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## **New Trout Limit at Scofield Reservoir**

*Many anglers aren't obeying it*

Scofield -- The trout limit at Scofield changed this year.

But you wouldn't know it if you saw the number of trout some anglers are trying to keep.

"If the anglers who are doing this understood the damage they're doing to the fishery by not obeying the limit, I think they'd start obeying it," says Brent Stettler, region outreach manager for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

### **New limit**

The new limit at Scofield allows you to keep a total of four trout. But you may have only two cutthroat or tiger trout under 15 inches long in your four-trout limit. And your four-trout limit may not include more than one cutthroat or tiger trout over 22 inches long.

All cutthroat and tiger trout between 15 and 22 inches long must be released immediately.

### **Fighting chubs**

The Utah Wildlife Board approved the new limit to keep plenty of tiger trout and Bear Lake cutthroat trout in the reservoir. Both of these fish—especially the Bear Lake cutthroats—are effective chub eaters.

And that's what Scofield needs right now—fish that can keep an exploding Utah chub population in check.

### **Gill net surveys**

Stettler says during spring gill net surveys in 2006, DWR biologists found an average of two chubs in each net they pulled in. The next year, that number rose to 26 chubs per net. In 2008, the number jumped to 205 chubs per net.

If the chub population keeps growing, the trout population in the reservoir could be affected dramatically.

"The problem with chubs stems from anglers who use live minnows as bait," Stettler says. "Some escape the hook. Others are dumped into the water at the end of the day. Over time, the minnows reproduce. The result is a reservoir full of unwanted fish."

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### **Stiff penalties**

Stettler reminds anglers that anyone who moves fish from one water to another is guilty of a Class A Misdemeanor. And anyone who fishes with live minnows is also guilty of a Class A Misdemeanor.

“The reason [for the heavy penalty] is that it costs millions of dollars to treat and restock a reservoir,” Stettler says. “Even after the reservoir has been treated, restrictive regulations have to be imposed to protect the reservoir from a resurgence of unwanted fish.”

DWR Lieutenant Carl Gramlich identifies another issue worth mentioning. “More and more anglers are collecting eggs from trout [to use as bait],” he says. “Many of these eggs are later returned to the water.

“The 2009 Utah Fishing Guidebook states that eggs may not be taken or used from fish that are then released. Eggs may be stripped only from trout that are kept and counted as part of your daily bag limit.”

### **Share your fishing ideas**

DWR biologists are already collecting ideas for possible fishing regulation changes for 2010. They’ll continue to collect ideas at a series of public meetings will be held starting May 12.

Those meetings include a May 13 meeting at the John Wesley Powell Museum in Green River. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.

If you have ideas about fishing rule changes you’d like to see at Scofield or any water in Utah, you’re encouraged to attend the meetings and share your ideas.

Ideas biologists are considering for 2010 are available at [wildlife.utah.gov/public\\_meetings/info/may07.pdf](http://wildlife.utah.gov/public_meetings/info/may07.pdf) on the Web.

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

## **More Antlerless Hunting Permits**

*Wildlife Board approves more deer, elk and pronghorn permits*

Salt Lake City -- More cow elk, doe deer and doe pronghorn permits will be available for hunts in Utah this fall.

Members of the Utah Wildlife Board raised the number of permits at their May 7 meeting in Salt Lake City. Their goal is to balance the number of elk, deer and pronghorn on various units in the state with the amount of habitat that’s available for the animals on those units.

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The following chart shows the number of permits that were available in 2008 and the number that will be available in 2009:

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>
Cow elk	10,569	11,146
Doe deer	1,170	1,775
Doe pronghorn	727	1,107
Cow moose	109	30

You can apply for an antlerless big game permit starting June 1. You'll know by July 14 whether you drew one.

**Deer**

The DWR has conducted range trend surveys across Utah for decades. Those surveys show that the habitat on most of the state's deer units is in poor shape.

Four units in southern Utah—the Panguitch Lake, Paunsaugunt, Pine Valley and Zion—face an additional challenge: the number of deer on the units is over the population objective.

Those two factors—poor habitat and too many deer—could lead to a future decline in the number of deer on the units.

“We look at several factors when we set population goals for the state's deer units,” Aoude says. “One of those factors is the amount of habitat that's available. We also look at the condition of the habitat.

“If the number of deer on a unit gets too large, the deer can damage the habitat, especially if the habitat is already in bad shape.”

This chart shows the population goal for the four units. It also shows the number of deer that biologists estimate were on the units after the 2008 hunts:

	<u>Plan population objective</u>	<u>Population estimate after 2008 hunts</u>
Panguitch Lake	8,500	10,000
Paunsaugunt	5,200	6,000
Pine Valley	12,800	13,400
Zion	9,000	9,500

(more)

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The board approved a total of 1,775 doe deer permits for Utah's 35 deer units and subunits.

DWR biologists recommended 500 more permits than the board approved.

## **Elk**

The number of elk in Utah continues to grow.

"Each winter, our biologists fly over different elk units to estimate how many elk are in the herds," says Anis Aoude, big game coordinator for the Division of Wildlife Resources.

"After flights this past winter, we estimate Utah's elk population at 67,805 animals," Aoude says. "That's up about 2,000 elk from the 65,880 elk we estimated during the winter of 2008."

Aoude says the elk herds on some of the state's units are at or above their population goal.

## **Pronghorn**

Just like the elk herds on many of the state's units, the pronghorn population on the Plateau unit in southwestern Utah is also above its population objective.

After surveys this past winter, DWR biologists estimate the unit's pronghorn population at 2,700 animals.

The goal for the unit is 1,500 pronghorn.

"The habitat on this unit can actually support more pronghorn than the population objective for the unit allows it to," Aoude says. "That's why this unit is always over objective."

The board approved a total of 1,107 pronghorn permits for Utah's 12 pronghorn units and subunits.

## **Moose**

Concerns about the public's safety and damage to habitat are among the reasons the DWR has tried to reduce the number of moose in Utah.

Those efforts, and the harsh winter of 2007 – 2008, appear to have worked. Because moose are close to their population goal, the board approved fewer cow moose permits this year.

"We've offered more cow moose hunting permits over the past few years," Aoude says. "We also worked with the Colorado Division of Wildlife to move 60 moose from the Ogden Valley to Colorado over the last few years.

"Surveys our biologists flew this winter show these efforts worked."

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