Game and Fish Department

Department:	Game and Fish
Director:	Scott Talbott
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Web site:	http://gf.state.wy.us
Other Locations	Headquarters office is in Cheyenne. Regional offices are in Jackson, Pinedale, Cody, Sheridan, Green River, Laramie, Lander, and Casper.

Statutory References:
The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission (Commission) created and empowered in Title 23 of Wyoming Statutes. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) is created and placed under the direction and supervision of the Commission in W.S. § 23-1-401. The responsibilities of the Commission and the Department are defined in W.S. § 23-1-103. The Department is charged with providing "an adequate and flexible system of the control, propagation, management, protection, and regulation of all Wyoming wildlife."

Clients Served:
The Department's clients include, but are not limited to, Wyoming resident and nonresident hunters, anglers, and non-consumptive users of wildlife.

Results Statement:
- Wyoming's wildlife and wildlife habitats are managed to maximize the economic, environmental, and social values of importance to current and future generations.
- Wyoming values the unique aspects of its wildlife heritage, providing residents and nonresidents expanding access to wildlife-associated recreational experiences.
- The Department is a responsible steward of state assets and effectively responds to the needs of residents and nonresidents.

Contribution to Wyoming Quality of Life:
- Conserve Wyoming's wildlife and wildlife habitat for current and future generations.
- Provide residents and nonresidents access to wildlife-associated recreational experiences.
- Manage Department assets responsibly and actively involve people in wildlife management decisions.

Total Wyoming Game and Fish Department Expenditures for FY 14:
$63,188,338

Department Facts:
The Department is made up of five major administrative divisions, including 23 programs, listed below with number of staff and 2014 budget:

Division	#FTEs*	2014 Annual Budget
Wildlife Division	153.8	$ 21,494,804
Fish Division	101.8	$ 11,702,681
Services Division	91.0	$ 12,699,623
Fiscal Division	50.9	$ 7,754,224
Office of the Director	17.8	$ 3,071,187
Other**	58.7	$ 14,773,169
TOTAL	474.0	$ 71,495,688

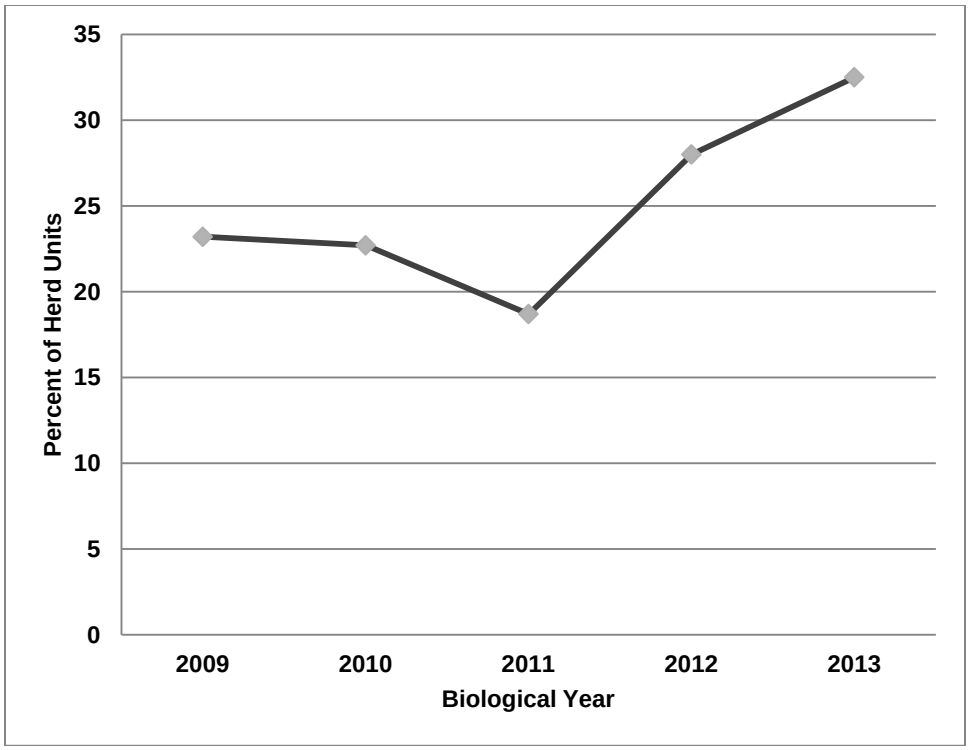
*Includes permanent, contract, and temporary positions authorized in the FY 14 budget. Any positions added during the budget cycle require Commission authorization or must be funded from supplemental grants.

**Includes Wildlife Trust, Access Fund, State Wildlife Grants, Competitive Grants, Nonrecurring Projects, and General Fund appropriation.

Wyoming Game and Fish Commission
The Department operates under the direction of the Commission. Seven members are appointed by the Governor for six-year terms with Senate confirmation. The Commission meets six times annually.

Primary Functions of the Game and Fish Department:
- **We conserve wildlife** by providing wildlife and wildlife habitat management, including scientific data collection, law enforcement, wildlife/human conflict management, research, habitat conservation, and wildlife health services.
- **We serve people** by managing wildlife populations, providing access for wildlife-associated recreation, and providing information and education about wildlife and wildlife-related issues.
- **We manage the human, fiscal, physical, and other resources** necessary to carry out the Department's mission, including people, money, lands, information, buildings, and other facilities needed to support wildlife conservation in Wyoming.

Performance Measure #1: Percentage of big game herds within 20 percent of population objective (Personnel in this program will work to ensure that at least 30 percent of big game herds are within 20 percent of the population objective). The standard for a herd being considered at objective was changed in 2012 from ± 10% to ± 20%.



Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:
While the Department is responsible for managing over 800 species of wildlife in Wyoming, many of our constituents are focused on the management of big game species (pronghorn antelope, mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk, moose, bighorn sheep, mountain goat, and wild bison). Most of the Department's annual revenue is derived from license sales for these species. Management of these species is the responsibility of regional terrestrial wildlife biologists, regional game wardens, and the regional terrestrial wildlife administration. Percentages reported above are based on post-season population estimates of each species presented in the final big game Job Completion Reports (2009-2013).

Hunting seasons and harvest quotas developed by the Department are the primary tools for managing big game species. Seasons are designed so that annual hunter harvest maintains herds at, or moves herds towards, their established objective. Seasons are also designed to manipulate male to female ratios within each herd's desired range.

Other factors such as hunter access, weather extremes, wildlife disease outbreaks, and predation affect the Department's ability to manage herds toward objectives. These factors are beyond the Department's control, but impact its ability to manage herds towards objectives. Declining hunter access on private lands limits the Department's ability to obtain the harvest needed to

move some herds towards objective. Many elk populations remain above objective despite increased cow harvest on public and private lands in recent years. Weather conditions such as drought and severe winters, impact the ability of does to successfully raise fawns and can severely reduce adult and juvenile overwinter survival. Consequently, many deer and pronghorn herds remain below objective. The Department intentionally manages some herds below objective in some years because drought, invasive species, and development have combined to decrease habitat available to wildlife. At best, it will likely take several consecutive years of normal to above normal precipitation before the remaining habitat can support objective levels and at worst; some areas may never recover to former productivity. The Department has continued its efforts to implement landscape-scale habitat improvements to benefit big game and other species. This effort is part of a long-term strategy designed to improve existing habitats in cooperation with partners such as the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, private landowners, federal land management agencies, private conservation organizations, and many others.

Of the total 147 herds tracked for this report, 24 herds (16.3 percent) had incomplete data. Of the 123 herds with complete data, 40 herds (32.5 percent) were at objective (+/- 20 percent), 24 (19.5 percent) were above objective, 59 (48.0 percent) were below objective.

What has been Accomplished:

A revised Strategic Habitat Plan (SHP) was adopted by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission in 2009. Personnel continue to emphasize habitat management and monitoring to federal land management agencies and to the public. The Department informs land management agencies and landowners about habitat improvement priority areas and, as resources are available, encourages collaboration on projects. Successful implementation of the SHP depends upon the cooperation of land management agencies and private landowners.

The Department employs terrestrial habitat biologists who focus on habitat monitoring and improvements on both public and private lands. There is also a Statewide Terrestrial Habitat Program Supervisor and a Statewide Terrestrial Habitat Biologist position that provide support for regional habitat efforts. Most of the Department's habitat efforts are focused on big game, and funding from many sources is being pooled to address priorities in the SHP. Wildlife Division personnel continued to apply for habitat improvement funds from a variety of sources, including the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and federal programs.

