

Utah Wildlife News
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Get Your Boat on the Water Faster

New online mussel course available

You shouldn't have to wait as long to launch your boat in Utah this year. The Division of Wildlife Resources has launched a new online Mussel-Aware Boater program.

In addition to teaching a simple clean, drain and dry process you must follow to keep mussels out of Utah, the program should reduce the time you and other boaters have to spend in line before officials allow you to launch your boat.

You can take the program's course at www.wildlife.utah.gov/mussels/form_options.php.

The course takes about 40 minutes to complete. Once you've answered all of the questions correctly, you can print a certificate that shows you've completed the course.

When you arrive at the water you want to boat on, show your certificate to the official at the ramp. And be prepared to answer some brief questions about the waters you've recently boated on.

Unless the official needs to decontaminate your boat, that's it—you should be on the launch ramp within a minute or two.

"We're really happy with this new course. It's a win-win for everyone," says Larry Dalton, aquatic invasive species coordinator for the DWR.

"Waters in Utah win because boaters will learn more about mussels—and the clean, drain and dry process they must follow to keep them out of Utah—than we can teach them at the launch ramps," he says.

"Boaters win because they won't have to spend as much time with us. They'll be able to get their boats on the water faster."

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

Trout are Biting in the Uinta Basin

DWR provides tips to catch rainbow trout this spring

Vernal -- Fishing has been good to excellent in the Uinta Basin this spring. In the past few weeks, the ice has melted off all of the lower elevation waters in the basin, including Starvation, Steinaker, Big Sandwash, Brough, Red Fleet and Pelican Lake.

Even waters as high in elevation as lakes on Diamond Mountain and Flaming Gorge Reservoir are free of ice.

Most of these waters have trout in them. And the trout have responded to the warmer weather. Anglers are enjoying excellent fishing.

Tip for catching them

Trout are a cold-water fish. They're most accessible to anglers during the spring and fall. (That's when the water temperature is cold or cool across the entire lake or stream the fish are in. When the water temperature on the surface warms, the trout go deeper to find colder water. But until then, they'll feed aggressively closer to the surface.)

Areas close to shore are good places to target in the early spring. Later, as the water warms a bit, try fishing near inlets that flow into the lake or reservoir you're fishing. Trout swim to these areas to feed. Some of them also spawn in these areas.

Try casting along the leading edge of the cloudy water where the inlet water meets the clearer water in the lake. Spring floods sweep insects, small fish and other food downstream. The fish congregate in the cleaner water, watching for food that floods in from the dirtier water. Since visibility is poor, the fish have to move fast to catch a meal.

A small, bright, flashy lure usually does the trick in the spring. A quick, bright flash often triggers the trout to strike.

Baits also work well because the fish can smell the bait. They'll often follow the scent of the bait right to your hook.

While lure anglers want something bright and flashy, fly anglers might want to stay conservative. While "matching the hatch" is always the tried and true method when fly fishing, sometimes the fly you pick won't be visible to the fish. So go dark—black ants and dark-colored grubs are common items swept into lakes and reservoirs by the spring runoff.

Updated fishing reports for northeastern Utah are available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/fishing/reports.php.

If you have questions about fishing in northeastern Utah, call the Division of Wildlife Resource's Northeastern Region office at (435) 781-9453.

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Contact: Ron Stewart, DWR Northeastern Region Conservation Outreach Manager
(435) 781-9453

Free Shooting

Free instruction offered on May 22

Salt Lake City -- Have you ever wondered what it would be like to shoot a bow and arrow? How about a .22-caliber rifle or a shotgun?

You can find out on May 22 at the Lee Kay Public Shooting Range. With the exception of the facility's shotgun range, all of its shooting ranges will be open for free from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. that day.

And, if you want to shoot on the shotgun range, you can for a reduced price.

If you don't have any equipment or don't know much about shooting, no problem. The Division of Wildlife Resources has equipment you can borrow from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. that day. Free shooting instruction will also be provided.

Experienced shooters are also invited to come to the range on May 22 and shoot for free from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

The Lee Kay Public Shooting Range is at 6000 W. 2100 S. in Salt Lake City.

