



California Wild Sheep

Fall 2017



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10 Year Old Ram
January 2017
Dry Creek Outfitters



ULTIMA THULE LODGE

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From the Editor's Desk

Glorious Fall has arrived, the Northern Hemisphere hunting season. I always feel more alive with the cooling air and the anticipation for my hunting plans. This issue includes some great hunting stories, interesting and valuable science, info on new directors, fun humor, a teaser about our 2018 Banquet and Fundraiser, interesting desert insights about what is expected to be our next NEW Hunting Unit from Carlos, CDFW update AND MORE! Your feedback, ideas, articles, pictures & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 4Q17 issue is November 20.



MEET YOUR NEW DIRECTORS

Our annual election was held in June for the half of the Board; we have two year terms. This year we welcome two new Board members - Andrew Ohanesian and Glen Pyne.

Andrew is a Sacramento native who began hunting as a young man with friends and family in Northern California's wetlands for ducks and foothills for deer, pig and turkey. Through the WSF, he was fortunate to take an amazing Stone Sheep in 2010, getting him out of the <1 Club. Andrew is a life member of WSF and CAWSF and has attended many California and National WSF banquets. Andrew is a certified CPA and works in real estate.

Glen was born and raised in southern California. Glen is an avid hunter, hunting most of the western states as well as Canada, Europe, and Africa. He has been a supporter of the Wild Sheep Foundation for many years and is a life member of CA WSF. Glen is a DVM specializing in small animal surgery.

Andrew and Glen join the following, who were elected to another term: Adam Casagrande, Ken Crother, Bob Keagy, George Kerr, Don Martin and Craig Van Arsdale. All eight of these people now have terms that last through June 2019.

They also join Board members who were elected in 2016 and are mid-term: Aaron Armstrong, Mike Borel, Ben Gordon, Jon Kruger, Dwight Ortmann, Don Priest, Darryl Williams and Shawn Wood.

CA Wild Sheep Foundation reaches a new milestone with over 1,000 Facebook followers. Join the herd — visit us on [Facebook](#) and press that "Like" button!

A young cowboy walks into a seedy cafe in Prescott, AZ. He sits at the counter and notices an old cowboy with his arms folded staring blankly at a full bowl of chili.

After fifteen minutes of just sitting there staring at it, the young cowboy bravely asks the old cowpoke, "If you ain't gonna eat that, mind if I do?"

The older cowboy slowly turns his head toward the young wrangler and in his best cowboy manner says, "Nah, go ahead."

Eagerly, the young cowboy reaches over and slides the bowl over to his place and starts spooning it in with delight. He gets nearly down to the bottom and notices a dead mouse in the chili. The sight was shocking and he immediately pukes up the chili into the bowl.

The old cowboy quietly says, "Yep, that's as far as I got, too."



Board of Directors

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Darryl Williams (2018)

Northern California Vice President

Ken Crother (2019)

Southern California Vice President

George Kerr (2019)

Vice President, Operations

Mike J. Borel (2018)

Secretary

Don Priest (2018)

Treasurer

Adam Casagrande (2019)

Board of Directors

Ben Gordon (2018)	Dwight Ortmann (2018)
Robert Keagy (2019)	Don Priest (2018)
Jon Kruger (2018)	Craig Van Arsdale (2019)
Donald C. Martin (2019)	Darryl Williams (2018)
Shawn Wood (2018)	Aaron Armstrong (2018)
Andrew Ohanesian (2019)	Glen Pyne (2019)

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

2017

September TBD	DBH Hunter Orientation in Ontario (8-12:00)
November 20	Due date for articles for 4Q2017 CAWSF Newsletter
December 8	Sheep Summit XXII in Ontario

2018

January 18-20	WSF Convention Reno, Peppermill
January 24-27	GSCO Convention Las Vegas, Westgate Resort
Jan 31 - Feb 3	SCI Hunters Convention Las Vegas Convention Center and MGM Grand Hotel
February 8-11	WHCE – Salt Lake City
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2018 CAWSF Newsletter
April 18-21	Desert Bighorn Council Mtg St. George UT
May 4	Sheep Summit XXIII Sacramento, Doubletree
May 5	CA WSF Fundraiser/Banquet Sacramento, Doubletree
May 20	Due date for articles for 2Q2018 CAWSF Newsletter
June 1	Ballots out for Board of Directors Election

President's Letter

Dear CA Wild Sheep Members and Friends:

I hope that most of you saw the email I sent out in July after certifying our Board of Directors election results but, in case you missed it, here's a quick recap. Your Board of Directors held a conference call on July 10th during which we certified our Director election results. Please join me in welcoming Andrew Ohanesian and Glen Pyne as new members to our board, along with new terms for Adam Casagrande, Ken Crother, Bob Keagy, George Kerr, Don Martin and Craig Van Arsdale. Thanks guys for making the commitment to ensure the future of wild



sheep in California! After certifying the Director election, we also held our Officer Elections with the following results: President - Darryl Williams, VP of Operations - Mike Borel, VP for Northern California - Ken Crother, VP for Southern California - George Kerr, Secretary - Don Priest, Treasurer - Adam Casagrande. I would like to thank all the candidates for stepping up to a leadership role in our Chapter. I also want to thank the Board for placing their trust in me to serve as your President for the next two years. It is truly an honor and I look forward to working with all of you to make CA WSF an even stronger organization. I am excited to see what this great team will accomplish! We also kicked off the process of establishing our 2017/18 Committees, including two new committees. I have challenged the Board to consider the goals we should establish to take CA WSF to the next level. We should establish goals for the next 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 5-10 years. Without goals and action plans to achieve them, we'll continue to stay where we are. I encourage the entire membership to get involved in this process. Your Board (with Beverly's help of course!) is used to doing the majority of the heavy lifting, but I would love to see more members get involved. The more diverse group we are able to bring together, the greater success we will have. After all, this is YOUR Chapter. Later in this newsletter you'll see an article I wrote about a hunt good friend, frequent hunting companion, and fellow board member Glen Pyne and I had the pleasure of taking with Frank Badey of Omineca Guides and Outfitter. Frank has been a donor for a number of years and Glen and I purchased this hunt during our 2016 banquet. If you happen to be on a guided hunt, fishing trip or other outdoor activity this year, please ask your outfitter to consider donating a hunt or trip to our 2018 Banquet. Supporting wild sheep is a great cause, their donation is tax deductible, and the advertising and exposure they get will be good for business.

Finally, I would like to thank Paul Brisso for his service to CA WSF as our President for the last four years. Under Paul's leadership our Chapter has continued to grow, our fundraisers have strengthened, our partnership with SCBS is stronger, our involvement with WSF has increased, and we have continued to put \$100 - 125K (95% of net revenues) on the ground annually to benefit Wild Sheep in California. I look forward to hearing from you and thanks again for your commitment to California wild sheep! Together we can do more!

Yours in conservation,
Darryl

...AND SOME DAYS THE BEAR GETS YOU

by Kyle Meintzer



If there's anything better than a sheep hunt, it's a sheep hunt at a significant discount. So when I received notice in mid-July about a cancellation hunt with a top outfitter, after doing some due diligence, I jumped on it.

Although the hunt was just four weeks out, there was little to do. I always stay in 'Sheep Shape,' so that was of no concern. I did hit the range a couple of times to check my rifle.

My flights to Vancouver where I'd spend the night before heading to Whitehorse the next morning were uneventful. But that's when 'the bear' showed up.

I'd checked in and was walking to my gate when I felt my right cowboy boot rubbing on my little toe. Instead of seeing a little redness, I saw a fingernail-sized piece of loose skin. Just what I needed to start a sheep hunt!

The flights to Whitehorse and a small base camp went as planned. The next morning we rode seven hours to a spike camp. The area hadn't been hunted in eight years and what little was left of the trail proved it. Twice on the ride in we got hit with torrential rain and ¼" hail. If you've never been pelted on the head and shoulders with 1/4" hail, don't!

The following day we bushwhacked on horses 4 ½ hours through an old burn littered with deadfalls, masses of young willows, and millions of flies and mosquitoes to where we would hunt before returning

to the spike camp that evening. The next morning we headed back up, packing in gear so we could camp closer to the hunting area.

Those two days of bushwhacking made a mess of my arms, my legs, my boots and my pants, not to mention that the scabbard containing my rifle actually fell off the horse at one point.

Although I was hunting the same area and with the same guide who had helped an archer tag a 176" Stone the previous week, it wasn't until the next to last day we had sheep closer than a mile away. Then, out of nowhere, we spotted a monster ram feeding below us. We couldn't get closer than 454 yards, but that was of little concern. The ram offered the same shot I'd made in Wyoming last year, so I was confident I would drop him.

Three shots later, I hadn't touched him even though he was standing still, broadside. Then off he went with my guide telling me I'd missed to the right.

When we got back to camp, I checked my scope. At fifty yards I was hitting 2" to the right. At 454 yards, that extrapolated to 18!" AARRGGHH!!!!

I'd had an opportunity at a ram of hundreds of lifetimes, but my scope had gone south on me, no doubt due to all of the bushwhacking.

Some days you get the bear and some days the bear gets you!



MY SOUTH BRISTOLS SHEEP HUNT

by John McGray

May 2016, like all Mays in California, was time to apply for the big game hunts, which I did, as I had done since they started having special hunt drawings. I always applied for everything available, deer, elk, antelope and bighorn sheep.

