

California Wild Sheep

SUMMER 2020



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David Sterk

Marble / Clipper Mountains, 2019

179 4/8 B&C

San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters



ULTIMA THULE LODGE

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From the Editor's Desk

I hope you enjoy this issue. If you are at all like me, during the COVID-19 isolation, I read everything cover to cover (and sometimes twice!). We've rescheduled an in-person annual banquet for June 27 at the DoubleTree Sacramento, and hope to be able to do it, COVID allowing.

This issue includes your ballot for the Director election (please vote!), hunting stories, milestone news about GALAD our major initiative that will more than DOUBLE the number of desert bighorn in California (pique your interest?!), fun humor, interesting desert insights from Carlos, AND MUCH MORE!

Your feedback, ideas, articles & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 3Q20 issue is August 20. Stay healthy, safe and looking forward to hunting season!



Stuffed Venison Backstrap

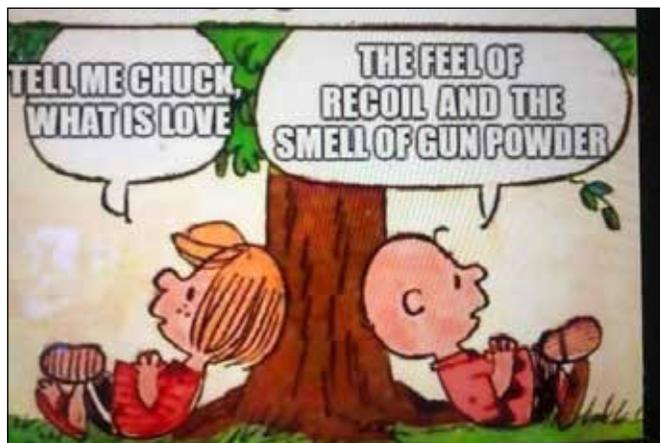
This backstrap recipe will hit the spot after a long day of hunting. Cook it at your basecamp or on the back patio; either way, it will taste incredible.

Ingredients

- Backstrap (elk, deer or Sheep)
- Salt
- Pepper
- Olive oil
- 1 pound bacon
- 2 cups mushrooms
- 1 clove garlic
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 cup bread crumbs

Instructions

Trim all silver skin from the backstrap and butterfly lengthwise. Do not cut into medallions. Season with salt and pepper.
Chop bacon into ½ inch pieces and brown in a 12-inch cast iron skillet. Add mushrooms and garlic. Once the mushrooms are cooked, remove from heat.
In a medium-size bowl, mix bacon, mushrooms, cream cheese and breadcrumbs. Evenly add stuffing mixture to the butterfly-cut backstrap. Close butterfly cut and tie off with butcher's twine. Brush with olive oil.
Grill over medium/high heat until the meat reaches medium rare. For the best taste and texture, be sure not to overcook.
Slice and enjoy!



COVID HUMOR – Is it too soon?

DAY 1 OF WORKING FROM HOME:

MY WIFE HAS ALREADY FILED A HARASSMENT COMPLAINT TO HR.

I was at the bank today when 2 people came in wearing masks. We all FREAKED! Then they said it was a burglary. We all calmed down.

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California Wild Sheep is published quarterly.

Please email all articles and photos to

mike.borel@contextnet.com

Photos should be high resolution and in color.

It is recommended that digital photos be sent by email.

Please include photo credits and captions.

Humorous outtakes provided by Tammy Scott

Published by Beverly Valdez, Gaiatec Services

Events

2020

- June 26 Sheep Summit XXVII in Sacramento (Rescheduled due to COVID-19) May be Virtual event
- June 27 Annual Fundraiser (Rescheduled due to COVID-19) May be Virtual event
- June 28 Completed CA WSF Ballots due
- August 20 Due date for articles for 3Q2020 CAWSF Newsletter
- September TBD Wild Sheep Foundation Fly-In and Walk on Capitol Hill (Washington DC)
- November 20 Due date for articles for 4Q2020 CAWSF Newsletter
- December 4 or 11 Sheep Summit XXVIII in Ontario

2021

- January 14-16 WSF Sheep Show, Reno
- January 20-23 GSCO Convention, Las Vegas
- February 3-6 SCI Convention, Las Vegas
- February 20 Due date for articles for 1Q2021 CAWSF Newsletter
- April 17-19 Desert Bighorn Council, Alpine Tx
- April 23 Sheep Summit XXVIX in Ontario
- April 24 CA WSF 19th Annual Fundraiser Sacramento, CA (DoubleTree)
- May 20 Due date for articles for 2Q2021 CAWSF Newsletter

President's Letter

Application season has mostly come and gone and, as you read this, the 2020-2021 California big game drawing may have already occurred. Never the less, I wanted to encourage each and every one you to apply and support California's fish and wildlife. In this time of crisis, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife will inevitably encounter a huge budget shortfall. Even if you don't intend to hunt, please purchase a hunting license. The number of hunting licenses sold in our state is one of the determining factors as to how Federal dollars from the Pittman-Robertson Fund are allocated to the States to aid in wildlife management.



I hope many of you noticed that this year there were 29 desert bighorn permits available through the random draw. It wasn't that long ago that we were at a dismal 19 opportunities. I want to thank all the CAWSF members and especially our Board of Directors for their continued dedication to California's bighorn sheep and their hard work in guiding the State Department of Fish and Wildlife towards creating additional opportunities for California's hunting enthusiasts.

We still face challenges here in California. The disease event in the San Geronio's is still being assessed and as a result there will not be any permits awarded in that unit. However, a permit will be awarded in the Old Dad's/Kelso Peak unit, a unit that has recovered from a disease event not that long ago. Our newest unit, the Newberry/Rodman/Ord complex, still shows tremendous promise and opportunity for California's sportsmen and women. All of our units have tremendous potential and we can take great pride in our science-based conservation efforts. One lucky hunter this past season was able to harvest a 16 year old ram. Amazing! That alone is a sign of good management and wise stewardship of the resource.

I can remember a time when our slogan was "Drive to 35", with the goal to establish a management program that yielded 35 bighorn permits to the general draw. I can assure you, our entire Board is still working to that end. Navigating the intricacies of Department and State policy is difficult and often frustrating, but all of your Directors are dedicated to "Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountain." ...and in doing so, we provide an opportunity for a select, lucky few to be able to take a few sheep off the mountains. Hunting opportunity is the by-product of good conservation and your Board is dedicated to that. Through our science and disease research, desert water projects in conjunction with the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, and our legislative and departmental policy efforts, we can drastically increase the number of desert bighorns in California and continue our "Drive to 35."

I've often said that the greatest enemy to California's sportsmen and women is apathy. So I implore each and every one of our members to stay focused on our goals and help us achieve great things for California's wildlife. Thank you for your continued support and I hope to see all of you soon.

Donald C. Martin
President, CAWSF

THE 18 YEAR JOURNEY

By David Sterk

The process began a month before California hunting licenses and draw tags needed to be purchased. I looked over the Elk & Desert Sheep quotas. It had been an 18-year journey which consisted of quotas, draw odds, success, etc. I also kept track of previous years' information.

I knew it was best to just put in for a bonus point. I was an alternate twice for elk, I was wondering if I would ever get drawn. I noticed the new zone for the Newbury/Rodman/Ord Mountains. I struggled on what zone to put in for. I called Terry Anderson of San Gorgonio Outfitters. I had an article from 2005 that I had kept on a sheep hunt in the San Gorgonio's Mountains. It was Terry who guided and talked about a spot called "hell for sure" and not to go there if possible. I figured if he was willing to go there, this was the guide for me, if and when, I got drawn.

After talking with Terry, I put in for the Marble/Clipper Mountain Zone. Mid-June 2019, I received my notice "successful" from the California Department of Fish and Game. I purchased my tag and went to the orientation in Davis, CA. While there, I met Andrew Pontious from San Gorgonio Outfitters. We talked about what to expect and the things I needed to be prepared for. One of the things going through my thoughts was to stay healthy and get in better shape. I did this knowing I had an out of state elk hunt also coming up in November. Andrew phoned me each month making sure I was preparing for the hunt.

In early December, I had my gear packed and readied for a call to meet San Gorgonio Outfitters at camp.

I arrived at camp just before dark and got settled in. I met Terry and his crew, Andrew Pontious, Don Anderson and Tim Carpenter. We planned for the next morning as they had all glassed that day. The first day, I went with Andrew and Tim while Don and Terry glassed as we carefully hiked up through the canyon.

Don looked familiar and I learned that he did taxidermy. I rattled my brain and figured that he did a prior mount for me two years ago. I felt like this was a good sign.

We spotted sheep approximately one mile away and above us. Everyone had eyes on them. There were eight rams with one being a possible shooter. We watched through our Swarovski Spotting Scopes as they browsed, fed, and bed down. After three hours we decided to get a better look at them. This meant hiking back down and angling around the canyon. As



David Sterk, with guides Andrew Pontious, Tim Carpenter, Don Anderson of San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters. Marble Clippers Ram 179 4/8 B&C green score.

we did this, Andrew and Tim "cleared" areas as not to wind, spook or bump other sheep we might encounter. Two hours later we were where we wanted to be, but no rams in sight. We sat down and glassed, we figured they had to be close. All of a sudden, we could see one ram walking towards us. I set up my rifle and waited. WOW 1 ram with only a head shot appeared 100 yards away. Breathe, stay calm, I told myself. He was a smaller ram, then the rest starting popping up over the knoll. Andrew and Tim quickly glassed them over and I decided to pass. The sheep balled up together, got nervous and bolted down the mountain. It was over in two minutes. We packed up and decided to check out one more canyon since we were so far up the mountain. We saw some ewes and one ram that was broken on one side. We watched for awhile and headed down the mountain at dusk.

The next morning, Andrew, Tim and myself checked out a new area. Again, hiking in, they glassed and cleared all the terrain around us. I was impressed with their skills and knowledge of the area. We hiked to a nice spot and glassed a big bowl area of ewes and more ewes. Andrew stayed and glassed as Tim and I went around the mountain. Tim saw movement a 1/2 mile away. It was an ewe and she seemed agitated. We soon realized a coyote was after her lamb. A raven also swept in and dove on the predator. We watched as nature unfolded in front of us. The ewe and lamb persevered.

Tim and I hiked back to Andrew who had glassed under every bush, cactus, draw and rock. He had found a ram. There were also about 5 ewes 300 yards



The following morning took Don, Andrew, Tim and me to an area where they always see sheep. We were going to split up and glass the area. They were clearing areas and canyons along the way when we spotted approximately 8 rams that were different from the first day. I was excited! We decided we would all stick together and stalk them. We had cover from a steep rocky hill in front of us. Tim and Andrew carefully went out in front to clear areas. As we were getting close, Tim belly crawled over rocks and spotted them 500 yards out. They were feeding up the mountain. We then carefully got to a vantage point as Don took over and decided this was the one, I needed to shoot. The sheep started to ball up. My adrenaline was pumping as Andrew told me to relax and take my time. A smaller ram started rubbing his horns on the one I wanted. I waited for them to separate and when they finally did, I shot with a 300 Winchester Short Mag. They took off running, I had hit him, and I fired one more and he collapsed. The rest came back to him, with their leader down, they didn't know what to do. We all watched in awe. As they eventually took off, a sigh of relief came over me. We took photos and discussed the stalk and shot. We then proceeded to cape and place the meat in our packs. We headed down the rocky mountain and back to camp. His horns had good mass, and scored 179 4/8, he was a nice ram.

It takes a lot of knowledge and time in the field and I am forever grateful to Terry and the crew of San Gorgonio Outfitters, Andrew, Don and Tim.

from him. We all discussed the different ways to get closer. Tim and I would carefully go straight at him with help from a knoll that stood between us.

I dropped my pack, and just took my rifle. It was going to be tough to close the distance with all those eyes watching. We finally got to within 600 yards and one ewe had gotten in with the ram and was head butting him as he just stood there and took it. He bedded down. Tim put his pack down and ranged him at 410 yards. I rested my rifle and waited for the big boy to get up. Lots of thoughts went through my mind. He finally got up on the rock outcropping stretching and giving me a frontal view. My kill area had been reduced and I was not sure I could squeeze that bullet in there. There he stood taunting me in the same position and, I decided not to shoot. My mind started racing of "what ifs".

We packed up and got Andrew and headed back. They let me know that he was not shot at or spooked, and we could come back for him, if necessary. That evening was restless for me.



SPANISH IBEX GRAND SLAM

by Darryl Williams and Glen Pyne

Glen and I first got interested in Spanish Ibex at the Eastern Chapter WSF banquet in 2011. We met Bruno Rosich of Trophy Hunting Spain and starting planning our first trip for December of 2013. On that trip we were fortunate to take great Gredos and Beceite Ibex and toured around Madrid and Barcelona with our wives. Cassie and Caroline absolutely loved Spain, so we started planning a trip to complete our Spanish Ibex Grand Slam. After rescheduling three times, we returned in November of 2019.

On this trip, we planned some touring in advance of our hunt. We flew into Malaga and drove to Seville where we spent 2-days sightseeing, shopping and enjoying the great Spanish food. We then traveled to Marbella for a couple of days, made a day trip to Gibraltar and returned to Malaga to start our hunt the next morning.

As we drove toward our hunting area, rain was gently falling as the gray light of day began to illuminate our surroundings. The tall grass was brown, and for November, the color was a reminder that moisture was needed. For hunters, donning rain gear is an expected routine and came with the confidence that our gear would do its job. This rain also came as a reminder that the sunny holiday touring in Seville and Marbella the previous week was over. Glen and I hunted together (2:1) in 2013, but would be teamed with our own guides on this trip. We stopped for breakfast on our way to the hunting area and made a quick stop to check zero on our rifles. I was using Bruno's custom .300 Winchester Magnum (long story on how I ended up borrowing a rifle, but had something to do with a move to Norcal!) Although rain blurred Glen's Zeiss optics a bit, Glen's guide Robert reported "Dead on" as we've both come to consistently appreciate from our Blaser rifles. With a hasty, but sincere hand shake and 'good luck' we split up to each locate a Ronda Ibex billy.

Bruno, my local guide Antonio and I loaded into Bruno's Mercedes Benz SUV (first time I'd hunted from a Mercedes!) to start looking for Ibex. We spotted a few nannies as we drove through the area, as well as several Red Deer does, but no billys. After about an hour, we drove through a steep canyon to area where Antonio had recently seen a large billy. As we passed under a large oak tree, Antonio saw a group of about ten ibex that included the billy we were looking for. Bruno and Antonio quickly verified his size and age class and told



Darryl Williams, Ronda ibex

me he was a good mature animal. One well placed shot from Bruno's custom .300 Winchester Magnum and Ibex number three was mine! Bruno told me that in addition to being the smallest of the Spanish Ibex, the Ronda also is the smallest population, which usually means it takes multiple days to find a good billy. I shot mine on day one, 1.5 hours into the hunt. I'd rather be lucky than good any day. Glen's hunt was a bit more challenging.