"Beginning and advanced shooters are welcome," says Ralynne Takeda, shooting sports coordinator for the DWR. "Equipment and instruction will be available for those who would like to try archery, shotguns and .22-caliber rifles for the first time.

"Plan on joining us for a fun day at the shooting range."

Volunteers needed

If you enjoy the shooting sports and would like to help others enjoy them too, you're invited to join Lee Kay's volunteer force.

The range is looking for volunteers to help with its daily operations. Volunteers are needed to serve as safety officers on the facility's firing ranges, to help at the front counter and to maintain both the rifle and shotgun ranges.

If you'd like to volunteer, call Herm Rackl at (801) 972-1326.

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

Taking Cow Elk during the Rifle Bull Elk Hunt

Wildlife Board approves antlerless big game hunting changes

Salt Lake City -- If they have a cow elk permit for the same area, all bull elk hunters—including rifle hunters—can take a cow elk during this fall's bull elk hunt.

That change was among the antlerless big game hunting changes members of the Utah Wildlife Board approved at their May 6 meeting in Salt Lake City.

All of the changes the board approved—including permit numbers for individual units—will be available in the 2010 Utah Antlerless Guidebook. The guidebook should be available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks by May 17.

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Permit numbers

The following are the number of antlerless hunting permits that were available in 2009 and the number the board approved for this fall:

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Cow elk	11,146	9,838
Doe deer	1,775	1,975
Doe pronghorn	1,107	622
Cow moose	30	19

Taking cow elk during the bull elk hunts

Division of Wildlife Resources biologists have used several strategies to keep elk herds within population objectives outlined in Utah’s elk unit management plans.

One of those strategies involves archery and muzzleloader bull elk hunters. If they have a cow elk permit for the same unit on which they’re hunting bulls, archery and muzzleloader elk hunters have been allowed to take a cow elk during the bull elk hunts.

Now rifle bull elk hunters will have the same chance.

“Allowing hunters to take a cow elk during the rifle bull elk hunts will be good for the state’s elk herds and the state’s rifle elk hunters,” says Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the DWR.

“Doing so will help ensure enough cow elk are taken,” he says. “Rifle hunters have the highest success rate.

“Also, allowing hunters to take a cow elk during the bull elk rifle hunts will reduce the number of hunters who hunt during the cow elk-only hunts later in the year,” he says. “That will reduce hunter crowding and reduce pressure on the elk while they’re on their winter ranges.”

Deer and crops

Almost 90 percent of the doe deer permits the board approved will be used to control deer that are damaging crops on farm land.

The remaining 10 percent of the permits—200 of the 2,025 permits the board approved—will be used to keep deer herds on the Paunsaugunt and Panguitch Lake limited-entry units from growing beyond the number their habitat can support.

“The deer herds on these two units are at their population objective,” Aoude says. “We need to make sure we balance the number of deer with the habitat that’s available to them.”

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Pronghorn on the Parker Mountains

In 2009, the board approved 1,107 doe pronghorn permits. Most of those permits were used to reduce the number of pronghorn on the Parker Mountains in southwestern Utah.

(The population objective for the unit is 1,500 pronghorn.)

“The unit is getting closer to its population objective,” Aoude says. “Because it’s getting closer to the objective, we can start reducing the number of doe pronghorn permits offered for it.”

Moose: Nearing their objective

Aoude says the number of moose in northern Utah is approaching the population objective. At the May 6 meeting, members of the board approved a slight decrease in the number of cow moose permits available for hunts this year.

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

Share Your Fishing Ideas with the DWR

Please share your ideas no later than June 1

Is there a fishing regulation in Utah that you’d like to see change? Or do you have an idea for a new rule?

If so, biologists with the Division of Wildlife Resources want to hear from you.

The biologists are already working on possible fishing changes for 2011. They need your ideas no later than June 1 to consider them for next year.

“2011 is still months away, but our biologists need time to consider your idea and determine whether or not it might work,” says Drew Cushing, warm water sport fisheries coordinator for the DWR.

“Please get your ideas to us by June 1.”