The draw results usually appear on the State website in mid June, so I started the daily review of the site about a week before the results were due. A day before the official notification deadline I checked the site and there it was a “yes” in the bighorn listing, but none of the other drawings were available, so I figured someone had screwed up and it must be a mistake. I waited until all the other drawing information came onto the site, when it did; the ram information stayed the same, a ram tag for Zone 8. I finally told my wife that I thought I had drawn a sheep tag and I needed to call Fish and Wildlife to confirm. The next day, with nervous anticipation, I made the call to Regina at the Sacramento headquarters and she confirmed I was the lone tag holder for the South Bristol Mountains, Zone 8.

Now what? Never hunted sheep before, had no idea what the area looked like or what rifle I should use? Should I do the hunt myself, get buddies to help, scout early....?

I started with what I knew, the rifles, I choose my model 70 in 270win as my primary gun and a model 700 in 7-08 Rem as my backup. Non lead bullets were required, so I purchased a variety of manufactures products and developed loads during the summer, ending up with the Barnes 129 grain long range bullet for the 270. It was very accurate and flew well in the wind but it was not a long distance bullet, 350 yards would be as far as I wanted to shoot at a ram. The 7-08 would use the 145gr Barnes long range bullet, also an accurate bullet and good to 500+yards.

I also knew two locals that had hunted sheep all over the world and sought out their advice and how to proceed with my preparations, both said, hire an outfitter, and do it before they get booked. I was not moved, and waited. I wanted to scout the area, see what we could find before committing to a guide. I had never used an outfitter for any hunt. I am stubborn, and a natural born tight wad.

I wore out google earth searching the South Bristols for sheep sign, bought all the maps of the area I could find and used my entire cellular data plan watching videos of anything related to sheep hunting.



Then on a summer Saturday my wife and I attended a wedding for the daughter of a friend. There, by coincidence, I came into conversation with the father of the groom, and we started talking hunting and I mentioned I had drawn a sheep tag. He became excited and told me he knows just who I need to talk to about sheep. Before the day is over he calls Cliff St. Martin of Dry Creek Outfitters and hands me the phone. Luckily, Cliff was out looking for sheep, so I left a message.

Cliff called back in a few days and I told him I was undecided on whether to hire a guide. Cliff and I made plans to meet at the hunter orientation in Sacramento. When we finally met and had a conversation it became obvious that Dry Creek Outfitters was willing to do whatever I wanted, from a simple consultation to a full blown guided hunt. I went home unmoved, but better educated, and waited.

The advice to “hire an outfitter before they are booked up” kept running through my head for the next few weeks until I tell my wife, I think the smart thing to do is hire a guide. “How much”, she asks, I tell her, and she says ok.

Cliff and I set up the hunt and start looking at dates. In the mean time I get in 2 scouting trips, each time seeing sheep and several rams.

Fast forward to January 5, 2017

On Thursday January 5th, I retired after 27 years. I completed my final official duties that morning. My fellow workers provided me with an outstanding lunch. At 2pm my work is done and I

can get home and load the truck with gear for the “once in a Lifetime” hunt for desert bighorns.

Friday morning, January 6th I meet with Robert, a good friend who has been on the scouting trips and has agreed to come along on the hunt. He is also a gregarious kind of personality and can make conversation with anyone, something I am not, so he is great to have around in unfamiliar company.

We loaded up the vehicle and headed for Amboy. We stopped in Barstow for lunch, then on to camp arriving in the early afternoon. No one is in camp so we gawk around camp and wander around the adjacent mining sites.

Just about dusk the crews start rolling in. Everyone had been out looking for rams. We all got acquainted and settled in. Matt, Shawn and Nate will be my team of guides. There is another hunter in camp, hunting in the Marbles just to the east, as well as a group of guides for him and support staff. Everyone is ready to hunt.

January 7th, The objective at the start of the hunt is to locate sheep, so the crew scatters across both sides of the zone, Robert and I are with Matt, everyone spends the day in the field. We see sheep, but no shooter rams.

The zone is rough and mostly inaccessible by vehicle. The glassing is from long distance so good optics are a premium. After hours of glassing you learn that binocular vision causes less eye fatigue than monocular vision, so you opt for binoculars and leave the spotting scope for detail work.

January 8th, second full day, we are out early, seeing sheep and covering lots of terrain. We spend the entire day in the field, gathering for lunch and discussing options. The teams split up after lunch and we move to a new location for more glassing, again we see sheep but no large rams.

January 9th, we are in the south of the zone, glassing, working our way north along the range. The other guides are out scanning the area from different angles. At midday, word comes that rams have been spotted in the far north of the range. We make the move and gather on a vantage point. We located a group of three rams and watch them for an hour, trying to figure out what direction they will move. Matt and I decide to make a stalk on the group.

We slip down the ridge line staying out of site of the rams and get within 400 yards. About then, the sheep become aware that something is not right. We stayed put until nearly dark in order not to spook the sheep.

January 10th, the entire scouting group heads for where we last saw the sheep the evening before. Shawn and Nate get there first and find the rams close to where they were the evening before, except there are now five rams.

Again, Matt and I move in closer to where the rams are. We have a destination picked out just below a ridge line that will put us above the rams. As we get closer to the ridge, word comes that the rams have moved and are no longer visible. Matt watches in front of us and I watch the back door, expecting the rams to appear at anytime. We wait, for an hour until we get news that the rams are on the move again. Matt tells me, “leave your pack and bring your rifle we need to move”. When I heard that, I knew it was on. We both start heading down hill 300 yards to a vantage point overlooking a dry wash. Once we arrive, I get set up in the prone position, resting my rifle on Matt’s pack. Matt is on the spotting scope as the rams appear. All five rams were working their way along the bottom of the wash 320 yards away. Matt tells me that he can see the rams but I cannot. They are feeding up the sandy bottom, the largest ram is first. Matt gives me a running commentary on what they are doing as they get closer. At 240 yards the largest ram and a smaller ram move from behind some brush feeding. I can tell they are there but cannot clearly see them. All of a sudden the lead ram steps out and Matt whispers, “220 yards”. I settle the crosshairs on the ram, the rifle “barks”, rams scatter, except for the lead ram which travels only 25 yards and is down!

So it’s over; years of applications and eight months of preparation with a singular thought, “hunting desert bighorn sheep”. I have never experienced anything like it in all the years I have spent in the field. Thank you to everyone who was there and made it possible!



BC BLACK BEAR BONANZA

by Darryl Williams

Editor's Note: Frank is once again donating to the CA WSF fundraiser for 2018. A spring bear hunt may be in your future!

My guide, Mike Helmer, and I were slowing walking single file down the gravel logging road in the direction we last saw the bear. As we approached a small rise in the road we both spotted the bear approaching us! Mike put up the shooting sticks and I got in position. At this point the bear continued to swagger straight toward us and had closed the range to 60-75 yards. I placed the cross hairs below his chin and held steady...mostly in self-defense!

This adventure started at the 2016 California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation banquet. My good friend and frequent hunting companion, Glen Pyne and I had settled in for the auction and both commented on Omineca Guides and Outfitter's donation of a spot and stalk black bear hunt for two hunters. Although the idea of a spot and stalk hunt in BC sounded great, Glen had taken a nice color-phase bear in California in 2015 and we had a Wisconsin black bear hunt booked for the fall of 2017, so we weren't interested in bidding. As sometimes happens at these auctions, the bidding stalled well below value and I bid just to get things going again. Well they got going all right...going once, twice, sold! Glen and I were the proud owners of another bear hunt.

Due to prior commitments, and the fact that neither of us had hunted bears in the spring, I coordinated with Frank Badey, owner/operator of Omineca Guides and Outfitters for Glen and I to join him in June of 2017. We chose to drive from southern California to BC because we thought it would add to the adventure and make it easier to get our trophies and meat home should we be fortunate to both take bears. Glen's oldest son, Connor, would be home from college for the summer and would join us for the adventure.

We stopped in St. George for gas, ice, and salt for our trophies and started the final leg of the trip to Grassham Lake. The rolling hills, lush vegetation and numerous farms were wonderful sights along the way. As we turned onto the gravel logging road to the lake our anticipation for what lay ahead continued to build. We arrived at the boat landing slightly ahead of schedule (not too bad to be off your plan by only 30 minutes after 1800 miles of driving!), so we took a nap and waited for the boat that would take us to Frank's camp located on an island in Grassham Lake. Frank's father started Omineca in the 1950s when the only access to the island was by floatplane. A close



inspection of the buildings will reveal that each piece of plywood was cut so it would fit into an airplane!

After a quick 20-minute boat ride we arrived at Omineca headquarters.

Our cabin had two rooms, a shower, wood stove, table and 5 very comfortable beds. We had a quick lunch and loaded the boat to get started on our hunt. Frank was our guide for the evening and we piled into his Suburban and started driving the logging roads looking for bears. In June, bears this far north have only been out of hibernation for a few weeks and are voracious eaters. They primarily eat clover and dandelions that grow on the edges of the roads, so it's not uncommon to see many bears each day on a spring hunt. The bears will run into the woods when a vehicle passes, but will return to eating in a few minutes. This behavior gives the hunters the opportunity to view many bears a day, if only briefly, to determine if the bear is large enough to warrant a stalk. We saw 2 bears the first afternoon of hunting.

Meals at Omineca are served in the main lodge that serves as the gathering place for the hunters and guides. The food was excellent and Frank and Jill make the entire experience feel more like visiting family than a guide/client relationship. Since the sun sets so late in June, each day started with coffee around 7:30am, breakfast at 8:00 and loading the boat around 10:00. Hunters make their own lunch from ample supplies and can expect to be out hunting until around 10:00pm. After returning to camp and enjoying a delicious dinner, everyone gathers around the campfire until time for bed.

