



PANHANDLE REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Week of January 1, 2001

Volume 8

No. 1

F&G MOURNS

Michael Gratson, Idaho Department of Fish and Game senior research biologist, was killed along with helicopter pilot, Mike Haygens, on Thursday, December 29, while conducting mountain lion surveys along the Lochsa River near Lowell, Idaho.



Wildlife Technician, Matt Lucia (son of Tom Lucia, SCO at Preston) survived and is doing well at St. Joseph Memorial Hospital in Lewiston. Matt has several cracked ribs and lower back pain, but is expected to be released later this week.

The family has requested that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Michael Gratson Scholarship Fund. These donations can be given to Michael's family or sent to the IDFG Clearwater office, 1540 Warner Ave. Lewiston, ID. 83501.

Thursday Greg carried with him to the Memorial Service the Panhandle's contribution of \$270 for the Michael Gratson Scholarship Fund. Thank you all for your generous donations. It is still not too late to contribute.

INFORMATION YOU MAY NEED

Cabinet Gorge Hatchery has a new e-mail address

cghatch@micron.net

John Rankin's new e-mail address is:

jrankin@micron.net

Also the hatchery has a new FAX # 266-0331

POSITION OPENINGS

The **Regional Conservation Officer** position for Pocatello is currently on departmental promotional announcement at the following website:

<http://www.dhr.state.id.us/promo/008741061.htm>

The application is available at this website:

<http://www.dhr.state.id.us/forms/pe1.htm>

Applications must be received by the Division of Human Resources by Thursday, **January 11, 2001, 5 pm** Mountain time. Applications may be faxed to (208-334-3182) until 6 pm Mountain Time on the closing date. **Please note that**

this register will be cancelled after a hire is made for Pocatello.

Don Kemner is being promoted into Bob Martin's Environmental Staff Biologist position at Idaho Falls. Anyone interested in a lateral transfer or voluntary demotion to Don's **Regional Habitat Biologist position at the Market Lake Habitat District** should contact the Personnel Office in writing (e-mail accepted) by Monday, January 15, 2001.

If you have any questions about this position, please contact Steve Schmidt (208-525-7290).

If you have any questions about the announcement, the application process, or cannot access the websites, please contact the Personnel Office at 208-334-3773. Thank you.

Cathy Kopke, Personnel Technician

HERE IS A LIST OF OBSERVED 2001 HOLIDAYS

Cut out, give to spouse...

New Year's Day	Monday	Jan 1st
ML King Jr Day	Monday	Jan 15th
Presidents Day	Monday	Feb 19th
Memorial Day	Monday	May 28th
Independence Day	Wednesday	July 4th
Labor Day	Monday	Sept 3rd
Columbus Day	Monday	Oct 8th
Veteran's Day	Monday	Nov 12th
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday	Nov 22nd
Christmas Day	Tuesday	Dec 25th

RECYCLE THOSE JELLY JARS

If you were fortunate enough to have received jelly for Christmas, there is a handy collection box in the mailroom in which to "recycle" those empty jars.... Thanks...

DATES TO REMEMBER

For Program Leaders/DCOs

Tuesday, January 9

Meet with John Gahl re: new Accounting system 1-3

Local Personnel

Tuesday, January 16

CdA Sptsmen's Breakfast @ Senior Center-6:30am

All Personnel

Tuesday, January 23

All Personnel Meeting with the Wildlife Bur. 9 am-?

Interested Personnel/local COs

Saturday, January 27

SV Sportsman's Brkfst @ Snakepit in Enaville - 7 am

Hunter Ed Information

Tuesday, March 6 - \$8 and SS #

Next Hunter/Bow Education Registration for Cda

Worley Plummer Area, Contact:

Don Cambra - 686-1441

Idaho Statesman Jan 4, 2001

HUNTERS FEAR THEIR CLOUT IS WANING

*Animal-protection groups use ballot box to win hunting,
trapping restrictions*

By John Ritter, USA Today

Hunters grumble that their sport has strayed from pursuit of game to the game of politics, and it all began with the mountain lion.

California's ban on hunting the big cats in 1990 set the stage for a dozen successful anti-hunting measures from Massachusetts to Alaska, including three more that passed last month.

Animal-protection groups have embraced the ballot box to win hunting and trapping restrictions that had no traction in state legislatures and wildlife agencies.

Hunters have gone on the political offensive themselves and won constitutional amendments in four states in the past four years -- last month in Virginia and North Dakota -- guaranteeing the right to hunt.

