

In this issue:

Burbot discovery
Special upland game hunts
Pull back; let it fly!
Archery safety tips

Burbot Captured In Green River

Vernal -- On July 28, researchers with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources found something they didn't want to find: a 21-inch burbot in the Green River below Flaming Gorge dam.

Burbot are a nonnative fish from east of the Rocky Mountains. The fish was captured during an electrofishing study to recover and study endangered fish in the Green and Colorado rivers.

"The burbot was captured from an electrofishing raft roughly 1.5 miles upstream of the Split Mountain boat ramp in Dinosaur National Monument," says Paul Badame, UDWR native fish project leader. "This is the first capture of a burbot below Flaming Gorge dam that I'm aware of."

The burbot likely came down the Green River after someone illegally introduced the species upstream in Big Sandy Reservoir in Wyoming. The burbot have worked their way downstream, bypassing dams at Big Sandy and Flaming Gorge.

Why the concern?

Burbot are a voracious predator, capable of breeding in both rivers and reservoirs. As a result, they can have a serious impact on both native and sport fish populations.

Biologists working on Flaming Gorge Reservoir have already noticed a rapid increase in the number of burbot in the reservoir and a corresponding decline in the number of kokanee salmon.

Burbot also pose a major risk to native fish in the Green River.

"We're concerned that burbot will negatively impact endangered fish and other native fishes in the Green River," says Krissy Wilson, native aquatic species coordinator for the UDWR. "We've seen this happen before with other nonnative fish, including northern pike, redshiner and smallmouth bass."

Wilson says the UDWR and its partners in the Upper Colorado River Endangered Fish Recovery Program are working together to determine the best way to deal with this latest threat.

Catch and kill regulation

The UDWR has placed a 'no tolerance' fishing regulation on burbot in Utah:

(more)

page 2

- There's no limit on the number of burbot an angler can catch.
- Anglers may not release any burbot they catch.
- All burbot must be killed immediately.

For more information, call the UDWR's Northeastern Region office at (435) 781-9453.

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Contact: Ron Stewart, DWR Northeastern Region Conservation Outreach Manager
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Special Upland Game Hunts

Hunters who are 15 years of age and younger can participate in special chukar and pheasant hunts this fall.

These special youth hunts have been held in Utah for years. They're a great way to introduce young people to upland game hunting.

"Kids really enjoy these hunts," says Dave Olsen, upland game coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources. "They usually have plenty of birds to shoot at, and they don't have to compete with older hunters for a bird."

Participating in one of the hunts is easy. If you're 15 years of age or younger, and you've completed Utah's Hunter Education course, just go online at www.wildlife.utah.gov/uplandgame and complete an application.

Application and hunt dates

To be considered for one of the youth chukar hunts, the DWR must receive your application no later than Aug. 23. Applications for the youth pheasant hunts are due by Sept. 6.

The youth chukar hunts will be held Sept. 4 on four state wildlife management areas (WMAs) and one Walk-In Access area. The youth pheasant hunts will be held Nov. 13 on four state WMAs and one Walk-In Access area. "We're holding these hunts across Utah," Olsen says. "No matter where you live, you should be able to find a hunt within two hours of your home."

The WMAs and the Walk-In Access areas will be closed to all other hunters on the day the youth hunts are held.

Getting youth excited about upland game hunting

"The number of young people who hunt in Utah has declined through the years," Olsen says. "We're hoping these youth hunts will help reverse that trend by getting young people into the field and letting them experience what it's like to take an upland game bird."

(more)

page 3

“The hunts also give us a chance to teach young people how to be responsible and ethical hunters.”

For more information about the hunts, call the nearest DWR office or see page 22 of the 2010 – 2011 Utah Upland Game Guidebook.

The guidebook is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks.

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

Pull Back, and Let It Fly!

Archery buck deer hunt starts Aug. 21

Utah’s first hunt of the fall—the general archery buck deer hunt—starts Aug. 21. As you head into the woods on Aug. 21, the number of young bucks you see might vary.

If you’re hunting in northern Utah—where the winter was mild this past winter—you could see more young bucks.

If you’re hunting in southwestern Utah, where deep snow covered the deer’s winter range, you might see less.

Overall, the number of mule deer in Utah is holding steady at just over 300,000 deer. The number of bucks wildlife biologists saw after last fall’s hunting seasons averaged about 16 bucks per 100 does on the state’s general season units.

The total number of deer in Utah has been hovering around 300,000 for several years. “That indicates to me that the habitat we have in Utah right now can support about 300,000 deer,” says Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

Aoude says the DWR and other agencies and organizations are pouring millions of dollars into work to improve habitat for mule deer and other wildlife.

Mule deer winter ranges have received most of the attention, but summer ranges are starting to receive attention too.