Our third day started with wind, rain, hail and a 20° drop in temperature. The strong wind and rain delayed our departure from camp until midday. After

arriving at the landing and loading into Mike's truck, we started looking for bears. The first few hours were spent driving the logging roads and glassing clear cuts, but turned up nothing. As the day grew later bear sightings increased...eventually seeing 12 bears! As we were driving along Mike spotted a good bear 'grazing' in the dandelions. As we approached, he spooked into the woods. He was big and jet-black...just what I wanted! We continued down the road about a quarter mile and stopped to begin our stalk. As I mentioned earlier, these bears don't have any experience with humans so once the 'danger' of a vehicle has passed they return to feeding.

We had a stalk interrupted by two passing cars on Day 2 and, as we continued our stalk, Mike told me, "No cars, one shot, on the road!" Mike told me that walking on the gravel was noisy and that occasionally a bear will approach the noise to investigate. That's exactly what happened to us at the beginning of this story. As I kept the cross hairs on the bear's chest, he continued to close the range. He was now about 50 yards and I told Mike, "I don't think he's going to turn." Mike said, "At this range, let him have it!" I don't think three seconds passed from Mike's direction until I fired. The 180 grain Barnes TTSX from my Blaser R8 in 300 Winchester Magnum dropped him in his tracks and Mike's request was fulfilled!

After a photo session, field dressing and loading my bear in the truck, we took advantage of the remaining daylight to find a bear for Glen. Not more than 10 minutes after my bear was loaded, Mike spotted a color phase bear run across the road. Although Glen wanted a jet black bear, he was interested if this bear was a shooter. Mike assured us he was and drove past the point where the bear entered the woods about a quarter mile to begin the stalk.

Connor and I waited in the truck and, within a few minutes, we heard the shot. A few minutes later Mike called us on the radio to ask us to drive the truck to their location. When we arrive we found Glen's bear piled up at the edge of the woods...20 yards from the road. Although Glen's bear was a bit smaller than mine, I have never seen a prettier bear. Thick soft blond hair on his back, cinnamon head and legs, and nearly translucent blond claws. The coloration looked more like a blonde grizzly ...simply beautiful!

After breakfast on Day 4 we skinned and deboned our bears...since we drove we took every piece of eatable meat. With our 'chores' complete we took one of Frank's boats out on the lake for some trout fishing. We had a glorious day on the lake and Connor out fished both Glen and I. Back camp Frank taught us how to prepare the trout for the smoker and we spent the rest of the day relaxing and exploring the island.

We enjoyed another wonderful meal of moose roast, more celebration, more libations, and turned in for our last night in camp. After breakfast on Day 5, we loaded our gear and said goodbye to Omineca.

We stopped on the way to St. George to drop off our hides with Heidi Hill of Blue Mountain Taxidermy and continued the long drive back to SOCAL.

Omineca Guide and Outfitters has been in operation since the 1950s on Grassham Lake BC. Frank and Jill run a comfortable camp with great food and even better hospitality. Frank's guides are committed to making each client's experience a memorable one and the ample game in the area (our camp of 7 hunters took 8 bears) increases your odds of success. Frank's season starts with spring bear hunts, progresses into fishing trips in the summer and culminates in fall moose and bear hunts. If you're looking for a truly unique BC experience with some of the hardest working, friendliest folks in the business, contact Frank and start making memories.



Give a Lamb a Drink, and a LIFE

**THANKS
FOR THE DRINK!**

CA WSF is committed to raising more than \$2M to install 90+ wildlife watering systems over the next 5 years. What does this mean for the sheep? What does it mean for you?

Water is the number one issue limiting our wild sheep populations (Douglas, 1988) and our sheep hunting tags. The two go hand-in-hand as the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife has a mandate that relates the number of estimated total sheep to availability of sheep for hunting.

However, since the 1940s there has been continuous change in availability of water sources due to climate changes as well as human intrusions.

Desert bighorn require 4% of their body mass in water each day and they often meet this requirement by consuming free-standing water according to multiple studies done in the 1960s and 1970s. In a 1963 study, bighorn watered at least once every three days when free-standing water was available. Daily movement of bighorns between watering areas, foraging areas and resting areas normally do not exceed more than a few miles in a day.

"In order to expand numbers and distribution of bighorn sheep, limiting factors, such as lack of water

and poor forage conditions, need to be addressed.

Management actions to

enhance these deficiencies will be aggressively pursued" was part of the Nevada Division of Wildlife's Bighorn Sheep Management Plan in 2001. Today Nevada has more bighorn sheep than any other state. Currently in California, with the various Federal Land Acts, protected land and forage for bighorn sheep are both in place; water is the limiting factor.

With a current estimate of 4,800 desert bighorn sheep in California according to recent estimates by CDFW and 103 man-made water sources in place, each location is averaging 45 sheep per drinker.

The Give a Lamb a Drink project will add 90 water sources ideally located for bighorn sheep. This would support an additional 6,750 desert bighorns.

Each installation costs approximately \$25,000 in materials. Most labor is provided by volunteers from our sister organization, the Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. YOU are the missing ingredient!



Give a Lamb a Drink Today!

Yes, I want to donate \$300 to give a lamb a drink.



Name on Card _____

eMail or Phone _____

Credit Card _____

Exp Date ____ / ____ CVC# _____ Billing Zip Code _____

Signature _____

Make checks payable to CA Wild Sheep Foundation

Mail to: 1314 B Center Drive #267, Medford, OR 97501

Fax this form to: 650-472-3889

Visit the website at: www.cawsf.org

LONE STAR LUCK

by Adam Casagrande

When you mention the great state of Texas most people think of the Alamo, BBQ, Football, Longhorn cattle and even black gold or “Texas Tea” as they call it. Very few people think of Desert Bighorn Sheep. When you mention Desert Bighorn Sheep to a sheep hunter or a hunter who dreams of becoming a sheep hunter they think Nevada, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Old Mexico in fact very few even realize there is an established population of Desert Bighorn Sheep thriving in West Texas.

This population of Desert Bighorn Sheep in Texas is a true conservation success story that began in the early 80’s thanks to Texas Bighorn Society the Wild Sheep Foundation and the Texas Parks and Wildlife. Native populations of Desert Bighorn Sheep in Texas are thought to have been gone since the 1960’s. But hard work and generosity of those who truly wanted to see these amazing animals again call the great state of Texas home has paid off. Today there are around 1,500 Desert Bighorn Sheep living on public and private lands in the West Texas landscape.

Anyone can drive the many hours into the heart of West Texas and go look at these awesome animals on one of the Wildlife Management Areas they call home. However only a very few hunters every year will have the opportunity to hunt and harvest a Texas Desert Bighorn Sheep. Fifteen or so tags are issued every year from TPWD. Each year one tag is auctioned through a non-profit organization to the highest bidder, one tag is given away in the Big Time Texas Hunts raffle and one is given away in the Texas Parks and Wildlife public draw. The other dozen or so tags every year are given to private land owners which are typically sold as land owner tags.

Even though hunting Desert Bighorn Sheep in Texas is not at the forefront of Desert Bighorn Sheep hunting, it is no secret. Last year there was 5455 applicants for the public draw hunt and who knows how many raffle tickets were sold for the Big Time Texas Hunts Grand Slam Package. Every year for the last ten or so years I have made my annual \$10 contribution to the TPWD via the application for the public draw hunt. Why do I call it a contribution you ask? Because when the odds are 1 in 5445 or .00018% I don’t even bother checking the results. I just figured I would do my part as a conservationist who cares deeply for bighorn sheep.

So on New Year’s Eve of this year while on a ski vacation with my family I was browsing through emails from the last few days and I came across an email from TPWD. It didn’t even get my heart racing as I didn’t know the draw date and it didn’t even cross my mind until I read Congratulations! After a few



expletives came from my mouth and rereading the email a dozen or so times I picked up the phone to call TPWD no answer, well no wonder it was 9:00 on New Year’s Eve in TX. With two sheep tags drawn in the last six months. Let’s just say it was a New Year’s celebration that night.

After a few days of trying to get in touch with the correct people, I finally got verbal confirmation from TPWD that I was indeed the winner of the Desert Bighorn Sheep hunt. Even better news was that I would be hunting in April, and it was a fully outfitted and guided hunt at no additional cost. Mark Garrett manager of the Trans Pecos Wildlife Management Areas filled me in on all the details and put me in touch with Dewey Stockbridge who manages the Elephant Mountain WMA where I would be hunting. Dewey would also be my primary guide for the hunt.

Dewey and I had many conversations over the next three months and he did an outstanding job laying out what I should expect and what was expected of me. TPWD is working very hard on the conservation and growth of Texas Desert Bighorn Sheep and they know most all of the animals that call Elephant Mountain home. There were a few mature age class rams they wanted me to consider harvesting. I am a member WSF and multiple WSF chapters so conservation of these animals was right in line with my expectations as well.

Elephant Mountain WMA is a 23,000 acre ranch that was donated in 1985 to TPWD and in 1987 the first 20 Desert Bighorn Sheep were transplanted there. Today there are approximately 150 Desert Bighorn that call Elephant Mountain home. TPWD has had great success in growing this herd and they want to see that success continue through proper management and conservation of the resource.

April 1st quickly arrived and I was on a plane headed for El Paso Texas where I would meet up with



my good friend Seth Henrie. We loaded the rental car and headed east through the deserts of West Texas to Elephant Mountain WMA. We arrived late that evening but were greeted by Mark Garrett, Dewey Stockbridge and a few other local area biologists all familiar with the Desert Bighorn that resided here. We would be staying in a large ranch house right at the base of Elephant Mountain. We told a few stories and got to know one another while looking at pictures of past tag holders hanging on the walls before heading off to bed.

