

Posted on RedRockAdventure.com

Utah Wildlife News
February 3, 2011

Mark Hadley, Editor
(801) 538-4737

In this issue:

Unmarked Traps Lead to \$4,000 Fine
Biologists watching deer herds
Project sends nests into the air
See bald eagles
Apply for a black bear permit

Unmarked Traps Lead to \$4,000 Fine

Price -- Two men will pay a total of \$4,000 for breaking Utah's trapping laws.

Dean and Spencer Steele, both of Utah County, were originally charged with more than 20 counts for violating Utah's trapping regulations.

In a plea agreement, both men pled guilty to five Class B Misdemeanors.

In addition to paying \$4,000, the men also forfeited numerous traps and a bobcat pelt. And both of them might lose their trapping privileges in Utah.

Officers find traps

During January, officers with the Division of Wildlife Resources discovered several leg-hold traps on Cedar Mountain in east central Utah. None of the traps had trap identification numbers attached to them. (The trap ID number is a four or five digit number that identifies the person who owns the traps.)

The officers also found a bobcat in one of the traps.

When Dean and Spencer Steele returned to collect their traps and the bobcat, officers apprehended them.

During the course of their investigation, the officers learned the men had not checked the traps for 14 days. They also determined that the bobcat had been in the trap for at least eight days.

The officers also learned the two men had a system to try to avoid detection—they would attach ID numbers to the traps as they collected them, in case they were stopped later by officers.

"This is a case where two men put out unmarked traps to avoid complying with the state's 48-hour trap check requirement," says Carl Gramlich, a DWR lieutenant. "They also left the traps unmarked to try to avoid detection if wildlife officers found the traps before they collected them."

Report trap locations to the DWR

If you find a trap in the wild, Gramlich encourages you to report the location to the Division of Wildlife Resources.

"Please do not disturb the trap," he says. "Tampering with someone's trap could lead to criminal charges if the trap was legally set."

(more)

page 2

After receiving your report, Gramlich says wildlife officers can check the trap to determine if it was legally set.

###

Contact: Brent Stettler, DWR Southeastern Region Conservation Outreach Manager
(435) 636-6731 or (435) 613-3700

Don't Feed the Deer

Utah's mule deer herds seem to be doing well as winter winds down.

As they do every winter, biologists with the Division of Wildlife Resources have been monitoring the deer closely. In addition to determining the condition of the deer as they entered the winter, the biologists have been watching for four additional things:

- The amount of food available to the deer
- How deep the snow is
- How cold the temperature is
- The amount of body fat they find on deer that have been killed along roads

If three or more of the five factors reach a critical point, biologists will consider feeding deer specially designed pellets. The pellets are formulated to fit the complex digestive system mule deer have.

Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the DWR, says biologists came close to feeding deer in Rich County this winter.

"In December," he says, "the snow was piling up. Then the cold temperatures froze the top of the snow. That made it difficult for the deer to paw through the snow to find their food."

Then, in January, the conditions improved. "It didn't snow as much," Aoude says, "and the temperatures warmed up and started to melt the snow. We didn't need to feed the deer after all."

Aoude and other biologists were relieved that the deer didn't need to be fed. While feeding deer can help the animals when winter conditions are severe, feeding can also put deer in circumstances that aren't good for the deer or the plants the deer rely on.

Aoude says biologists will continue to monitor the winter conditions and the deer herds. If the deer need to be fed, the biologists will make sure the feeding is done in the right way, at the right time and with food that is best for the deer.

Don't feed the deer

Aoude strongly advises you not to feed deer on your own. "You may not realize it," he says, "but feeding deer actually harms the deer a lot more than it helps them."

(more)

Aoude gives several reasons why feeding deer is a bad idea:

- Deer have complex and delicate digestive systems. If you feed the wrong foods to them, the deer can actually die with stomachs that are full of food.
- Feeding deer congregates them in a smaller area. And that can lead to all kinds of problems for the deer:
 - Congregating deer in a small area increases the chance that the deer will pass diseases to each other.
 - When deer congregate to feed, it's "every deer for itself." The larger deer push the smaller deer—the fawns—aside. Fawns often end up receiving less food than they would have received if you had left the deer alone and not fed them.
 - Feeding deer near a road increases the chance that deer will be killed by cars.
 - In addition to eating what you're feeding them—which may or may not be good for them to eat—deer will also eat other vegetation in and near the feeding area. This can lead to deer over-browsing the area. That over-browsing can damage the plants in the area for years to come.
 - Even after winter is over, deer will often stay close to the area where you fed them.

Learn more

More information about why deer shouldn't be fed is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/dwr/deer-winter-feeding.html.

###

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

Project Puts Hawk Nests into the Air

PacifiCorp comes through with equipment and needed know how

Price -- Three organizations teamed up recently to help a bird on Utah's state sensitive species list.

In east central Utah, the greatest threat to the ferruginous hawk are suitable places to nest.

But with help from PacifiCorp, suitable nesting sites are appearing in the desert.

(more)

Getting away from predators

While raptors in other ecosystems can nest on vertical cliffs or tall trees, suitable nest sites in the desert are harder to come by. Ferruginous hawks often resort to nesting on hilltops, low buttes, rocky outcrops or the crowns of juniper trees.