In November, voters decided eight hunting questions in seven states, and the trend is expected to continue, although scientists are wary.

"Ballot initiatives are not good solutions because they're not biological or sensitive to change," says Steve Torres, senior wildlife biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game. "Wildlife management, by definition, is adaptive, and you can't have wildlife policies in an arena where you can't change them."

Hunters in many parts of the country say they feel beleaguered, the victims of demographic trends they can't control.

Expanding populations are creating tension between suburban lifestyles and traditional rural values such as hunting. Animal-protection groups have seized the advantage, particularly in the West, where urban voters increasingly dominate elections.

"The animal rights movement goes to TV and radio with slick campaigns that target 30-second spots at disconnected urban voters," said Bill Horn, a lawyer for the Wildlife Legislative Fund of America and an assistant Interior secretary in the Reagan administration. "That's how they prevail."

The movement has had less success in the East, because fewer states have a ballot initiative process.

Many city dwellers, devotees of what Horn calls "the Bambi school of education," know little about hunting.

Ever since supporters of the California lion-hunting ban went to malls to hand out fliers with cuddly lion photos, the tactic has been refined into an election staple.

And hunters' political clout is waning. Their numbers have held steady at about 15 million in recent years, but their percentage of the population has dwindled to 5.4 percent from 9.1

percent in 1980.

Backers of anti-hunting measures say they go to the voters only as a last resort because game boards and wildlife agencies are stacked with hunting sympathizers who resist even modest changes. And they say the measures that pass aren't as restrictive as hunters complain. Trapping bans, for instance, allow exceptions for research purposes or to get rid of nuisance animals.

"The intent is only to ban recreational and commercial trapping for fur pelts, something that an overwhelming majority of the public does not support," said Michael Markarian, executive vice president of the Fund for Animals.

But professional wildlife managers attuned to predator-prey relationships, ecological balances and human safety say that anti-hunting sentiment and voter initiatives can tie their hands.

Look no further than the ubiquitous white-tailed deer, now a pest in much of the East. Other examples abound:

- ◆ Pennsylvania has a bear-hunting season, but bears have become a nuisance across the border in New Jersey since the state stopped hunts in 1971. Bear populations are soaring in more than 20 states, and wildlife managers say hunts are the only way to control them.
- ◆ Beavers thrived and became a threat to drinking water supplies in Massachusetts after passage of a trapping ban in 1996. The Legislature had to reconstruct the law to allow some trapping.
- ◆ Colorado's elk herds, booming because of hunting limits and a lack of predators, are trampling tundra and pristine meadows in Rocky Mountain National Park and elsewhere.
- ◆ Golden eagles are a big headache for Western sheep ranchers, but they remain off-limits to hunting.
- ◆ Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama catfish producers want a hunting season on cormorants, large, voracious diving birds, to hold down predation.
- ◆ In the Northwest, sea lions are voracious consumers of endangered salmon and steelhead, but federal law protects them.
- ◆ Though not a game species, coyotes that prey on livestock should be controlled with hunting, ranchers say. A group of hunters in Utah is organizing a coyote hunt to control the animals' population.
- ◆ In parts of the Northeast, moose are so numerous they're destroying sensitive riverbanks. They're less of a problem in Maine, where voters defeated a moose-hunting ban in 1982.
- ◆ Non-migratory Canada geese have become pests in many areas, yet there's reluctance to control them with hunting. Minnesota authorizes roundups in a summer period when the birds are flightless. They're sent to meatpacking plants for charity donation.

But perhaps more than any other animal, mountain lions symbolize the deep divide between hunters and their opponents over what is fair, ethical and prudent.

Hunters argue that lions are now so numerous in the West that restricted hunting does no harm to the species.

Several states that permit hunting, including Montana, Idaho and Wyoming, sustain robust populations.

California has up to 6,000 lions, so many that they're threatening to kill off endangered bighorn sheep in the Sierra Nevada.

Animal-protection advocates don't suggest that the species is in trouble.

They're repulsed by the nature of lion hunting. "It's trophy hunting in its purest form and acutely unsportsmanlike," said

Wayne Pacelle of the Humane Society of the United States.

"The animal is chased by a pack of dogs, fitted with radio transmitters on their collars, and the hunter has a hand-held directional antenna. He drives the lion up a tree and shoots it out of the tree. It's the moral and sporting equivalent of shooting a caged lion in a zoo."

Hunters say mountain lions and bears have been hunted this way for generations, and killing a treed animal instantly from close range with a clean shot is more humane than maiming a deer from 200 yards.