Glen's Ronda Ibex

The rain seemed to separate the hunter from the hunted. Not just physically, as no game was to be seen, but intellectually as well. Apparently Spanish Ibex score a percentile or two above me on IQ testing as the Ibex had the wherewithal to avoid the rain and I unabashedly trudged along. I made no assumptions of my guides potential test scores as they were obviously smart enough to know that the conversion rate from dollars to Euros was in their favor.

Mother Nature seemed to enjoy teasing me with a slowing of the rain or a ray of sunlight cast on the canyon walls. As I removed a layer she would resume her role with a fresh downpour and gale force winds. Lunch was Spartan by traditional Spanish hunting standards; no blood sausage or Jamon Iberico, nor Manchego cheese. Most importantly, considering the conditions, Robert had forgotten the bota bag and its anticipated liquid refreshments. Hey, its Spain people!

I cannot remember when the text message was sent or which tree I was huddled under. It did, however, come with good news. The picture of Darryl with a beautiful Ronda Ibex lightened the current



Glen Pyne, Ronda ibex

environmental conditions and I could not have been happier for him. Well done!

Each time the rain increased we found cover beneath a tree. Respite from the rain offered a chance at reflection. The three of us counted the annular rings on Darryl's Ronda. Nine or ten? No matter he was beautiful. The terrain was rugged as expected. Darryl and Bruno had big smiles as expected. Then it became apparent. Where is the rain gear? (Clearly the bad weather affected Glen's vision – I am wearing rain gear in the photo and it was pouring!) Okay, when was this picture taken? 1100 hours? It came through at 1600 hours. For the past six hours Darryl and company have been raising a glass and I am covered in mud!

The hills were steep and slick from the rain. There were no shadows to judge time, but light was fading. I resisted the urge to call it a day and raise a glass myself. I suppose the billies were tired of the rain too. They had started to move. At least 4 of them did. A group across the canyon had not noticed us and were fortuitously moving toward us. Robert called the range – 223 yards. I liked that range as much as the .308 cartridge.

It was dark when we packed my Ronda back to the truck and it was warm and dry when we all raised a glass to two nearly identical Ronda Ibex and the teams that supported us!

Since we were successful on our first day of hunting, we had two full days for sightseeing. We spent the first day in Ronda visiting the oldest Bullfighting Ring in Spain, touring a farm that raises bulls for the ring, and finally visiting the town of Cuevas del Sol y de la Sombra. This quaint town has restaurants and shops literally built into caves! The next day we traveled to the hunting area for Southeastern Ibex. Glen Bruno and I loaded up the Mercedes and headed to Orgiva to check zero on our rifles before checking into the hotel for the night.

The next morning we woke to an incredibly windy day. Again we split up, Glen with Robert and me with Bruno, to find our Southeastern Ibex. This hunt was very different from the Ronda Ibex. For starters, my group included three vehicles and a total of seven members. I had plenty of eyes looking for my billy!

We arrived at the first area and immediately found a group of ibex with a good billy. Four of us split off from the group to stalk into position. One of the Spaniards was carrying a very large target rifle attached to a backpack-style sling. That rifle was huge and must have weigh 20 pounds. Since I was the only hunter, I wondered why he was carrying that thing around...I found out later in the day. We climbed up hill to get the advantage, but the ibex gave us the slip. We never saw them again.

During the day, we visited a number of other areas in search of a good billy. Although we saw ibex in nearly every location, we never found what we were looking for. At one point, the local guide received a call from the town baker telling him he had seen a large billy up the road from where we were glassing. Bruno told me it's very common for hunters to become friends with the baker since he works all night and travels home early in the morning...often spotting game on his way. We found the billy he told us about but he wasn't up to Bruno's standards.

Late in the afternoon, we moved to another hunting area near the town of Alcazar. We hiked down to a large canyon and started glassing. Across the canyon I could see the ruins of a large ranch house and terraces that Bruno estimated at over 800 years old. It is amazing to think that the Moors ruled Spain



Darryl's Southeastern ibex

for 800 years – we think ancient history is a couple of hundred in the U.S. We immediately found more ibex, but the wind was fierce. We moved down the canyon to get out of the wind and settled to glass until dark. We saw numerous billies, but not the one.

With about 30 minutes of shooting light remaining, Bruno spotted a shooter and told me to use Enrique's rifle because he was concerned about a cross-canyon shot in the strong wind conditions we were experiencing. Now I knew why they were packing that thing around all day. Enrique is the 6-time Spanish National Long-range Shooting Champion and his rifle, affectionately named Sputnik, is a .338 Lapua with a massive bull barrel, huge scope, and target stock. I told Bruno I was nervous about using the rifle since I'd never fired it, but he told me not to worry.

Enrique got me set up prone with a sand bag rest and I settled in for the shot. After the billy stopped at around 400 yards, I squeezed off the shot and was horrified to see the impact 10 feet high! After a few tense moments that seemed like an eternity, the ibex stopped again and I squeezed off shot number two...10 feet high again! At this point Bruno knew something was wrong and told Enrique to check the rifle. It turned out that Enrique had been shooting at 850 yards the day before my hunt and neglected to dial the scope down. By this time, my nerves were shot! I've just missed the last ibex I need to complete my Grand Slam – twice - with the 6-time Spanish National Long-range Shooting Champion and four of his friends watching.

Fortunately the billy stopped again and I was able to knock him down, but the scope adjustment still wasn't quite right and he quickly got to his feet. One more adjustment and he was down for good! He tumbled down the steep mountain for what seemed like an eternity and I was sure his horns would break in the fall. As we were almost out of light we opted to come back the next morning for the recovery.

Glen's SE Ibex

Rain gave way to ferocious winds the morning of our hunt near Orgiva. I tried to calculate windage, wind speed and ballistic coefficients for various anticipated ranges – Impossible! Too much risk. I would have to wait for the right combination of actual wind and range. No guessing.

The only guessing that morning would be 'heads or tails'. Darryl called heads. Bad choice. The day before he chose heads and I won the bigger suite at the hotel. This time heads cost him the opportunity at the "big one" near the highway. Or did it? I never saw the big boy, but I did see a lot of diapers cast along the highway. What was I thinking? You don't get an easy day just because you had a hard one. Time to head for the hills.

Hills? Ibex live in mountains! It was tough hiking in ibex territory. Thankfully no rain, but the wind was incessant. My head was dizzy, not from altitude, but because I couldn't stop calculating windage. I just prayed that the moment I spotted my ibex the wind would ease up.

338 yards – I found a good spot to 'build my house'. I had time as he did not know I was there. I was rock

solid. He was beautiful. He stood on an outcropping surveying his territory. Even the wind was cooperating. Robert and I were in agreement that this billy would do.

The billy was patient. Robert was patient. I was patient. I dry fired at least ten times. Not that I needed it, but Robert needed confirmation that this billy was a shooter. I dry fired more. We all waited more. 'We could do better' was the message on What's App. I dry fired more. The billy enjoyed his view.

Views were exponential in these mountains, but opportunity was inverse. Time is linear and we were nearing the end point of shootable light. Wind good, light good. Billy spotted. He was in a group of 6 – leading his ladies to bed. With my scope set to SAAM shooting school's calculated 'Hunter Zero', I didn't need a range calculation as I was set to take any game from zero to 260 yards and he was clearly within that range.

I stayed on him as he moved; this time impatient. He stopped. I was patient. He moved; I was impatient. I asked for permission to shoot. It was not given. What's App? What the hell! He went out of site and we tried to cut him off. He stood on a ridge a step away from life. He was in my cross hairs as I tried to be patient.

We raised a toast that night to patience!

Back to Darryl

Bruno actually found my ibex with his drone! It was very cool to use technology in that way to assist in the recovery. We worked our way up the canyon for about half a mile, crossed over to the other side and found my ibex at the bottom. Although animals had eaten most of his right side, his right horn only had one small chip. We took pictures, packed him out and went to a friend of Bruno's partridge farm for lunch. What a feast! We had jamon, cheese, bread, mussels, and beans with shrimp. Oh and several cold beers!



Glen's Southeastern Ibex



Darryl's Ballarean Boc

We spent the next day touring Granada. We walked through Alhambra, shopped, ate a snack in a traditional Hookah Bar, had dinner and enjoyed a Flamenco show. After a full day we retired to hotel bar where the celebration continued. The next morning we were back at the Granada airport for our flight to Mallorca to hunt Balearian Boc.

After checking into the hotel, our guide Juan picked us up to check zero on our rifles. I was using borrowed rifle #3, a Yugoslavian made .270 with double set triggers and a large object lense scope mounted in high mounts. After properly mounting the rifle, I was only able to see through half the scope due to the height. Fortunately, I brought my butt saddle that when installed provided a perfect sight picture. Next challenge – no ammo. Juan had to drive home to get it. When he returned, he handed three rounds of 150 grain Remington Core-locked ammo in the greenest brass you've ever seen – they must have been in that leather ammo belt for years. Well, I couldn't get better than a 3-inch group at 100 yards with that rifle so I hoped the Boc would be close.

The next morning we headed out – late – because Juan's dog got out and ran off. This was the first hunt of our trip that we hunted together and it was a nice change of pace. We eventually arrived in the hunting area that doubles as a recreation area for mountain bikers and hikers. We actually had a group of them walk by us on the road while we were evaluating a Boc. I was able to take a nice Boc at about 75 yards – well inside the error margin for the rifle. Glen took his Boc later that afternoon at about 200 yards. We were successful on all three animals on the first day of each hunt...it doesn't get better than that! Cassie and Caroline were still out shopping so I asked them to pick up some Cuban cigars for a celebration later that evening.

After another fantastic meal, we returned to the



Glen's Ballarean Boc

hotel. We sat out in a little courtyard and drank wine, smoke cigars and savored the time we spent in this wonderful country with great people and an exceptional hunting tradition. The next morning we parted ways – separately traveling to Barcelona for a couple more days of shopping and eating!

GET READY!
19TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER
AND BANQUET
APRIL 24, 2021

A THANKSGIVING CAPRA HUNT

by Ben Gordon, Distinguished Life Member

This last November 24th, after months of anticipation, my wife, Tina, and I were aboard a Lufthansa airliner headed to Geneva, Switzerland. The reason for the trip, or I should say the main reason, was a planned hunt through Joe Jakab of Point Blank Hunts for Alpine Ibex. A couple weeks before our departure Joe contacted me with an opportunity to hunt Kri Kri Ibex on a short notice available tag. I accepted the opportunity for the Kri Kri, and made plans with Joe to also go to Romania for unfinished business and collect a Carpathian Chamois which I was unsuccessful on an earlier hunt in 2014. So, my hunt quickly went from a single species hunt to a three species capra hunt!

Arriving in Switzerland, Joe meet us at the airport and we hopped on a train to the town St. Maurice. We were joined for dinner by Philippe Dubois, who would be my guide for Alpine Ibex. Philippe is also the local head game manager. Leaving at 6 am the next morning was not easy with the jet lag still in full effect, but off we went to an area that borders France above Lake Geneva. As we started our ascent up the Alps, we spotted three smaller Ibex near the bottom of the mountain. This was a good sign the animals may be low due to incoming storms. The temperature was a brisk 28 degrees with clear skies, but there was a big change coming with heavy snows forecasted which put the pressure on us to harvest in one day. Part way up the hill more Ibex were spotted near the top, so there went our hope of all animals being near the bottom! After hiking to near the top of the mountain, a group of five billies was spotted, and a stalk ensued. Two of the billies were good mature goats, we just had to make sure which one was better. A decision was made and we moved into position to shoot, but when lying prone on the hillside to shoot uphill, I kept sliding off the hill! Finally Joe got below me and held me in position for the shot. The animal fell and slid an estimated 500 yards down the steep terrain. After reaching him, I was relieved to see no damage had been done. The area was so steep that taking pictures was a real challenge with no chance of any "skyline" photos. The billy was aged at 10 ½ years old with good mass and average length. Philippe Dubois is a true gentleman and an absolute pleasure to hunt with. The next day was spent touring St. Maurice and checking out the Christmas Fair in Montreux along the Lake Geneva shoreline.



Ben Gordon, Kri Kri Ibex

The following morning we boarded the train back to Geneva and caught a flight to Athens, Greece. Our destination was Atalanti Island to hunt the Kri Kri Ibex. Most Capra hunters are aware of the hunting on Sapientza Island, but my permit was for Atalanti. The Ibex are undisputedly larger on Sapientza, but tags are very difficult to get with only around 20 given each year for both Islands and the mainland, so I was just happy to be able to hunt this bucket list Ibex anywhere! We were met at the airport in Athens by Paul Skalidis, a partner in Greek Mountain Hunting, and his guide Petra. That evening we all enjoyed a traditional Greek seafood meal at our hotel in the lovely town of Livanates along the North Euboean Gulf, with plans laid out for our hunt the next day. Leaving the hotel at 7 am the next morning, we were driven to the boat dock for our short 15 minute boat ride to the island under clear skies and warm temperatures. At the dock, I was able to meet the other hunter for the day which turned out to be well known International hunter Bruce Keller. After arriving at the Island we received our permit from the head of the Greek Forestry, and were transported by tractor to our hunting stands for the morning hunt. Hunting for Ibex on Atalanti commences at 8am and ends around 2pm on hunting days. The hunting is done from brush stands constructed in the vegetation along the major game trails. All hunting is done with smooth bore shotguns and open sights only, and I was using a very nice Benelli with a custom barrel and very good buckhorn sights. Bruce took the top of the hill stand with his guide, then Petra and I were dropped

at a stand overlooking the far side of the island. After sitting a short time a small herd of Ibex came into view, but no mature males were in the group. A few other groups came by, with some animals bedding 30 yards from us for about an hour! Petra pointed out some Ibex along the shoreline around a quarter mile away, and one billy was a good mature one! It took some time, but finally the group made it up the trail to our stand, and with a slow and steady motion I was able to get the shotgun in position for the shot without spooking the animals. When I pulled the trigger the animals were only 25 yards away! The billy ran off like he wasn't wounded, but I knew the sights were on the vitals when I fired. No blood was found and I was no longer confident of my shot. At 1:30 Paul and the Island caretaker arrived with the tractor to retrieve us. We all took a walk the direction the Ibex went after the shot, and in a short distance Paul found a speck of blood! Soon, more blood was found and then the Ibex piled up in the thick brush! I must add that the brush is so thick and tall on Atalanti, there is no way you can spot and stalk these extremely small Ibex and hence the brush stands to hunt from. After pictures and trophy care, we were transported back to the dock where we celebrated a unique hunting experience, and my 64th birthday with another wonderful Greek seafood meal!