“Habitat improvement work doesn’t pay off overnight,” Aoude says. “It takes years for plants to grow and establish themselves. But when they do, and the state’s habitat has the ability to support more deer, the number of deer in Utah should grow.”

To find success during the archery hunt, Aoude encourages you to do three things:

- practice shooting your bow until shooting it becomes second nature
- scout the area you’re going to hunt before the season starts
- keep the wind at your face while you’re hunting.

“Those three things can make all the difference between taking a deer home with you and coming home empty handed,” he says.

(more)

page 4

The following are deer hunting prospects for each of the DWR's five regions:

Northern Region

With the exception of the Cache and Ogden units, all of the general season units in northern Utah have at least 15 bucks per 100 does.

And some units have more.

Here's a look at the deer herds on many of the region's general season units:

Cache and Ogden units

Wildlife Biologist Darren DeBloois says the three-year average for the Cache and Ogden units is slightly below the objective of 15 bucks per 100 does.

Like much of the Northern Region, DeBloois says range conditions are good and the animals are scattered. He also says the past two winters have been mild, and few fawns have been lost.

"Hunters should see good numbers of two-point bucks on both of these units," he says.

Box Elder unit

Two good years with low winter losses, high fawn production and good range conditions should translate into a good hunt on the Box Elder unit.

Wildlife Biologist Kirk Enright says the unit's buck-to-doe ratio is 19 bucks per 100 does. "Habitat improvement projects we're doing with landowners and other agencies is creating better habitat and more deer," Enright says.

Uintas North Slope units

Biologist Dave Rich says the range on the units is in good shape, and the animals are scattered. "Recent rains have kept things nice and green," Rich says.

Summit and East Canyon units

Biologist Scott McFarlane cautions you that most of the land on these units is private property. Written permission from landowners is required to hunt much of this area.

Phil Douglass, regional conservation outreach manager, shares two reminders:

- If the average buck-to-doe ratio on a unit stays below 15 bucks per 100 does for a three-year period, Utah's mule deer management plan requires that the hunting seasons on the unit be reduced in length until the buck-to-doe ratio improves.

As a result, the archery season on the Cache and Ogden units will be shorter this year.

The season begins Aug. 21 and ends on Sept. 5.

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- To avoid attracting bears into your camp, store food where bears can't get to it and keep your camp clean. Additional tips are available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/dwr/learn-more/bear-safety.html.

Central Region

Where you decide to hunt in the Central Region will be important this fall. Some areas harbor good numbers of bucks. Other areas have less.

Overall, the number of bucks on the region's general season units is 15 bucks per 100 does. The area east of Interstate 15, from Spanish Fork Canyon north to Interstate 80 in Salt Lake City, has the best habitat and the highest buck-to-doe ratios.

Buck-to-doe ratios are lower outside of that area. For example, the buck-to-doe ratio on the South Manti unit is 5 to 6 bucks per 100 does. On the Oquirrh-Stansbury unit, the ratio is 7 to 8 bucks per 100 does.

West of I-15, in Tooele and Juab counties, Wildlife Biologist Tom Becker says the deer herds average about 10 to 11 bucks per 100 does. On a positive note, Becker says precipitation has helped the desert areas this year, and the habitat conditions are better than they were last year. The improved conditions should help more deer fawns make it through the upcoming winter.

Scott Root, regional conservation outreach manager, has two reminders:

- The archery hunt on the Oquirrh-Stansbury unit will shorter this fall. The archery hunt on the unit runs from Aug. 21 to Sept. 5.
- You can extend your hunt by hunting on the Wasatch Front Extended Archery Area. You may use archery equipment to take either a buck or a doe on the area from Aug. 21 to Nov. 30. From Dec. 1 to Dec. 15, only doe deer may be taken.

Before hunting on the Wasatch Front Extended Archery Area—or any of the state's extended archery areas—you must complete the DWR's Extended Archery Orientation Course. The free course is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/huntereducation.

After completing the course, you must carry your Extended Archery Orientation Course certificate with you while you're hunting.

You must complete the course each year before hunting on Utah's extended archery areas.

Northeastern Region

The archery hunt in northeastern Utah might be better than it was last year. Biologists say the number of deer has increased on most of the region's general season units.

Even though the number of deer is rising, the overall number of deer is still below objective on five of the seven units, though.

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Ron Stewart, regional conservation outreach manager, says the weather has been good to deer this year. “The winter was relatively light in the Uinta Mountains,” Stewart says. “Most of these herds came through the winter without much winter loss.”

(Most of the region’s general season units are located in the Uinta Mountains.)

Even though the general season units didn’t receive a lot of snow, rain this spring and summer has kept the vegetation on the mountains green. That’s provided good forage for the deer. But it’s a mixed blessing for hunters.