Big game disease surveillance and research continue to be high priorities. Surveillance for brucellosis in northwest Wyoming and chronic wasting disease across the state continued during the 2013 hunting seasons. Brucellosis surveillance in elk included a large monitoring effort in the Bighorn Mountains after two elk cows tested positive in 2012; two additional elk tested positive in 2013 from the same hunt area as those found in 2012. The Department continued to vaccinate on the state's feedgrounds to reduce the prevalence of brucellosis in elk. Chronic wasting disease was identified in deer hunt areas 97 and 98 near Rawlins. Research was initiated to determine the causes of pneumonia bighorn sheep, and surveillance was conducted to identify and to map pathogens in bighorn sheep herds. Funding for the Department's Veterinary Services Program was approximately $1.8 million in FY 14.

What we propose to improve performance in next two years:
Recommendations for big game hunting seasons will continue to consider factors such as habitat condition, drought, access, and management of wildlife diseases in addition to the publically established herd objectives. The Department will continue to fund and promote the Access Yes Program in a cooperative effort with willing landowners. This program has allowed the Department to more effectively distribute hunter harvest and increase hunting opportunity by providing access to private lands.

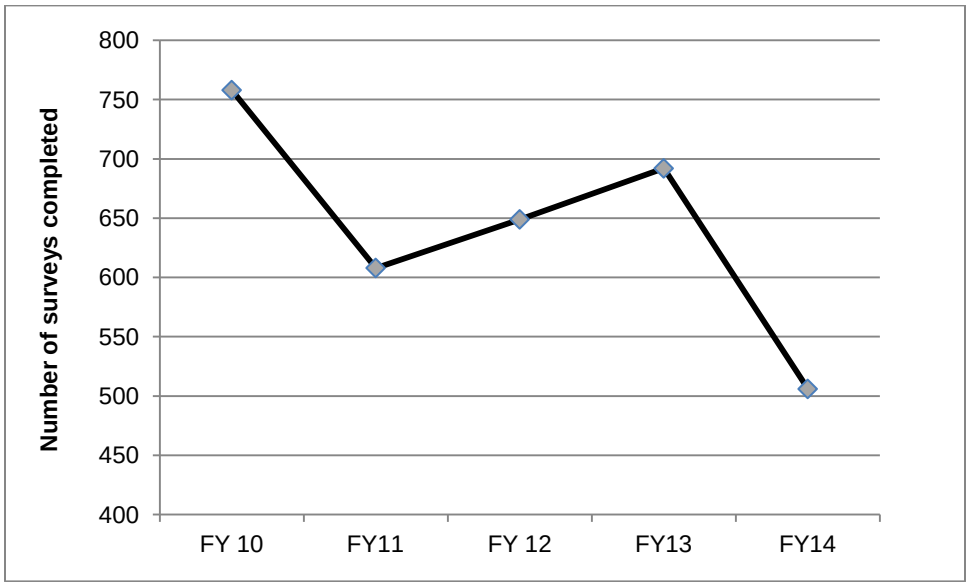
In FY 12, the Department began a five-year statewide process to review and revise all big game objectives. Traditionally, the Department has managed all herds using one objective type, post-hunt population size. Considering the realities of wildlife management in the 21st Century, Wildlife Administration approved two additional objective types providing regional wildlife managers the flexibility needed, while still holding them accountable to our land management partners and the public with measurable objectives. Local managers can utilize post-hunt population size (±20 percent), mid-winter trend count (±20 percent), and landowner/hunter satisfaction (60+ percent satisfied). Thirteen herds have been changed to a trend count objective (10 elk, 1 mountain goat, and 2 moose herds), and 9 have been changed to landowner/hunter satisfaction objective (3 pronghorn, 5 elk, and 1 mule deer herd). Objective reviews continue, and other herds may be converted to one of the new objective types. The following table shows the breakdown of herd units at, below, or above objective by species and objective category.

Table 1. Breakdown of herd units "At", "Below", or "Above" objective by species and objective category

Population Objective				
	At Objective	Below Objective	Above Objective	Incomplete Data
Bighorn Sheep	6	3	0	4
Elk	5	1	10	4
Bison	0	0	1	0
Mountain Goat	1	0	0	0
Moose	1	2	0	5
White-tailed Deer	1	0	1	3
Mule Deer	4	30	0	3
Pronghorn	13	16	9	2
TOTAL	**31**	**52**	**21**	**21**
Trend Count Objective				
Elk	6	0	3	1
Mountain Goat	0	0	0	1
Moose	1	1	0	0
TOTAL	**7**	**1**	**3**	**2**
Landowner/Hunter Satisfaction				
Pronghorn	1	2	NA	0
Elk	1	3	NA	1
Mule Deer	0	1	NA	0
TOTAL	**2**	**6**	**NA**	**1**
Grand Totals				
Bighorn Sheep	6	3	0	4
Elk	12	4	13	6
Bison	0	0	1	0
Mountain Goat	1	0	0	1
Moose	2	3	0	5
White-tailed Deer	1	0	1	3
Mule Deer	4	31	0	3
Pronghorn	14	18	9	2
TOTALS	**40**	**59**	**24**	**24**
PERCENT[1]	**32.5%**	**48.0%**	**19.5%**	

[1] There are 123 herds with complete data. Percentages presented for herds "At", "Below", and "Above" objective are based on herds with complete data.

Performance Measure #2: Number of stream and lake surveys completed (Personnel with this program will work to complete at least 540 stream and lake surveys per year).



Story behind the performance:
The quality of Wyoming's fisheries is a direct reflection of the quality of Wyoming's lakes, rivers, and streams. Stream and lake surveys are conducted to determine the general condition of fisheries. Until recently, surveys have been targeted towards evaluating the need to change management approaches, primarily for native and introduced sport fishes. The survey strategy now used includes more intensive surveys that emphasize watershed-level fishery evaluations for both sport fish and native species.

In FY 14, a total of 506 streams and lakes were surveyed. This is below the five-year average of 643 surveys per year. The decrease was due primarily to four factors. First, fisheries management budgets were reduced by 12 percent from FY 13 to FY 14. In the FY 13 report, the Department anticipated that these budget reductions would result in a decrease in the number of surveys completed. Although the most important priorities were completed, the reduction in funding resulted in a commensurate reduction in survey effort. Second, a retirement in the Cody region and transition to a new supervisor was one of the factors responsible for a 70 percent reduction in the number of stream surveys completed in FY 14 in this region (25 in FY 14 vs. 84 in FY 13). Third, the time involved in a large-scale effort to eradicate exotic rusty crayfish from a drainage in the Casper region resulted in a decline in the number of stream surveys conducted, from 87 in FY 13 to 30 in FY 14. Finally, all regional fisheries crews spent additional time in FY 14 interviewing anglers to calculate indices of angler success rather than sampling fish populations directly. These angler contacts are not counted as stream or lake surveys. Although this effort resulted in a dramatic increase in angler contacts (6,056 in FY 14 vs. 3,072 in FY 13) there was a corresponding decrease in the number of streams and lakes surveyed.

Baseline sampling to identify the distribution and relative abundance of native herptiles continued. Crews continued working to conserve three species of fish native to the Green River

and we continued work on a survey of native mussel populations, focusing on the North Platte River drainage in 2013. Funding through the Governor's Endangered Species Fund and General Fund appropriations supported a good portion of this activity.

Intensive fish population estimates that require multiple electrofishing passes through one sampling site were conducted on streams throughout the state, most notably on the North Platte (3 sections), Nowood (3 sections), Shoshone, Bighorn (2 sections), Snake, Greys, Gros Ventre, Salt, Little Wind, Popo Agie, Sweetwater (2 sections), East Fork Wind (3 sections), Green, New Fork, Tongue, Little Tongue, South Tongue (2 sections), West Fork South Tongue (2 sections), Laramie, Encampment (2 sections) and North Platte Rivers. These repeated sampling of the same reach, often with multiple boats and crews, were only counted as a single completed survey.

In addition to the 297 stream surveys conducted statewide, 209 lake surveys were also conducted. Many remote, wilderness lakes were surveyed, particularly in the Jackson and Sheridan regions. In addition, all of the largest lakes and reservoirs in the state were surveyed, multiple times. Large standing water reservoirs surveyed included Alcova, Seminoe, Pathfinder, Glendo, Buffalo Bill, Flaming Gorge, Fontenelle, Boysen, Wheatland #3, Keyhole, and Grayrocks. Lakes surveyed included Big Horn, Boulder, Jackson, Fremont, Halfmoon, New Fork, Ocean, and Lake DeSmet.