Ben Gordon, Alpine Ibex

The following morning we loaded into a van, which our old friend Nicusor Cirstea drove from Romania, and headed off on a road trip through Macedonia and Serbia to hunt Romania. With one overnight stay in the town of Nis, Serbia, we arrived in Targu Jiu, Romania, on December 1st to pursue Carpathian Chamois. At breakfast the next morning, my guide Cornel met me at the hotel, and after the proper licensing paper work was done we left for the area of the Carpathian Mountains chosen for the days hunt. The morning was cold with snow squalls off and on,

and a light dusting on the frozen ground. The trees had lost all their leaves, which was great for visibility, but made for hazardous walking conditions! Cornel led us down a ridge that plunged off steeply on both sides with many sheer rock cliffs we studied with our binos. Hunting down for Chamois was another new experience for me, but I knew we had to go back up at the end of the day. Many Chamois were spotted, but no shot was presented for us. Once we dropped off the ridge near its end, Chamois were spotted above us and we scrambled to get in position. While doing this a very large rock flew down between Cornel and I and we both thought more Chamois were above us. Instead, a very large Romanian Brown Bear was the culprit and was only a few yards above us! The bear immediately scampered away as soon as he had a good look at us. Once this was over, we focused back on the Chamois which had gone to the bottom and crossed to the other side of the canyon. Once the Chamois were located again, a good rock was found for a rest and the Blaser borrowed from Cornel hit its mark. The animal turned out to be a very large female with long horns and the biggest body I've ever seen for a Chamois. After pictures and field care of the trophy, Cornel and I enjoyed a meal of salami, cheese, bread, grapes and apples then the work began of going back up the mountain. The journey back to the truck was nothing short of treacherous. Frozen ground with six inches of leaves topped off with a layer of snow in some of the steepest terrain I've ever hunted was near disaster with almost every step!

The next morning we headed for Bucharest and toured the old downtown area which has over 200 restaurants and bars. Tina and I, along with Cirstea, enjoyed a meal at Vlad The Impaler's, better known as Dracula, medieval restaurant in the old downtown. The next morning Cirstea dropped us at the Bucharest airport for our journey home and it just so happened to be our 39th wedding anniversary. The Lufthansa crew on our flight presented us with a bottle of red wine, red roses and gifts. A very fitting end to another European adventure!

**JUST HOW LONG IS THIS
SOCIAL DISTANCING
SUPPOSED TO LAST?**

**My wife keeps trying to
come in the house.**

2020 ANNUAL CAWSF BANQUET

VIRTUAL EVENT

*by Donald C. Martin
Fundraiser Co-Chair*

Show season and Dinner season are some of my favorite times of year. Each is an opportunity to get together with other “sheep enthusiasts” and share a cold beverage, catch up with old friends, make new friends, and raise money for wildlife.

This has been an unusual and challenging year as we have all been introduced to “Corona-19”. I’m sure all of you have been inundated by the 24-hour news cycle about Covid-19 so I don’t care to talk much more about it, other than to say that all of us have been impacted by this pandemic and the daily inconveniences of “shelter in place” pale in comparison to the grief of those that have lost friends and family during this disease event. A friend told me, “Our parents/grand-parents were asked to go to War. We were asked to stay home.” We will get through this and, in time, return to normalcy.

In this time of “social distancing” many Wild Sheep Foundation state chapters have been impacted. Most events have been cancelled. I was lucky enough to attend the Iowa chapter dinner in February and that was the last of the Wild Sheep Foundation events to be held live and in person. Due to the constraints of pandemic lockdown, some chapters, including our own, went “virtual”. I’m glad to inform you that our efforts were rewarded and I personally want to thank our entire Board of Directors for their efforts during these unusual circumstances in helping to switch gears and go “virtual.” I’d also like to thank the nearly 100 of you that registered for our online hunting auction and the hundreds of you that watched our auctioneer, John Bair, live-stream our auction via onlinehuntingauctions.com.

In the online auction our 31 items were able to net our chapter roughly \$40,000. We were able to set some new records on some of our donations, the most notable being the Alaska State Bison Permit which sold for a record-setting \$38,000. In addition, our California State Governor’s Permit for Desert Bighorn of the Cady Mountains unit sold for \$62,500. Good luck to those generous hunting conservationists this fall/winter. In addition, we were able to award the random drawing winners for the Stone Sheep hunt with Aaron Florian’s Yukon Stone Outfitters and the MOA .300 PRC Extreme Ascent Rifle courtesy of Bob Beck of MOA Rifles and Extreme Outer Limits TV. Congratulations to our winners, Mitchell Strobl of Texas and Duane Kramer of Washington, respectively. We thank you both and our sponsors for supporting California’s wild sheep.

In all, even without a live event, we were still able to net nearly \$57,000 in total towards “Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountains” in California. Thank you all.

But there may still be more? Our live event at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento has been postponed until June 27. We may still be able to raise even more for California’s wildlife. By the time many of you read this, we will likely have made a final decision if we can meet the social distancing and group gathering guidelines and continue with our efforts. If we have not done so already, we will notify you via email the details regarding our event.

Thank all of you for your patience and understanding during these trying times and stay safe.

**THANK YOU TO OUR SPECIAL
FIREARM DONOR!**

M•O•A RIFLES



*PUTTING AND KEEPING
WILD SHEEP ON THE
MOUNTAINS
IN CALIFORNIA!*

HABITAT SELECTION BY BIGHORN SHEEP: IMPLICATIONS FOR CONSERVATION IN THE SAN RAFAEL MOUNTAINS, CALIFORNIA

by *Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D.*

Reintroductions have played an important role in the restoration of bighorn sheep to historically occupied areas. Although post-translocation assessments are expensive and labor-intensive, such information is important for informing future management decisions.

Nonetheless, increasing responsibilities among wildlife biologists working in state or federal agencies, declining operating budgets, and shifting political priorities often have precluded the timely assessment, analysis, or publication of results despite what appear to have been successful management actions. That is precisely the situation with bighorn sheep reintroduced into the San Rafael Mountains, Ventura County, in 1985 and 1987. Those animals were monitored closely over four years following the reintroduction, but ever-shifting responsibilities, changes in departmental priorities, and increasingly diverse workloads precluded timely publication of the evaluation effort. That shortcoming was resolved, however, in January of this year with the long-delayed publication of my research on habitat selection. The California Wild Sheep Foundation is acknowledged for funding publication costs for the professional paper upon which this article is based.

Bighorn sheep were extirpated from the San Rafael Mountains by about 1915. Factors contributing to extirpation remain unconfirmed, but potentially included illegal hunting and competition with domestic livestock and, almost certainly, respiratory disease caused by pathogens contracted from domestic sheep. In 1971 and 1972 my friend and mentor, the late Richard Weaver of the California Department of Fish and Game, conducted several overflights and on-the-ground evaluations of areas potentially suitable for the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the San Rafael Mountains. Following those surveys and additional in-depth analyses, areas proximate to San Rafael Peak and Cobblestone Mountain were determined to be locations at which animals could be reestablished in that range.

As a result of Weaver's efforts and the enthusiasm and cooperation of wildlife biologists from the U.S. Forest Service with whom I worked closely, I was assigned to implement the translocation of bighorn sheep from the San Gabriel Mountains to the San Rafael Mountains. Twenty-one bighorn sheep (16 , 5) were captured in December 1985 in Cattle Canyon, Los Angeles County, and released at San Rafael Peak (34°37'25" N, 119°00'06" W), about 100 km to the west of Cattle Canyon. Fifteen additional bighorn sheep (11 , 4) were captured in January 1987 in Cattle Canyon and also released at San



Rafael Peak. Aerial telemetry locations ($n = 757$) from 4 and 14 individual bighorn sheep were used ($\bar{x} = 42$ locations, $SD = 15.8$, $Range = 11-63$) to develop models that would be useful in the management of the newly founded population and its habitat.

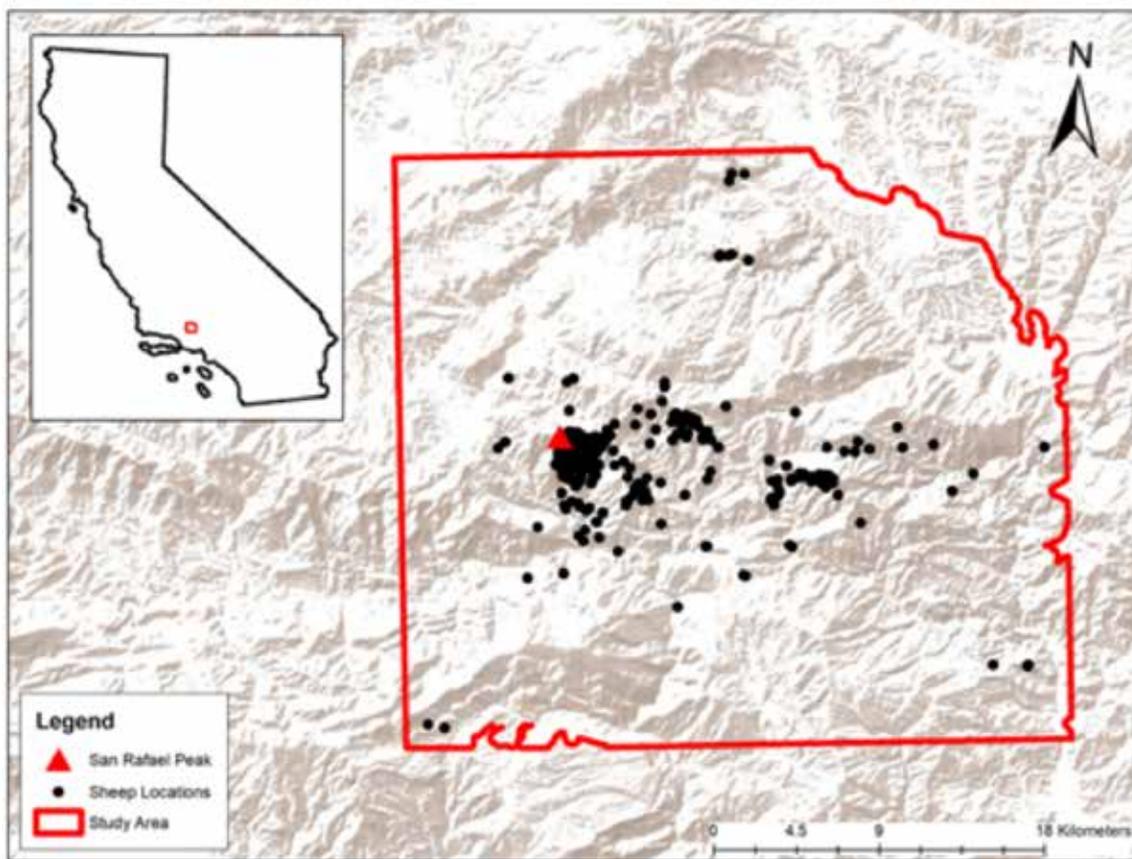
Surprisingly, there was little support for the influence of sex on habitat selection by males and females, but there was variation in the way bighorn sheep selected habitat across seasons. In combination, males and females selected higher elevations, steeper slopes, and more precipitous terrain than were available across the landscape. During all seasons, individuals selected areas closer to water, areas further from roads, and habitat patches that had burned recently. The strength of selection or avoidance varied by season, and some variables shifted from selection to avoidance as a function of season. Bighorn sheep selected southeastern slopes during summer and more northeastern slopes during spring, but there was no influence of fall or winter on selection of aspect.

Seasonal variation in selection for vegetation type was most pronounced in fall and summer. During fall, bighorn sheep selected areas with greater percentages of conifer cover, xeric chaparral, and mesic chaparral compared to summer, but selected for areas with lower concentrations of oak woodland, conifer cover, mesic chaparral, and xeric chaparral during summer. Additionally, an index to habitat diversity did not appear in any seasonal model, indicating that bighorn sheep did not select areas with higher diversities of vegetation types over areas with high percentages of specific vegetation types.

Bighorn sheep translocated to the San Rafael Mountains selected habitat in a manner similar to those occupying the San Gabriel Mountains, which was not surprising. The absence of sex as a significant factor in habitat selection, however, was surprising given that males generally range more widely than do females; females generally select areas most likely to enhance safety for themselves and offspring, while males seek areas in which to maximize nutrient intake to ensure they are competitive during the mating season, a phenomenon commonly referred to as sexual segregation. Absence of an effect of sex on habitat selection, however, may be explained by several factors, among which are a lack of familiarity with the reintroduction site in that monitoring occurred for a period of time inadequate to allow segregation by habitat to develop into a regular pattern, or during a period of extended exploratory movements by bighorn sheep as they adapted to their new location. Other alternative explanations include the level of precision associated with the aerial

telemetry data upon which the analysis was based, and the small sample size of males, either of which could have precluded the possibility of detecting differences in habitat selection by males and females. If additional research on habitat selection in the San Rafael Mountains occurs, it is likely that the long-term presence of this population, larger samples of both males and females, and the use of high-precision telemetry collars incorporating geographic positioning system technology, will reveal intersexual differences in habitat selection. This behavioral trait is characteristic of bighorn sheep and most other of sexually dimorphic polygynous ruminants during a large portion of the year.

Bighorn sheep clearly selected areas that had burned more recently than available across the landscape, a finding that was consistent with earlier results from the San Gabriel Mountains. There also was a strong seasonal effect on selection during winter, spring and fall that was consistent with habitat use by ruminants dependent on open terrain



The San Rafael Mountains are in central Ventura County, California, and are the home of the westernmost population of bighorn sheep in the state. The area outlined represents the landscape in which habitat selection was evaluated, and the black circles are aerial telemetry locations of bighorn sheep used in the analyses.



Following aerial transport to San Rafael Peak, bighorn sheep were held in a temporary enclosure for several hours prior to being released in 1985 and 1987. Vern Bleich (L; California Department of Fish and Game) and the late Steve Holl (R; US Forest Service) are shown releasing animals from the enclosure in 1985.

and attempting to obtain the best available forage, as are bighorn sheep and Dall's sheep throughout their respective distributions. Chaparral is a fire-adapted plant community, and bighorn sheep rely on recently burned areas both for nutritious forage and for openness, the latter being a key factor in detecting and evading predators.

Collectively, bighorn sheep selected areas closer to water when compared to random points and selected recently burned areas during all seasons, and the importance of topographic attributes is clear. These results are consistent with reports from elsewhere in the transverse ranges of California, and provide useful information with which to evaluate the suitability of additional areas for reintroductions. Moreover, seasonal effects on habitat selection and resulting selection probabilities have important implications for the design or timing of aerial surveys, or for the interpretation of aerial survey results.