Sunrise presented me with my first views of Elephant Mountain itself which is really a large mesa. Gaining about 1500-2000 feet in elevation the scattered rock and jagged cliffs give way to a grass filled plateau. Food, water and shelter all were present here on this isolated mesa in the middle of an unforgiving endless rugged desert landscape. We gathered our gear ate a quick breakfast and headed off to check the zero on my rifle. Dewey was satisfied with my shooting and we had one last discussion in regards his expectations on killing a mature ram.

We jumped in the trucks and headed down a dirt road as we would be circling the south side of the mountain stopping to glass every mile or so. The mountain was so broken up with cuts and ravines the sheep could hide anywhere. We managed to glass up a bunch of ewes and lambs up in the cliffs but were unable to turn up any rams early that morning. The weather was not what I expected for April in TX as it was cloudy windy and misting rain which did not make for ideal glassing conditions. The low clouds continually rolled through, socking in the top half of the mountain. We continued to glass and move around the south side of the mountain retreating to the cover of the trucks a few times as the rain became more constant. By no means is this a canned hunt these sheep are free to roam where they wish, but I will say the hardest part of this hunt was going to be drawing the tag.

By early afternoon we had made our way to the north side of the mountain where Mark and some of the other biologist had been glassing all morning. They had been watching a group of mature rams feeding about three quarters of the way up the face



and thought there was one or two rams in the group worth looking over. We set up the spotting scopes and Dewey agreed that we needed a closer look but was pretty sure two of the rams were ones that were on his list he wanted me to consider. Both were heavy dark horned rams that he thought were ten years old. Neither of them had super long horns as they were broomed back, but their mass all but made up for what they lacked in length. We formulated a plan to close the distance on the rams and confirm they were indeed the correct age class.

We decided to go around the mountain and come at them from above due to the winds and where they were situated. Our stalk would put us within 300 yards which would allow us to confirm age and set up for a clear shot. Back in the trucks we headed about a mile down to a dirt road that would lead us to the top. We stopped about a quarter of the way up and would go on foot the rest of the way. Seth, Dewey, Cody and myself grabbed our gear and headed up. Only a few hundred yards from the truck Dewey stopped in front of me and pointed across a canyon. On the skyline two rams were walking dead away. We backed off a little and circled to get behind what little cover there was and continued up. Suddenly Dewey stopped again and threw up his binoculars as did I. I glassed across the canyon about 350 yards trying to pick up what he was watching. I whispered, "I don't see anything." Seth who was right behind me whispered back, "Right there." "Right where," I replied. "Seventy yards" Seth said. Well seventy yards was on this side of where the canyon started so I threw my binos up again and nothing. Seth whispered "at the base of the rock pile." I panned down and all I could see were horns. But something wasn't right, they were laying on the ground. As I studied them through my binos I couldn't see a body all I could see were horns. I said "that is just a ram skull." Dewey who was to my right about five feet said no that is a ram. I leaned to my right and sure enough I could see the rams body. He was laying nose down in the dirt facing straight at me sound asleep. This ram was not part of the other group we were making a play on as they were well over a mile away.

We eased to the ground and I got set up prone on my bipod. Dewey confirmed he was at least ten years old and a mature old ram for the area and met the criteria we were looking for. His exact words as I peered through my scope were "he fits the bill so it is up to you." Here I sit with a mature Desert Bighorn Sheep in my crosshairs at 99 yards. I didn't have to think twice, but I was going to wait till he stood up and presented me with a broadside shot. A few minutes later he lifted his head and the mass he carried throughout his horns was unreal. Just then he decided to stand but was still facing me straight on. He then dropped out of sight in a gully and this is when things got just a little western.

With him out of sight and headed down into the canyon we quickly worked our way closer to the edge. About fifty yards further as we started to crest I looked down to my left and there he was. He started to trot and I locked on to him. Dewey whispering beside me, "let him stop let him stop." Just as he got the rim he hesitated which gave my trigger just enough time to break. Over the edge he went and we scurried up to where he went over. I had another round in the chamber if needed but felt confident of the shot. There was no immediate blood but it only took a minute or so to locate him piled up in the rocks fifty or so yards below.

The standard high fives and hugs all around ensued as we were all a little shocked at what had just occurred. We were joined by a few of the other

biologists who had been out glassing including Froylan Hernandez the head sheep biologist for the state of Texas. Everyone was amazed by the sheer mass and age of the ram. At eleven years old he ties for the oldest ram ever harvested on Elephant Mountain WMA. Everyone especially myself was extremely pleased as this ram was a perfect example of the type of ram TPWD wanted to harvest. Dewey looked at me and said, "I don't know this ram." I said, "What do you mean." He said, "I have not seen this ram before or at least not for the last few years." Had he been that good at hiding or had he wandered off the WMA into the vast West Desert landscape and just recently made his way back? Who knows but he is an impressive ram none the less.

Back at the ranch house we prepped the cape and skull for the journey back to Idaho and took DNA and blood samples for research. The horns were green scored at an incredible 172 4/8 gross and then plugged so all was official. We celebrated with a fantastic steak dinner and a few cold beverages while telling sheep hunting stories of years past. Although this hunt ended sooner than I would have liked and by no means was a physically demanding sheep hunt I am thrilled with the outcome. Again the hardest part of hunting Desert Bighorn Sheep in the great State of Texas is drawing the tag. Thanks again to TPWD and all of those involved for the work you have done to bring these amazing animals back to Texas.

BEWARE OF RATTLESNAKES

by Glen Pyne, DVM

During the warmer months of the year, several subspecies of rattlesnakes resurface from their dormant state in the winter and are more active. They are prevalent throughout the west, and you need to make sure that your pets are protected. Fortunately, there is a rattlesnake vaccine that can be given to help combat the venom and it will significantly reduce the chances of a fatal bite.

There is an initial administration of the vaccine followed by a subsequent one about a month later. This is to ensure that the vaccine will endure in the body long term, and at least throughout the summer. The vaccine works extremely well at generating protective antibodies, and these antibodies start neutralizing venom immediately. It also reduces the amount of anti-venom required to treat your pet, but it does not eliminate the necessity of treatment.

This means that vaccinated dogs experience less pain and have a reduced risk of permanent injury

from a rattlesnake bite. Veterinarians typically report that such dogs experience less swelling, less tissue damage, and a faster recovery from a bite than unvaccinated dogs. If your pet is bitten by a snake, you must consider that as an emergency and transport them a veterinarian immediately. Even bites by non-venomous snakes can lead to serious infections and antibiotic treatment may be needed.

California's diverse climate hosts many different areas for rattlesnakes to establish a home. From the mountains and the deserts to our chaparral region, snakes can nestle in and adapt to their environment. Our dogs enjoy sniffing around and exploring their world, and they may encounter a snake which can lead to a serious or fatal altercation. So, if snakes live in your neck of the woods or you plan on hunting where they are situated, make sure your pet is protected with this vaccine.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Matt Burke and Donald C. Martin
Archery Triple-Monterey County,
2 Trophy Toms and the decoy!



Donald C. Martin
350+ lb. Wild Boar
Jim Bardin Ranch-Monterey County



Jeff Atwood
Dall's Sheep
2017 Yukon with Tim and Jen Mervyn



Stan Atwood
Dall's Sheep
2017 Yukon with Tim and Jen Mervyn



Terry Anderson
Bear 450 to 500 lb
seen on my PLM



John McGray
10 Year old CA Desert Ram, South Bristols
Dry Creek Outfitters

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Darryl Williams
Canadian Black Bear
Omenica Outfitters



Adam Casagrande
Texas Desert Bighorn, Elephant Mountain WMA
Dewey Stockbridge

NEWS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

WSF has announced new <1 Rules
— Are you still a member? <http://bit.ly/LessThan1>

WSF has requested Interior Appropriations Language changes from the 2015 Budget for Bighorn Sheep
<http://bit.ly/BHLanguage>

WSF requests Forest Service and BLM to include language in FY2018 Appropriations bill that will help to stop transmission of the M. ovi species of bacteria that leads to deadly pneumonia
<http://bit.ly/BLMLanguage>

WSF engages AWCP on Sportsman's Act regarding Access to Manage Wildlife on Public Lands
<http://bit.ly/AcceessPublicLands>

WSF statement on Transfer of Federal Public Lands In the Lower 48 United States
<http://bit.ly/TransferLands>

WSF Respiratory Disease and Mitigation in Wild Sheep Issue Statement
<http://bit.ly/DiseaseAndMigration>

CDFW Hunter Dollars at Work:
Plumas and Sierra Counties Elk Expansion. Sporadic sightings of elk have been reported in Plumas and Sierra counties for the last decade. It is presumed the elk originated in Lassen County and are expanding

their range by crossing Highway 395 southward. CDFW has placed GPS telemetry collars on four individual animals to gain baseline data on the movement of elk in this area.

<http://bit.ly/ElkExpansion>

CDFW Hunter Dollars at Work:
San Joaquin Watershed Telemetry Project. The San Joaquin deer herd is in decline and much of the winter range is underutilized. In addition, a large percentage of bucks within the range appear to be resident deer causing concern that the migratory population may be even more suppressed. Telemetry data will help locate, protect and enhance key summer and winter range areas and the migration corridors throughout the range.

<http://bit.ly/SanJoaquinTelemetry>

Did you strikeout in the 2017 Big Game Drawing? CDFW encourages you to take advantage of the Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) program, which is designed to improve public access to private or landlocked public land for hunting and other activities.

<http://bit.ly/SHARE17>

2018 ANNUAL BANQUET UPDATE

by Donald C. Martin

What a tremendous success we had at this year's banquet. I want to thank each and every one of you that attended for making our annual fundraiser "THE" wildlife conservation dinner not to be missed. What a great time we had and what a tremendous amount of money we raised for California's wild sheep.

