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**Best River and Stream Fishing  
Will Happen Early this Year**

*Lack of runoff means better spring fishing in northern Utah*

If you enjoy catching trout in rivers and streams in northern Utah, you won't have to wait long to catch some this year.

Runoff this spring is expected to be lower than normal. And that means some of the best fishing of the year on rivers and streams will kick off early.

"We will have some runoff this spring, but it won't peak as high or last as long as it normally does," says Roger Wilson, cold water sport fisheries coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. "If you like to fish rivers and streams, get your fishing poles ready. We should see some great early-season fishing."

**Not many challenges this spring**

Wilson says river and stream anglers in northern Utah won't face some of the challenges they usually face this time of the year.

"Because the water won't be as high or as cold this spring, the trout should feed more actively," Wilson says. He says the water won't be as turbid either. "The clearer water will make it easier for trout to see your bait, lure or fly."

And your offering won't be competing with as much natural food for the attention of the fish. "The limited runoff won't sweep a lot of natural food down with it because it's not going to last as long this year," he says. "Whatever you cast in or onto the water is going to stand out to the trout."

The lower runoff will also affect when insect hatches occur. "It's important that fly anglers watch the hatches closely, and then adjust their fly patterns and techniques to match the hatch," Wilson says.

Wilson says you'll also have safer and easier access to the water for a longer period of time this spring. "That's another advantage to not having a lot of runoff," he says.

(more)

### **Lots of rivers and streams**

Wilson says northern Utah has more river and stream fishing opportunities than any other region in Utah. The Provo, Logan, Blacksmith Fork, Ogden, Weber (especially between Rockport and Echo reservoirs) and the Strawberry River below Solider Creek Reservoir are among the waters he encourages you to try this spring.

“There’s lots of public access on key reaches of all of these rivers,” he says. “And each of them should provide great fishing this spring.”

For more information, visit the DWR’s weekly fishing reports at [www.wildlife.utah.gov/fishing/reports.php](http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/fishing/reports.php).

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

### **Nine Mile Reservoir Produces Nine-pound Tiger Trout**

Manti -- Many anglers drive by Nine Mile Reservoir without giving the water a second thought.

Not Perry Bunderson, though. The Moore resident has fished Nine Mile for years. And on March 25, fishing the reservoir paid off big time.

Bunderson caught a beautiful nine-pound tiger trout at the reservoir on a day he says was cold and windy. “I was fly fishing from my float tube, bobbing like a cork,” he says.

He caught a couple of nice rainbow trout earlier in the day, and he was hoping for another rainbow before he stopped fishing that afternoon.

“Then the big one hit,” Bunderson says. “He broke the surface and looked huge; a giant tiger trout!”

Bunderson thought the fish would get away. “I’ve lost several big ones at Nine Mile through the years,” he says. “I was determined to get this one in.”

Barbless hooks are the only hooks Bunderson uses when he fishes. And he was also using five-pound tippet line. “So I let him have his way, keeping just enough tension on the line to keep the hook set,” he says. “Half an hour later—which seemed like two hours—he gave up and ‘came to pappa!’”

After Bunderson caught the fish, he took it to the Sterling Post Office/Denton Store in Sterling to have it weighed.

“Nine pounds even. Twenty-eight-and-half inches long!” he says.

“I later learned the catch-and-release record was 25 inches, but oh well,” he says. “Maybe next time.”

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### **Nine Mile Reservoir**

Nine Mile Reservoir is a medium-sized reservoir just off U.S. Highway 89 between Manti and Gunnison. Even though the reservoir is privately owned, the public has unlimited access to it through the Walk-In Access program administered by the Division of Wildlife Resources.

The DWR also stocks the reservoir with rainbow trout and tiger trout.

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Contact: Scott Root, DWR Central Region Conservation Outreach Manager (801) 491-5678 or (801) 376-7076

### **See Mountain Goats on April 10**

*Fun activities for kids also part of the event*

Sandy -- Colorful flowers and warmer weather aren't the only signs spring is here: so are mountain goats at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon!

You can see and learn more about the goats at a free wildlife-viewing event. The event will be held Saturday, April 10.

Free activities for children are also part of the event.