The results clearly demonstrate the importance of the role of fire to bighorn sheep in the San Rafael Mountains, and provide a platform upon which more complex models of habitat selection can be based. Managing for habitat burned at intervals of ≤ 15 years,

and that is selected by bighorn sheep is inconsistent, however, with the natural variation in fire-return intervals in coastal chaparral ecosystems. Moreover, fire-return intervals of < 15 -years increase the spread of exotic herbaceous plants. The careful implementation of prescribed fire to simulate a more natural fire regime, however, will enhance habitat for bighorn sheep, and must receive serious consideration for the reintroduced population to remain viable.

Legislation in the form of the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act (Public law 102-301) was introduced by seemingly well-intentioned politicians that had not considered the ramifications of wilderness designation for the management of early successional chaparral, a vegetation type that is important to many species of wildlife. Passage of that legislation by congress currently presents serious obstacles to the use of prescribed fire in the San Rafael Mountains. As a result, administrators now must consider action necessary to maintain a tangible resource—habitat suitable for bighorn sheep and other wildlife dependent on early successional chaparral—and evaluate it in the context of the sociological, political, and other intangible (e.g., spiritual) 'benefits' of wilderness, which invariably receive

undue consideration from the majority of risk-averse bureaucrats. Current fire management strategies and the constraints imposed by uninformed politicians clearly have jeopardized habitat management options available to benefit bighorn sheep and other species dependent on early successional stages of chaparral vegetation in the San Rafael Mountains. Unfortunately, the same situation also applies to other chaparral-dominated areas occupied by bighorn sheep in the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains.

The San Rafael Mountains also may provide a refugium for bighorn sheep adapted specifically to the relatively mesic habitats typical of California's transverse ranges and, thereby, become a source of reintroduction stock should an outbreak of respiratory disease among bighorn sheep inhabiting the San Gabriel or San Bernardino mountains result in a catastrophic loss. In the absence of a strategy to restore a natural fire regime, however, the utility of the San Rafael Mountains as a refugium for a unique ecotype of bighorn sheep remains in question.

Editor's Note: Dr. Vern Bleich is an independent wildlife biologist who worked 34 years with the California Department of Fish and Game. He currently resides in Bismarck, North Dakota, but remains active in the conservation and management of bighorn sheep and other large mammals inhabiting the arid landscapes of the western United States. Vern is Research Professor at the University of Nevada Reno, and serves as an advisor to several conservation organizations, including the California Wild Sheep Foundation. In 2019, Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt appointed Vern to the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board, on which he represents wildlife conservation interests. Persons interested in reading the peer-reviewed publication upon which this brief article is based can request a copy from Vern (vcbleich@gmail.com).

NEW WILDLIFE BRANCH CHIEF AT CDFW



Scott Gardner has been selected as the new Wildlife Branch Chief.

Scott was born and raised in the Adirondack Mountain Region of New York State, where he completed his B.S. in Biology with a study option in Ecology at the State University of New York. He had an interest in moving west and spent 8 years in Idaho where he worked for Idaho Fish and Game and earned his M.S. in Wildlife Resources at the University of Idaho.

Scott began his career with the Department in the Wildlife Management Division in 1998 and has been in the Wildlife Program for his 22-year career ever since. He has been the supervisor of the Upland Game Program in the Wildlife Branch for the past 7 years and took on an acting assignment as Nongame Wildlife Program Manager for one year. Scott chaired the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Sage-Grouse Technical Committee and has been a key figure in developing sage-grouse conservation for the past 20 years.

He received a Special Thanks for Achieving Results Award from the United States Fish and Wildlife Agencies in 2015 for his long-term efforts working with the Nevada Department of Wildlife and a diverse range of stakeholders to develop and implement conservation actions as an alternative to listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Scott brings a diverse background in traditional and forward-thinking scientifically based approaches to wildlife conservation that will be a great asset to the Wildlife Branch and Department in these challenging times.



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All Distinguished Life Members receive a PELOTON 240 VEST from Kuiu emblazoned with the CA WSF logo.

CA WSF DIRECTOR CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES FOR THE 2020 ELECTION SLATE

Listing is Alphabetical by Last Name



MIKE J. BOREL, Alamo, CA

Founding Member, Current VP, Newsletter Editor and Facilitator of the CA Sheep Summits (number XXVII is scheduled the coming month) for CA WSF. He is a Past President & Secretary of the organization. Mike is a Principal in the Context Network, which is a full-service business consultancy assisting agricultural businesses with strategy, management and insights. Mike has lived across the USA, in France and Australia.

A hunter his whole life, Mike is an active supporter of wildlife conservation, hunting rights and the Second Amendment. He's been a Director of WSF, a Director and VP of SCI, and an officer and board member in three SCI Chapters - in addition to CA WSF. He believes political action is necessary to preserve our hunting heritage and 2nd Amendment rights, and is an active campaigner, phone caller and letter writer.

He confesses to being severely afflicted with "Alpine Addiction - Sheep Fever" and has taken 42 of the worlds Ovis and Capra species. Mike invites your call (925-937-4180) or email (mike.borel@contextnet.com) with any questions.

MEMBERSHIP – FOUNDING MEMBER, DISTINGUISHED LIFE



JIM FITZGERALD, Rolling Hills Estate, CA

Jim Fitzgerald is an avid hunter, outdoorsman, and strong conservationist.

Jim has organized, supported, and led various conservation organizations including; National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and California Foundation for North American Wild Sheep for a cumulative 35 years experience. He is a Distinguished Life member California Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF), Life member of the National Rifle Association, Chadwick Ram Society member Wild Sheep Foundation, and is currently serving as a CA WSF board member and as a banquet committee member.

Jim is a retired Battalion Chief from the Ca. Department of Forestry and served 32 years with CALFIRE. He has extensive knowledge in the use of prescribed fire for wildlife habitat improvement. This experience will provide a positive relationship in working with land management agencies for improving wild sheep habitat should that opportunity occur.

Jim has been married to his wife Susan for 31 years and they have two children. They have a small ranch in Central California at the base of the Sierras and raise horses and mules for packing into the high country.

Jim would like to again serve on the CA WSF board to help provide the hunting and outdoor experiences that he has enjoyed for future generations.

MEMBERSHIP – DISTINGUISHED LIFE



BEN GORDON, Princeton, CA

Ben is a fifth generation Northern California rancher currently involved in commercial rice production and wildlife habitat management. His operation also includes a commercial duck hunting club managing hunting opportunities for 70 plus hunters each year and managing pasture land for cattle with upland habitat for pheasant, turkey and blacktail deer. He currently serves as director on two different mutual water company boards and has served on several committees involving farm cooperatives, banking, and county fish and game commissions.

Ben is a lifetime member of WSF, Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn, SCI, and also holds memberships in RMEF, NBU, Calif. Deer Assn., MDF, NWTF, and NRA. Married with two grown children, he and his family hunt many western states each year and has completed his collection of the four species of North American wild sheep.

MEMBERSHIP – DISTINGUISHED LIFE



MAGGI KOUFFELD, Anderson, CA

Maggi Kouffeld has been a lifelong hunter that is dedicated to wildlife conservation and ensuring the future of hunting traditions. She is a quiet champion of R3 and has mentored numerous youth and women in the outdoors with turkey and big game hunting including 5 years of mentoring NWTJ Jakes. Maggi is an accomplished solo hunter and has hunted throughout the Western and Midwestern United States as well as Kyrgyzstan, South Africa, New Zealand, Tazmania, and Hungary for big game, small game and waterfowl species. She is a Fire Captain for Cal Fire and has worked throughout the state to protect lives, property and natural resources for the past 14 years. As a dedicated lifetime member of the California Wild Sheep Foundation she is committed to putting and keeping sheep on the mountain. Like many in the organization she has a deep personal interest in returning sheep to their range throughout the great state of California and would appreciate the opportunity to become more involved.

MEMBERSHIP – LIFE



ANDY MOECKEL, Petaluma, CA

My name is Andy Moeckel, I am a 5th generation California native to the SF Bay Area. I've been in love with hunting since I was a youth, hunting with my parents and grandparents. I've had a lot of amazing role models in my life and advocates for being involved in conservation instead of just talking about it. My grandfather Al Giddings played a lot of roles in this state's foundation of conservation and I can only hope to continue that passion in my own life. I've taught Hunters Education for coming up on 7 years. I've become more and more interested in the California wild sheep population and what I can do to help put and keep sheep back in the mountains of California..

MEMBERSHIP – 3 YEAR



DWIGHT ORTMANN, Fremont, CA

Dwight grew up six miles from the Canadian border in Northern Minnesota hunting and fishing. He is the President of a commercial construction/development/property management company in Redwood City and is married to Edie, an accomplished international hunter herself. Dwight is a dedicated conservationist with membership in many non-profit organizations. He is a life member of SCI, NRA and the Wild Sheep Foundation in addition to many other hunting groups. Dwight has been involved with SCI as well as CA WSF for more than 10 years, serving as the San Francisco Bay Area SCI President for six years and is currently serving on its Board of Directors. In addition, he is a Regional Representative for SCI. Dwight is also the Chairman for the Central Coast Chapter of Mule Deer Foundation and serves on the Board of Directors for the Mzuri Safari Club. He is a current Board member. He is, unfortunately, still a member of the "less than one" club. He brings a wealth of experience and capability.

MEMBERSHIP – LIFE



DON PRIEST, Reno, NV

Don's heritage in California began with his great, great grandfather as a homestead rancher in California's Central Coast in the 1860's. Don is an Actuary and a member of all three US actuarial societies, with a degree in Applied Mathematics and advanced degree in Statistics. He has his own underwriting agency Pacific Reinsurance Managers, underwriting reinsurance into a number of Syndicates at Lloyds of London. In addition, he provides actuarial/analytics consulting with his company Optium. Don is a member of and active conservation supporter through CA WSF, WSF, Safari Club, North American Versatile Hunting Dog Association, Ducks Unlimited and Trout Unlimited. Don is currently CA WSF's Secretary, Chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee and Chair of the Projects (Other than Water) Committee. He also currently sits on the Wild Sheep Foundation's Legislative Affairs Committee.

Don has been hunting his whole life, in the past fourteen years having harvested four North America sheep and Mountain Goat, as well as a number of sheep and ibex/goat species in Asia and Europe. He has also hunted other species in North America and Africa. He is also an active upland bird hunter, having competed with his three Large Munsterlanders. With such an active hunting life and strong supporter of wildlife conservation he looks forward to continue participation as a Board member of CAWSF in order to keep our lands and waterways conserved, populated with wildlife for hunters and non-hunters heritage and enjoyment.

MEMBERSHIP – DISTINGUISHED LIFE



PAUL SCHULTHEIS, Clovis, CA

My name is Paul Schultheis, I live in the Fresno/Clovis area and have been a lifelong resident of Central California. Having completed both an undergraduate and graduate degree in business administration at California State University Fresno, I currently own and operate multiple businesses in the central valley. My family includes my wife Shannon, daughter Hanna and son Colton.

I was introduced to big game hunting shortly after high school over 25 years ago and have spent the last several decades hunting throughout the Western United States. In 2017 good fortune turned my way at the CA WSF dinner and I was able to harvest my first ram, a Dall sheep, in the Wrangle Mountains of Alaska. My most memorable and favored moments in life are being outdoors hunting or fishing but most of all just being outdoors with those I love.

I have a passion for conservation and would love to give back more to the sheep community. I plan to commit to working and fighting for our rights as hunters and to do all we can do to preserve our

sheep in California. As well, I would like to ensure the generations that follow will have the same or better opportunity than I have had. I am a life member of the NRA and have served as treasurer for the local Friends of the NRA committee for the past ten years. I am also a Summit Life Member of the national Wild Sheep Foundation as well as a member of the Chadwick Ram Society.

I have very much enjoyed the last 18 months as a member of this board and look to continue doing good work in the future. This is why I am asking for your vote to help me help the sheep in taking on the role of director in 2020.

MEMBERSHIP – DISTINGUISHED LIFE



DARRYL WILLIAMS, Lincoln, CA

My name is Darryl Williams and I live in Lincoln, CA. I am a Distinguished Life Member of CA WSF, a Life Member of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, and a Wild Sheep Foundation Summit Life Member and Chadwick Ram Society Member. I am very proud to be a member of your Board of Directors and the work we have done over the last few years to grow our Chapter Membership, to make our annual banquet “the can’t miss conservation event” in California, and most importantly to improve habitat for our desert bighorn sheep. There’s plenty more to do and I’d like to help!

I would like to continue to serve the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation as a member of the Board of Directors. I believe that my organizational and business skills, coupled with my enthusiasm and work ethic, will make a positive impact on the organization and hope that you will give me the opportunity to continue to serve you. Should you have any questions about my

commitment to Wild Sheep, feel free to call me at (323) 333-2160 or email me at dtwilliams1959@aol.com.

MEMBERSHIP – DISTINGUISHED LIFE



SHAWN WOOD, Clovis, CA

I was born and raised in the small farming community of Dos Palos, CA. I attended California State University, Fresno where I obtained a BS in Ag. Business. I’m currently employed by the Wilbur-Ellis company as a pest control advisor. I also take responsibility of managing my family’s almond farming operation as a fourth generation farmer.

Big game hunting and wildlife conservation have always played a huge part of my life. And being able to give back has always been very important to me. I’m a life member of the NRA, WSF and CAWSF as well as an annual member in several other conservation organizations. One of my life highlights was being able to work as an assistant guide in the state of Alaska guiding Dall sheep along with several other species of game. I’ve been fortunate enough to be able to take three of the four species of North American Wild Sheep along with 19 species of North American Big Game.

I would be honored to serve again on the Board of Directors for CA WSF.

MEMBERSHIP – DISTINGUISHED LIFE



ZACK WALTON, Roseville, CA

If you told me a few years ago I’d be a sheep hunter, I would have called you a liar. But here I am... Over the past decade, I have become immersed in the lifestyle of mountain hunting and conservation through many different organizations—including WSF, CA Wild Sheep, Pope & Young and others. For years, I have been a life member and financial supporter of WSF and CA WSF. I have done the same for P&Y and currently sit on the conservation committee where I have solicited tens of thousands of dollars in donations and help make recommendations to the board for worthy grant applications for wildlife conservation programs.

As a member of the board of directors for CA WSF, I would continue my conservation efforts and learn from the many experienced members of our organization. At some point, everyone becomes interested in the betterment of wildlife species for future generations. I am glad that it happened

for me at a relatively young age and I have an opportunity to help for many years to come.