Unfortunately, all of these nest sites are vulnerable to ground predators, which can enter the nests and kill the young.

To help ferruginous hawk populations in the Cisco Desert, PacifiCorp (which operates as Rocky Mountain Power in Utah) recently teamed with the Bureau of Land Management and the Division of Wildlife Resources to construct pole-mounted nesting platforms.

Constructing these tall platforms gives the hawks a place to nest that's beyond the reach of ground predators.

The process and equipment used to install the structures are similar to the process and equipment used to erect power poles.

"The decline of ferruginous hawk populations is a serious concern," says Sherry Liguori, lead avian biologist for PacifiCorp. "We're pleased that PacifiCorp, the DWR and the BLM can partner on projects like this that benefit the species."

Declining across the West

Throughout its range in the western United States, ferruginous hawk populations are in decline. The decline is causing increasing concern among conservationists and the agencies that are charged with the hawks' welfare.

Tony Wright, a regional sensitive species biologist for the DWR, says the potential threats to the ferruginous hawk are the reason the hawk has been classified as a state sensitive species in Utah.

That classification allows the bird special attention under Utah law.

"We take potential threats and negative population changes seriously," Wright says. "We counter these threats with mitigation measures to try to prevent the population from declining further."

The recent nest structure project is an example of actions the DWR and its partners are taking to keep the species from being listed as threatened or endangered on the federal Endangered Species list.

"We hope the nesting platform project will increase the nesting success of a hawk that plays an important role in a desert ecosystem that also supports other species of concern," Wright says, "including white-tailed prairie dogs, burrowing owls and kit foxes."

"We greatly appreciate the employees and the management of PacifiCorp and the BLM who made this project happen."

Desert species

A desert species, the ferruginous hawk can be identified by its rusty-red leggings, which contrast against a light colored breast and belly.

Dark morph ferruginous hawks, which are uniformly dark on their undersides, are less common.

(more)

page 5

For more information, call the DWR's Southeastern Region office at (435) 613-3700.

###

Contact: Brent Stettler, DWR Southeastern Region Conservation Outreach Manager
(435) 636-6731 or (435) 613-3700

See Bald Eagles

Bald Eagle Day is Feb. 12

If you've ever seen a bald eagle in the wild, you know it's an experience that can take your breath away.

On Feb. 12, you'll have a chance not only to see bald eagles, but to learn more about them. The Division of Wildlife Resources will hold its annual Utah Bald Eagle Day that day.

Bald Eagle Day is free. You can see eagles at five locations across the state. Viewing times vary depending on the viewing site you visit:

Northern Utah

Salt Creek Waterfowl Management Area (Compton's Knoll), located about 10 miles northwest of Corinne

Viewing will take place at Salt Creek from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In addition to seeing the eagles at Salt Creek, you can also see a captive bald eagle that volunteers from the Ogden Nature Center will bring to the event. The captive eagle will be at the event from 10 to 11:30 a.m. Make sure you bring your camera with you—this will be a great chance to take a picture of your kids standing next to a real bald eagle!

To reach the WMA, take Exit 365 off of Interstate 15 and travel west on state Route 83 through Corinne. Stay on Route 83 until you get to 6800 West (Iowa String). Travel north to 6800 N. Travel west on 6800 N. until you reach the Salt Creek WMA/Compton's Knoll Watchable Wildlife site.

Farmington Bay Waterfowl Management Area, located on the west side of Farmington at 1325 W. Glover Lane (925 South)

Viewing will take place at Farmington Bay from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

If you're traveling north on Interstate 15, coming from Salt Lake City and other areas south of Farmington:

(more)

page 6

To reach the WMA, travel north on I-15, and exit the freeway at Exit 325. Turn left on Park Lane and travel west. The road will angle to the south, and you'll come to Clark Lane at the first traffic light. Turn right. Travel west to the first stop sign, which is at 1525 West, and turn left. Travel south to Glover Lane, and turn right. Travel west on Glover Lane for about one block until you come to 1325 W. Turn left on 1325 W. and travel south into the WMA.

If you're traveling south on Interstate 15, coming from Ogden and other areas north of Farmington:

To reach the WMA, travel south on I-15 and exit the freeway at Exit 325. Go to the stoplight and turn right on Park Lane. Travel south to the next light, which is at Clark Lane, and turn right. Travel west to the first stop sign, which is at 1525 West, and turn left. Travel south to Glover Lane, and turn right. Travel west on Glover Lane for about one block until you come to 1325 W. Turn left on 1325 W. and travel south into the WMA.

Central Utah

Fountain Green State Fish Hatchery, located east of Nephi

Viewing will take place at Fountain Green from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

If you're coming from the north, you can reach the hatchery by taking Interstate 15 and exiting the freeway at the second Nephi exit (Exit 225). After exiting the freeway, turn east on state Route 132 and travel about 10 miles. About 1 mile before the city of Fountain Green, a Bald Eagle Day sign will point you to an access road that leads to the hatchery.