It's never too early to start planning to attend next year's dinner on May 5, 2018 at the Doubletree by Hilton located on Arden in Sacramento. The new location was a great success and we now have room to grow. I challenge all of our members to introduce someone new to our event next year or reintroduce someone that may not have attended in some time. Tell your friends that if they can attend only one wildlife banquet in California, they better make it the California Wild Sheep Dinner.

Thanks to our friends at Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep(SCBS) we now have nearly unlimited drinker project potential in the Southern California desert. All we need is YOU to attend our dinner and help us raise the money to double the number of desert bighorn sheep here in California. Twice as many sheep could translate into more than twice as many tags! Double your chances at a desert bighorn tag by "Giving a lamb a drink" at our next event.

Once again we had an awesome line up of high quality items in our live and silent auctions and our general and special raffles. I expect our "Fundraiser Dream Team" to once again deliver next year and continue to set the standard for other state sheep chapters to follow.

We have a couple new surprises for next year's event that I may hint at in upcoming issues but for now I want to outline the big items we have already locked down for next year's dinner. First and foremost, Ultima Thule Outfitters continues to allow me great latitude with their hunting program and we will be offering another 10 day Dall sheep hunt in Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. Winner will be selected by random drawing and I will personally guide the winner. To improve odds of winning, we will be limiting the # of tickets even more and YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN. Tickets will go on sale at the 2018 Wild Sheep Foundation National Convention in Reno. In addition, we are working on another custom rifle to be available for Special Random Drawing with a limited number of tickets.

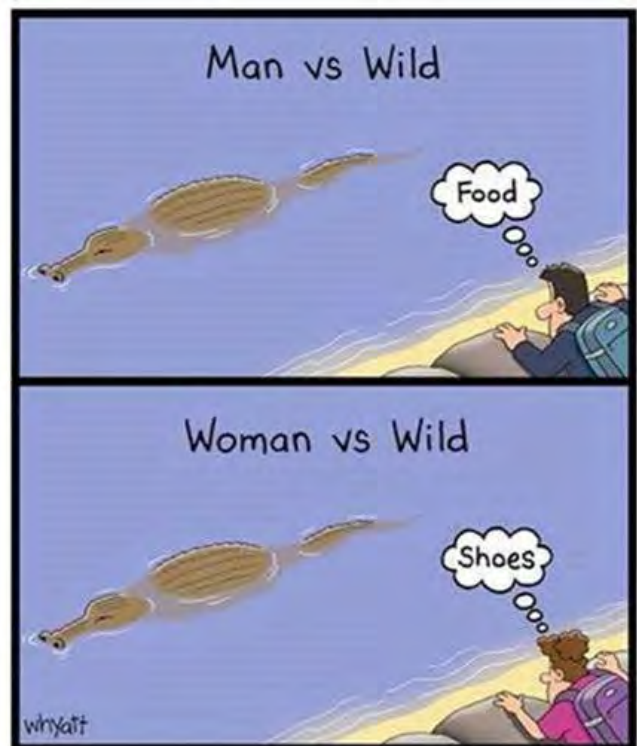
The State of Alaska has been very generous with our chapter in the past and this year is no different. We have been awarded the 2018 Delta Junction

Controlled Use Area(CUA) Dall sheep permit. This is a highly sought after permit only available through the state drawing and draw odds for non-residents are extremely low. This is a great opportunity to hunt one of Alaska's best CUA's for trophy Dall sheep in 2018.

In addition, we have been awarded a 2018 Unit 14C Mountain Goat Permit. The permit is for the Bird Creek area and only 5 permits are issued per year. For the hardy mountain hunter, this is a great opportunity to hunt in one of the most sought after areas without having to beat the nearly impossible draw odds. I spoke with Dan Montgomery of Alaska Trophy Adventures and he told me he would fly the area and be willing to help whoever obtains the permit.

That's a great start to our lineup of items for next year's event. With 10 months to plan there's no excuse to miss the best party in California Wildlife conservation, so clear your calendars and save the date of May 5, 2018 and I will see you there!

Good luck, this fall. Shoot straight, shoot often and be safe!



WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION JUNE 2017 WASHINGTON DC “FLY-IN”

by Donald Priest

This past June representatives from Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) and many of its Chapters and Affiliates gathered again in Washington DC for a “Fly-In” to continue our Legislative work with members of Congress on Capitol Hill. Kyle Meintzer and I attended as the California contingent of this team. Other states represented included Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Montana and Nevada. During our two day visit to Congress, these eight members of this Spring 2017 Legislative team met with the offices of six Senators and two Representatives, including Representative Paul Cook (CA-8). Rep. Cook’s congressional district includes much of the wild Desert Bighorn Sheep habitat in southern California. In addition, Executive offices were visited including the Department of the Interior (Interior), Forest Service and Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The most pressing and essential issues were discussed with all. This included disease prevention, a concern for all states including California given the recent outbreaks in the past four years. WSF continued to work with and encourage Senators and Representatives to reinforce their support via sign-on letters to the Forest Service within the USDA as well as the Bureau Land Management (BLM) within Interior to prevent disease expansion on and spreading from grazing allotments. WSF has had success in making part of recent spending bills directed to agencies to identify disease risks. This includes bringing in sportsmen and grazing permittees in assisting with eliminating these risks. WSF very much supports pro multiple-use groups working together to resolve this persistent and difficult problem.

The WSF team also discussed with legislators our support for the Sportsmen’s Act (Senate Bill 733). This bill includes several provisions important to wild sheep, including conservation programs, land access for sheep management, and our hunting heritage.

The last key concern for this fly-In session involved access to federal lands so that state Fish and Wildlife agencies as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) may conduct their wildlife management work. Specifically, here in California there are a number of agencies that actively manage lands in our desert. This includes two National Parks, a National Preserve, a National Monument, at least four Military bases, and all those spread within a sea of BLM and Forest Service lands, with many of these including Wilderness Areas. Needless



to say, the jurisdictional issues surrounding good wildlife management is made problematic by the many agencies that must be coordinated. This makes efforts by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CA DFW) personnel and conservation NGO’s like CA WSF difficult to complete effective sheep management work.

However, there is promise as Rep. Cook is working with two bills that can help effectuate more effective sheep management; we had the opportunity to discuss both bills. The first is House Bill HR 857 and the other is the “Bighorn Sheep Preservation Act.” The later act was coordinated by the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep with Rep. Cook’s office. Its main thrust is to require the various Federal land agencies to allow access to the CA DFW for construction, maintenance, and repair of guzzlers within the California Desert Conservation Area.

HR 857 is an expansive bill that covers many topics, including: the expansion of the two California desert National Parks, Death Valley and Joshua Tree; the addition of new Wilderness Areas; allowing for and defining off-highway vehicle recreation areas; and amending the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 regarding California State School lands.

Next month WSF will again call on our Senators and Representatives the week of September 11th; and California shall be well represented by Kyle Meintzer. Kyle will again meet with Rep. Cook to lend our CA WSF support and assistance to his offices efforts for Desert Bighorn Sheep conservation.

PROGRESS TOWARD EVALUATING THE ROLE OF HARVEST, DEMOGRAPHY, AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS ON HORN SIZE OF MOUNTAIN SHEEP: PART I

by Tayler N. LaSharr, Kevin L. Monteith, and Vernon C. Bleich

This article is the first in a series that will summarize a detailed report describing progress toward understanding the influences of hunter harvest, demography, and the environment on horn size of North American Wild Sheep. Funding for the research has been provided by a multitude of agencies and organizations, each of which is acknowledged later in the article; it is especially noteworthy that the California Wild Sheep Foundation and a number of other affiliates of the Wild Sheep Foundation have invested in this project, and that all three of the big game record-keeping organizations in North America have cooperated fully by providing access to the long-term data streams in their archives.

Hunting of wild populations has been, and remains, an important part of human history. In North America in particular, hunting has long been a fundamental component of wildlife management and conservation. Following the exploitation and near extirpation of many wildlife species in the 1800s, biologists, managers and sportsmen developed a set of principles that allowed them to not only sustainably harvest wild game, but also to return many depleted populations to robust numbers. This body of principles, better known as the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, recognized hunting as a cornerstone of wildlife management, and is arguably one of the most successful sets of tools used for the conservation of wild species throughout the world.

Beyond its value to wildlife management and conservation, hunting also provides one of the largest sources of funding for management and conservation of wildlife in North America. Hunting generates billions of dollars each year through federal taxes, and the sale of licenses and permits, all of which directly benefit wildlife and their habitat throughout North America. Without the efforts of early sportsmen and anglers in developing the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation, and the continued monetary contributions of both hunters and anglers today, many of our wild populations and the habitat upon which they rely likely would no longer exist.

Although harvest remains a fundamental part of conservation and management of wild populations, there has been recent concern over unintended consequences of selective pressures

that may result from current harvest strategies. Over the past two decades, the idea that selection for specific sizes, behaviors, or characteristics of wild animals can cause an evolutionary change in those characteristics has garnered increased interest and concern among researchers and the public over the past two decades. Indeed, there can be evolutionary consequences through time when harvest pressure is both highly selective and intensive. Among potential changes are a reduction in the average body size of a population, changes in the size of horns or antlers, increasingly early sexual maturation, and changes in behaviors such as courtship or foraging. Yet, the degree of selectivity and intensity necessary to produce such evolutionary changes remains unclear.