MEMBERSHIP – DISTINGUISHED LIFE

CA WSF 2020-2022 DIRECTORS BALLOT

The California Wild Sheep Foundation Nominating Committee is pleased to present eleven candidates for Board of Director positions. These positions are for two-year terms beginning July 1, 2020. We believe the candidate biographies on the prior pages will provide you with the input needed to vote; however, should you have additional questions feel free to contact me. You may also contact Beverly at the office (forthesheep@gmail.com or 650-472-3889 phone/fax) and she will forward information.

Renee Snider
Nominating Committee Chair 2020
reeneesnider@comcast.net

Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountains

VOTING FORM

This is the voting form (you may also receive this via email; please vote only by email or by using this form). You may vote for a total of eight candidates, including write-in votes.

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR VOTE

Your ballot must be received no later than 5 p.m. on June 30, 2020.
You may mail your ballot to the CA WSF office at:

CA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION
1620 Williams Hwy #151
Grants Pass, OR 97527

You may also fax to 650-472-3889. Or reply to the email sent to you to place your vote.

Vote no more than ONCE for each candidate (no cumulative voting). Vote for NO MORE THAN EIGHT candidates. Vote by reply e-mail or by fax (650-472-3889) or USPS no later than 5 p.m. on June 30, 2020.

CANDIDATES (Listed randomly)

- _____ Mike Borel
- _____ Zack Walton
- _____ Paul Schultheis
- _____ Dwight Ortmann
- _____ Shawn Wood
- _____ Andy Moeckel
- _____ Maggi Kouffeld
- _____ Don Priest
- _____ Ben Gordon
- _____ Jim Fitzgerald
- _____ Darryl Williams

Write in candidate: _____

Write in candidate: _____

CA FNAWS dba Ca Wild Sheep Foundation is a not-for-profit organization with the goal of KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN through conservation, education, and promotion of professional management to ensure generations to come are able to experience the phenomenal beauty of wild sheep. CAWSF tax identification number is 68-0481140.

CA WSF — 2019 in Review

CA WSF remains focused on activities related to desert bighorn sheep in California. *Our objective is to lead a collective, collaborative effort to achieve maximum sustainable populations of bighorn in as many areas of historical presence as possible.* And as quickly as possible!

In 2019 we continued expending our efforts to lead, support, influence, and raise money on behalf of wild sheep with our partners. Our collaborations with CDFW, the Mojave National Preserve, BLM, military bases in California, USFS, our sister organizations (Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep [SCBS] and Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn), Oregon State University, Washington State University, WSF and others has never been stronger. Most importantly, our membership remains committed to our goal of **Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountains** in California.

The GALAD project – the Give A Lamb a Drink initiative to more than double the carrying capacity of DBH in California – has progressed the state land leases, installed new Raincatcher systems, and continued repair and/or retrofitting older guzzlers. One of the most recent projects was the Acacia Project where GSCO/CA WSF partially funded and CA WSF members participated in construction of a new Raincatcher Wildlife Water System (two tank) on the USMC 29 Palms base. See photos of many projects throughout this issue. Our next installation was scheduled for early May 2020 but needed to be moved to later in the fall due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

We continue our work on creating a program of Drone Unit Surveys with a new organization, Overwatch Aero. They have better technology, including live streaming of the video feed from the drone. Drone surveys would provide a safer and most cost-effective survey routine if it is proven reliable to the CDFW sheep biologists. We are planning this year to complete a drone survey of the Marbles with a helicopter survey done at the same time requiring close coordination with CDFW and our drone partners.

Another exciting project is the “Deep Sheep” project. This project, begun in 2019 at the request of CDFW sheep biologist Paige Prentice, will allow “first pass digital ID” of sheep from the thousands of images collected during surveys and from trail cameras on the ground. The project, begun in 2019, should be com-

pleted in 2020. Once completed, additional work may be undertaken to broaden the application to deer, wild pigs, and other mammals.

We have recently submitted a draft plan for the San Gabriel Mountains Sheep Management Unit as an assist for the CDFW Biologists in the process toward opening this unit for bighorn sheep hunting. We still have many hurdles to vault before we can fully call it a success, but the first step is still often the biggest and most important.

We continue to actively participate in CDFW’s Big Game Management Account (BGMA) grant process and have applied for multiple grants each year. Unfortunately CDFW has not awarded any grants during the last 2 years.

CA WSF also continues to monitor possible problems (domestic sheep and goats in bighorn proximity, travel corridor impediments, etc.) and opportunities (mineral needs of bighorn, artificial intelligence for individual animal identification, etc.).

Since our founding, we have raised and invested over \$2 million for the benefit of wild sheep in California; and we are over \$500K in donations for GALAD. In addition, we, and our sister organization SCBS, have hosted a twice annual “Sheep Summit” each year. The CA Sheep Summit was initiated by CA WSF to bring together all stakeholders in the stewardship of bighorns in California. All parties involved in the CA Wild Sheep Summit believe we are achieving some great things. This group has become the guiding committee for bighorn sheep conservation in California. One of the major results of the Sheep Summit is the CDFW Bighorn Sheep Comprehensive Management Plan (BSCMP), and corresponding Herd Unit Plans. The most recent FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT for BIGHORN SHEEP HUNTING is available at <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=166100&inline>.

We **ARE** making a very positive difference! None of this would have been possible without the support of our members, SCBS, and WSF. Members are how we’ve accomplished so much and Members will be the reason we will accomplish even more in the years ahead!

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS!

Are you enjoying your newsletter? Having fun seeing all the photos and maybe dreaming of the time when you will draw a tag. Or maybe you hope you'll be the next member to get drawn for one of our special hunts. YOUR membership is what makes it happen and if you are an Annual (one year) member your membership may be about to expire. Check your mailing address on this magazine to see when your membership expires. If the year by your name says 2020 on it you are looking at your last magazine!

All annual memberships expire July 31. Renew TODAY in any one of the following ways:

- 1--Log onto the CAWSF web site at <http://www.cawsf.org/> and complete using a charge card or PayPal renewal. At this location you can also renew or join the Wild Sheep Foundation. By joining or renewing both you will have a small discount.
- 2--Return the membership form on page 43 with a check for \$40 by mail to the address on the form. Or use the form that is downloadable from the website.
- 3--Return the completed membership form with your charge card info by email or mail.

Note: If you renewed or joined after January 1, 2020, your membership is active until July 31, 2021.

Make it easy on yourself -- upgrade to a Life Membership for a one-time \$500 dues payment - or - if you are already a Life Member - upgrade to Distinguished Life Membership for a one time \$1000 dues payment. With either of these special commitments to wild sheep you'll be adding to the CA WSF Life Member Endowment.

CA WSF has an enviable record of major, positive impact on California wild sheep. Join these LIFE members and you can continue to help us build momentum and to multiply the difference we make!

Ralph E. Adams	Vernon C. Bleich	Edwin Charkowicz
Jack Ahart	Vince Bloom	Kern L. Chew
Daniel M. Alegre	Steven F. Boitano	Michael S. Chittim
C. Dennis Anderson	Mike Borel	James Coffrini
Donald B. Anderson	John Brelsford	Joe Colangelo
Terry B. Anderson	Michael Bright	David Combs
Brian Anderson	Paul A. Brisso	Frank D. Cox
Aaron Armstrong	Larry Brown	Cameron Civelli
Stanford Atwood	Matthew T. Burke	Ken Crother
Pamela Atwood	Richard Butler	Bill Cullins
Armen Avedissian	Don K. Callahan	Mark Dickson
Bruce Bardessonno	Robert S. Campbell (Deceased)	John M. Diedrich
Ray D. Barger	Ron Carey	Joe E. Diedrich
Peggy Barnett	Adam Casagrande	Bret Dismukes (Life Member #4)
Kenneth L. Barr	Michael Casey	Jim Dismukes (Life Member #6)
John M. Barritt	John Cavin	Krista Dismukes (Life Member #10)
Daniel Bartlett	Mark Celso	Natalie Dismukes (Life Member #9)
Derek Berry	Edwin Charkowicz	

Noah Dismukes (Life Member #7)	Ernest Holloway	Rod Miranda
John R. Drummond	J.Craig Holworthy	John Montelli
Eddy Dirk	Daryll Hosker	Bo Morgan
Jim R. Egan	Shad Hulse	Ken Morrill
Jim Egan	Kevin Hurley	James C. Mower
Brad Farrow	Scott Hushbeck	Tim Murray (Deceased)
Danny B. Ferguson	Brett Jefferson	Robert Lee Murry Jr.
Scott Finley	Micki Jefferson	Richard P. Musselman
Kenneth D. Fish	Cary Jellison	Glenn Napierskie (Deceased)
James Fitzgerald	Scott A. Jesseman	Gordon Ohanesian
Susan Fitzgerald	Larry J. Johns	Andrew Ohanesian
Randy C. Fortune	Carl E. Jacobson	Pat Oilar
Dan Fox	Bob Keagy	Dwight Ortmann
John C. Frazier, III	Jay Kellett	Edie Ortmann
Dallas Freeman	George C. Kerr	Richard Papapietro Jr.
Ronald S. Gabriel, MD	Maggi Kouffeld	S. Edward Parish
Will Garroutte	Duane Kramer	Rick Parker
Rick Garzoli	Butch Kufiak	Jeffrey J. Passanante
Dave German	Bill Kulungian	Jeremy Pechtel
Scott Gibson	Charles LaPorte	Jeff Peracchi
Anthony Gigliotti	David Le Fevre	Don Perrien
Steven Gingras	Bryan LeBlanc	John Pesticich
Don S. Giottonini, Jr. (Life Member #5)	Leon M. Lesicka	Matt Pesticich
Ben Gordon	Raymond Liden	Carl Phillips
Tina Gordon	Thomas Liming	Richard J. Pierce
Paul T. Goularte	John Locker	Dan Pocapalia
Eric Gould	Jimmy Low	Romeo Pompei, Jr.
L. Jack Graf (Deceased)	Brian MacDonald	William E. Poole (Deceased)
Tom Griffiths (Life Member #8)	Victor R. Manucso, Jr.	Elie Poore (Youth Life #2)
Damon Gross	Robert Manger	Don Powers
Jason Hairston (Deceased)	Robert C. Marshall	Don Priest
Chad Haman	Jeff F. Martin	Bill Pritchard
David W. Hanna	Don Martin	Paul Prudler
Douglas Hart	Joseph Massolo	Robert L. Puette
Alan Hayes	Roger McCosker	Glen Pyne
David Heitsman	Richard M. McDrew	Caroline Pyne
Robert L. Highfill (Life Member #3)	Rich McDrew	Blake Quinn
Gary Hill	James McIsaac	Deborah Ramsey-Casey
Dale Hislop	Steven A. McNamara	Tom Rea
Doug Holl	Ken Mee	Jamo Rioux (Youth Life #1)
Chip Hollister	Kyle Meintzer	Mason Rogers
Patty Holloway	Matt Mellon	Graham Rogney
	Tim Mercier	Thomas B. Rutherford

Dennis J. Saccone
Michael K. Saiers
Mike Saiers
Paul Schultheis
Tammy Scott
Brenton L. Scott
Albert D. Seeno, Jr.
Dennis J. Sites
Dan Smith, III (Life Member #1)
Dan Smith, Jr. (Life Member #2)
Victor Smith, Jr
Renee Snider
Arlo "Arnie" J. Spiess
Jay Stanford

Adam Starr
Kyle Steltar
Kirk Stiltz
Brooks Stiltz
Joe M. Surprenant
Dennis Swanson
Gerald Tadina
Richard Thompson
Gray Thornton
William H. Tilley
Bill Tittle
James H. Tonkin
Jim Tonkin
Greg Tooley

Michael Torres
Zack Walton
John Ware
Jim Warner
Shaina Warner
Dick Weaver (Deceased)
John D. Wehausen
Graham G. Weiss
Darryl Williams
Bret Wingfield
Richard E. Wiseley
Shawn Wood
John Zenz



Photos of Old Dad repair work and helicopter filling provided by George Kerr, CA WSF Life member and Board member and SCBS Board member. The work is hard but many volunteers show up every time. If you haven't worked a project, put it on your TO-DO list this year!

COVID-19 AND THE WILD SHEEP DECLINE: AN INTERESTING PARALLEL

by Chester Moore, Jr. [Reprint]

The impact of COVID-19 on humanity is nothing short of historic.

While the death toll has not and hopefully will not reach the levels of the Spanish flu of 1918, the potential is there, and the grip it has on government, commerce, and private citizens is unprecedented.

That's why I can't help but make parallels between COVID-19 and the near-catastrophic decline of wild sheep of the 1800s.

When Lewis and Clark set out on their epic expedition, there were around 2 million wild sheep in North America. By 1900, there were fewer than 25,000, according to some estimates.

And while it would be easy to blame it on unregulated hunting and market killing, which no doubt had some impact, by far the biggest killer was pneumonia. Coming from domestic sheep, it hit wild herds as they co-mingled in the valleys and mountains during the westward expansion of European settlement. Millions of

sheep died, and if it were not for conscientious hunters and fish and game departments around the nation, there would likely be no wild sheep left today.

It's a story few have heard outside of wild sheep hunting and biologist circles, but now is the time.

The decline of wild sheep is second only to the government-sponsored bison slaughter in the depth of impact on a species in North America.

Humans are now quarantined, and in effect, bighorns are in many areas.

In 2016, Colorado Parks & Wildlife (CPW) officials killed six bighorns because backpackers saw them co-mingling with domestic sheep. The bacterial form of pneumonia can be brought back to the herd and transmitted to lambs.

"When you have the lambs dying, it's hard to build a population," said CPW spokesman Joe Lewandowski in *The Durango Herald*.

"As wildlife managers, we look at populations, not individual animals. In this case, we know an individual animal could spread the disease to the larger herd, and then we have a bigger problem."

This is not an uncommon practice in wild sheep management.

While translocations, strict herd management, and grazing restrictions have brought sheep numbers continent wide into the 150,000 to 175,000 range, pneumonia is still the most significant threat. Still,

there are no specials on Animal Planet or Nat Geo Wild or any other mainstream media outlets. This pandemic has been going on with wild sheep for 150 years, and only the hunting community, fish and game agencies, and biologists seem to care.

The focus should now be on saving people and the economies of the world, but there is space to teach a valuable lesson on wildlife conservation. There has never been a point in recent history where this particular story of wild sheep has such a great chance to touch the hearts of millions of wildlife enthusiasts.

During the downtime from work and school, people are looking for things to occupy their time and inspired, informative media on some of the beautiful animals in North America can help fill some of that void.

That is what this post is all about. I'm doing my best to let people know that when the dust settles on COVID-19 (and me and my family are praying daily that will happen soon), sheep will still have their own pandemic to face.