What has been accomplished:
In FY 14, as in past years, the statewide Aquatic Assessment Crew completed a significant number of herptile (n=134) and mollusk (n=30) surveys that were not included in the number of stream and lake surveys completed. The majority of the stream and lake surveys were completed by the Regional Fisheries Management Crews as part of their routine management. Many of those surveys were designed to monitor management strategies and adjust as needed.

The Department continually surveys streams and lakes in order to accomplish priorities identified in the 2010 State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP). Surveys typically gather baseline inventory or trend monitoring data for Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). Although federal State Wildlife Grant funding needed to effectively implement the SWAP has declined, the continued availability of funding from the Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account and General Fund appropriations has maintained the Department's ability to sample priority SGCN.

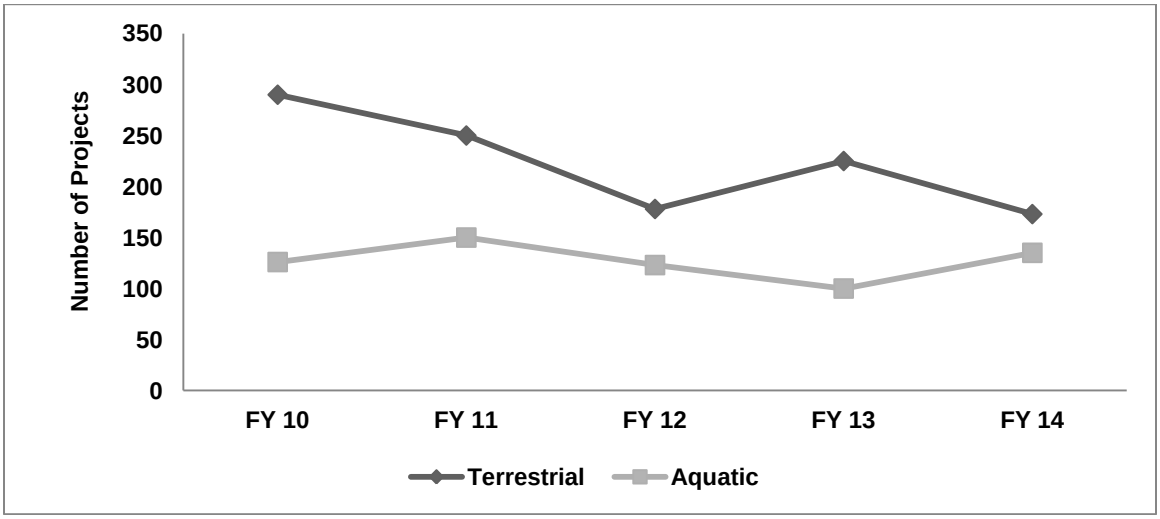
What we propose to improve performance in the next two years:

- Revise the SWAP in 2015 to reflect significant progress toward conservation of native species and to update conservation priorities for the coming decade.
- Continue efforts to reduce the spread of non-native fish, mollusks, and crustaceans. Once established, control of these unwanted species consumes valuable time and resources that would otherwise be spent improving stream and lake angling opportunities.
- Continue efforts to simplify sport fish regulations and evaluate fish stocking programs. Fish stocking evaluations are necessary to refine stocking programs to make the most efficient use

of the limited number of fish available. Continue to evaluate success of stocking programs and to effectively adapt to changing angler demographics.

- Continue to work with partners such as the University of Wyoming or Wyoming Natural Diversity Database to assist in surveying reptiles and amphibians, bivalves, aquatic snails, and land snails.
- Continued budget reductions in FY 15 will likely result in a number of stream and lake surveys similar to FY 14.

Performance Measure #3: Number of habitat projects implemented annually (Personnel in this program will implement at least 150 terrestrial habitat projects and 45 aquatic habitat projects annually).



Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:
For measurement and tracking consistency, a habitat "project" is defined as any habitat restoration, protection, management, or enhancement activity requiring at least three or more days of effort that was either planned during the annual work planning process or unplanned and occurred during the reporting period. This definition excludes activities and efforts like training; routine coordination with federal, state, and private conservation partners; and providing assistance to other Department programs.

The Terrestrial Habitat Section accomplished 146 out of 148 planned habitat projects in FY 14 (99 percent). An additional 25 unplanned projects were all addressed and implemented (100 percent) during the fiscal year. The Department's 2013 Annual Report on Strategic Habitat Plan (SHP) Accomplishments highlights many of the habitat projects. Individual projects are captured, in part, in the Wildlife Division annual work schedule plans and in some of the performance goals. Terrestrial section personnel and administration administered and worked on over 90 different funding grants, agreements, and contracts, which included 59 Department trust fund projects from FY 14 or earlier. An additional 12 new FY 15 Department trust fund terrestrial projects were approved with an additional six developed, but not funded. One of the great strengths of the habitat program is partnerships and collaborative efforts with private landowners, land management agencies, private industry, and conservation partners. Personnel spend considerable time on these partnerships and continue to write grants and receive funds from a variety of other sources, including state, federal, and private donors.

Terrestrial projects are identified annually through the Wildlife Division work planning process which includes development of individual work plans and performance goals, as well as coordination and collaboration with regional personnel and state office personnel. The cooperative partnership positions with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for habitat extension biologists are coordinated relative to implementation of Farm Bill Programs.

Regional terrestrial habitat biologists and habitat extension biologists develop potential projects for the upcoming fiscal year and present these in their draft annual work plans to supervisors and Wildlife Division staff for review and input. The regional terrestrial habitat biologist and habitat extension biologist identifies projects to meet the objectives identified in the SHP. Various meetings among staff and regional terrestrial biologists and habitat extension biologists are held throughout the year to review, discuss, and evaluate project status as well as to propose funding applications for on-going projects and new FY 15 projects.

To assess progress on terrestrial habitat projects, the Terrestrial Habitat Program Manager compare the activities planned for the previous and current calendar years to the progress reported in the calendar year progress report and the annual SHP report. Since the last six months of the fiscal year are not formally reported, the activity template submitted by each individual, along with daily activity reports and monthly summaries, are used to assess progress. A project is considered implemented if the activity proposed or planned for the reporting segment is successfully accomplished. The assessment of progress on all terrestrial projects for each of the regions is compiled by the Terrestrial Habitat Managers and reviewed by Wildlife Division staff.

The Aquatic Habitat Section achieved 97 out of 128 planned habitat projects in FY 14 (76 percent). An additional 7 unplanned projects were accomplished. On average, aquatic habitat biologists in each region completed 17 projects. The Department's 2013 Annual Report on SHP accomplishments highlights many of these habitat projects. The Fish Division work plans and progress reports for calendar years 2013 and 2014 contain additional details about aquatic habitat project plans and progress for FY 14. Aquatic section personnel and administration tracked and worked on 18 trust fund projects from FY 14 or earlier. An additional 13 new FY 15 trust fund aquatic projects were funded with an additional 2 developed but not funded. Finally, the Aquatic Habitat Section administered funds from other sources for additional projects. Overall, approximately 48 aquatic projects involving substantial funds were developed, implemented, or administered over the fiscal year. One of the great strengths of the habitat program is partnerships and collaborative efforts with private landowners, land management agencies, private industry and conservation partners. Personnel spend considerable time on these partnerships and continue to write grants and receive funds from a variety of other sources, including state, federal, and private donors.

Potential aquatic habitat projects are identified annually through the Fish Division work planning process. Under this process, regional aquatic habitat biologists list potential projects for the upcoming calendar year and present a draft work plan to the Aquatic Habitat Program Supervisor, the Aquatic Habitat Program Manager, and fish division staff for review. The Regional Aquatic Habitat Biologist identifies projects to meet the objectives identified in the SHP. Along with the draft work plan, a progress report is prepared and presented to staff summarizing work accomplished on the previous calendar year's work plan. A monthly estimate of hours worked by project code is prepared for all activities planned for the upcoming fiscal year. A meeting among staff and regional aquatic biologists is held, typically between late February and early May, to review, discuss and finalize these planning and reporting documents.