Among ungulates, the evolutionary effects of selective harvest pressure typically are assessed through changes in the size of horns or antlers. Research on this subject is still limited, but there is evidence that harvest can cause changes in the size of horn-like structures. The majority of the work on this topic, however, has focused on a single population of bighorn sheep found on Ram Mountain in Alberta, Canada. In that population, harvest has resulted in a genetically based reduction in the size of horns through time. Those results represent an important step in understanding the effects that selective harvest can have on the size of horn-like structures, but the Ram Mountain population possesses unique characteristics that do not exist in most populations of wild game in North America: (1) for the majority of the study period, harvest of bighorn sheep was regulated based solely on a size requirement with no limit to the number of animals that could be harvested each year, and (2) during most of the study, males had a 40% probability of being harvested during the year in which they reached legal size. The high degree of both hunter selectivity and harvest intensity at Ram Mountain almost certainly contributed to genetic changes affecting the size of horns through time. The unique characteristics of the population on Ram Mountain, however, make it critically important to understand how the results of harvest practices in this population relate to other populations of big game that are managed under more conservative harvest regulations.

Research results from Ram Mountain have been used by some to suggest that management strategies throughout North America are causing irreversible evolutionary changes to the size of horns or antlers through time. In reality, though, harvest of most populations of big game throughout North America does not occur at the same intensity as the harvest pressure that existed on Ram Mountain, thereby calling into question the selective role of harvest practices at a larger scale. Further, the idea that selective harvest is causing changes at the population level has received increased attention among the public. If current harvest practices are causing declines in the growth of hornlike structures in ungulates, however, managers and biologists would want to know that, and would adjust harvest practices accordingly. Our research is being conducted on a much broader spatial scale than occurred at Ram Mountain (i.e., a scale that encompasses populations that are more representative of how we harvest most populations of wild game) and will help wildlife conservationists, managers, and hunters understand how harvest practices influence the size of horns and antlers.

Understanding how selective harvest influences ungulates is a highly controversial issue that can be difficult to address, especially because changes to horn or antler sizes in response to harvest can take decades to manifest. Furthermore, other factors such as age and nutrition can override genetic contributions to horn or antler size, and can potentially confound results if not properly accounted for. Age plays the most important role in size of horn-like structures, particularly in species in which horns grow throughout life. Nutritional condition during different stages of life also can have lifetime consequences for horn size, and individuals that experience poor environmental conditions may have smaller horns than individuals of the same age that are not limited by poor resources.

Mountain sheep represent an ideal taxon to test the question of how selective harvest influences horn size for two reasons. First, the presence of horn annuli allows biologists to estimate the age of mountain sheep with a high level of confidence. These age data are critically important for assessing changes in the age structure of the population, which can result in population-level changes in horn size through time, and that may mimic trends caused by selective harvest. Second, harvest of mountain sheep is highly regulated, and harvested individuals must be checked in to state or provincial wildlife agencies. In many areas, biologists and managers have collected horn measurements and age data from wild sheep for decades. These records represent one of the

few sources of empirical data that are currently available for testing the question of selective harvest at the time scale on which evolutionary processes occur in a long-lived species.

Using harvest data from four subspecies of mountain sheep (Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, desert bighorn sheep, Stone's sheep, and Dall's sheep), we are in the process of testing three hypotheses potentially explaining how harvest influences the size of mountain sheep horns through time. We have termed these the demographic shift hypothesis, the selective harvest hypothesis, and the environmental effects hypothesis. In the next issue of *California Wild Sheep*, we will describe these hypotheses in detail, and provide insight into our initial findings.

Editors Note: *Tayler LaSharr is a graduate student working under the direction of Kevin Monteith. In the fall of 2015, she began this project, which focuses on understanding the effects of harvest on horn size of mountain sheep, identifying the relevancy and use of trophy record books to assess biological trends, and understanding the influence of nutrition and the environment on annual growth of horns in North American wild sheep. Kevin Monteith is an Assistant Professor at the University of Wyoming, where his research program is centered on establishing protocols for habitat-based, sustainable management of ungulate populations, while investigating the effects of predation, habitat alteration, climate change, migration tactics, and novel disturbance through the lens of nutrition. Vern Bleich retired from the California Department of Fish and Game in 2007, but remains active in wildlife research and conservation. Additional project collaborators are Ryan Long (University of Idaho), Jim Heffelfinger (Arizona Game and Fish Department), Paul Krausman (University of Arizona), Justin Shannon (Utah Division of Wildlife Resources), and Terry Bowyer (University of Alaska Fairbanks). This project is a cooperative effort that would not be possible without the support of biologists and managers throughout the West, data contributed by the Boone and Crockett Club, Pope and Young Club, and Safari Club International, and financial support from Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, California Wild Sheep Foundation, the National Wild Sheep Foundation, Wyoming Wild Sheep Foundation, Alberta Wild Sheep Foundation, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Wyoming Governor's Big Game License Coalition, Iowa Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, Utah Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, and the Pope and Young Club.*

2017 WHITE MOUNTAIN BIGHORN SHEEP GROUND SURVEY

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE, REGION 6

by Mike Morrison

Windy and cool, with a high near 53.

The annual White Mountain ground survey is divided into three sections, White Mountain north, White Mountain south, and Silver Canyon. This is a minimum count survey as opposed to a population estimate using robust statistical methodologies. White Mountain north and south sections are within the White Mountain bighorn sheep hunt zone where the survey is conducted at high elevation and Silver Canyon is outside the hunt zone to the south and is conducted at low elevation. There are currently no active, working radio collars on bighorn in the White Mountain range but efforts are under way for approval to conduct a capture in Forest Service designated Wilderness, where up to a maximum of 60 collars could be deployed as early as fall of 2017. Radio collared bighorn will enable the Department to conduct population abundance estimates in future surveys. The capture will also be very important for blood sample collection to screen for disease. A harvested ram from the 2016 hunt, which exhibited all the external signs of serious disease, was taken to Nevada where it tested positive and was found to have sinus tumors after a necropsy was conducted.

Two observers traversed north from White Mountain Peak to the north end of the range on July 1 through July 4 hiking approximately 30 miles and counting 171 bighorn. Eight observers looked for bighorn on July 18 from White Mountain peak south to Sheep Mountain where a total of 41 bighorn were counted. This year's survey from White Mountain peak south was the most coverage (four different

WHITE MOUNTAIN SURVEY RESULTS			
	WM (north)	WM (south)	Silver Canyon
Ewes	65	12	19
Yewes	0	2	4
Unclassed Ylgs	19	0	0
Lambs	41	7	13
Rams	28	18	0
Yrams	0	2	2
Unclassed	18	0	0
Total	171	41	38
Grand Total - 250			

groups of two observers) for this area that has ever been achieved compared to previous year's surveys.

The Silver Canyon portion of the survey is conducted over several month's from summer through fall. This is done in order to capture easily observed bighorn while lambs are still quite young and they stay close to Silver Creek and the nearby road during mid-summer. Adult rams will migrate into the canyon in early fall for the pre-rut where they can then be counted. These adult rams typically migrate into Silver Canyon from inaccessible areas known not to have been previously surveyed during the same year. There have only been 4 survey days completed in Silver Canyon at the time of writing this article. So far, 38 bighorn have been counted with no adult rams seen yet. This is the most sheep seen in Silver Canyon since 2007. There have, however, been four lambs observed coughing and time will tell if they survive through the most vulnerable earliest months of their life.



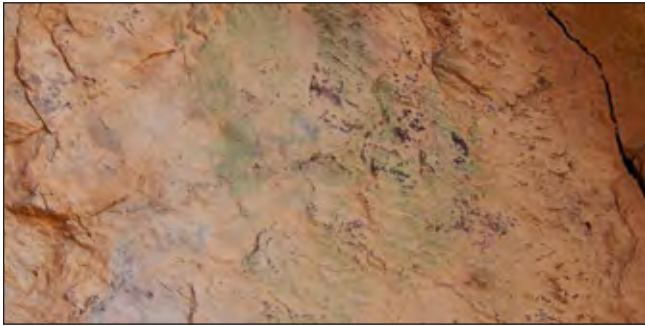
Photo 1: A ram bedded on Pellisier Flats.



Photo 2: A young lamb in Silver Canyon.

THE WAY OF THINGS

by Carlos Gallinger, www.thewayofthings.org



THOUGHTS ON MANAGEMENT FOR THE DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP OF THE NEWBERRY MOUNTAINS COMPLEX

This herd wanders through a vast amount of land that has few roads and large tracts of wilderness which encompasses the following ranges: Newberrys, Ords, Rodman and Granite Mountains as well as Sunshine Peak and other parts the Twentynine Palms Marine base. This large piece of land has many favorable attributes for a population of desert bighorn sheep. According to local rancher Dave Fisher there has always been sheep in this area though in the 70s and 80s. California Fish and Game Department considers that there were none, or perhaps only 25 head.

The Newberry herd is a remnant herd and thereby possesses part of the unique genetic diversity of the species. It also has the possibility of becoming a relatively large herd pushing animals all the way into the Twentynine Palms Marine base and connecting to places as far away as the Coxcomb Mountains and perhaps even into Joshua Tree National Park. This would have a wide-ranging effect on the health and genetics of the species as a whole.

This herd has been subject to a long history of detrimental events, common to all bighorn sheep herds throughout the southwest. However, at present, many of these detrimental attributes have been mitigated with some success. A recent helicopter survey completed in October 2016 and recommended by CA WSE, counted approximately 150 animals in a relatively small flyover sample. Yet there is much more that can be done with a good management plan implemented.

As with most of the herds in southern California, this herd has been studied genetically and has also been studied by the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep's (SCBS) camera project starting in 2009. This project continued for more than three years, capturing almost a half-million pictures at numerous sites throughout this herd's range. Many of the images

are archived with Bob Burke, Robert Gallinger, and myself as well as other members of SCBS.