Concerned conservationists have done a remarkable job building herds throughout North America, but these conservationists are aging quickly, and new blood needs to step up to the plate.

Maybe something good that can come out of this tragedy is that some young person is motivated to get involved with sheep conservation. Perhaps being isolated, afraid of mingling with others and under the potential threat of death itself because of an unseen force will inspire action.

Sheep, of course, have no way to conceptualize these things, but they don't need to when caring conservationists are in place in fish and game departments, conservation groups, and halls of the legislature.

COVID-19 may be momentarily stealing our freedoms, but it can't rob the wild and enduring spirit of those thoughtful enough to make a bold stand for bighorns and their thinhorn cousins.

That force is as majestic as the sheep themselves.

Editor's Note: Chester Moore Jr. is an award-winning wildlife journalist, author and lecturer. He is Editor-In-Chief of Texas Fish & Game, publisher of the Higher Calling blog and newsletter and hosts Moore Outdoors on Newstalk AM 560 KLVI. He has been won numerous awards for writing and conservation and was given the Mossy Oak Outdoors Legacy Award for his work with wildlife and children.

2022 STONE SHEEP HUNT Special Drawing



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\$100 PER TICKET



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Location: central British Columbia, Canada

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Grants Pass, OR 97527

FAX order form to:

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Expire Date

CCV Code

Billing Postal Code

Signature

Orders must be received by April 10, 2021. Drawing held April 24, 2021.

Do not need to be present to win.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



David Sterk
California Desert Bighorn - Marbles
San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters
179 4/8 B&C green score, 2019



Jim Doering
California Desert Bighorn
Dry Creek Outfitters
180 1/8" green score, 2018



Charlie Crannel
California Desert Sheep - Newberry / Rodman / Ord
San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters other info



Hunter Colin Jewett and friend Ed Kerr (R)
176 4/8 gross - 40 inch long horns both sides
San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters



Do you know this Happy Hunter
Marco Polo
Tajikistan



Proud Desert Ram
Photo from Cliff St Martin
Dry Creek Outfitters

IN APPRECIATION OF ROBERT L. VERNOY (1926–2020)

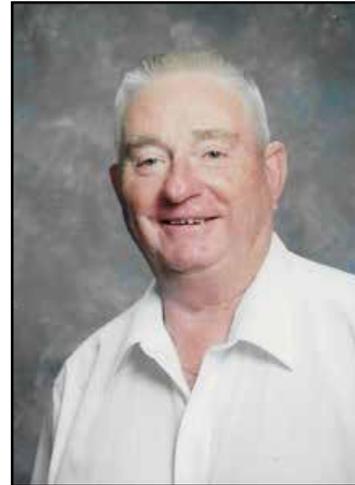
by Vernon C. Bleich

Hunters and other sportsmen familiar with the eastern Mojave Desert lost one of their strongest supporters on March 7, 2020 with the passing of Robert L. Vernoy, retired California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Wildlife Biologist. A California native and a veteran, Bob grew up in Cherry Valley before serving in the Army Air Corps in the Philippines during World War II.

Bob was employed by CDFG for 41 years and served in a variety of capacities in the deserts of southeastern California prior to his retirement in 1989. He began his career in 1949 as a Game Conservation Aid at CDFG's Imperial Waterfowl Management Area near the southeast corner of the Salton Sea, at a salary of \$180.00/month, and where he became a proficient heavy equipment operator. Bob also worked at the Brawley Game Farm for 7 years before becoming manager of the Valley Center Game Farm in San Diego County. He next transferred to the Chino Game Farm, and then spent several years at the Mojave River Hatcher but returned to the Chino Game Farm in 1965 to oversee the closure of that facility. Following closure of the Chino Game Farm, Bob was assigned to a "pool" position, where he participated in a variety of wildlife management activities throughout southern California, and during which he became heavily involved in mitigating the impacts of the Santa Barbara oil spill in January and February of 1969.

In 1970, Bob promoted to Assistant Wildlife Manager-Biologist, and was assigned to the Desert Wildlife Management Unit (DWMU) in San Bernardino County, where he established an office at his home in Victorville. During the 20 years he held that position, he was an important contributor to CDFG's efforts to ensure water was available for all species of wildlife inhabiting that arid region, and thereby ensuring that hunters would have access to high-quality opportunities to pursue Gambel's quail, chukar, mourning dove, and other upland game, as well as mule deer and, eventually, bighorn sheep. Few individuals realize Bob's dedication to maintaining the 350 wildlife water developments (often referred to as quail guzzlers) in his management unit. In his own words, though, he acknowledged, "I was only able to inspect or make repairs to these units about once every other year."

Bob also performed inspections and needed maintenance on the many dozens of desert springs located in the DWMU to ensure surface water was available for all wildlife, and on which mule deer and bighorn sheep were especially dependent. Add to these activities the annual brood



Robert Vernoy
1926-2020

counts to assess quail and chukar production, dove surveys, raptor surveys, data collection and oversight of the mule deer hunting season in eastern San Bernardino County (now Zone D-17), participation in aerial surveys for bighorn sheep, and the ever-increasing number of environmental documents to review and comment on, and he was one busy biologist. Zone D-17 has become well-known for producing large mule deer, but with an annual ceiling of 500 tags, it has continued to produce animals that are among the largest taken in California each deer season.

Bob's interest in data acquisition and his thoroughness in maintaining records, his presence out in the field talking and interacting with hunters throughout the upland game and deer seasons, and his close working relationship with local wildlife protection personnel paved the way for increased hunter interest in, and appreciation for, the eastern Mojave Desert. His area of responsibility included the majority of San Bernardino County, and extended from the Riverside County line on the south to the Inyo County Line on the north, and from the Los Angeles County line eastward to the Colorado River, and actually included a large portion of southeastern Inyo County. Located within this vast area were the first two areas to be opened to the hunting of bighorn sheep in California since 1878: Old Dad Peak and the Marble Mountains. To date, 7 of the 11 zones thus far opened to bighorn sheep hunting are within what once was the DWMU.

Bob was the biologist for the DWMU when Dick Weaver conducted the only in-depth and statewide assessment of bighorn sheep in California, and Bob

lent his expertise and knowledge to assist in that effort from 1970 to 1972. Following completion of that assessment and prior to Bob's retirement, a total of 21 wildlife water developments were constructed specifically for bighorn sheep within the DWMU. Bob worked closely with personnel assigned to CDFG Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-26-D (referred to most frequently as "The Habitat Crew") and members of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep during those projects. Construction of each water development depended largely on volunteer labor and provided hundreds of interested individuals with opportunities to be involved directly with bighorn sheep, and resulted in many life-long commitments to conservation that, in all probability, would otherwise not have occurred.

During the early 1980s and following development of several of those water sources, bighorn sheep in the eastern Mojave Desert were the beneficiaries of increased interest within CDFG. Bob participated in numerous helicopter surveys, and helped collect data that resulted in the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Eagle Crags, Whipple Mountains, Argus Range, Sheephole Mountains, Bullion Mountains, the northern Bristol Mountains, and to augmentations of the bighorn sheep populations in the Avawatz Range and in the Chuckwalla Mountains. Bob was an integral part of, and an active participant in, those translocations, and ensured that critically important tasks were carried out effectively and efficiently.

Bob also helped to plan, and was a participant in, the numerous helicopter surveys that eventually led to the legislation authorizing bighorn sheep hunting. He was a primary author of the two plans prepared for the management of bighorn sheep at Old Dad Peak and in the Marble Mountains that were required by the state legislature before hunting could occur, and those plans are still in place and are relied on each year. He also was an important contributor to the annual Bighorn Sheep Hunter Clinic that bighorn sheep hunters are required to attend. Marvin Wood, an active and highly respected member of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, suggested that the Society assist CDFG with the clinic, and Bob worked closely with Marvin and others to ensure it would be a success. Bob proposed the first Hunter Clinic be held at the Camp Cady Wildlife Area. That initial venture transformed into an event held just prior to the opening of each bighorn sheep season, and became a tradition that lasted 25 years. Bob had management responsibility for the Camp Cady Wildlife Area, and ensured the bunkhouse and other facilities always were in tip-top condition. During those great years, the clinic was an extensive, in-depth, all-day affair that, following supper, most often extended well into the evening and continued the following day. During the clinics Bob, and many other individuals, generously shared information on bighorn sheep occupying the hunt zones, geography, hunting techniques, equipment, desert safety, taxidermy, photography, and regulations,

far exceeding the requirements specified by the legislature.

Bob Vernoy was a quiet man, and did not have a penchant for accolades, or even for being noticed. As a result, it is likely that few members of the California Chapter are familiar with his name. At least two individuals currently active in the California Chapter, however, will remember him very well. Chip Hollister, a close friend of Brian Hawes, accompanied Brian during Brian's 1987 hunt in the Marble Mountains; coincidentally that was the same area in which Debi Casey also had drawn a tag during that initial season; please see Debi's personal tribute to Bob elsewhere in this issue of California Wild Sheep. As I recall, Brian took his sheep on opening day of the general season, and it was the second bighorn ram legally harvested in California (the first was taken at Old Dad Peak by Bob Howard, who had purchased the initial fund-raising tag). Chip and Brian spent an extended amount of time at the check station responding to dozens of our questions while Bob and I measured Brian's sheep, obtained numerous biological samples, validated Brian's tag, and we all became friends. I'm sure Chip can attest to Bob's professionalism and the enthusiasm he showed for Brian's accomplishment. This process was repeated by Bob and Andy Pauli when Debi arrived at the check station with her ram.

To summarize, Bob played a pivotal role in the establishment of bighorn sheep hunting in California. He understood the importance of habitat and the need to assure the availability of resources needed by all wildlife. He was a friend of hunters and other outdoorsmen, and he fulfilled his role in conservation very capably. He flew as an observer in dozens of aerial telemetry flights that otherwise would not have occurred, and was a participant in numerous helicopter surveys upon which the program to reintroduce desert bighorn sheep to vacant ranges was based; data gathered during those flights led to the opening of several bighorn sheep hunt zones in addition to those at Old Dad Peak and the Marble Mountains. He wrote the management plans for Old Dad Peak and the Marble Mountains, as well as for other areas that eventually became hunt zones.

Following retirement, Bob was recognized by the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep with the Bicket-Landells Award, named for BLM Wildlife Biologist Jim Bicket and Pilot Don Landells who died while conducting a helicopter survey at Clark Mountain on 6 October 1986. Bob had been scheduled to join that crew on the very morning he and I learned of the accident.

Collectively, bighorn sheep, sportsmen, and the public in general have been the beneficiaries of Bob Vernoy's many contributions to wildlife conservation. Let us not forget those efforts.

Editor's Note: Dr. Vern Bleich was employed by the California Department of Fish and Game for 34 years. He met and began working with Bob Vernoy in July 1973,

when Vern was assigned to 'The Habitat Crew' that is referenced above. Bob generously granted permission for him to stay at Bob's camp, located in Carruthers Canyon in the New York Mountains, while Vern worked shifts of 10-days-on and 4-days-off because of the remoteness of the area. Vern had the privilege of being Bob's coworker from 1973 to 1986, and was honored to serve as his supervisor

from 1986 until Bob's retirement in 1989. In Dr. Bleich's words, "Bob was a kind and generous person, a dedicated employee, a fine naturalist from whom I learned a great deal about the Mojave Desert, and an individual for whom I had the utmost respect".

"WE GO WHERE OUR FRIENDS ARE AND ONES WE HAVEN'T MET YET"

by Debi Ramsey Casey

I had met Bob Vernoy at the Mandatory Sheep Hunter Orientation in 1987, having drawn a Desert Bighorn Sheep tag for the Marble Mountains. All sheep hunters in California must attend this mandatory orientation prior to their hunt, which addressed hunter expectations, rules and regulations, bighorn sheep habits and habitat, and descriptions of the hunt areas. And, as most of you know, it is mandatory that your sheep be checked in by an official from the California Department of Fish and Game. During the first several years of the hunt, biologists set up the check station at a campsite in the Mojave Desert, and operated it until all hunts were completed. Bob Vernoy, who planned and oversaw the initial Hunter Clinic, ran the check station for the entire bighorn sheep season, with occasional assistance by several others including Dick Weaver, Vern Bleich, and Andy Pauli, all of whom I had met during the clinic, and all of whom became close friends of mine.

Bob and I made friends quickly. He was quiet, but very direct, knew the Marble Mountains very well, and openly shared his knowledge of the sheep there. He also was very nice, and we got along great. I visited the check station several times during the season, and Bob visited our camp, located at the north end of the Marble Mountains, several miles from the check station. At the time, the sheep season was set for two full weeks and a third weekend. I hunted 15 days of that 16-day season, and had not pulled the trigger, and Bob understood why I had held off. The area had never previously been hunted, there were lots of great rams,

and he knew I wasn't just hunting — I was in desert bighorn sheep country! Bob got it!

When I finally harvested my ram, and Bob and Andy were ready when I brought it into the check station. Those two went over the sheep with a fine-toothed comb, weighed it and measured everything about it, and then re-measured everything, collected tissue and organ samples, interviewed me and my hunting party, took lots of photos, and then installed the requisite horn plug, marking my sheep one of the first bighorn sheep legally harvested in California in 117 years.

Bob and I visited more than a few times during my 2-week hunt, sharing sheep stories and a little about ourselves. Bob shared that he was an accomplished roller-skater, participated in "Roller Dancing" competitions, and planned to continue competing actively following retirement. Recently, I learned that he skated in his final competition at the age of 81. Bob became a longtime friend, and I extend a "Thank you, Bob" for your dedication and help during my hunt, your friendship and dedication to the conservation of wild sheep, and for Putting Sheep on the Mountain. Happy Trails Always, Until We Meet Again.

Editor's note: Debi Ramsey Casey is a Life Member of the California Wild Sheep Foundation, a FNAWS Achiever, completed Ovis Grand Slam #867, and is holder of Ovis Women's Grand Slam #29.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

by Don Priest

We certainly hope that this finds you, our members, your family and friends safe, healthy and secure during this trying time with the COVID -19 virus. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has also not been immune on how they operate. Although, with the 'lockdown' the CDFW staff is taking precautions and working from home, activity has not slowed. Meetings with CDFW and the California Fish and Game Commission (Commission) have been done via webinar and teleconferences since March. CA WSF frequently meets directly with the CDFW management and were able to do so in early April 2020 via conference call. A number of topics were covered during our meeting including current status of helicopter contracts for survey and captures by field office staff, as well as discussion of the upcoming 2020-2021 Desert Bighorn Sheep hunt season, both of which are discussed further below.