To assess progress on aquatic habitat projects, the Aquatic Habitat Program Manager compares the activities planned for the previous and current calendar years to the progress reported in the calendar year progress report and the Annual Report on Strategic Habitat Plan Accomplishments. Since the last six months of the fiscal year are not formally reported in a progress report, daily activity reports and monthly summaries are used to assess progress. A project is considered implemented if the activity proposed in the work plan or the substantial activity that opportunistically emerged during the year was successfully accomplished. The assessment of progress on all aquatic projects for each of the regions is compiled by the Aquatic Habitat Manager and reviewed by the Assistant Aquatic Habitat Manager.

What has been Accomplished:

Habitat efforts continue to be guided by the SHP, which identifies 110 actions to pursue toward achieving five goals (2013 Annual Report Strategic Habitat Plan). Accomplishments include habitat protection efforts, habitat assessments and inventories, development/designing of projects, on-the-ground projects/enhancements and restorations, maintenance of existing structures or projects, and monitoring of completed projects. Selected accomplishments out of the 243 project achievements include:

Habitat Protection

- Participated in the Rock Springs Bureau of Land Management (BLM) RMP process by supplying expert input about aquatic and terrestrial resources and likely affects of various proposed land management alternatives.

Habitat Assessment

- Employed the Wyoming Habitat Assessment Methodology (WHAM) in multiple watersheds in the Jackson and Laramie Regions including Bailey Creek, Flat Creek, Wolf Creek, Crow Creek, Three Forks Creek, Upper Salt River, and the Encampment River. These assessments provide a sound and systematic basis for identifying issues that can be addressed through projects to improve aquatic resources.
- Conducted rangeland inventories for the NRCS Sage Grouse Initiative on 154,600 acres in Park and Hot Springs Counties.
- Inventoried fish passage obstructions in the upper Green River basin.
- Water temperature loggers were deployed at sites throughout the North Fork Popo Agie River, Wind River, Sweetwater River, Red Canyon Creek, and Little Popo Agie Rivers. This network provides a baseline of water temperature conditions and an index to the health of watersheds.

Project Planning and Development

- Participated in the "Platte River Revival" and associated efforts in the City of Casper to restore river function and enhance various public recreation and fishery values in the North Platte River.
- Developed a design for improved passage and screening at the Thunderhead Diversion on Bear Creek on the Department's Spence Moriarty Wildlife Habitat Management Area (WHMA).

- Through a fish passage grant, developed a screen design for the Hamp Diversion on Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge to enhance the Green River fishery.
- Developed a plan and funding for upgrading rock sills in the Big Sandy River.
- Began designing a stream restoration and diversion rehabilitation on the East Fork Wind River on the Spence Moriarty WHMA.
- Developed stream restoration designs for the Encampment River on a private land parcel downstream from previous river restoration work.
- Mapped fire severity on 1,500 acres in the Big Fork fire on the Yellowtail WHMA.
- Developed designs for decreasing sediment contributions from the Coal Creek Road in the Bear River watershed.
- Developed a design with partners to improve passage at the PF1 Diversion on Piney Creek.
- Planned a 250 acre riparian enclosures in Converse County.

<u>On-The-Ground</u>

- Installed sheet pile structures on Stinking Creek to improve riparian vegetation and reduce sediment movement from the basin.
- Airlifted 126,000 lbs of aspen for riparian restoration on Bolton Creek.
- Installed two cone screens in the Harmony Diversion off the Nowood River to reduce entrainment of native fish.
- Planted 250 acres of sagebrush and native forbs in the 50 mile flat area.
- Worked with the City of Green River to remove Russian olive along the Green River and replace them with native cottonwoods.
- Allowed cattle grazing on Half Moon WHMA in order to achieve post wildlife habitat objectives regarding the Fontenelle fire.
- Completed river restoration along 1,350 feet of the Encampment River to functional dimensions to improve fishery habitat, reduce private land loss, and improve riparian vegetation.
- Completed rehabilitation of the Dunlap Diversion on Piney Creek to enhance fish passage and maintain water delivery.

<u>Maintenance or Monitoring</u>

- Measured aspen and cottonwood browsing and leader growth on Little Mountain and the Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge to work toward improved grazing management.
- Monitored willow communities along the North Tongue River and South Tongue River.
- Monitored screen and fishway performance at sites on Trout Creek, Bitter Creek, Clear Creek at Kendrick, Bear Creek, Goose Creek, and the Tongue River.
- Monitored four sites in tall forb communities located in the Wyoming Range.

Additional insight into FY 14 accomplishments can be gleaned from the 2013 Annual Report on Strategic Habitat Plan Accomplishments, which spans calendar year 2013 (and thus is half FY 13 and FY 14). Selected accomplishments include:

- 17 watershed assessments spanning over 39 stream miles,
- Prescribed burns totaling 3,038 acres,
- Seven detailed stream assessments spanning 1.1 stream miles,
- Herbicide weed treatments totaling 20,846 acres,
- 48 bank enhancements over 6,884 feet,
- Mechanical tree removal totaling 2,313 acres,
- 18 in stream structures installed,
- Upland habitat inventory landscape evaluation totaling 362,542 acres,
- one fish screen installed,
- 7,056 trees or shrubs planted,
- nine fish passage structures installed,
- three water wells converted to solar pumps,
- 75 upstream stream miles connected

Some of these accomplishments are shared with project partners like Trout Unlimited and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

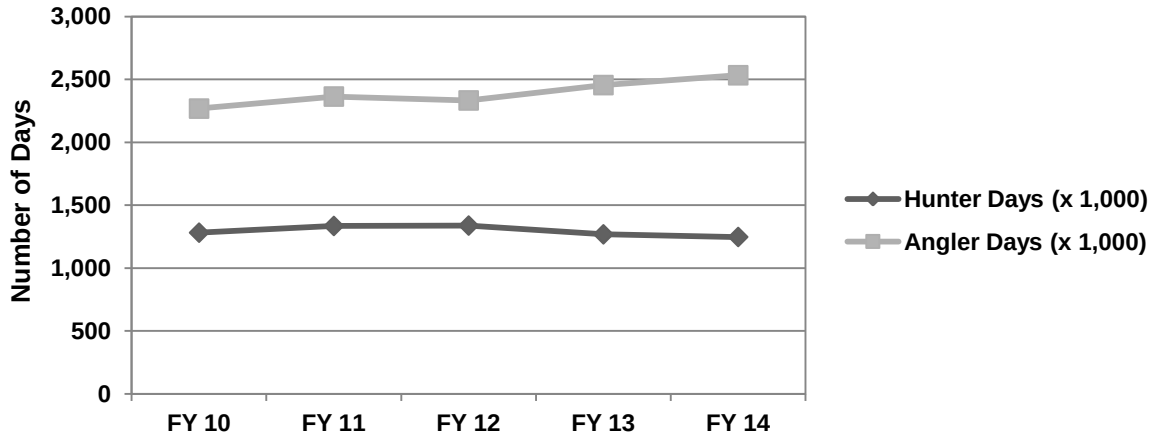
What we propose to improve performance in the next two years:
The largest gains in both aquatic and terrestrial habitat performance could be achieved through increased staffing. The Aquatic Habitat Section is essentially down two positions. The Casper position was lost during the Wyoming state government position freeze of 2009 and 2010. The Cody position has been reclassified to Fish Passage Coordinator. Terrestrial habitat is also down full-time staff in the Jackson and the Green River regions. There are unmet aquatic and terrestrial habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration needs in the areas listed above that can only be met by assigning permanent personnel to the issues.

With reductions in Department budgets during FY 13 and going forward, there was no allocation of funding toward project planning in FY 14. In the next two years, the Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat Sections will look toward developing planning projects using funding from the Wyoming Wildlife Natural Resource Trust (WWNRT). Developing designs through outside contractors has proven to be a vital approach toward initiating and completing projects and the Department plans to be more proactive in using WWNRT funds toward this end.

With limited funding and personnel, it is critical the Department's Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat Sections continue to find efficient ways of developing and completing habitat projects that yield big benefits for wildlife and wildlife habitat. Even with improvements in efficiency, without increased funding in the future there will be a decrease in the number and/or size and scope of future projects. One area for improvement is to continue to work toward improving

internal processes. For example, the Terrestrial and Aquatic Habitat Sections will re-examine their SHP reporting approach and the regional review and ranking of habitat projects to be efficient in developing quality projects. Efforts to enhance internal coordination and communication and efficient delivery of the Department's habitat management and enhancement program is an on-going major focus. The Habitat and Technical Advisory Group, an internal Department team, will continue to pursue these efficiencies while overseeing SHP implementation.