After examining the ideas they receive, biologists will present their final recommendations to the public in September.

“We don’t hear from as many individual anglers as we’d like to,” Cushing says. “We hope those who don’t belong to a fishing group will share their ideas with us too.”

Three ways

You can share your ideas with the DWR three different ways:

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- e-mail your ideas to DWRComment@utah.gov

- mail your ideas to:

Sport Fisheries Coordinator
Division of Wildlife Resources
Box 146301
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6301

- attend your upcoming Regional Advisory Council meeting. You can share your ideas at any of the following meetings:

Southern Region

May 11
7 p.m.
Beaver High School
195 E. Center St.
Beaver

Central Region

May 18
6:30 p.m.
Springville Civic Center
50 S. Main St.
Springville

Southeastern Region

May 12
6:30 p.m.
John Wesley Powell Museum
1765 E. Main St.
Green River

Northern Region

May 19
6 p.m.
Brigham City Community Center
24 N. 300 W.
Brigham City

Northeastern Region

May 13
6:30 p.m.
Uintah Basin Applied Tech College
450 N. 2000 W.
Vernal

Fewer bass limits

One of the ideas the biologists are considering should result in more bass anglers and larger bass for anglers to catch.

Reducing the total number of bass limits in Utah—from eight major limits down to three—is their idea. Specifically, biologists are recommending the following for 2011:

- A limit of six bass—with no size restrictions—at most of the Utah's bass waters.
- Five reservoirs—Jordanelle, Quail Creek, Sand Hollow, Gunlock and Huntington North—would also have a six-bass limit. But only one bass in that six-bass limit could be longer than 12 inches.
- Biologists would also like to simplify the bass limits at Lake Powell and Flaming Gorge. But they need to do additional work with biologists in Arizona and Wyoming to make that happen.

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It's likely the bass limit at Lake Powell and Flaming Gorge in 2011 will be similar to the limits in place now at those waters.

New anglers, larger bass

Biologists believe the new limits would be a good change for bass and bass anglers in Utah.

"Right now, Utah's bass waters are facing a challenge: they're overpopulated with smaller bass," Cushing says.

At every bass water in Utah except Lake Powell, anglers are keeping four percent or less of the total adult bass population each year.

They're releasing the rest of the bass they catch. "What anglers are ending up with are tons of bass in the nine- to 12-inch range," Cushing says. "Many anglers aren't happy with these smaller fish. But if they want larger bass, then they need to remove some of the smaller fish."

Cushing says the new limits should benefit all bass anglers, ranging from those who are new to bass fishing to those who have fished for years.

"Beginning anglers aren't as concerned about the size of the bass they catch. They're happy with smaller fish. And they want a chance to keep some fish," Cushing says.

Cushing says it's tough to recruit new anglers to bass fishing with eight different bass limits, including some that are fairly restrictive. "If we can reduce the number of bass limits, make the limits easier to understand and give anglers a chance to keep some fish, we think more anglers will give bass fishing a try."

The new regulations would also help experienced bass anglers.

"More of the smaller bass need to be removed to make room for bigger fish. These smaller fish are eating most of the food and utilizing most of the cover that's available in these waters," Cushing says. "Imagine Utah's bass waters are a big cookie jar. You can fill the jar with large cookies or with crumbs, but there isn't enough room in the jar for both."

Cushing says Jordanelle, Quail Creek, Sand Hollow and Gunlock are four waters biologists believe have the potential to grow large bass. Allowing anglers to keep six bass—but limiting them to not more than one bass longer than 12 inches—should keep plenty of big bass in these waters for anglers to catch.

Cushing says that won't happen, though, unless those who fish these waters are willing to keep bass that are less than 12 inches long. "If they don't take some of these smaller bass, it will be difficult for the bass grow to a larger size," he says.

Cushing says the regulation at Huntington North is designed to provide the bass in the reservoir with extra protection. "The water level at the reservoir fluctuates a lot," he says. "In fact, water levels in all of our bass waters are the limiting factor facing bass in the state. Good water years mean great fishing. Poor water years mean poor fishing."

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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