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Pronghorn Find New Homes in Northeastern Utah

Almost 100 pronghorn released in mid-December

Vernal -- Pronghorn from Parker Mountain in southern Utah have been introduced to new homes in northeastern Utah south of US-40.

During the week of Dec. 15, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources moved 49 pronghorn to the Book Cliffs. Biologists also moved 50 pronghorn to the Nine Mile, Anthro unit southeast of Duchesne.

"We released 49 antelope in the Book Cliffs: 11 bucks, 30 does and eight doe fawns," says Dax Mangus, UDWR wildlife biologist. "On the Anthro unit we released 50 animals: 12 bucks, 1 buck fawn, 27 does and 10 doe fawns."

Mangus says all of the animals were marked with pink ear tags. The tags have numbers on them. Mangus says the tags will help biologists estimate the number of pronghorn that survive and where they move to.

The UDWR released the pronghorn to help offset a severe decline in the number of pronghorn in northeastern Utah. Extended drought and other impacts to the pronghorns' habitat are the reasons for the decline. Without supplementing the herds with new animals, the biologists are afraid the herds might be lost. As the surviving animals in the herds get older, the potential that successful breeding will occur is declining.

In addition to introducing new animals, UDWR biologists have enhanced water and forage conditions in the areas where the pronghorn live.

"We released the pronghorn as high up in pronghorn habitat as we could," Mangus says. "We did this to avoid the lower ranges where impacts from drought and energy development have increased in recent years.

"The release sites also correspond with habitat improvement work we've done, including building guzzlers and other devices that hold water. We've also enhanced the ranges by thinning the pinion/juniper woodlands and setting prescribed burns. Both of these techniques help promote the growth of forage plants that are desirable for wildlife."

UDWR biologists consider themselves lucky to have a convenient source of pronghorn to supplement the herds in northeastern Utah.

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“The Parker Mountain pronghorn herd continues to produce excess animals. Those animals have to be removed,” Mangus says. “Taking those animals and moving them to areas where antelope populations are struggling is a win-win proposition.”

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

Trout Limit Will Change at Two Popular Waters

If you can identify a rainbow trout, you shouldn't have a challenge with new fishing regulations at two of Utah's best trout-fishing waters.

The trout limit at Scofield Reservoir and Panguitch Lake will change on Jan. 1. Starting Jan. 1, the following will be in effect:

- The trout limit will be 4 trout.
- Your 4-trout limit can include rainbow trout of any size.
- Within your 4-trout limit, you can have two cutthroat or tiger trout under 15 inches in length. You can also have one cutthroat or tiger trout over 22 inches long. All cutthroat and tiger trout between 15 and 22 inches long must be released immediately.

Identifying rainbows

“Surveys have confirmed that rainbow trout are the easiest of the three trout for anglers to identify,” says Roger Wilson, cold water sport fisheries coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

“If you know what a rainbow trout looks like—and then you catch a fish that doesn't look like a rainbow—you'll know the fish you've caught is covered by the special regulations.”

The DWR has put a new brochure together to help you identify rainbow trout. The brochure is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/trout.pdf.

Changes

The limit change at Panguitch Lake will allow you to keep more rainbows. At Scofield Reservoir, the change will help ensure fishing remains good at the reservoir for years to come.

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Scofield Reservoir

DWR biologists say the Utah chub population in Scofield Reservoir has increased dramatically over the past two years. To try and keep the population in check, biologists will stock Bear Lake cutthroat trout into the reservoir starting in spring 2009.

Putting Bear Lake cutthroats in the reservoir will give it two “chub eaters”—the Bear Lake cutthroat trout, and tiger trout that are in the reservoir now.

Putting special regulations on Bear Lake cutthroats and tiger trout will help ensure plenty of the large predatory fish stay in the reservoir.

“We put Bear Lake cutthroats in Strawberry Reservoir after we treated the reservoir in 1990. The cutthroats in Strawberry have been protected by a limit that’s the same as the limit that will be in place at Scofield starting Jan. 1,” Wilson says.

“The cutthroats have kept the chub populations in Strawberry in check. We hope they’ll do the same at Scofield.”

Scofield Reservoir is just north of the town of Scofield.

Panguitch Lake

A 4-trout limit, which includes restrictions on the size of the fish you can keep, has been in place at Panguitch Lake since 2006. That was the year the lake reopened to fishing after being closed to remove Utah chubs.

Just like at Scofield, the regulations at Panguitch Lake will help ensure plenty of Bear Lake cutthroats and tiger trout stay in the lake to control any chubs that might return. The difference between the past regulation and the new regulation is that your 4-trout limit can include rainbow trout of any size.

“In the past, anglers had to release all trout that were between 15 and 22 inches long,” Wilson says. “This change will allow anglers to keep more rainbows.”

Panguitch Lake is about 15 miles southwest of Panguitch.

2009 fishing guidebook

All of Utah’s fishing changes for 2009 are found in the 2009 Utah Fishing Guidebook.

The guidebook is available at www.wildlife.utah.gov/guidebooks. Printed copies are available at DWR offices and from fishing license agents across Utah.

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