The submitted plan is more detailed and exacting than a general plan yet one that will grow with continuing information, addressing all spring and crossover points. [Ed note: You may get the complete draft plan by contacting Carlos carlosgallinger@gmail.com.]

NEWBERRY MOUNTAINS

The Newberry Mountains contains ideal escape terrain that the desert bighorn sheep prefer. It also has as a wide variety of vegetation that they can eat. However, it has very few water sources. This mountain range has a year-round bighorn sheep population. Management of this herd began with installation of a big-game guzzler in 1986.

The Newberry Mountains are currently legally considered a wilderness area by the Bureau of Land Management, so any plan concerning this mountain range must be coordinated with their local office as well as with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

RODMAN MOUNTAINS

The Rodman Mountains are a large and geologically mixed mountain range containing a large lava flow and a number of granite peaks. Most of this mountain range is used extensively by bighorn sheep including the lava flow. The Rodman lava flow has many archaeological sites. Many of these have petroglyphs showing bighorn sheep indicating a long history of bighorns within the range.

The Rodman mountain wilderness has three known water sources to facilitate sheep habitation, although one is quite often dry. With some management, this herd could easily be expanded.

ORD MOUNTAINS

Without a doubt this is the best habitat in the complex. The ground is relatively fertile and supports a wide variety of plants. It stands over 6000 feet and can be classified as a sky island. A sky island is a mountain in a desert region that is isolated and tall enough to have a wetter microclimate that often has unique plants and animal species. This sky island has a large north facing slope that contains snow, often for three months or more. This snow provides a highly distributed water source for the bighorn sheep giving them an advantage when it comes to predator interaction. These mountains also have a large number of springs that have any number of advantages as well as maintenance issues that should be considered.

It is without a doubt that the attributes on Ord Mountain are the primary reason why we still have a bighorn sheep herd in this area.

One of the main considerations for a long-term management plan in this area is the private landholdings in and around this mountain

EAST ORD MOUNTAIN

East Ord Mountain is not quite as high and for number reasons does not seem to hold the snow as well as Ord Mountain. There are no known springs of any use to the bighorn sheep. Near the base of the pass that goes between East Ord and Ord mountain there is a spring known as Fisher Springs. This is actively used by the desert bighorn sheep at this time, and is the closest reliable water source to them when they're in the East Ord area. Due to East Ord's lack of water this habitat is not utilized as much. East Ord would be a candidate for two artificial water sources as part of this plan to hold 15 to 25 sheep in this mountain year-round.

WEST ORD MOUNTAINS

This mountain range is another prime piece of habitat that is relatively large and has year-round activity. It has a lot of good escape terrain and good vegetation as well as numerous water sources. The management of these water sources will be the key to the expansion of this herd in both numbers and territory.

GRANITE MOUNTAINS

The Granite Mountains between Lucerne Valley and Apple Valley are a relatively high, rugged range that provide good escape terrain and vegetation for bighorn sheep. It is used on an intermittent basis but does not currently have a resident herd. As part of this plan we will consider the Sidewinder, Black, Fairview, and Stoddard mountains as part of the Granites.

The issues surrounding this area are complex yet there are a lot of opportunities here. Much of the territory is in an off-road vehicle area as well as a proposed wind farm. This area also has a fair number of springs that are either being used or could be used by this herd. However, a lot of management, augmentation, and protection could be done for these springs.

Proper management of this area should be considered very important for the long-term expansion and overall health of this herd even with several complexities such as solar/wind energy farms, livestock that could lead to disease transmission, and lack of concentrated crossover points.

SUNSHINE PEAK/TWENTYNINE PALMS

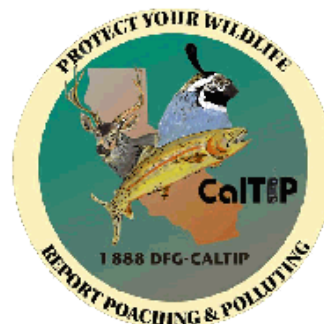
This was once a very active bighorn sheep habitat judging from the ancient game trails and the

mummified droppings found in some of the small caves. This area went through a classic disruption of the desert bighorn sheep population and their habitat due to mining from the 1880s to the 1940s. In the mid-1980s I did a flyover and spent four or five days walking this area with the help and supervision of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base. I determined at that time there was no active use by desert bighorn sheep. Since that time much has changed. Now there are seven guzzlers on the Twentynine Palms base and bighorn sheep are there year-round. No doubt these sheep are connected to both the Newberry Mountains and the Sheep Hole Mountains. There are two springs or seeps that we consider would benefit bighorn sheep with management.

Overall the Newberry herd exemplifies the history and possibilities of the desert bighorn sheep in Southern California.

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WATER DEVELOPMENT WORK NEWS

by Steve Marschke, SCBS President

We started the year with two projects to improve the water availability in the Marble and Clipper Mountains. Chuckwalla Spring and Teresa Spring each benefitted from the addition of one new SCBS-designed Raincatcher Wildlife Water System (RWWS) tank. The tanks had been flown in last fall but there wasn't enough time for plumbing. We spent three weekends at Chuckwalla digging out the old spring box collection system and laying a new pipe to the new tank. There were some verbal reports that the spring box was about 5 feet deep when it was installed. We started digging at the surface and didn't see any evidence of a spring box other than some discarded cover pieces. We ended up digging in a swamp as it rained during two of the weekends. No matter, that made the digging soft and we would have been wet standing in the spring box anyway. We had to give up digging when we struck flowing water at about 4.5 feet deep. At that depth we had found the sides of the rock and mortar spring box. We punched a new hole, laid pipe, grouted it and backfilled the trench.

Teresa Spring was quite a bit easier – no digging - it was as simple as running an overflow pipe from the existing tank to the new tank and connecting the New Mexico style drinker. DFW crews assisted on both projects.

In April, we cooperated with Mitsubishi Mine to install a two tank RWWS on a portion of their reclaimed cement mine. We have cooperated with them in the past to benefit the Cushenbury Springs herd. This time we recruited some local Boy Scouts to help us out. The mine dug the hole with heavy machinery and prepped the hole with a load of fines, but we found out that their definition of "fines" is

quite a bit courser than ours. We spent most of the day adjusting the width of the hole and finish grading the bottom. We did not have enough manpower with strong backs to set the tanks but that was completed later by a second crew. Funding was from a CA WSF anonymous donor.

In April, we organized a water hauling effort to the Kerr System in Old Dad Mountain. For once we had the opportunity to start early in the season and beat the heat. Two employees from Mojave National Preserve helped us lay the hose. We hauled enough water to completely fill the system, approx. 3600 gallons. Thanks to Baker Community Services and San Bernardino County Fire for the water and to the DFW Big Game Management Account (BGMA) for funding.

In July we hauled water to the Teresa Spring system. The DFW summer desert crew had visited



Chuckwalla Spring, start of digging in February, note concrete rim between people



Chuckwalla Spring, end of digging in March, note concrete above Neal's shoulder



Chuckwalla Spring Tank and drinker



Mitsubishi Mine, Not fines



Mitsubishi Mine, Digging with scouts



Mitsubishi Mine, setting tanks



Mitsubishi Mine, hole ready for tanks (now it has some fines)

and reported it was a nearly dry. It turned out that the overflow pipe installed in February had sprung loose and the system did not capture anything in tank 2. This was a first-time water haul to this site; it was previously thought to be too far for the pump. After our experience at Vermin a few years ago we knew it was possible. We laid approximately 2200 feet of fire hose and pumped 4200 gallons. The DFW crew from Bishop and a DFW water trailer from Blythe helped us out immensely. Water was supplied by Walt and Hector of Chambless so the haul distance was only about 20 miles. Funding was from DFW BGMA grant.

UPCOMING PROJECTS:

After long delays, we have finally secured the permit and funding to completely replace the aging Cady #1 system. This was the first system built in San Bernardino County and it has a hodge-podge of every idea from the last 40 years. Due to low collection efficiency and heavy bighorn use, we must haul water several times per year. We are replacing it with a completely new low profile SCBS RWWS located a

couple hundred feet away. The old eyesore system will be removed. The new system will have three below-grade tanks and a large rainmat for collection. These large rainmats have been proven to collect significant amount of water in only a few tenths of an inch of rain, much more effective than the old check dam systems. BLM has approved the project and signed the permit and it includes the use of a tractor for the digging. That will save us a lot of time and prevent sore backs. Funding is from BGMA grant that was extended to cover delays in getting the BLM permit. We have scheduled this project for Sept 22-24. We are going to be staging out of Camp Cady east of Barstow. If you can come down and help please let us know.

Later this fall and winter we will install four new RWWS within the Twentynine Palms Marine Corp base. The NEPA permits were a bit too late for last winter's season and we couldn't fit in between the training schedules. Everything is in place for this fall. We expect to schedule the first project near the end of October and subsequent projects in November, December and January 2018. Due to military training taking precedence, we won't get more than a 30-



Teresa Spring, laying out the hose

day notice for scheduling. Please stand by for dates; normally we schedule for Friday through Sunday.

Editor's Note: CA WSF partners with SCBS on many projects benefiting bighorn sheep. Our Give a Lamb a Drink campaign is just one example where CA WSF will be



Teresa Spring, looking downhill

providing funding and SCBS will be providing installation. Being a member of SCBS as well as CA WSF makes your commitment to wild sheep even stronger. Learn more at <https://sheepsociety.com>.

DFW UPDATE

by Kyle Meintzer

As reported in the last issue of CA Wild Sheep, our drone survey grant the Big Game Advisory Committee and the DFW approved is now final and all of the requisite paperwork has been completed. Thanks to Mike Borel for all the work he put in on that!