Performance Measure #4: Number of days in the field by hunters and anglers (personnel with this program will work to provide at least 1.1 million hunter days and 2.3 million angler days per year).



Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:
The number of days hunters spent in the field during FY 14 was 13.4 percent above performance measure standards. Hunter days did decrease 1.5 percent between FY 13 and FY 14. Big game, trophy game, and furbearer days decreased while small game, upland game, and migratory game, bird days all increased. In spite recreation days being above target, declining access for hunting continues to impact hunter days as licenses go unsold in areas with difficult access.

The number of angler days in FY 14 is trending upwards over the last five years. Good fishing conditions and improved economic conditions likely account for the increase in fishing effort. Much of the increase in fishing in 2013 was by nonresident anglers as we saw increases in the number of annual and daily fishing licenses sold. In terms of license sales, the number of all license types sold increased by 3.2% overall, while total revenue from fishing license sales increased about 5.2 percent

For the period FY 10 - FY 14, Wyoming residents and nonresidents have expended an average of 1,293,580 hunter days and 2,390,272 angler days. In FY 14, 1,246,868 hunter recreation days and 2,532,892 angler recreation days were provided. Values reflect lifetime license holders included in the estimate of hunter and angler recreation days. Angling days in FY14 were 10.1 percent above the target of 2.3 million angler days.

What has been Accomplished:
Declining hunting and fishing access is being partially addressed through the Department's Private Lands Public Wildlife (PLPW) Access Program. The enrollment in each program for calendar year 2013 was: Hunter Management, 1,090,708 acres; Walk-in Hunting, 687,517 acres; Walk-in Fishing lake acres, 4,912 acres; and Walk-in Fishing stream miles, 96 miles. The average enrollment in each program for 2009-2013 (five-year average) was: Hunter Management, 1,111,493 acres; Walk-in Hunting, 687,370 acres; Walk-in Fishing lake acres, 4,856 acres; and Walk-in Fishing stream miles, 97 miles. During the fall 2013/spring 2014

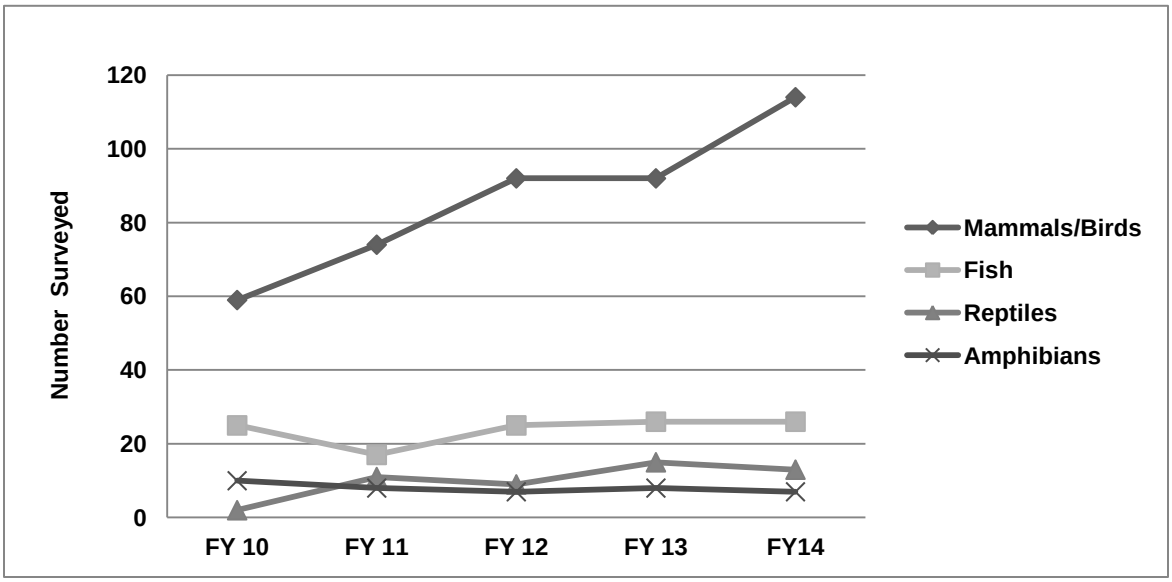
hunting season, the PLPW Access Program provided access to 2,847,159 acres (1,778,117 acres of enrolled private and state lands, and 1,069,042 of public lands) for hunting within the boundaries of the Walk-in Hunting Area (WIHA) and Hunter Management Area (HMA) programs. The PLPW Access Program provided additional access to 341,860 acres of public lands located outside the boundaries of the WIHA and HMA which would not have been accessible without the program. This included land in every county within Wyoming. The Department will continue to explore options for enhancing hunting and fishing access to private lands.

In FY 14, the Department continued to concentrate on modernizing and repairing aging boating access infrastructure. Major repair of aging roads, parking areas, and comfort stations was a focus for a majority of work completed by the Department's Boating Access Program.

The Department continues to manage wildlife populations as needed through elk feedgrounds, fish hatcheries, and bird farms. Veterinary Services' efforts to address terrestrial wildlife diseases were approved.

What we propose to improve performance in next two years:
With above normal precipitation during the last few years, water levels in our streams and rivers have led to a recovery of fisheries diminished by persistent drought; this bodes well for future fishing success. As fisheries improve in response to improved habitat conditions, fishing success should also improve. Fishing success in terms of improved catch rates tend to improve fishing participation and license sales to the extent economic factors will allow. The Department will continue to encourage hunter and angler recruitment, seek ways to maintain and increase access, improve habitat, and advertise the opportunities Wyoming offers. Loss of funding for easements will directly affect the number of field days by both hunters and anglers. The PLPW Access Program provides 4.1 acres of access for every Access Yes dollar. Additionally, reduction in travel budgets will decrease the number of landowners staff can contact in order to enroll their properties plus limit their ability to administer existing properties.

Performance Measure #5: Number of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) surveyed annually.



Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:
The 2005 *Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy for Wyoming* (CWCS) identified 279 SGCN in Wyoming. In general, these were species whose populations are greatly restricted or declining, whose habitats may be imperiled, or whose status in Wyoming cannot be documented sufficiently to demonstrate their security. Of the 279 SGCN identified, 54 were mammals, 60 were birds, 26 were reptiles, 12 were amphibians, 40 were fishes, 19 were crustaceans, and 68 were mollusks. The 2010 update of the CWCS is titled the *State Wildlife Action Plan* (SWAP) and identifies 56 birds, 46 mammals, 30 fish, 8 amphibians, and 21 reptiles as SGCN.

The most significant factor limiting the Department's ability to maintain surveys of SGCN is funding. The federal State Wildlife Grant (SWG) program provides about $600,000 annually to support inventories and conservation of SGCN, but currently appears to be facing budget cuts. Beginning in FY 09, the terrestrial nongame program was funded by the Wyoming State Legislature and SGCN inventories and conservation were enhanced with allocations from both the legislature and the Governor's office. Although funding sources for different projects are identified, all of the projects listed in this report used funds from the legislature for employee time to write proposals as well as for project coordination and implementation.

What Has Been Accomplished:

- During FY 14, 74 bird and mammal SGCN were surveyed at varying levels of intensity (47 bird and 27 mammal).

- During FY 14, the terrestrial nongame program continued efforts pertaining to collecting information on population trends of SGCN such as trumpeter swan, common loon, bald

eagle, peregrine falcon, ferruginous hawk, mountain plover, upland sandpiper, pygmy rabbit, black-footed ferret, bats, and swift fox. Long-term monitoring efforts under the Integrated Monitoring in Bird Conservation Regions (IMBCR) program continued with key Wyoming Partners in Flight participants. The IMBCR program in Wyoming includes 191 sampling grids, each containing 16 point-count stations at which all avian species detected by sight and sound are recorded. For all point counts combined, the Department determined population trends for five avian SGCN, estimated abundance for seven SGCN, and upgraded distribution for 14 SGCN. The project was funded by a BLM cooperative agreement, Wyoming State Legislature General Fund appropriations, Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account Funds, and the U.S. Forest Service. The Department coordinated the annual Breeding Bird Survey roadside monitoring program in Wyoming, which provides distribution, abundance, and population trend information for landbirds, including 10 SGCN. This project uses volunteers and funding from Wyoming State Legislature General Fund appropriations, Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account, and cooperative agreements with the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, BLM, USFWS, and Bureau of Reclamation. A project was initiated to estimate a baseline trend for pygmy rabbit and to evaluate trends of swift fox. The project was funded by the Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account.