Although the upcoming FY 2020-2021 budget bill, effective July 1, 2020, is still being negotiated, we know to expect CDFW to be impacted by significant budget cutbacks due to COVID-19. To protect those portions of the CDFW budget of greatest importance to wild sheep and hunting opportunity, CA WSF has been actively working to protect our interests – including Bill Gaines of Gaines & Associates testifying on our behalf at recent budget hearings and in teleconference calls with CDFW leadership to make our concerns known. Time is short, with the Legislature and Governor's office working overtime to complete the budget by the June 15, 2020 deadline. We will provide details in our next magazine of the final budget impact on CDFW along with any effects this bill might have on hunting and fishing.

In our last magazine we touched on the issues surrounding the helicopter contract for Desert Bighorn Sheep (DBS) captures. We are happy to report that indeed a helicopter capture contract was recently completed with Leading Edge. Thus, the CDFW will be back on track with captures this fall. And, with the contract in place for three years, the next three seasons of captures will get completed barring other circumstances. We understand from the CDFW that a new two year helicopter survey contract to replace the soon expiring one (expires June 30, 2020) is in draft, if not already out for bid. We'll keep you updated.

As outlined in our Spring 2020 Issue, the CDFW was to present recommendations for hunting tag numbers and allocations by Hunt Zone at the April Commission meeting in Sacramento. The Commission accepted CDFW's Desert Bighorn Sheep (DBS) hunt tag recommendations for the 2020-2021



season. They are identical to last year's 2019-2020 tag allocations with one change, an increase of one additional tag for the Kelso/Old Dad Mountains within the Mojave National Preserve. This herd was impacted by disease back in 2013, but has since stabilized and rebounding; again allowing for the harvest of one ram in this upcoming season. The table below shows the tag allocations by Hunt Zone.

- Zone 1 - Marble Mountains – 5**
- Zone 2 - Kelso Peak/Old Dad Mountains – 1**
- Zone 3 - Clark/Kingston Mountain Ranges – 4**
- Zone 4 - Orocochia Mountains – 1**
- Zone 5 - San Gorgonio Wilderness – 0**
- Zone 6 - Sheep Hole Mountains – 0**
- Zone 7 - White Mountains – 6**
- Zone 8 - South Bristol Mountains – 2**
- Zone 9 - Cady Mountains – 2**
- Zone 10 - Newberry, Rodman, Ord Mountains – 6**
- Open Zone Fund-Raising Tag – 1**
- Marble/Clipper/South Bristol Mountains Fund-Raising Tag – 1**
- Cady Mountains Fund-Raising Tag – 1**

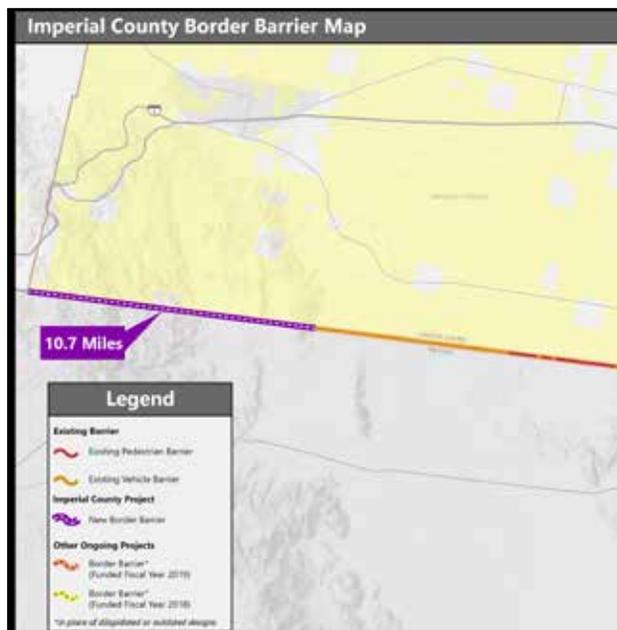
PENINSULAR BIGHORN SHEEP JACUMBA HERDS US/ MEXICO BORDER BARRIER CONFLICT

With the new Border Barrier installation along the United States-Mexico border we've all read or heard about, it might be easy to imagine how this new

30 foot tall steel bollard fence could be disruptive to wildlife habitat and migration corridors. California's DBS are not immune to this new potential burden to wildlife. There is one herd of Peninsular DBS that indeed migrates to/from Mexico and the US, the Jacumba herd. Ewes migrate to the Mexico side of the Jacumba Mountains, utilizing this area for lambing in winter and spring. Rams also frequent the Mexico side. These movements have been determined by use of GPS collared DBS by the CDFW.

Unfortunately, the Border Barrier through this part of Imperial County cuts directly across the migration corridors for these sheep, as shown in the map (right). In the map those mountains that are divided by this new section of border fencing (in purple) are the Jacumba Mountains.

CA WSF is working with the CDFW and Wild Sheep Foundation to help mitigate, if possible, the disruption this 10.7 miles of Border Barrier will cause the Jacumba DBS herd.



Photos of the Acacia Raincatcher Wildlife Water project in process provided by Debbie Marsche, SCBS Board member.

CASTLE MINE GUZZLER

Arioch M'greene

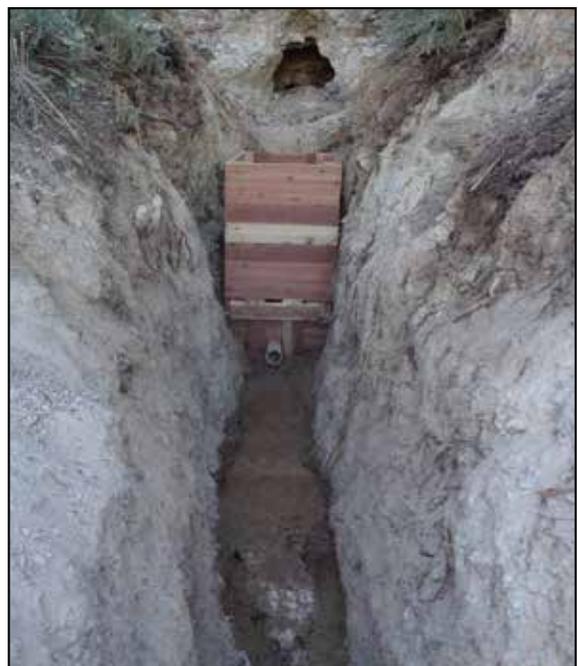
Spring Captain, Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep

SCBS has successfully dug out the Castle Mine Spring Site located in the Southern Marble Mountains. The spring feeds into the Society's big game guzzler that sits approximately 250 feet away. A past effort in 2018 saw a work party digging down to the previously installed johnson screen; it was this effort that helped to identify the reason why the tank had run dry. The water table, or point of intrusion, at Castle Mine Spring has sunk below the point at which the installed johnson screen collects the natural water there. On the week of May 16th, SCBS successfully dug out over eight feet of dirt to re-locate the johnson screen two feet below the top of the water table. Approximately 100 feet of pipe had to additionally be dug out to restore the necessary negative slope of the pipe. Unfortunately, this spring seems to be either drying up, or extremely seasonal. Now that the continuity of the pipe is sound, and the johnson screen is at a low enough point to collect water, SCBS can further analyze the water level of the guzzler tank to see if upgrading to a rain-catcher style guzzler will be necessary in order to continue to bring adequate water levels to the southern end of the Marble Mountain Range. A spring box was built for easier future maintenance of the site, and to allow for periodic inspections to assess water flow.

If you are interested in similar boots on the ground projects, please feel free to follow SCBS on Facebook, or email me at ariochmgreene@gmail.com.



Castle Mine Guzzler
Work in Progress above
Finished project below



**I NOTICE THE PRESS IS
SAYING HOW MANY MALES
AND FEMALES ARE GETTING
THE COVID-19 VIRUS.**

**It's amazing how the other 57
genders aren't getting it!**

CA WSF — WORKING TO KEEP YOU IN THE FIELD

by Bill Gaines, Gaines and Associates

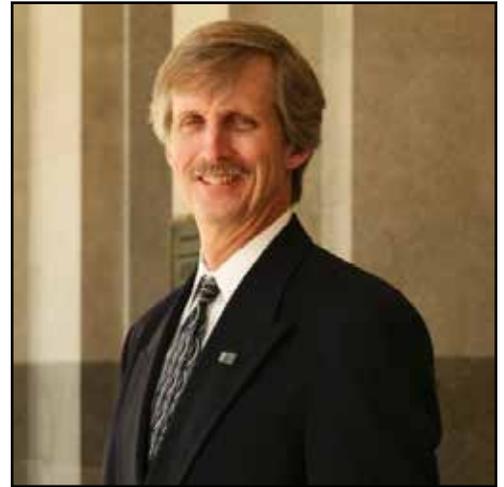
State Capitol Gets Back to Work

As we approach the end of May 2020, both the California State Assembly and Senate are back in Session and fully up-to-speed – albeit with many changes in procedure to address COVID-19 precautions.

With a month and a half unscheduled hiatus having carved considerable time out of their traditional legislative calendar – and an extra challenging 2020/2021 State budget still being hammered out – the State Legislature must stay focused on only those bills of critical importance to California’s public.

To that end, Legislators were recently asked to prioritize their bills and pull from consideration any bill not deemed urgent. With the first round of hearings on the Assembly side now in the books, and hearings in the Senate now ramping up, the dust has cleared on what bills will be heard – with several bills of concern to the California Chapter of Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) still in play.

Below is a summary of how just some of the bills of interest to CA WSF have fared during this unprecedented 2020 Legislative Session. Bills are listed in numerical order, not in order of priority or interest.



AB 2299 (GALLAGHER) – FREE HUNTING DAYS

AB 2299 would have required the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to designate two days per year as “Free Hunting Days” – with one free hunting day in the fall hunting season and the other day during the spring hunting season. The bill would have required those taking advantage of the free hunting day to have successfully completed their Hunter Safety Course and to be accompanied by a licensed hunter, over the age of 21, who has held a valid hunting license for at least the last three years. AB 2299 would not have allowed those participating in free hunting days to take wild sheep or any other game species that requires a draw or lottery to obtain a tag.

AB 2299 has been pulled from consideration.

AB 2429 (IRWIN) – HUNTING AND FISHING GUIDES

AB 2429 would have increased the amount of the surety bond hunting and fishing guides must obtain to not less than \$2,500 and, among other things, required guides to carry commercial liability insurance coverage in the amount of no less than \$1,000,000. Further, the bill would have required the Fish and Game Commission (Commission) to adopt a visual system of identification stickers guides must use when providing guiding or packing services to a client.

AB 2429 has been pulled from consideration.

AB 2523 (GRAY) – FISH AND GAME COMMISSION: YOUTH HUNTING PROGRAM: SPECIAL HUNTING PERMITS

As amended, AB 2523 would require the Commission to establish a program to increase

opportunities to hunt big game, upland game birds and migratory game birds for youth under the age of 18 with terminal illnesses or who have lost a parent in service to the state or country. AB 2523 defines “in service to the state or country” as a person who died while actively serving in the Armed Forces or in local, state, or federal law enforcement or fire service”. The legislation defines “terminal illness” as an incurable or irreversible condition with a corresponding life expectancy that does not exceed 60 months.

AB 2523 was heard in the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee on May 14th, passing out on consent. AB 2523 will next be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee where it must be heard and passed to the Assembly Floor by Friday, June 5th, to meet legislative deadline.

AB 3022 (OBERNOLTE) – JUNIOR HUNTING LICENSES: AGE ELIGIBILITY

Legislation passed in 2014 increased junior hunting license age eligibility from 15 to 17 years of age. However, that bill included a “sunset” provision which requires the age eligibility to revert to 15 years on July 1, 2020 – the beginning of the upcoming 2020/2021 hunting license year.

As introduced in mid-February and as currently written, AB 3022 would extend the “sunset” for one year to July 1, 2021, and – in order to have the bill take effect before the July 1st commencement of the 2020/2021 license year – AB 3022 includes an urgency statute which would allow the bill will take effect immediately upon enactment.

Working very closely with the bill's author, Assembly Member Jay Obernolte, our original strategy was to rapidly push AB 3022 through the legislative process, have it approved prior to July 1, 2020, and have it in effect long before July 1st for the upcoming 2020/2021 license year. Putting this one-year extension in place would have bought us the additional time necessary to introduce and pass subsequent legislation which would extend the junior hunting license age eligibility of 17 indefinitely. However, when COVID-19 forced the Legislature into a lengthy unscheduled recess, we lost the opportunity to pass the bill quickly enough to seamlessly make that change prior to the 2020/2021 license year.

Since AB 3022, as currently written, can no longer address its original intent. AB 3022 will be amended in the near future to address the junior hunting license age eligibility of 17 years of age beyond the 2020/2021 license year. What those amendments look like and when they are put into the bill, is still under consideration.

AB 3022 was heard in the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee on Thursday, May 14th, passing out on consent. AB 3022 will next be heard in the Assembly Appropriations Committee where it must be heard and passed to the Assembly Floor by Friday, June 5th, to meet legislative deadline.

AB 3071 (MULLIN) – LEAD AMMUNITION: SHOOTING RANGES

AB 3071 would have prohibited the use of lead ammunition at a sport shooting range or an indoor shooting range and prohibited those ranges from selling or giving away ammunition unless that ammunition is certified as nonlead ammunition.

AB 3071 has been pulled from consideration.

SB 914 (PORTANTINO) – FIREARMS: HUNTING EXEMPTIONS

Existing law prohibits the sale or transfer of a firearm by a firearm dealer to a person under 21 years of age, but exempts from those provisions the sale or transfer of a firearm – other than a handgun or semiautomatic centerfire rifle – to a person 18 years of age or older who possesses a valid, unexpired hunting license.

As amended May 11, 2020, SB 914 would require that, for the sale or transfer of a firearm to a person under 21 years of age, the salesperson must visually inspect the hunting license to confirm that it is valid and unexpired, and record the license number, GO ID, and dates valid. The bill would also require the Department of Justice (DOJ) to verify the validity of the purchaser's hunting license with DFW as part of the background check.

As most are aware, as of July 1, 2019, the law requires DOJ to electronically approve the purchase or transfer of ammunition through a vendor. However, existing law also limits the fee charged for DOJ

approval of an ammunition purchase to \$1.00, with that fee only allowed to be increased at a rate not to exceed any increase in the Consumer Price Index. As amended, SB 914 would also remove the \$1.00 fee limitation – effectively allowing the fee charged for DOJ approval of an ammunition transaction to substantially increase.

SB 914 was heard in Senate Public Safety Committee on May 20th, passing out on a party-line vote. SB 914 will next be heard in the Senate Appropriations Committee where it must be heard and passed to the Senate Floor by Friday, June 19th, to meet legislative deadline.

