Public input received during two Mule Deer Initiative public meetings precipitated changes toward a more conservative hunting season structure for the 2015 fall seasons. The deer harvest survey conducted after the 2015 hunting season indicated there was an 18% decrease in total mule deer harvest. The buck harvest decreased 8% and the antlerless harvest decreased 65%.

Due to public concerns about a lack of quality bucks in this herd, wildlife managers collected incisors and antler width measurements from adult bucks to compare antler size with known age of the deer. Harvested adult bucks averaged 4.5 years old and ranged from 2.5 to 10.5 years old. Antler spread averaged 18.2 inches and ranged from 10 to 33.5 inches. The 3.5-year old and 4.5-year old cohorts comprised 56% of the sample, followed by 2.5-year old bucks at 20% and 5.5-year old bucks at 19%. Average antler width increased with age up to 7.5 years of age. However, on average, bucks aged 4.5 to 6.5 years old do not grow very large antlers. This may be the best that can be expected at this time given the nutritional limitations on the habitat.



Antler spread by age cohort for adult bucks harvested in the Upper Powder River Mule Deer Herd Unit during the 2015 hunting season.



A 7.5-year old MD322 mule deer that had an outside antler spread of 26 inches.



A 5.5-year old MD322 mule deer that had an outside antler spread of 22 inches.



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Construction of Fishing Piers Completed—Only Approaches Need Work

Construction of wheelchair accessible fishing piers was completed at Sundance Fishing Pond and the new Black Elk Fishing Pond in Newcastle. The piers were completed with lots of help from members of the Sundance Rod and Gun Club; Game and Fish Commissioner Keith Culver; Game Wardens Troy Achterhof and Chris Teter; Habitat and Access personnel Seth Roseberry and Brad Sorenson; and the Sheridan Fish Management Crew. Both fishing piers will be totally usable by the time the ice melts this spring.



A little work on the approach to the deck and this wheelchair accessible fishing pier at Black Elk Pond in Newcastle will be ready for anglers.



The wheelchair accessible fishing pier at the Sundance Fair Grounds Pond will require some work on the approach to the deck, which will be completed prior to the ice melting on the pond.

Lake trout bound for Park Reservoir marked at Story Hatchery



Story Hatchery Senior Fish Culturist Brad Hughes (second from left) helps the Sheridan Fish Management Crew; Andrew Nikirk (on left), Paul Mavrakis (second from right) and Bill Bradshaw (on right) fin clip lake trout that will be stocked into Park Reservoir later in 2016.

With help from Story Hatchery personnel, the Sheridan Fish Management crew marked about 5,000 lake trout destined for Park Reservoir. The lake trout are marked by removing the adipose fin. The marked lake trout will allow fish biologists to determine the contribution stocked fish make to the overall lake trout population in Park Reservoir. Biologists will compare marked (stocked) fish with unmarked (wild, naturally produced) fish to determine the difference, if any, in fish growth and condition. Based on the information collected during future fisheries surveys on Park Reservoir, lake trout stocking rates will be adjusted.



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Survey shows Fortification Creek Elk Herd Numbers Up



A small herd of elk encountered during the February 2, 2016 aerial survey.

During the November 2015 elk survey of the Fortification Creek elk herd, the spotting conditions were poor. Gillette Wildlife Biologist Erika Peckham was not satisfied with the November data so she decided to re-fly the survey when conditions were better. On February 2 the conditions were ideal, so Peckham flew the area again and counted elk in the Fort Creek herd. More elk were spotted on the second flight than any survey flight in the past several years. A total of 331 elk were counted and all but 22 of those were able to be classified as adult bulls, yearling bulls, cows or calves.

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Super Tag raffle
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*Larry Brown 2015 Elk
Super Tag Winner*