- During FY14, the Department's Fish Division programs collected information on the distribution, abundance, and/or habitat use of 50 SGCN. Including 26 fish, 7 amphibians, 13 reptiles, and 4 mollusks/crustaceans.

The Department initiated and continued several projects in FY 14 to determine abundance, habitat associations, life history, distribution, and potential threats to SGCN.

- In cooperation with the University of Wyoming Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, a research project examining the impacts of energy development on birds is ongoing. The SGCN focal species are sagebrush obligates - Brewer's sparrow, sage sparrow, and sage thrasher. The project uses nest monitoring, remote cameras, predator count monitoring, and habitat metrics to evaluate nest site selection, nesting success, and predation on these SGCN. This project was funded by SWG.
- A specialized survey to detect secretive marshbirds has been implemented in the Cokeville Meadows National Wildlife Refuge in cooperation with the USFWS, and was expanded to include additional SGCN (e.g., Virginia rail). Wetland sites near Baggs and Yellowtail Reservoir were evaluated to verify if this technique could be used to determine the presence of SGCN. This project was funded by Wyoming State Legislature General Fund appropriations and the Department.
- A project to inventory and improve the Department's understanding of the breeding status of bats associated with cliffs and canyon habitats classified as SGCN in western Wyoming was completed. The project was funded by SWG.
- A project to inventory and improve the Department's understanding of bats associated with cliff and canyon habitats classified as SGCN in eastern Wyoming was initiated. The project is funded by SWG.

- A project to determine the status and distribution of fisher in northwestern Wyoming was completed. The project is funded by SWG.
- A project to determine the status of water vole in the Big Horn Mountains of Wyoming was initiated. Project objectives include assessing trends and breeding status. The project was funded by SWG.
- A research project is on-going with the University of Wyoming to determine the impacts of invasive species on small mammal communities associated with grasslands in eastern Wyoming. The project is funded by SWG.
- A research project is on-going with the University of Wyoming Fish and Wildlife Cooperative Unit to evaluate the utility of using sage-grouse core areas for protecting other SGCN associated with sagebrush. This project was funded by SWG.
- A research project was initiated in spring 2013 to study habitat use and movements of great gray owls in the Jackson region through use of satellite radio tracking in partnership with the Craighead Beringia South Research Institute. Project objectives include determining population status, and developing long-term monitoring strategies and management recommendations. The project is funded by SWG.
- A project is ongoing utilizing satellite telemetry to track resident bald eagles in the natural gas Anticline Project area south of Pinedale in partnership with the Craighead Beringia South Research Institute. The project is funded through the Pinedale Anticline Project Office (PAPO).
- A cooperative project with The Nature Conservancy to evaluate the status and risk of SGCNs to a multitude of natural and anthropogenic threats was completed. The project focused on major conservation challenges identified in the SWAP. Project was funded by a USFWS grant.
- Continued a project initiated in 2005 that established shallow water wetland habitat for the growing population of resident trumpeter swans and up to 20 other SGCN species including ducks, waterbirds, raptors, and moose in the Green River basin. Plans are being developed for two new ponds on a ranch in the New Fork River drainage; construction should start in winter 2013. Projects have been funded mainly through the BLM Wyoming Landscape Conservation Initiative, with additional funding from the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and NRCS. The original planning effort to initiate this work was funded through SWG. Over 40 acres of new wetland habitat has been completed. Wetland ponds will be created/restored on two other ranches through a standard NAWCA grant award obtained by the Department for work in the Green River Basin.
- A project is on-going in 2013, in partnership with Biodiversity Research Institute, to assess the population status of common loons nesting in Wyoming, develop site-specific management plans, and develop a long-term monitoring plan in coordination with Yellowstone National Park. This project was funded through a grant from the Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition.
- A project to assess status of SGCN and provide GIS support to the nongame bird and mammal programs was completed. The project was funded by SWG.

- A project funded through SWG and sportfish dollars examining otolith microchemistry as a tool for reconstructing life histories of burbot and sauger in the Wind River continued in FY 14.
- A project funded through SWG aimed at collecting better data on the distribution and habitat used by herptiles in northeast Wyoming was initiated in FY 14. A sister project funded through SWG examining distribution and habitat use in southeast Wyoming was completed in FY 14.
- A project funded through SWG aimed at collecting distribution and habitat use by native mollusks (all SGCN) in the Platte River drainages of Wyoming was initiated in FY 14. A sister project funded through SWG and the Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species account examining distribution and habitat use in the Wind-Bighorn drainage was completed in FY14.
- A project funded through SWG examining habitat use, movement, and interconnectedness of Columbia spotted frog (a SGCN) populations in the Big Horn Mountains continued field work in FY 14.
- A project funded through SWG to determine potential impacts of water management on burbot in the upper Wind River drainage continued field work in FY 14.
- A project funded by SWG and a BLM cooperative agreement grant continued in FY 14 to determine genetic introgression with nonnative fish and relatedness of native suckers including bluehead (SGCN), flannel mouth (SGCN), and mountain suckers in the Green and Snake River basins.
- A project funded by SWG to survey for amphibians in the Green River drainage and design a monitoring program for amphibians in the region continued in FY 14.
- A project funded with sport fish dollars to determine if angler exploitation is negatively influencing burbot populations in lakes in the upper Wind River drainage continued in FY 14.
- A project funded by a USFWS cooperative grant to determine parameters for an effective barrier design to protect bluehead and flannelmouth suckers (both SGCN) in the Green River drainage was completed in FY 14. Data from the project report is being used to design a barrier that will facilitate a large-scale restoration project in the Big Sandy River watershed.
- A project funded through SWG that will use data collected in recent years to develop a prioritization of stream segments for the conservation of native fishes in the Missouri River drainages of the state was initiated in FY 14.

The Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account also provided funding in support of the following projects:

- An assessment of grassland birds, mountain plover, burrowing owl, long-billed curlew, and upland sandpiper is on-going. This project was funded by Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account and Wyoming Partners in Flight funds from the BLM.

- Ongoing projects that will be completed in 2014 will document the population status of ferruginous hawks and will quantify the effects of energy development on habitat and key prey species. The cooperative study was initiated in 2010 with funding from the Forest Service, USFWS, BLM, and greatly enhanced with funding from the Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account.
- A project documenting the presence of forest owls in the Shoshone and Bridger-Teton National Forests was completed.
- A project is on-going to improve the Department's understanding of the distribution, abundance, and response to fire of the Preble's meadow jumping mouse in southeastern Wyoming. The project was funded entirely by the Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account.
- A project funded through SWG and the Wyoming Governor's Endangered Species Account to inventory freshwater mussels in the Bighorn drainage was completed in FY 14.

The distribution of all wildlife species, including SGCN, is monitored with the aid of the Atlas of Birds, Mammals, Amphibians, and Reptiles in Wyoming and a computerized wildlife observation system. In FY 14, the distribution of eight avian and four mammalian SGCN were updated in the atlas.

Results of these bird and mammal projects are detailed in annual reports, available on the Department's internet site (http://gf.state.wy.us/wildlife/nongame). Annual and administrative reports detailing fish, reptile, amphibian, and mollusk work can be found on the Department's website.

What we propose to improve performance in next two years:

- The Department will continue the annual and periodic SGCN surveys being conducted. Continued funding from the Wyoming Legislature, SWG, and cooperative agreements with other entities will allow the Department to conduct necessary inventories and research on the life history of SGCN, SGCN survey techniques, and the effects of energy development and other impacts on a number of SGCN. Such funding will allow the Department to move more quickly toward removing those species whose status can be confirmed as secure, and begin implementing conservation actions for those whose populations and/or habitats may be imperiled. This proactive approach will be Wyoming's most effective strategy in reducing the chance for a listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Performance Measure #6 - Number of breeding pairs of wolves in Wyoming (personnel in this program will work to maintain the number of breeding pairs at a level that meets the requirements of Wyoming statutes and complies with the Wyoming Gray Wolf Management Plan).

