

Monthly "tweet sheet" of activities assisting the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes on the Wind River Reservation, WY – January 2021

US Fish & Wildlife Service, 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:

In collaboration with Tribal Fish & Game and University of Wyoming Migration Initiative, we captured and re-collared 33 mule deer does across Wind River. This effort will assist with a generational inheritance study of mule deer migrations as well as provide additional survival and mortality information regarding the Wind River herd.

Helped coordinate a helicopter survey of bighorn sheep in the Owl Creek Mountains, flown by Tribal Fish & Game Warden Friday. This is part of an effort led by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to refine and increase precision regarding how estimates of bighorn sheep abundance are made for herds located in northwest Wyoming.

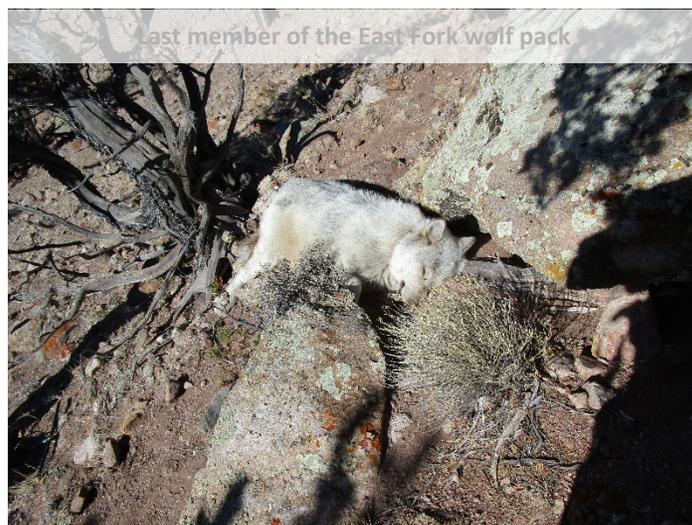
Took part in the annual midwinter eagle count. Every year biologists across the state count eagles on the same day in an effort to track population trends. Fewer eagles were observed than average, likely related to the open, snowless winter.

Investigated the mortality of the final member of the East Fork wolf pack. Both the breeding male and female were killed as part of a confrontation with an unknown number of wolves from the Bear Creek pack, whose territory resides generally west of the reservation.

Investigated the mortalities of two GPS-collared elk. Mortalities were located near Crow Mountain in the Wind Rivers and west of Potato Butte in the Owl Creek Mountains. The cause of death is unclear in the Crow Mountain cow, but appeared to be of old age. Wolves killed the Potato Butte cow.

A collar was placed on a wolf associated with a suspected group of three wolves now residing south of Bull Lake in an area previously occupied by the St. Lawrence pack. This collar will assist in monitoring the location of this new wolf pack as it defines its territory.

Native Range helicopter with captured mule deer near Washakie Reservoir



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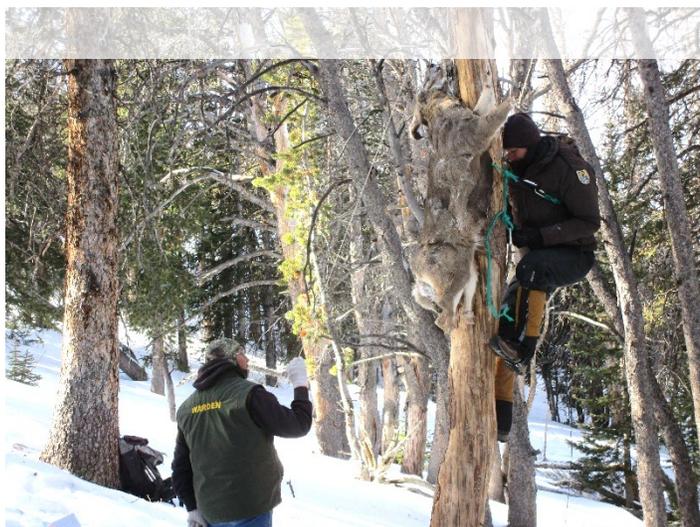
Acknowledgements: The Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office located in Lander, Wyoming, has assisted the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes with fisheries conservation since 1941 and wildlife conservation since 1975. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to assist the Tribes with conserving and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

Installed two wolverine camera trap sites, one on Bold Mountain and one on Trail Ridge. We bait these sites using deer that were killed by highway/vehicle collision. This is a continued effort to monitor for the presence of this rare and unique species on Wind River.

Conducted an aerial survey of mule deer utilizing GPS collared deer in a mark-recapture approach to facilitate the development of a new method for assessing and tracking the Wind River herd. Refining the techniques used to assess the mule deer population on Wind River will provide valuable management information regarding this culturally significant species.

Conducted a preconstruction site visit for the Yellowcalf irrigation diversion project. The irrigation system at Yellowcalf is being overhauled and fish passage in the Little Wind River should be improved by the modifications.

Participated in a fish stocking coordination meeting with Saratoga National Fish Hatchery. Reviewed future fish stocking requests for Wind River.



Winter view from Trail Ridge



Drawing blood from a mule deer

February 2021 proposed activities:

Investigate mortality sites and retrieve deer & elk GPS collars as needed.

Retrieve 35+ GPS collars that are programmed to release on Feb 1st from live mule deer and elk.

Install wolverine camera traps on Shoshone Mtn, Black Ridge, and possibly Hobbs Park

March 2021 proposed activities:

Coordinate with Tribal Fish & Game and the Wyoming Game and Fish regarding sauger monitoring

Begin surveys and counts of sage-grouse that are present on strutting grounds (leks)