Once you reach the hatchery, you'll be given a driving map of the Sanpete Valley that highlights the best areas in the valley to view eagles. Literature, displays and bathroom facilities will also be available at the hatchery. Spotting scopes will be set-up at a viewing location about one mile from the hatchery where eagles often gather in a large tree.

Northeastern Utah

Split Mountain/Green River, located north of Jensen and below the Dinosaur Quarry in Dinosaur National Monument (DNM).

Viewing will take place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

To reach the site, drive north from U.S. Highway 40 in Jensen on the road (state Route 149) to the Dinosaur Quarry.

(more)

page 7

Your first stop should be at the staging area located just inside the DNM boundary. Displays and spotting scopes will be available at the staging area, and you might be able to see bald eagles and other raptors in the distance.

You can also see live birds close up! At least two live birds of prey—and maybe as many as four—will be on display at the staging area.

From the staging area, biologists will direct you to other sites where you may have better views of eagles and other wildlife of interest. In past years, visitors have seen bald and golden eagles hunting and feeding, as well as prairie falcons, hawks, mule deer, river otters, pheasants, turkeys, sandhill cranes, porcupines, mergansers, Canada geese and other wildlife.

During your trip, you may also want to stop and visit the Dinosaur National Monument. The monument's dinosaur quarry is closed, but you can see a few dinosaur bones at a temporary visitor center near the quarry. The visitor center also includes a small bookstore.

Southern Utah

Cedar Valley, about four miles northwest of Cedar City

Viewing will take place in Cedar Valley from 3 p.m. until dusk.

To reach the site, exit Interstate 15 at Exit 59, and travel west on state Route 56 to 3900 W. Turn right on 3900 W., and travel north to 2800 N. The viewing site is at 3900 W. and 2800 N.

Get a close look

Bob Walters, Watchable Wildlife coordinator for the DWR, says spotting scopes will be set up at each viewing site so you can get a good look at the eagles. "Biologists and volunteers will also be on hand to help you spot the eagles and to answer your questions," he says.

You can also pick up information about bald eagles, and wildlife watching and birding opportunities in Utah, at each location. The materials will be available for free, or for a small cost.

The best time to attend

The best time to see eagles on Feb. 12 depends on whether you want to sacrifice staying a little warmer for a chance to see more eagles!

(more)

- If you want to attend during the warmest time of the day, attend late in the morning or early in the afternoon. Walters says the warmer temperatures are especially important if you bring young children with you.

Late morning and early afternoon are also usually the clearest times of the day to see eagles.

- If you want to see the greatest number of eagles with fairly good light conditions and reasonably warm temperatures, attend between 2 and 4 p.m. Walters says in late afternoon, eagles at most of the locations start flying to trees to roost for the night.

“If you want to see the greatest number of eagles,” he says, “mid to late afternoon is usually the best time to attend.”

Items to bring

If you attend Bald Eagle Day, dress in warm clothes and bring waterproof boots. Also, if you want to get pictures of the eagles, bring a telephoto lens.

“The eagles will be some distance from the viewing areas,” Walters says. “In the past, we’ve had photographers try to get close to the eagles. They ended up scaring the eagles away.”

Utah’s most popular viewing event

Walters started Bald Eagle Day in 1990 as a way to introduce people to Utah’s wildlife.

“I started Bald Eagle Day because I wanted to make people aware of the wildlife around them,” Walters says. “I wanted to whet their appetite to see more.”

Since it began, Bald Eagle Day has become Utah’s most well attended, and one of its most enjoyed, wildlife-viewing events.

“I think the event is still accomplishing its intended purpose,” he says.

For more information about Bald Eagle Day, call Walters at (801) 538- 4771, or Division of Wildlife Resources offices in Ogden, Springville, Vernal or Cedar City.

###

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

Apply for a Bear Hunting or Pursuit Permit

Feb. 3 is the first day to apply

If you like to hunt bears in Utah, two big changes await you this year:

- For the first time, you can apply for a premium-limited-entry bear permit.

If you draw a premium-limited-entry bear permit—and you don't take a bear during the spring hunt—you can hunt bears again during the fall hunt.

Only 41 of the 419 bear permits available in Utah this year are premium-limited-entry permits. The remaining 378 permits are regular limited-entry permits.

- The spring hunting season will run for an additional week on four more hunting units in the state.

The extended spring season starts April 9 and runs until June 5.

A total of 10 bear hunting units now have a spring season that runs one week longer than the season runs on the state's other units.

Feb 3

You can apply for a bear hunting or a bear pursuit permit starting Feb. 3 at www.wildlife.utah.gov.

To be included in the draw for permits, your application must be received through the website no later than 11 p.m. on Feb. 23.

Results of the 2011 Utah black bear draw will be available by March 14.

Apply for a bonus point

If you're not going to hunt bears in 2011, you can still apply for a bonus point. Bonus points increase the chance you'll draw a bear permit in the future.

Applications for bonus points will also be accepted at www.wildlife.utah.gov from Feb. 3 until 11 p.m. on Feb. 23.

2011 Black Bear Guidebook

Before you apply, you'll need a copy of the 2011 Utah Black Bear Guidebook. The guidebook is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks.

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

###

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