"April is one of the best months to see the goats," says Bob Walters, Watchable Wildlife coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. "This event will be a great opportunity to get out and watch their sure-footed antics."

The event will be held at the Park-and-Ride lot at the mouth of Little Cottonwood Canyon in Salt Lake County. DWR biologists will be at the lot from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To reach the canyon, travel east out of Sandy on 9400 South.

"You'll be able to get a front-row look at these agile rock climbers using spotting scopes and binoculars we'll have on hand," Walters says. "You can also pick up a poster and a card that will teach you more about mountain goats."

Activities for children will be held from 9 a.m. to noon. "Your kids can stamp goat tracks using ink stamps and paper we'll make available," Walters says. "We'll also have some goat horns and goat fur that you and your kids can pick up and handle."

For more information, call Walters at (801) 538-4771.

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Contact: Bob Walters, DWR Watchable Wildlife Coordinator (801) 209-5326

## View Strutting Sage-grouse on April 10

Price -- The “bloop, bloop” sound that male sage-grouse make, as they strut on their breeding grounds, is one of the most unique sounds you’ll ever hear in nature.

And the sight of the grouse strutting is pretty unique too!

You can hear and watch this ritual yourself at a free wildlife-viewing event in east-central Utah. The event will happen April 10 at Emma Park, about 13 miles north of Price.

The Division of Wildlife Resources is sponsoring the event.

To see and hear the spectacle, you need to be at the viewing site early. Viewing is best before the sun comes up and just after the sun has risen. Grouse leave their strutting ground within an hour after sun-up.

Before making the trip, please remember that several things can force the grouse to leave the viewing site early or to not visit the site at all. Those factors include eagles or coyotes near the site. Wind, rain or snow can also keep the grouse under cover and out of sight.

After the birds leave their breeding ground, the grouse spend the day feeding and resting in stands of sagebrush. They remain mostly out-of-sight until the following morning at first light, when they congregate at their strutting ground again.

DWR biologists will be on-hand with spotting scopes and binoculars. They’ll help you find the grouse and answer any questions you have.

### Directions:

- From the Wasatch Front, travel east on US-6 from Spanish Fork. At the top of Price Canyon, look for the Emma Park sign, and turn left onto the Emma Park Road. Travel east until you see vehicles with the state of Utah seal on their doors.

- To get to Emma Park from Price, travel north on US-6 to the Castle Gate power plant. Turn right onto US-191, and travel northeast about six miles to the Bamberger Monument. From there, turn left onto the Emma Park Road, and travel west until you see the state vehicles.

For more information, call Brent Stettler at (435) 613-3707 or (435) 613-3700.

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Contact: Brent Stettler, DWR Southeastern Region Conservation Outreach Manager  
(435) 613-3707 or (435) 613-3700

## **New Elk Plan Approved**

Salt Lake City -- Elk with large antlers and more chances to hunt spike bulls are what you can expect if you hunt elk in Utah in the next five years.

At their March 31 meeting, members of the Utah Wildlife Board revised Utah's elk management plan.

The plan guides elk management in Utah. It's updated every five years.

Two highlights from the revised plan include:

- changes that will keep plenty of bulls with large antlers on selected units in Utah.

- more spike bull elk hunting permits.

### **Survey and committee**

Utah's 15-member Elk Advisory Committee helped the Division of Wildlife Resources draft the revised plan. The group suggested the updates after reviewing a recent survey of Utah elk hunters.

DWR biologists surveyed more than 16,600 elk hunters. The hunters were randomly chosen from the more than 76,800 hunters who either applied for or obtained a Utah elk hunting permit in 2009. The hunters included both limited-entry and general-season hunters.

A summary of the survey results is available at [www.wildlife.utah.gov/public\\_meetings/next.php](http://www.wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings/next.php).

### **Older bulls**

When they draw a Utah limited-entry elk permit, hunters want to take a bull that has large antlers. "That's one of the things that jumped out from the survey," says Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the DWR. "Taking a bull with large antlers is important to limited-entry hunters."

Utah already produces plenty of big bull elk, including the world-record bull taken in 2008. To ensure big bulls are available in the future, the committee recommended that the age objectives change on various elk units in Utah.