SB 1041 (HUESO) – HUNTING: USE OF DOGS TO HUNT DEER

SB 1041 would have prohibited the use of any dog for the purpose of hunting deer at any time. The bill would also have authorized DFW to capture or dispatch any dog that was being used to hunt deer and that was inflicting injury or immediately threatening to inflict injury to any deer.

SB 1041 has been pulled from consideration.

SB 1175 (STERN) – “ICONIC AFRICAN SPECIES PROTECTION ACT”

As amended May 13, 2020, SB 1175 would enact the “Iconic African Species Protection Act” and would prohibit the possession of any part, product, or the dead body of African elephant, African lion, leopard, black rhinoceros, white rhinoceros, giraffe, Jentink's duiker, plains zebra, mountain zebra, hippopotamus, and striped hyena. Among other things, SB 1175 would exempt articles possessed for noncommercial purposes that the owner can demonstrate were in their possession within California before January 1, 2021.

As amended, SB 1175 would now also ban live animal markets, and the importation of a wild animal species into the state when the evidence suggests zoonotic transmission from the species, or a closely related species, could be responsible for a novel, readily transmissible human disease.

SB 1175 is set to be heard in Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee on May 26th.

SB 1372 (MONNING) – WILDLIFE CORRIDORS AND CONNECTIVITY

Coined the “Wildlife and Biodiversity Protection and Movement Act of 2020”, SB 1372 would have required the state to build off existing programs and plans to proactively protect and enhance wildlife corridors and design infrastructure to maximize wildlife connectivity. Among many other things, the bill would have required DFW and the Department of Transportation to coordinate on future transportation and water infrastructure planning and design to allow for maximum wildlife passage features.

SB 1372 has been pulled from consideration.

NEWS IN CALIFORNIA R3: RECRUIT. RETAIN. REACTIVATE

by Jen Benedect

CDFW R3 WEBPAGE AND STATEWIDE R3 CALENDAR

The CDFW R3 webpage (<https://wildlife.ca.gov/r3>) hosts a variety of information related to hunting, fishing, shooting sports, foraging and wild food. The goal of this webpage is to serve as a centralized hub where people can go to seek information about these activities. More specifically, it contains information on how to get started and links the public to the various R3 stakeholder organizations, including to the Wild Sheep Foundation, in one place. CDFW intends to continue building this webpage by add relevant content and resources over time.

An exciting feature of this webpage is the statewide R3 calendar. This calendar was created as a response for the need to have a one-stop shop where the public could easily find hunting, fishing, and shooting sports events to join in their area. Organizations, clubs, agencies, and other R3 stakeholder across California can uploading their relevant R3 events for free. While many in-person events have been canceled due to Covid-19, we are hopeful that the calendar will be used more in the coming months as some events are reimagined for the digital space or rescheduled. If you are part of an organization or chapter that would like to add events to the calendar, please visit the R3 webpage and click on “submit an event” at the top of the calendar.

100% ONLINE HUNTER EDUCATION

Do you know someone who has recently taken an interest in hunting and needs California hunter education? In an effort to maintain access and continue hunter recruitment efforts during the stay-at-home orders, CDFW is temporarily offering hunter education 100% online in three easy steps.

- 1 – Study and pass the online course.
- 2 – Print your online course completion document.
- 3 – Buy your hunting license and tags!

See <https://www.hunter-ed.com/california/> for more information.

For questions relating to R3, please reach out to Jennifer.benedet@wildlife.ca.gov.



Recruit. Retain. Reactivate.

CDFW's R3 Program aims to increase statewide participation in hunting, angling and the shooting sports.

The new R3 website will be a centralized events calendar and resource center for hunting and fishing in California.

Coming this fall at:
www.wildlife.ca.gov/r3



www.wildlife.ca.gov/R3

FIVE THOUGHT EXPERIMENTS ON BIGHORN SHEEP AND MINERALS

by Carlos Gallinger, *thewayofthings.org*

There are many issues that one can explore when dealing with bighorn sheep and minerals. Some of these are in the realm of established science but few if any have been applied. I believe it is the volunteer organizations that will eventually bridge the gap between the knowledge we already have and applying it to the various meta-populations. When this occurs we will experience a feedback loop where the success of this applied knowledge will encourage us to learn more and do more about minerals. It is through this process that we will make significant increase in the number of bighorn sheep and repopulate places where they have been absent for many generations.

We will start these thought experiments by describing an idealized habitat for desert bighorn sheep. Of course a real habitat will have variations and complexities that we don't need to deal with in these thought experiments. Like so many thought experiments we attempt through simplification to understand the complex. The reason for using desert bighorn sheep in this thought experiment is it will be generally easier to visualize a desert bighorn sheep habitat as opposed to an Alpine Mountain habitat, although we will explore some attributes and possibilities that exist in Alpine wild sheep habitat as well.

Our thought experiment habitat will consist of a mountain range that is 50 miles long and runs North and South and is 10 miles wide. On the extreme north end it will have a stable clean water source with a separate yet close by geologic mineral source. The minerals consist of all necessary and advantageous minerals such as selenium salt copper and calcium and so on. This environment will also have a water/mineral source on the south end. It will be similar to the one on the North, that is to say it will have good clean stable water with the nearby geological mineral source that has an abundance of all the necessary elements for good health such as selenium copper salts and calcium. However this mineral source on the south end will also contain measurable amount of elements such as lead Mercury and arsenic.

Now let's discuss our first thought experiment, we will start with a group of sheep entering an empty habitat thousands of years ago. As they spread out across this habitat and multiply eventually they fill the habitat to capacity. Due to the width and



length of this habitat some individual animals would cover the entire habitat in their yearly wanderings while most would tend to stay on one half or the other. For the sake of this thought experiment will have those animals on the south end of the habitat suffering a chronic but not acute symptoms from the lead Mercury and arsenic that is in their mineral source. We can also imagine that when the sheep first colonized this habitat they did not prefer one mineral source over the other though they could taste and perhaps smell the difference. Over time evolutionary processes would've eventually have their effect. In this case animals that like the taste of the southern mineral source would tend to die in larger numbers during droughts and severe winters. This would go on till one of two things would happen. Either the southern mineral source would no longer be used due to the fact that the surviving lineage of sheep no longer liked the smell or taste of the southern mineral source. Or perhaps to some degree or another they would develop a resiliency to those toxic elements. All wildlife populations that are isolated or semi-isolated will show some degree of evolutionary adaptation to their particular habitat. So it is we see all sorts of variations in the meta-populations of wild sheep that exist today. So one has to consider if this population wild sheep is wiped out, and then reintroduced, whether through a natural process or artificially it will have to endure numerous generations of evolution before it is genetically tuned to its specific habitat once again. In light of this, a proper modern management program for a newly established meta-population would take minerals into account for both short and long-term management plans. Currently I know of no existing programs or awareness of this issue for newly transplanted or expanded populations.

Now let's go through our second thought experiment, in this experiment will start with the

same habitat full of sheep with an ancient well acclimated population. Like many real wild sheep populations, our thought experiment sheep population would've have seen wave after wave of changes in the environment during the last two centuries. Changes such as the introduction of cattle Horses, Burros, Domestic Sheep, and a wide range of exotic plants. So numerous and extensive are these changes that they often obscure the true effects of one another. If we imagined a flight over our thought experiment habitat in the year 1800 and then once again in the year 2000 there might be a significant change that we could see from the air, and that would be roads and mines. This kind of disturbance create pulverized rock and rips away topsoil thus exposing mineral rich earth. This could be a significant or insignificant change in this habitat for the wild sheep. Currently I know of no habitat that has had definitive studies to figure this out. No doubt this is due in large part to the other more noticeable calamities that have affected wild sheep populations and their habitat. If roads and mining operations has filled a given sheep habitat with detrimental minerals nobody really knows. Over the years I have observed some intriguing situations that seem to point to toxicity however without proper geographically specific scientific studies one can only speculate, all the while there is no beneficial action that can be taken.

Now for our third thought experiment, let's once again go to our hypothetical desert bighorn sheep population and their habitat. In this thought experiment will imagine that the North spring, that is the one with only good minerals goes dry for about two or three months every summer. This is a fairly common occurrence for many desert springs. This of course would require that the entire population rely on the south spring for water and its detrimental mineral source for these summer months. This would reduce the health of the entire population and probably the overall carrying capacity of that habitat. Without having a definitive knowledge of these two mineral



sources the reason for the lower carrying capacity would go unnoticed, leading people to believe the problem is the lack of water. Which it is but only in light of the waters strategic location to the mineral source. Another way of expressing this would be, if an artificial water source was put in the middle of the habitat the sheep might still use the detrimental mineral source primarily or exclusively. Another thing to consider is that the seasonal fluctuation in minerals would affect the evolutionary process of this population in a wide range of possibilities. As an example it might influence the plants they choose to eat and when they eat them. This might manifest itself in this population choosing the eat certain water rich plants that grow in the vicinity of the now dry North water/mineral source, to prolong their stay at the good and perhaps better tasting mineral source. Or perhaps consume plants that balance out the effects of the detrimental water/mineral source on the south end. Here again I would reiterate there is no meta-population that I know of that has this type of knowledge associated with it.

Now for our fourth thought experiment, let's consider the effects of minerals on the transmission and lethality of diseases. For this thought experiment will use the same desert bighorn sheep habitat with an ancient well-tuned lineage. We will start this scenario with a diseased individual entering the habitat from a distant meta-population. With this event there will be a spectrum of possibilities, of which we will discuss the two extreme ends of this spectrum. The first possibility the disease finds it difficult to be transmitted from one individual to another and when it does it has little effect on the individual. The second possibility is that it finds in this meta-population a place where it is easily transmitted from one individual to the next and kills off a large portion of the population. Both of these scenarios or anywhere in the spectrum will largely be influenced by the differences or similarity in the mineral sources available to these two meta-populations. Of course the very concept of a meta-population implies there is a difference in the genetics between populations occupying different geographic regions. These genetic differences can be a response to a wide range of environmental attributes. So it would be reasonable to assume that there is a feedback loop between the specific minerals that these populations consume and their meta-population genetics. This would not be the only feedback loop related to minerals as there is almost certainly one between minerals and the plants they eat. Of course this would cause many other feedback loops such as between the plants they eat and that populations genetic response to them. I know of no scientific work that has been done on this subject. However there may be, but it does not seem like it has been acted upon. There is however a lot of work that has been done on domestic sheep that can be useful in direct the study of wild sheep. To get a grasp on how minerals affect the

diseases of various meta-populations of wild sheep can only be done by properly funded scientific studies. It is also important that these studies do not languish in some scientific doldrum, but rather by their deliberate design are put to use by funded professional level programs.

Now let's contemplate the fifth thought experiment, in this experiment we will have the same size and shape of the habitat and placement of the mineral/water sources. Except this will not be a desert bighorn sheep habitat rather an Alpine habitat. Perhaps it could be in an isolated part of the Rocky Mountains. If the mineral sources for both the North and South spring are on the north slope as well as any other mineral sources they may be inaccessible due to snow cover for months at a time. In such a case the winter would be a time that is very cold where food is limited and minerals perhaps almost nonexistent. Such a situation would reduce the carrying capacity of this habitat significantly. So in an Alpine environment a year that lacks snow cover might be a good year for the sheep due to the increased availability of critical minerals. I have seen videos of sheep that were in alpine environments that were so desperate for minerals during the winter that they go down to parking lots and roads to lick underneath the fenders of cars for the salt enriched snow that is deposited there. Of course this salt was applied to the road to facilitate the melting of the snow. When considering the overall health of a particular herd engaging in this behavior, one has to consider various issues such as what is in and what is not in the salt they are using on the roads, as well as other contaminants such as

oil and other residues from the road. Another thing to consider – there may be significant health effects, good or bad due to the changes in the timing and distribution of this herd across their winter habitat. Currently I know of no meta-population that has this type of information available let alone being put to use.

Most issues dealing with wild sheep management will in one way or another have an association with minerals. Even issues such as predation that one might think has nothing to do with wild sheep consuming minerals, however in the end it is affected by minerals. To understand predation one has to understand the other side of that equation which is a populations ability to reproduce. Without a doubt wild sheep need proper access to minerals to reproduce at an optimum rate so they can sustain losses due to predation. Here again I do not know of any meta-population that has been studied examining the relationship between predation reproduction and minerals let alone put this information to use.

Once the ideas expressed in these thought experiments take hold we will enter an entirely new era of wild sheep management. One of the hallmarks of this new era will be people both professional and amateurs that will explore maintain and pass on knowledge that is specific to meta-populations and their habitat. Through this process we will see wild sheep populations achieve significant increase in population and inhabit places where they have been absent for many generations.



Photos of Raincatcher Wildlife Water systems in use provided by Scott Gibson, CA WSF Life member and SCBS Board member. The sheep and other animals can't speak, but they thank us every time they use the drinkers!



California Chapter
Wild Sheep Foundation
 1630 Williams Hwy #151 Grants Pass, OR 97527
 (650) 472-3889 (Phone and Fax)
 cawsf@cawsf.org www.cawsf.org



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

Name: _____

Phone: Primary: _____ Alternate: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Preferred method of communication (check one): Phone eMail Fax

Yes, I would like to volunteer to help the California Chapter with its' events and/or projects! Please contact me about volunteer opportunities! (check here)

Yes, I am already a member of Wild Sheep Foundation! My member number is: _____

Do you have a FNAWS (Four North American Wild Sheep)? Yes No

Do you have GSCO Slam®: 1/2 Slam 3/4 Slam Grand Slam

Have you hunted Sheep? Yes No

Do you hunt with a: Rifle: Bow: Muzzleloader: Handgun: Don't Hunt:

Which sheep have you harvested? (Please list and note year) _____

CA WSF Membership:

Annual Membership (\$40) = \$ _____
 Life Membership (\$500) = \$ _____
 Distinguished Life Membership (\$1,500) = \$ _____
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 Youth Annual Membership (\$25) = \$ _____
 Youth Life Membership (\$400) = \$ _____

Wild Sheep Foundation Membership:

Annual (\$45) = \$ _____
 3-Year (\$120) = \$ _____
 Family (\$80) = \$ _____
 Life Membership Under age 59 - \$1,000 = \$ _____
 Age 59-64 - \$750 = \$ _____
 Age 65+ - \$500 = \$ _____

Payment Type (check one): Credit/Debit Card Check Enclosed (payable to: "CA WSF")

Credit Card Type: Visa MasterCard Discover AMEX

Cardholder Name: _____ CCV: _____

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Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail this form to CA WSF, 1630 Williams Hwy #151, Grants Pass, OR 97527 or fax to 650-472-3889.

Don't forget to share this form to your hunting friends and relatives!



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www.cawsf.org

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

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