



January 2016 activities assisting the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes on the Wind River Reservation, WY- US FWS Lander Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office

To meet our trust responsibilities of assisting the Tribes with sensible fish and wildlife conservation, we performed the following activities:

Over 2-day period, led classroom discussions with 160 6th graders from Riverton Middle School on fish anatomy as part of the on-going Adopt-A-Trout program. Last October, 30 brown trout were implanted with radio-transmitters along Bull Lake Creek.

In cooperation with Tribal Water Engineer, completed proposal to the BIA's Tribal Youth Initiative to fund 2 water technicians.

Compiled data to compare water levels at Ray Lake with numbers of fish netted during annual late spring surveys. Fluctuating water levels due to irrigation draw-down may negatively influence the abundance of fish in Ray Lake.

Conducted annual count of wintering bald and golden eagles on Wind River. Surveyed 124 miles of roadways and observed 7 adult and 6 immature bald eagles, and 4 adult golden eagles. This is the 4th year of surveying and have seen about the same number each year.

Revisited wolverine camera sites on Trail Ridge in the Owl Creek Mountains and Mount Shoshone in the Wind River Mountains to check cameras, remove storage cards, and resupply with fresh bait and lure. No wolverine detections as of yet on Wind River. However, in early January, 1 wolverine was caught on camera during a night-time visit along the Loop Road above Lander approximately 15 miles south of the Reservation boundary at a site managed by the WY Game & Fish.

Investigated report of wolf depredation on a livestock cow and calf in the Burris area. Wildlife Services and follow up by our office confirmed wolves were responsible for kill. Coordinated with both Shoshone and Arapaho Councils and Tribal Fish & Game to decide on course of action. All agreed to continue to monitor situation. Set up remote cameras to monitor site and determine numbers of wolves. Wolves returned to kill site a week later. Subsequently, traps were deployed for 5-day period in hopes of radio-collaring and releasing wolves to aid in monitoring. During trapping effort, no wolves returned to the site. No additional depredations have occurred to date.



Mike Mazur with Riverton 6th graders learning about fish anatomy.

A wolverine along Loop Road, 15 miles south of the Reservation boundary. Photo courtesy of Lee Tafelmeyer of WY Game & Fish.



1

Acknowledgements: The Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office located in Lander, Wyoming, has assisted the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes with fisheries conservation since 1941 and wildlife conservation since 1975. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to assist the Tribes with conserving and enhancing their 2.2 million acres of beautiful lands, and the abundant fish and wildlife that reside there. Our special thanks go to the Tribal Fish and Game Department: Ben Snyder, Western Thayer, Art Lawson, and Sherilyn Heba without whose cooperation we could not accomplish our mission.

February 2016 proposed activities:

Conduct a 4-day aerial survey of pronghorn antelope to assess population trend.

Capture 15 bighorn sheep ewes and rams in the North Fork Popo Agie and Little Wind River wintering areas. This study will assess movements and survival of these sheep that are descendants of 88 sheep transplanted above Washakie Reservoir in 1988 and 1993. There is interest from the local public to transplant sheep into Sinks Canyon, and biologists from the WY G&F and the Lander FWCO would first like to assess areas of use and movement corridors prior to entertaining any transplants.

Conduct midwinter annual survey of trumpeter swans at Dinwoody lakes and Bull Lake Creek. This survey is a part of the larger tri-state midwinter survey.

Revisit wolverine camera sites on Bold Mountain, Trail Ridge, and Mount Shoshone to check cameras, remove storage cards to review pictures, and resupply with fresh bait and lure.

Survey deer along the Big Wind River from Diversion to the East Fork.

Coordinate with Tribal Water Board to develop fish passage (a fish ladder) that will be installed at the Dinwoody Canal Diversion. This will allow natural movement of fish past the diversion.

Meet with WY Game & Fish personnel to plan for upcoming sauger spawning in May. This will be the 5th year of augmenting this inter-jurisdictional population that was in decline. Sauger have increased dramatically since the start of this effort.

Conduct creel survey on Bull Lake to assess fisherman activity and success.

March 2016 proposed activities:

Revisit wolverine camera sites on Bold Mountain, Trail Ridge, and Mount Shoshone to remove cameras. Camera will likely be re-deployed in November to continue with study.

Complete annual summary report of wolves on Wind River.

Begin checking sage-grouse attendance at ~50 leks (breeding grounds) located on Wind River. The counts of males displaying on leks is a good indication of the trend in population. This is done annually between mid-March and early May.

Participate in the regional Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout annual coordination meeting with biologists from multiple agencies.

In cooperation with University of Wyoming, Tribal Fish & Game and WY Game & Fish, re-capture bighorn sheep ewes in the Sacagawea Ridge and Red Creek area to assess pregnancy, disease and body condition.