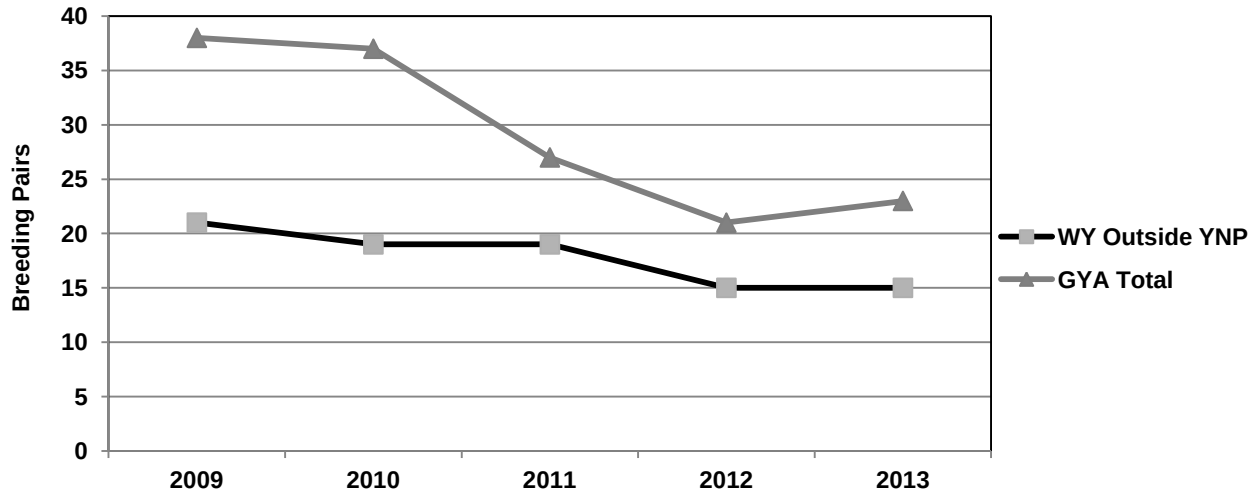


Figure 1. Number of breeding pairs of wolves in the Greater Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Area (GYA) and in Wyoming outside Yellowstone National Park. ("Breeding pair" is defined by W.S. 23-1-304(c) as an adult male and an adult female gray wolf raising at least two (2) pups of the year until December 31).

Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:
Currently, wolves are managed as a trophy game species within the Trophy Game Management Areas (WTGMA) in northwestern Wyoming. Outside of the WTGMA and Seasonal WTGMA wolves are classified as predators. The Department is currently the management authority responsible for the management of wolves in Wyoming. The Department took management responsibility from the USFWS upon delisting of the species in September 2012.

Wolves were first introduced from Canada into Yellowstone National Park (YNP) in January 1995 and again in 1996. YNP is part of the Greater Yellowstone Wolf Recovery Area, one of three recovery areas in the U.S. Northern Rocky Mountains (NRM). The other two recovery areas are Central Idaho and Northwest Montana. The USFWS defined criteria for a recovered wolf population in the NRM in its 1987 Wolf Recovery Plan and again in the 1994 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on introducing wolves into YNP and Central Idaho. Those criteria included 10 breeding pairs and approximately 100 wolves in each recovery area, equating more or less to 30 breeding pairs and 300 wolves equitably distributed The recovery criteria had to be met for three consecutive years before wolves could be removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife.

The original recovery criteria were first achieved in 2000, and by 2002 had been exceeded for three consecutive years in the NRM. On July 13, 2005, Wyoming filed a petition requesting the

USFWS to establish a NRM Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of gray wolves, and to remove wolves in the NRM DPS from the federal list of endangered and threatened species.

On March 28, 2008, wolves in the NRM were delisted and management was transferred from federal to state authority. A coalition of 12 conservation and animal rights groups filed suit in federal court to halt the delisting. On July 18, 2008, the U.S. Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana issued a preliminary injunction that resulted in reinstated Endangered Species Act protections for gray wolves in the NRM DPS pending a final court decision. On October 14, 2008, the federal court granted the request by the USFWS to vacate and remand the NRM DPS wolf delisting rule published on March 28, 2008. This placed wolves in the NRM DPS back onto the federal list of endangered and threatened species until such time as the USFWS posted a new rule to delist wolves in the NRM DPS.

On October 28, 2008, the USFWS opened the comment period for the proposed new federal rule to delist wolves in all areas of the NRM DPS except Wyoming because the USFWS deemed Wyoming's regulatory framework for managing wolves did not meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The USFWS officially delisted wolves in the NRM DPS except Wyoming on May 4, 2009. A coalition of 13 conservation and animal rights groups filed suit in Federal District Court in Missoula, Montana, to halt the delisting in June 2009 claiming that under the ESA the NRM DPS must be treated as an entire unit and that the USFWS could not delist a portion of the DPS while retaining ESA protections in Wyoming. Their request for an injunction was denied in September 2009, allowing a regulated wolf harvest to proceed in Idaho and Montana. Arguments were heard in this case on June 15, 2010. Federal District Court issued a final ruling on this case on August 5, 2010 ruling against the USFWS and restoring ESA protections for wolves in all of the NRM DPS. The State of Wyoming, Park County in Wyoming, and the Wyoming Wolf Coalition also filed suit in Federal District Court in Cheyenne, Wyoming, challenging the rejection of Wyoming's regulatory framework and the Wyoming Gray Wolf Management Plan by the USFWS. Federal District Court ruled in favor of the state in this case in November 2010, forcing the USFWS to reconsider Wyoming's wolf management framework, including the dual predator-trophy game classification status. Following this ruling, negotiations between Wyoming's Governor and the Secretary of Interior were initiated with the goal of developing a mutually agreeable wolf management scheme. An agreement, in principle, between the Secretary of Interior and Wyoming's Governor was announced in July 2011 and steps were taken toward delisting wolves in 2012.

Meanwhile, in April 2011, Congress approved a rider attached to a federal budget bill that reinstated the May 2009 delisting rule, and wolves were removed from the ESA in June 2011 in all states in the NRM DPS except Wyoming because Wyoming still lacked a USFWS-approved wolf management plan.

Wolves were successfully removed from federally endangered status in September of 2012 with the Department assuming management responsibility for wolves occupying any portions of the state outside of National Parks and the Wind River Reservation. As of July 2014, wolves in Wyoming are managed by the Department. The Department is responsible for investigation and compensation of livestock depredations occurring in the WTGMA pursuant to Wyoming state statutes and Department regulations.

What Has Been Accomplished:
Annual wolf population estimates are calculated each year based on monitoring efforts ending on December 31. The number of wolves in Wyoming is calculated for the entire state including YNP. Three census techniques are combined to estimate the total number of wolves in Wyoming: 1) direct observations of wolves; 2) winter track counts of wolves traveling in snow; and 3) confirmed reports of wolf sightings from other agencies. The Department defines a pack of wolves as two or more wolves traveling together in a defined home range. A breeding pair is defined as two or more adults producing two or more pups that survive through December 31 of that year. Wolves in packs containing radio-collared wolves are counted using visual observations from the ground and aerial telemetry flights. Wolves are tracked in the snow and different sets of wolf tracks are counted. Observations of wolves are incorporated into population estimates in areas where repeated wolf sightings are confirmed.

At the end of 2013, the gray wolf population in Wyoming remained above minimum delisting criteria; making 2013 the 12th consecutive year Wyoming has exceeded the numerical, distributional, and temporal delisting criteria established by USFWS. At least 306 wolves in ≥43 packs (including ≥23 breeding pairs) inhabited Wyoming on December 31, 2013. Of the total, there were ≥95 wolves and ≥11 packs (including ≥8 breeding pairs) inside Yellowstone, ≥12 wolves and ≥2 packs (≥0 breeding pairs) in the Wind River Reservation, and ≥199 wolves and ≥30 packs (including ≥15 breeding pairs) in Wyoming. The end of year wolf population increased seven percent from 2012 to 2013 (≥186 wolves at the end of 2012 compared to ≥199 wolves at the end of 2013) in portions of the state outside YNP and tribal lands in the Wind River Reservation. The wolf population outside YNP has declined in line with management goals.

As of July 2013, a minimum of 15 wolf packs in Wyoming outside of YNP are suspected to have produced pups making them potentially eligible for breeding pair status pending pup survival at the end of December 2014. It is likely other breeding pairs will be identified as monitoring by the Department continues. In YNP, the number of breeding pairs at the end of the year is expected to be within normal ranges for the past few years (6 to 10 breeding pairs) depending on summer pup survival.

