



February 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:

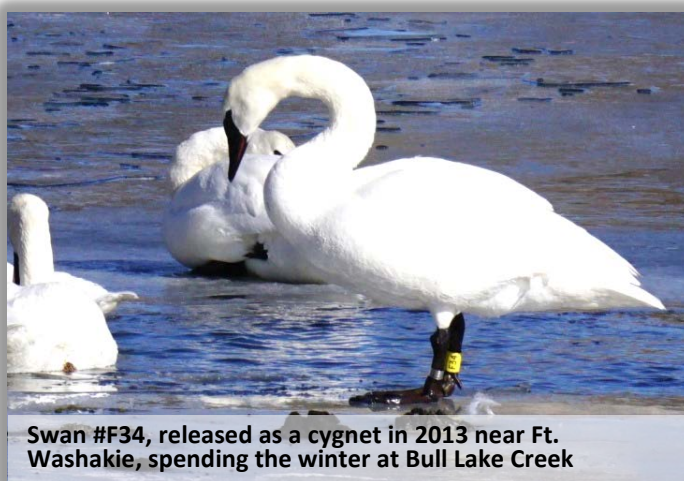
Met with WY Game & Fish personnel to plan for upcoming sauger spawning in May. This will be the 5th year of augmenting this inter-jurisdictional population that was in decline. Sauger have increased dramatically since the start of this effort.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game, reviewed and updated fishing regulations for 2016-17 booklet.

Met with member of Drought Team and Tribal Fish & Game to coordinate how fish and wildlife data will be incorporated into drought preparedness plan for Wind River.

Conducted midwinter annual survey of trumpeter swans. Observed the most wintering swans on record on the Reservation (34 adults and 8 juveniles on Bull Lake Creek including #F34 above, and 30 adults and 10 juveniles on Dinwoody lakes). This survey is part of the larger tri-state midwinter survey. Also, necropsied trumpeter swan that was found dead floating in Bull Lake Creek. Died of natural causes, extremely emaciated.

In cooperation with Tribal Fish & Game and WY Game & Fish, captured and GPS radio-collared 10 bighorn sheep ewes and 2 rams in the Little Wind River wintering areas on Feb 22nd. Helicopter capture went extremely well. This study will assess disease, movements and survival of bighorns that are descendants of 88 sheep transplanted to the Washakie Reservoir area in 1988 and 1993. Bighorn Sheep Restoration Group assisted. Funds for capture and collars graciously provided by WY Wild Sheep Foundation.



Swan #F34, released as a cygnet in 2013 near Ft. Washakie, spending the winter at Bull Lake Creek



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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.

March 2, 2016

Revisited wolverine camera sites on Trail Ridge in the Owl Creek Mountains, and Mount Shoshone and Indian Ridge 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.

Continued to monitor wolf activity related to depredation of livestock cow and calf in the Burris area using remote cameras to monitor site and determine numbers of wolves. Wolves returned to kill site for multiple nights every 7 to 10 days. No additional depredations have occurred to date.

Conducted environmental review of 1 proposed homesite at BIAs request, Threatened and Endangered species clearance for Shoshone Rose Casino expansion, and proposed installation of watering tanks and pipeline for livestock in the Meadow Creek area.

Hired seasonal 6-month biological technician. Will begin in May.

March 2016 proposed activities:

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

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 wolf conservation on Wind River. Portions of the report are incorporated into larger annual summary report for the Northern Rocky Mountains.

Conduct tour with students from Yale discussing water, fish and wildlife issues 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. Scheduled for March 14th.

April 2016 proposed activities:

Continue checking sage-grouse attendance at ~50 leks (breeding grounds) located on Wind River.

Survey areas for wolf activity to target locations for capturing and radio-collaring wolves in May.

Attend Native American Fish and Wildlife Society's Regional Conference in Red Lodge MT April 11-13. Give presentations on sauger restoration, wolverine study and wolf depredation case.

Attend the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team and Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee meetings in West Yellowstone, MT April 14-15.