

Angler sets state record, loses it on detail

By **JEFF OBRECHT**
Laramie Times

On April 15 Mike Laursen went 15 rounds with a heavyweight fish, possibly the biggest ever hooked in Wyoming outside of Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Jackson Lake. Due to his fishing savvy, after 60 minutes in the Sloan’s Lake ring, Laursen won the match with the Asian opponent.

The thrill of victory was tempered later the next week, when Laursen was informed he was disqualified from being awarded the state record title on an inadvertent technicality.

Laursen won the match that morning with a grass carp, a sterile import with a voracious appetite for aquatic vegetation, weighing in that day at around 36 pounds. But he’s not getting the state record for the species. He inadvertently snagged the fish, a detail the veteran Cheyenne angler readily volunteered about the feat.

“We commend Mike for his honesty about the fish being snagged or ‘foul hooked,’ but state record fish must be hooked in the mouth,” said Mike Stone, fisheries chief for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. “We also recognize his fishing skill to be able

to battle a huge fish like that with 4-pound test line for an hour and get it landed. That was an amazing accomplishment.”

Laursen, 62, was using a small Swedish Pimple, an elongated spoon equipped with just a No. 12 treble hook. “Whether the big fish brushed my line to make me think I had a strike or if I missed the strike of a trout or crappie and hooked the big fish that was laying nearby, I’ll never know,” Laursen said.

Prior to the battle, Laursen landed two pan-sized cutthroat trout and a largemouth bass he estimated at 1½ pounds. If a game fish, such as a trout, bass or walleye, is inadvertently snagged, it should be returned to the water immediately. It is unlawful to intentionally snag game fish.

The tiny treble hook was imbedded where the last of the grass carp’s muscle meets the tail. That contributed to the physics enabling the fish to drag Laursen the length of the 29-acre lake’s north shore.

Laursen estimates the 42-inch grass carp ran out at least “a football field” of his linWe and the strain forced him to frequently shift the rod to his left hand to let his right arm to recover. “It was literally a



Photo by Ted Brown

Mike Laursen caught a grass carp, a sterile import with a voracious appetite for aquatic vegetation, that weighed around 36 pounds.

whale by the tail,” he mused of the fish sporting a 25-inch girth. “A big fish like that goes anywhere it wants to go.”

On April 16, the career U.S. Air Force veteran brought the fish to the Game and Fish office where it officially weighed in at 34 pounds 6.5 ounces. That would have beat the old record by nearly 9 pounds. Biologists estimate it had lost at least a pound since caught.

“No hard feelings about not getting the record,” he said. “The rules are clear on that. I’m just happy to have had the opportunity to fight the fish. I’ve been fishing over 50 years and it’s the biggest fishing thrill of my life.”

The first two state record grass carp: 23.13 pounds caught June 29, 2003 and 25.86 pounds caught June 7, 2005 also came out of Sloan’s Lake.

Train collision kills 41 pronghorn

By **JEFF OBRECHT**
Laramie Times

Forty-one antelope were killed May 17 when hit by a train near Laramie.

Laramie Wildlife Coordinator Bill Rudd said of the 41 pronghorn antelope killed, there were 14 fawns, 13 does and 14 buck antelope. Fifteen were still alive when Rudd and Wildlife Supervisor Steve DeCecco arrived and had to be put down

“The pronghorn got into the fence right of way and could not get out,” said Rudd.

“Fencing of railroad right-of- ways not only creates barriers to movement by pronghorn, they also contribute to mortality when pronghorn do get in and then cannot get out again.”



G & F Photo by Lucy Wold

The train killed 41 antelope along a railroad track outside of Laramie.

Although this type of accident is rare, significant numbers of animals are killed per incident. Trains are responsible for a loss of many different species of wildlife.

June 11 deadline set for G & F educator’s camp

By **JEFF OBRECHT**
Laramie Times

Wyoming teachers have a second chance to enroll in the acclaimed Wyoming Game and Fish Department educator’s camp. The application deadline has been extended to June 11 to give more teachers a chance to participate.

Not only teachers, but also youth leaders interested in the outdoors are invited to the June 25-29 camp at the Trail Lake Conservation Facility southeast of Dubois.

Enrollment costs \$100, which includes room, board and recertification credit. Teachers are also eligible for two hours of UW credit for an additional \$80. Applications for the camp must be received by the Game and Fish offices.

the LaramieTimes

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