From July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014, the state paid livestock owners $160,257 for wolf depredation. Additional livestock depredation occurred outside of the WTGMA in Wyoming, but there is currently no compensation program outside of the area for wolf depredation events.

What we propose to improve performance in the next two years:
In the spring 2008, the Department initiated a Wolf Management Program. Legislative funding was appropriated to hire a Wolf Coordinator and three Wolf Management Specialists. Following the decision by the USFWS to remand the March 28, 2008 delisting rule in October 2008, the State of Wyoming and the Department effectively disbanded the Wolf Management Program. In November 2008, Wyoming's Wolf Coordinator resigned and returned to the USFWS. At that time, the Commission voted to reassign two Wolf Management Specialists to the Trophy Game Section (renamed Large Carnivore Management Section in FY 12) and redefine their duties to include all trophy game management tasks. The remaining Wolf Management Specialist was retained in the Wolf Management Program to monitor developments in federal wolf management

and administer the compensation program. In July 2010, the Wolf Management Program was placed under the broader Trophy Game Management Program to allow for more effective coordination and cooperation between programs.

Originally, the Wolf Management Program was designed to address four key issues concerning wolf management: 1) monitoring, 2) management/control, 3) information and education, and 4) research. Following the relisting of wolves in July 2008, and the exclusion of the State of Wyoming in the delisting of wolves in the NRM DPS implemented in May 2009 and May 2011, Wolf Management Program activities were primarily limited to livestock depredation investigation and compensation in the WTGMA. The Department continued to communicate and coordinate on a regular basis with the USFWS and U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) to ensure close collaboration on wolf management and depredation issues. The Department has transitioned into the role of wolf monitoring and management with the publishing of the delisting rule for Wyoming in fall 2012.

Monitoring: The Department's involvement in actively monitoring wolves has significantly increased since delisting of the species and taking over the authority for monitoring the species in the state. The Department has assumed capture and tracking responsibilities of marked animals as well as monitoring through visual/aerial observations, in addition to verification of breeding pair status and annual population estimation. Monitoring of wolves in chronic depredation areas will continue in order to anticipate whether problems are likely to occur. The Department will continue to track wolf sightings in areas of the state not currently occupied by wolves and will actively communicate with the USFWS to share wolf sightings in order to assist with the USFWS's monitoring efforts and population estimates.

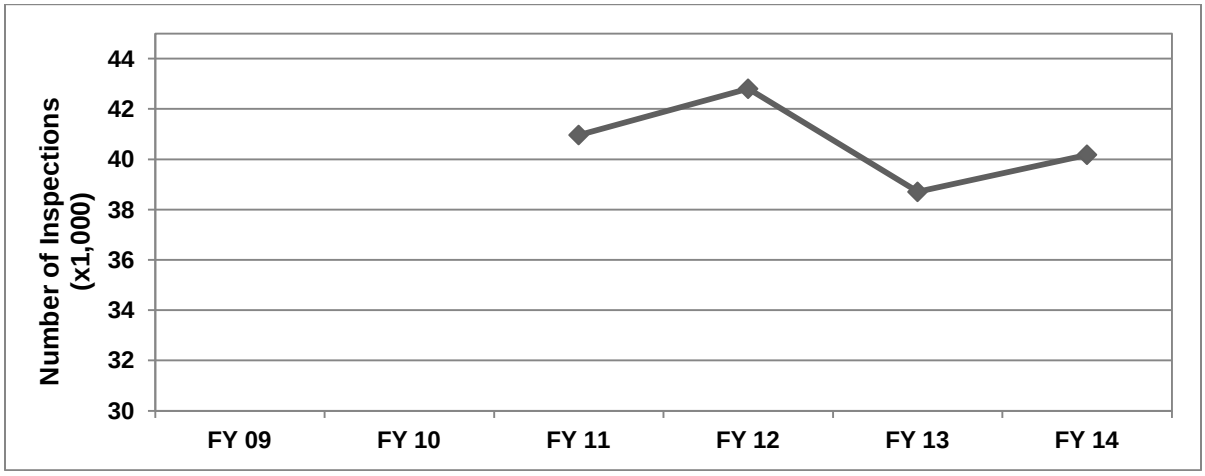
Management/Control: The Department will investigate potential livestock depredations caused by wolves in the WTGMA with assistance from the Department's game wardens, other Large Carnivore Section personnel, and Wildlife Services. The Department will continue to record depredations occurring throughout the WTGMA in order to document the effects of wolves on livestock operations and effectively administer the compensation program according to Wyoming state statutes and Commission regulations. In addition to control work by the Department, Wildlife Services will be the primary agent for control under the direction of the Department.

Information and Education: The Department will continue to develop and provide information to help the general public and other management agencies understand wolf population status, depredation, ecology, and management in Wyoming as requested. The Department provides annual updates on monitoring, management, and harvest of wolves at multiple public meetings and Commission meetings, as well as engaging the public during wolf season setting meetings. In addition, the Department presents information as to management and monitoring at various interagency and professional meetings.

Research: The Department continues to evaluate Department management objectives such as the effects of wolf predation on ungulate populations and wolf population monitoring techniques and whether specific research objectives could be pursued outside of the standard monitoring activities. The Department will evaluate additional methods to monitor the wolf population in

northwest Wyoming to determine efficacy of other techniques in comparison with current methods.

Performance Measure #7: Number of watercraft inspected for aquatic invasive species (Personnel with this program will work to provide at least 30,000 watercraft inspections per year).



Story Behind the Last Year of Performance:
The 2010 Wyoming Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Act and subsequent Wyoming Game and Fish Commission regulation established the Wyoming AIS Program. The purpose of the program is to prevent the spread of AIS to Wyoming waters through public outreach, watercraft inspections, and monitoring.

Amendments in 2012 to the AIS statute mandated that all conveyances (watercraft, water hauling trucks, etc.) entering Wyoming by land be inspected for AIS before contacting or entering a Wyoming water. In addition, check stations were authorized to be placed at Wyoming Department of Transportation ports of entry and rest areas. The AIS regulation (Chapter 62) was revised and signed by the Governor in January 2013.

The movement of check stations from boat ramps to ports of entry in FY 14 resulted in a substantive change in the program and the watercraft being inspected. Boat inspections prior to FY 14 were largely Wyoming residents contacted just prior to recreating on high use waters. With inspections occurring at the ports of entry and other border locations, watercraft inspected in FY 14 were largely owned by nonresidents and were destined for numerous waters in Wyoming and elsewhere in the United States. These inspections are much more likely to result in the interception of AIS as boaters entering Wyoming are more likely to have recently boated on waters infested with AIS in other states.

Since implementation in March 2010, the program has operated with one permanent coordinator, and 30 to 51 contract employees to conduct and supervise watercraft inspections, sample waters throughout the state for AIS, and conduct education and outreach. Substantial additional information is available on the Department's website: wgfd.wyo.gov/AIS

What has been Accomplished:
The goal of watercraft inspections is to intercept watercraft transporting AIS and to educate boaters on AIS threats, thereby preventing the spread of invasive species. Increasing public awareness through outreach has proven to be the best method for successful AIS prevention. Based on watercraft inspection data from 2010 to 2013 and a 2012 boater survey, there has been a marked increase in public awareness of AIS and in boaters implementing actions to prevent the spread of AIS on their watercraft.

Despite changes in inspection locations that began in FY14, the program inspected a similar number of boats (40,180) as in previous fiscal years. However, the number of watercraft inspected that were a high risk for transporting AIS was markedly higher in 2013 than previous years.

What we propose to improve performance in next two years:
The main challenge facing the program is a lack of continuity due to limited permanent personnel. The program is currently operating with only one permanent position and eight temporary supervisors with responsibilities including supervision of 43 technicians conducting watercraft inspections, annual monitoring of waters through the state for AIS, and public education and outreach. The lack of permanency in these positions results in a substantial amount of time and resources dedicated to hiring and training personnel each year and a lack of consistent AIS personnel to form necessary relationships with the boating public and to gain the involved of other agencies and entities. To address this, there is a critical need for additional permanent positions in the AIS program.

Providing required inspections efficiently and conveniently to those bringing watercraft into the state is a main goal of the program. To address this challenge, the program is continuing to seek individuals outside the agency to become certified inspectors and to conduct inspections. Inspectors are most needed in locations far from established ports of entry or Department facilities. Additionally, the program continues to evaluate, and where necessary move, border inspection stations to provide for more efficient, safe, and convenient inspections for the public.

Organization Chart