Utah's limited-entry units are managed so the average age of the bulls hunters take fall into one of four age categories. The age objectives the units have been managed under the past two years, and the objectives they'll be managed under starting in 2010, are as follows:

#### Categories since 2008

3 - 4 years old (3 units)

4 - 5 years old (4 units)

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5 - 6 years old (18 units)

6 - 7 years old (6 units)

Categories starting in 2010

4½ - 5 years old (8 units)

5½ - 6 years old (13 units)

6½ - 7 years old (4 units)

7½ - 8 years old (6 units)

Even though the age objectives are higher now, Aoude says the number of limited entry bull elk permits will continue to climb for the next few years.

"It's hard to believe, but many of the bulls on Utah's elk units are older than the objectives that were just approved," he says. "To reduce the number of older bulls, we'll have to increase the number of hunting permits for the next few years."

Once the average age of the bulls falls to the new objective, Aoude says the number of permits will have to be reduced to reduce the number of bulls hunters take. Taking fewer bulls should keep the average age within the new objective.

**More spike permits**

While the number of limited-entry bull elk permits will likely go down in the future, the number of general spike bull elk permits will go up starting this fall.

The board raised the number of general spike bull permits to 13,750 for both the 2010 and the 2011 seasons. (In 2009, a total of 12,500 permits were offered.)

If fewer than 20 percent of the spike hunters take a bull during the 2010 and 2011 seasons, the permit cap will jump to 15,000 permits for the 2012, 2013 and 2014 seasons.

"Spending time with family and friends is the most important part of the hunt for general-season elk hunters," Aoude says. "That's another thing that jumps out from the survey."

Aoude says raising the number of spike bull permits accomplishes two things. "It gives more elk hunters a chance to hunt, and it benefits the elk by reducing the number of bulls in the herds," he says. "Right now, the number of bulls per 100 cows is higher than it should be on most of the state's units. We need to reduce the number of bulls to make more room in the herds for cows and calves."

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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Contact: Mark Hadley, DWR Relations with the Public Specialist (801) 538-4737

## Wildlife Board Approves Big Game Hunting Permits

### *Fewer bison permits offered for the Henry Mountains*

Salt Lake City -- The number of permits offered for most of Utah's big game hunts has increased this year.

There are a few exceptions to the increase, though. But even one of the decreases is good news for hunters.

At their March 31 meeting, members of the Utah Wildlife Board approved fewer permits to hunt cow bison on the Henry Mountains. Offering fewer permits will allow the bison herd on the unit to start building to a new management objective.

#### Permit numbers

The following chart shows the number of permits that were available in 2009 and the number the board approved for 2010:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
General season buck deer	94,000	94,000
Premium limited entry deer	173	179
Limited entry deer	1,021	1,034
Management buck deer	60	95
Limited entry bull elk	2,737	2,976
Pronghorn antelope	992	1,022
Moose	147	139
Bison	170	39
Rocky Mountain goat	104	111
Desert bighorn sheep	37	45
Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep	24	30

(more)

### **Fewer bison permits**

It's time to start increasing the number of bison on the Henry Mountains in southeastern Utah. To help that happen, the board approved fewer cow bison hunting permits for the unit this fall.

Two types of bison permits are offered for the Henry Mountains. Most of the permits allow hunters to take either a bull bison or a cow bison. Others allow hunters to take only a cow.

"A management plan was approved for the Henry's in August 2007," says Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. "One of the objectives in the plan limits the number of adult bison on the unit to not more than 305 adults after the 2010 hunting season is over."

The plan allows that number to increase to not more than 315 adults after the 2011 season is over and not more than 325 after the 2012 season.

Using information from aerial surveys, harvest data from the 2009 hunt and range studies of habitat on the Henry Mountains, biologists feel it's safe to start increasing the number of bison on the unit to the 305 adult objective.

And right now should be a good time to do that. Aoude says the DWR and its partners have spent more than \$1 million on habitat work on the Henry's over the past three years alone. More than 8,000 acres of habitat has been improved. And water sources have been developed across the unit.

For more information, call the nearest Division of Wildlife Resources office or the DWR's Salt Lake City office at (801) 538-4700.

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