



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Jackson Region

September 2016 Newsletter

Misbehaving 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 including fencing, rope swings, wind chimes, Christmas lights, lawn furniture, hammocks and so on. 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) Jackson Wildlife Biologist Aly Courtemanch prepares to land a tranquilizer dart in the rump of a young bull moose that had been chasing people in the Rafter J subdivision near Jackson. (Left) Jackson Game warden Kyle Lash steadies the tranquilized moose.

(Below) The young bull moose, with its antlers removed, gets a ride in a horse trailer to the Togwotee Pass area north of Jackson. Photos by Forest Dramis





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Volunteer Dave Sweet packs empty cans of chemical and other supplies out of the Teton Wilderness following the Mystery Lake treatment near Togowotee Pass in the Absaroka Range.

Mystery Clean-up

There is only one trout native to Jackson Hole, the Snake River cutthroat trout. The single greatest threat to this native trout population is hybridization with non-native species. Thus, one long term goal for the Jackson fish crew is to remove populations of non-native fish wherever possible.

One such population of non-native fish that has long been slated for removal is in Mystery Lake,

which is in the upper reaches of the Cub Creek drainage near Togowotee Pass in the Absaroka Mountains. After many years in the planning stages, the week-long Mystery Lake treatment was successfully completed Aug. 29-Sept 2.

Since the project, coordinated by Jackson Fish Biologist Tracy Stephens, was located within the Teton Wilderness, logistics were much more complicated and required the assistance of many people. Jackson Region personnel Kyle Lash, Aly Courtemanch, Mike Boyce and volunteer Dave Sweet assisted with packing supplies in and out of the project area via horseback, including the camp, pack raft, chemical, nets, etc.



Casper Fish Biologist, Nick Hogberg, sets up a chemical drip station at the headwaters to Mystery Lake in the Teton Wilderness.

To remove the non-native rainbow and brook trout, fish managers used the piscicide, rotenone. This chemical has been used successfully in many stream and lake restoration efforts and has proven highly effective at removing unwanted fish species from aquatic systems.



(Above) Jackson Fisheries Technician Lauren Flynn and Grand Teton National Park Fish Biologist Chad Whaley set up a chemical drip station at the outlet of Mystery Lake while Jackson Fish Supervisor Rob Gipson disperses chemical in the lake with a pack raft. (Right) Non-native rainbow and brook trout collect in a net set up across the outlet of Mystery Lake.





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It's Huntin' Season

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

South Jackson Wildlife Biologist Gary Fralick again conducted his annual hunter check station at the mouth of the Greys River near Alpine for the September 15 mule deer opener through the weekend. Several trophy class mule deer bucks were again taken in the Wyoming Range deer herd.



Jackson Wildlife Biologist Aly Courtemanch ages a successful hunter's mountain goat by counting the horn annuli.



(Above left) Jackson Wildlife Management Coordinator Doug Brimeyer collects a tissue sample for DNA purposes while checking in a successful hunter's bighorn ram. (Above Right) South Jackson Wildlife Biologist Gary Fralick ages a hunter's mule deer buck at the Alpine check station.

Pronghorn Surveys

Jackson Wildlife personnel Kyle Lash, Jon Stephens, Aly Courtemanch, and Doug Brimeyer conducted pronghorn surveys from the ground in Grand Teton National Park, the National Elk Refuge and the Gros Ventre drainage in August. Pronghorn are relatively visible from the ground in sagebrush-grassland habitats. A total of 487 pronghorn were counted, including 243 does, 120 fawns, 92 mature bucks, 18 yearling bucks, and 14 unclassified individuals. This is the highest count in the past 15 years. Ratios were 49 fawns, 38 mature bucks, and 7 yearling bucks per 100 does. While the fawn and yearling ratios are typical for this segment of the Sublette Antelope Herd, the mature buck ratio is the highest seen in the past 15 years. The majority of these pronghorn will soon migrate up through the Gros Ventre drainage and down the Green River drainage into the Pinedale area to spend the winter. Although in recent years, some small groups have stayed in Jackson and successfully survived the winter.





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Bad Badger

In early August, South Jackson Game Warden Kyle Lash responded to a call from the Flat Creek Inn Gas Station that there was a badger that wouldn't leave the front door of their business. After evaluating the situation, Warden Lash decided he would try to capture the animal and move it. Lash was successful in subduing the animal with a catch pole and got it into a pet carrier for transport. The badger got a free ride to a release site north of Jackson well away from homes and people.



Mending Fences

The Jackson Habitat & Access crew spent a considerable amount of time making repairs to the boundary fence at the South Park Wildlife Habitat Management Area and elk feedground south of Jackson. The fence is critical in preventing elk damage situations to nearby private lands in the winter. The fence includes several "elk jumps" allowing animals to jump over the ramp back onto the feedgrounds but not the opposite direction.



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Fall Fishing Forecast

After a summer of elevated stream temperatures and sluggish afternoons, fish and anglers are ready for cooler fall temperatures. The most popular fall fishing in the Jackson Region is found on the Snake River for the native Snake River cutthroat trout. Rob Gipson, Jackson regional fisheries supervisor advises, "There are several access points for float fishing, but large portions of the river are within Grand Teton National Park or the Bridger-Teton National Forest allowing for some great walk-in fishing."

Flat Creek, on the National Elk Refuge, is only open to fishing from August through October. Flat Creek is an artificial flies only water and holds some of the largest Snake River Cutthroat Trout in the valley. The limit is only one cutthroat trout over 20 inches and all cutthroat trout less than 20 inches must be returned to the water immediately. The fish quickly become well educated and wily, so patience will be key.

For those that like to fish lakes, fishing for lake trout can be exceptional in the fall as fish come into shallow waters to spawn. Jackson Lake is closed to fishing in October to protect spawning Lake Trout, but there can be some great fishing days in November. Jenny Lake remains open in October and there is great access to Lake Trout fishing from both boat and shore.

Fall fishing for brown trout on the Salt River is popular among many anglers. While most of the valley is under

private ownership, there are plenty of access areas along the river allowing for bank and float access. Access areas are well signed along the highway and at the river. As always, please respect private land and ask permission before fishing.

Jackson offers plenty of public access as well, so check out the Buffalo Fork River, Hoback River, Gros Ventre River, and Greys River.





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Wyoming Harlequins

Nongame Biologist Susan Patla conducted a five-day backcountry harlequin duck brood survey with another biologist and student intern from Grand Teton National Park to determine how many pairs successfully nested this year in remote streams in the northern part of the park.

Walking in and along streams, they observed four broods with a total of 15 young. As follow up, Susan installed two wildlife cameras to test this method for documenting broods in remote streams. The area, however, was closed due to the Berry Fire so retrieval of the cameras has been delayed. Two male harlequins, which were tagged in June with satellite transmitters, migrated to wintering sites in the Puget Sound area in early July (Below).



Photo by Susan Patla



Late Summer Angling

Jackson Game Wardens Jon Stephens and Kyle Lash and Afton Game Warden James Hobbs all continued visiting with anglers throughout the Jackson Region in this last half of summer reporting generally good compliance with the rules and good fishing. Warden Lash helped out the Snake River Fund with their Youth Fishing Days on the Snake River near Moose (Left). Photo by Kyle Lash