“The rainfall means the vegetation will be green,” Stewart says, “so the deer may not receive an early warning by hearing the rustle of dried leaves and grass as you sneak up on them. But it also means the deer won’t be clustered near a few, isolated watering holes either.”

Stewart reminds you that the archery season on the South Slope, Vernal unit will close early this fall.

The archery season on the unit runs from Aug. 21 to Sept. 5.

The following is a snapshot of the deer herds on the region’s seven general season units:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Number of deer</u>	<u>Bucks per 100 does</u>
North Slope	Up, and near objective	18
South Slope, Yellowstone	Up, but below objective	14
South Slope, Vernal	Up, and at objective	12
Nine Mile, Anthro	Up, but well below objective	34
Currant Creek	Up, but well below objective	12
Avintaquin	Stable, but well below objective	19

Southeastern Region

You might see a few more bucks in southeastern Utah this fall. The overall number of deer is up from last year.

While that’s good news, there’s still plenty of room for growth—the overall number of deer on most of the region’s general season units is between 55 and 60 percent of the number called for in management plans. “One exception is the Abajo unit,” says Brent Stettler, regional conservation outreach manager. “The number of deer on the unit is above the unit’s objective of 13,500 deer.”

Another positive sign is the number of bucks per 100 does that biologists counted after last fall’s hunting seasons. Stettler says the number of bucks on all of the region’s general season units is above the minimum objective of 15 bucks per 100 does.

Stettler says much of southeastern Utah experienced a cool spring and received plenty of rain in July. “Deer are widely dispersed across their summer range,” Stettler says.

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So what's the secret to taking a deer in the region this fall?

"Hunters may experience higher success rates by simply spending more time away from roads and other areas that experience high use by hunters," says Justin Shannon, the region's wildlife manager. "Hiking an extra mile may be more difficult. But it may also provide a more rewarding hunting experience."

Shannon also encourages you to do some pre-season scouting. Once you've selected a particular area, learn where the springs, seeps and creeks are. Get to know the game trails, the bedding areas and the escape routes the deer might take once the hunt starts.

Develop a hunting strategy that will account for changes in deer activity once archers start moving through the woods.

Southern Region

Southern Utah received something last winter that it rarely gets: lots of snow.

The snow that fell could result in fewer younger bucks in the region this fall. On the positive side, the moisture has also led to healthy mature deer with bigger antlers.

Another plus is the number of bucks per 100 does. The buck-to-doe average on the region's general season units is 20 bucks per 100 does. The Southern Region has more bucks per 100 does than any region in the state.

Buck-to-doe ratios on the general season units vary from a low of 11 bucks per 100 does on the Monroe unit to 30 bucks per 100 does on the Southwest Desert unit.

Biologists say additional precipitation this spring and summer has provided excellent forage and water for the deer. The deer should be spread across their summer range when the hunt starts on Aug. 21.

The following is a look at the deer herds on most of the region's general season units:

Monroe and Plateau/Fishlake units

Wildlife Biologist Vance Mumford says this past winter was a long one on the Monroe and the Plateau, Fishlake units.

"The number of fawns that died this past winter was higher than normal," Mumford says. "That will affect the number of yearling bucks available during the hunt, especially since the number of fawns we started with was lower than normal before the winter even hit."

Mumford says there should be plenty of mature deer to hunt, though. "Those who hunt smart and scout areas for mature deer should have a good hunt," he says.

Mumford says lots of rain has fallen on the two units this past spring and summer. That has led to healthy deer and good antler growth. "I've seen some good mature buck groups on the Fish Lake unit," he says.

Mumford reminds you that the archery hunt on the Monroe unit is shorter than it is on many units in the state.

The archery hunt on the unit runs from Aug. 21 to Sept. 5.

(more)

page 8

Plateau, Boulder unit

“We just went through the meanest winter around here in memory, even the memories of the really old guys,” says Jim Lamb, regional wildlife biologist. “I have seen very few yearling bucks.”

The mature bucks Lamb has seen look good, however. And they’ve had good antler growth.

“I’m not expecting great success this fall during the deer hunts,” he says. “The elk hunts, on the other hand, will be great. The elk seem to have wintered well. I’ve seen quite a few spikes recently.”

Pine Valley, Zion and Southwest Desert units

Wildlife Biologist Jason Nicholes says he counted more than 20 bucks per 100 does on each of the three units after last fall’s hunts. “Yearling bucks may be down slightly due to some light winter kill,” he says.

Panguitch Lake and Mount Dutton units

More fawns than normal were lost to heavy snowfall on the Panguitch Lake and Mount Dutton units this past winter. Wildlife Biologist Dustin Schaible says that may result in fewer younger bucks for hunters.

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Tips for a Safe Archery Hunt

If you’re an archery hunter, you can stay safe during this year’s archery hunts by following a few, simple rules.

Utah’s general archery buck deer and elk hunts kick off Aug. 21.

