

2009 hunt season will be a good year for a great deer

There aren't as many deer roaming the hills and prairies of Weston County this fall, but the number of trophies available to hunters is holding steady, and there should be plenty of quality mounts taken this hunting season.

This is particularly true when it comes to whitetail, where reproduction and mortality have generally held the line in the past year or two.

"Deer numbers are down a bit, but whitetail numbers aren't down much, and buck hunting for whitetails will be about the same as last year," Wyoming Game and Fish

Wildlife Biologist Joe Sandrini predicted.

He said that there aren't as many young whitetail bucks around this season, but the old mossy horns that hunters are looking for should be in good shape.

"We're down a little bit on yearling bucks, but it should be a good antler year because of the age structure. The younger bucks is what we're missing," Sandrini revealed.

"There's some pretty nice whitetail around," Game Warden Dustin Shorma agreed.

Of course, finding one of those nice whitetail isn't nec-

essarily going to be easy, but they are there if you're willing to look hard enough.

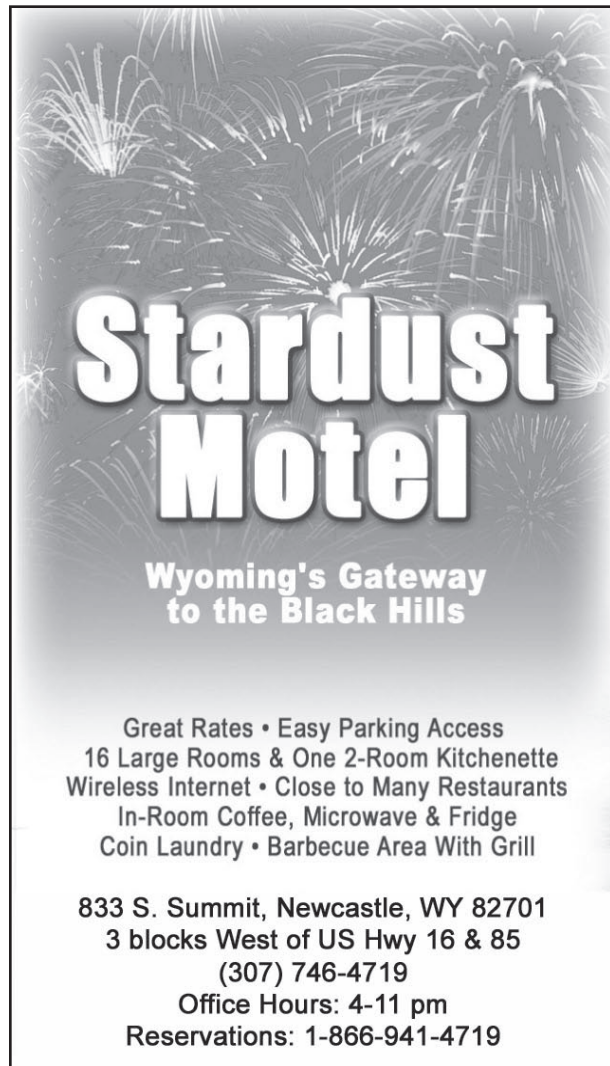
Significantly increased winter and spring moisture took a toll on the younger animals this year, and that might affect future hunting seasons, but it also made the adults healthier because of increased forage.

"The last two winters were a little more normal, and the spring storms definitely took a toll on things, but the last five years or so winter mortality was low," Sandrini said.

The impact of winter seemed to increase the further you got from the prairies around Newcastle and Upton, meaning the herds close to the communities of Weston County are thriving.

"November season is going to be tougher because our

— Continued



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