“Every year, we receive reports of archery hunters injuring themselves,” says Gary Cook, hunter education coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

Two practices lead to most of the accidents: not being safe in tree stands or having arrows out of your quiver when you shouldn’t.

Cook provides the following advice to help you avoid these accidents:

1) Tree stands - before you climb a tree, make sure it’s large enough to hold your weight.

To lessen the chance that you’ll fall while climbing the tree, leave your bow, arrows and other equipment on the ground, and attach a hauling line to them. After you’ve climbed into your tree stand, attach your safety harness. Then use your hauling line to lift your gear to you.

(more)

page 9

Cook also recommends using a portable tree stand, rather than building a “permanent” one. “Permanent tree stands can deteriorate and become unsafe,” he says. “Also, they don’t look good. And you can damage the tree by hammering nails into it.”

2) “Until you’re ready to shoot, keep your arrows in a quiver that has a hood on it that covers the broadheads,” Cook says. “One of the most common accidents we see is archers jabbing themselves or other hunters while carrying arrows in their hand that should be in their quiver.”

State law requires that arrows be in a case while the arrows are in or on a vehicle. When you’re outside your vehicle, it’s up to you to protect yourself.

More tips

In addition to the safety tips, Cook provides tips on getting prepared for the season, safety items to remember while you’re in the field and tips on tracking animals and preserving their meat.

1) Preparation -

a. equipment checks - make sure the laminations on your bow are not flaking or separating and that the strings on your bow are not fraying. And if you have a compound bow, make sure the pulleys and cables are in good shape. Also, make sure your arrow’s spline (the stiffness of the arrow’s shaft) matches your bow’s draw weight. If your bow’s draw weight produces more force than your arrow can handle, your arrow will probably fly off target when you shoot.

b. broadhead sharpening – when you sharpen your broadheads, be careful and take your time. Your broadheads should be razor sharp, but make sure you don’t cut yourself while sharpening them.

c. practice shooting as much as possible.

d. obtain written permission from private landowners before hunting on their property or using their property to access public land.

e. know the boundaries of limited entry units and other restricted areas in the area you’ll be hunting.

2) Never take a shot at a deer or an elk that is beyond the maximum, effective range you’re comfortable shooting at. Also, before releasing your arrow, make sure of your target and what’s beyond it.

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3) After the shot -

a. watch the animal and determine the direction it took. Then go to the spot where you last saw the animal and find your arrow. If there's blood on it, and if you have a compass, take a reading of the direction the animal went. Then wait 30 minutes before tracking it. If you track the animal too soon, you can spook it into running. If you wait 30 minutes before tracking it, you'll find most of the deer and elk you shoot dead within a reasonable distance of your starting point.

b. when you track an animal, look for blood not only on the ground but on the brush too. If you begin to lose the animal's trail, tie a piece of biodegradable paper near the last blood spot. Then search for the animal's trail by walking a circular pattern out from the paper. The paper will serve as a marker that will let you know where you started.

Also, tying paper at the locations of the last three or four spots you see, and then standing away from the paper and looking at the paper trail, can help you visualize the direction the animal took.

c. once you've found the animal, check to see if its eyes are open. If they're not, the animal probably isn't dead. If its eyes are open, touch one of the eyes with a long stick. That will keep you out of harm's way if the animal is still alive. Once the animal is dead, field dress and cool its meat immediately. It's usually warm during the archery hunt. The warm temperatures can cause the meat to spoil quickly.

Cook also provides tips for reducing conflicts with homeowners and those who don't hunt:

1) Find access points to your hunting area well in advance of the season.

2) If access requires crossing private land, you must obtain written permission from the landowner. If you can't obtain written permission, find another access point.

3) Before you start hunting, make sure you're well beyond the minimum distances you must maintain from roads and dwellings. If you're going to hunt in Salt Lake County, please remember that the county's hunting restrictions are more restrictive than the rest of Utah. Read the 2010 Big Game Guidebook closely for more information.

4) Avoid hunting in areas that a lot of people use. Also, whenever possible, avoid hunting near heavily used trails.

"Most of the people in Utah choose not to hunt. But they support hunting as long as hunters are legal, safe and ethical," Cook says. "When hunters don't behave that way, how people feel about hunting can take a turn for the worse."

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Extended archery areas

If you want to hunt the Wasatch Front, Ogden, Uintah Basin or Sanpete Valley extended archery areas, please remember the following:

- 1) Before hunting any of these areas, you must complete the DWR's Extended Archery Orientation Course. The free course is available online at wildlife.utah.gov/huntereducation.

- 2) While hunting in an extended archery area, you must carry two items with you: your 2010 statewide general archery buck deer permit and your Extended Archery Orientation Course certificate. If you're a member of the Dedicated Hunter program, you must also carry your Dedicated Hunter certificate of registration.

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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