The survey will be flown in late September, followed by a traditional helicopter survey. The results and accuracy of the two surveys will then be compared to determine which method is best used for surveys going forward.

On August 1, Mike and I presented the Give a Lamb a Drink (90 drinker) grant request to the DFW. While we learned the state is yet again looking at another potential financial crisis, I expect the Department will fully support and largely fund our request. Thanks again to Mike for his work in putting together the presentation.

As you may have heard, T.O. Smith is no longer head of the Big Game program. However, the Department, including the top brass, has assured us the promises they have made to us and our fellow conservation NGOs, to include having a final edit of The Sheep Plan, will be honored in full and that The Sheep Plan will be on Director Bonham's desk by Oct. 1.

In early June, CA WSF Director Don Priest and I flew back to the nation's capitol along with the WSF



Legislative Affairs Committee to lobby on behalf of desert bighorn sheep and the management thereof. Shortly thereafter, WSF issued policy statements on issues ranging from access to manage wildlife on federal lands to the sale of federal lands to management issues on National Monument lands.

Finally, a huge shout-out to CA WSF Director Don Priest for his work on legislative language which is of great importance to desert bighorn sheep.

RICHARD A. WEAVER (1926–2017)

by Richard A Brigham, Glenn W. Sudmeier, Steven G. Torres, and Vernon C. Bleich

Richard A. Weaver, known west-wide as “Mr. Bighorn,” passed away on February 10, 2017, at the age of 91. With his passing, bighorn sheep and the deserts they inhabit lost one of the best friends they ever had. Dick began his career in 1948 with—what at the time was—the California Division of Fish and Game and, over the following 69 years, he retained a presence in that organization that shortly thereafter became the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). In his first position, he was assigned to build watering devices for upland game birds—commonly referred to as quail guzzlers—near Amboy, San Bernardino County. During that assignment, he recorded in his notes a midnight temperature of 112°F and, perhaps, his love affair with the desert was born.

Early in his career, Weaver also worked in Riverside County, where he was involved in the production and distribution of pheasants for sport harvest. In 1951, he was assigned to Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-26-D, where he again concentrated on the construction of wildlife watering devices for game birds and other wildlife. While assigned to that project, he also ensured the availability of surface water for use by wildlife at springs throughout southern California. During his years with Project W-26-D, he developed a tremendous knowledge of California’s deserts and their associated fauna. Among the species that most intrigued him was the desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*). Weaver eventually was promoted to a supervisory position and became the manager of the Imperial Wildlife Area in Imperial County, where he remained for 8 years.

In 1968, the California Senate passed Resolution 43, which provided funds for CDFG to conduct a statewide inventory of bighorn sheep. Weaver, who was still at the Imperial Wildlife Area, applied for the opportunity to lead the investigation, all the while realizing there were two potential benefits, and one potential detriment associated with that assignment. He would be able to leave the Imperial Wildlife Area (a positive), he would be able to put his vast knowledge of California’s deserts and the natural history of bighorn sheep to constructive use (a positive), but it would entail a demotion from his supervisory role at IWA (a negative). Despite the cut in salary, Weaver always maintained that transferring to the bighorn sheep project was the best decision of his career.

From 1968 to 1972 Weaver investigated the status of bighorn sheep throughout California. During this period, he and the co-investigators who worked with him produced the first-ever comprehensive evaluation of bighorn sheep populations and their habitat in California. Their efforts resulted in publication of



14 detailed reports, with each one addressing the distribution, habitat conditions, disease issues, illegal take, recommendations for habitat acquisition, availability of water sources, and habitat enhancement needs in each of the geographic regions investigated. Much additional information has become available since those reports were published, but they remain as useful today as they were then, and are referenced on a regular basis in the professional literature.

Dick recognized water as one of many important habitat components for bighorn sheep, and he initiated the first projects to improve its distribution and availability with the goal of enhancing habitat for bighorn sheep. He realized that his agency couldn’t do it alone, and he understood the value of using volunteers. In 1970, Weaver collaborated with the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS)—the organization that played the primary role in passage of Senate Resolution 43—to create the Volunteer Desert Water and Wildlife Survey. That summer, he organized more than 200 Society volunteers to visit and report on habitat conditions and use by bighorn sheep at the numerous water

sources that Weaver had personally selected. From that initial effort were born the Society's Area Captain Program and the periodic 4th of July waterhole counts, both of which remain active today.

Such was the beginning of a long-term relationship between SCBS and CDFG; with Department personnel providing leadership, and enthusiastic support and cooperation from the Bureau of Land Management, SCBS began implementing the habitat enhancement recommendations that Weaver had recommended. The first wildlife water development designed to serve the summer needs of desert bighorn sheep was constructed in the Cady Mountains of San Bernardino County, where it continues to serve the needs bighorn and other desert wildlife. Subsequently, Weaver's recommendations resulted in the construction of dozens of similar water developments in the desert mountains of southeastern California.

In 1984 Dick and SCBS patriarch Marvin Wood jointly proposed a campaign they termed '10,000 by 2000.' Ten thousand bighorn sheep in California by the year 2000 was far more than an unrealistic goal; it was, instead, a talking point intended to reinvigorate supporters and keep the ball moving to benefit bighorn sheep. And it worked! The slogan raised awareness, money, volunteer participation, and bighorn numbers. In 1986 Weaver addressed the California Legislature in an effort to reclassify selected populations desert bighorn sheep as game animals, and he co-authored a draft of the legislation that resulted in the first bighorn sheep hunting season in 114 years. That action yielded benefits in terms of enhanced funding, additional management opportunities, and new-found support for habitat protection and enhancement, population restoration, and overall interest in the status of bighorn sheep in the Golden State. During the initial hunting season, Weaver emphasized the benefits associated with the harvest of the oldest, but not necessarily the largest, bighorn sheep. The result was creation of the Patriarch Award in 1987—the first year of the hunt—and it has been presented on an annual basis by SCBS to the hunter taking the oldest ram.

Following completion of the bighorn sheep survey work, Weaver transferred to Sacramento and became the statewide project leader for bighorn sheep, mountain lion, and black bear management programs. Dick was also the CDFG expert on the distribution and numbers of feral donkeys in California, and the threats they presented to bighorn sheep and other desert wildlife. Weaver remained in his position as statewide coordinator until his retirement in 1989. Many don't know it, but Dick radio-collared the first mountain lion in California, and was also the first to use a dart-gun fired from a helicopter to capture a bighorn sheep. He shared leadership responsibilities for numerous capture events and translocations, and participated regularly in aerial surveys, even following

his retirement. Weaver was one of two survivors of a helicopter crash in 1986 that resulted in the tragic deaths of pilot Don Landells and fellow wildlife biologist Jim Bicket.

An additional, and very important, aspect of Weaver's life involved the Desert Bighorn Council (DBC), a professional organization of biologists, naturalists, educators, and advocates, all with the goal of enhancing conservation and sharing knowledge of desert bighorn sheep. He was a charter member of that organization and, with one exception, attended every meeting since its founding in 1957. Why did he miss the one meeting? Weaver's boss at the time prohibited him from attending because bighorn sheep were not a priority for CDFG.

Weaver's career and leadership ultimately changed that and, even in retirement, he continued to support the Council. Over the years, Weaver attended more meetings of the DBC than any other individual. He served many years as Chair, or as a member, of the Council's Technical Staff, he was the long-term chair of the DBC Awards Committee, and he presented the status reports from California over a period of several decades. In 1986, Dick was recognized by the Council with the Desert Ram Award for his professional contributions to the conservation of bighorn sheep and his 30 years of service to the Council. The last meeting that Dick attended was held in Borrego Springs, California, in 2015; he was remembered fondly during several moving tributes presented at the 2017 Council meeting in St. George, Utah.

In preparing this tribute, we thought deeply about what it means to be a mentor, because that's what Dick was. Eventually, we came to understand that the best mentors don't realize they fulfill that role! Humility, kindness, and a welcoming nature—all of which are characteristics that greatly influence and inspire others—were the foundations of Weaver's personality. At professional meetings and in personal conversations he always said, "Do what's best for bighorn sheep." These words sometimes were uttered during challenging times or periods of passionate disagreement, but they always seemed to simplify decisions.

Dick's personality traits—his love and passion for bighorn sheep and their surroundings, his watching and being very aware of what was going on around him, his ability to listen to others without interrupting, his constant desire to learn, his sharing of knowledge and mentoring others, and his recognition of others for their accomplishments—made him the special person he was. He was also a great story teller—a true raconteur—and he loved that role.

Weaver's knowledge—in terms of ecology, geography, and history—of the deserts of California was unparalleled. He was very likeable and he got along with everybody—a trait that helped him

spread the word about desert bighorn sheep and the importance of the habitats upon which they depend. And his knowledge, gained from years of wearing out boot leather in the mountains and canyons of California, served him well when dealing with bureaucrats, whether in other agencies or in his own Department. Weaver seldom raised his voice, and he was slow to anger. One exception involved the poaching of numerous bighorn sheep by an individual whom Dick had befriended, trusted, and believed in; Dick was truly hurt by what transpired, and he never got over that betrayal.

Throughout his career, Dick inspired numerous young professionals and multitudes of equally passionate volunteers; many of those individuals became mentors to others. Thus, second and third generations—and beyond—are part of Weaver's legacy, and they will continue an advocacy for conservation. He had a "Yogi Berra" quality, and many of his quotes are still heard today. In their simplicity, though, there was also wisdom. We all know how he often said, "Do what's best for bighorn sheep."

Dick Weaver was a pioneer, an innovator, and a leader. He was an advocate for the desert as a special place: it was not a wasteland to be neglected. The late George Welsh, a long-term colleague of Weaver's,

noted that, "Every good wildlife biologist should leave a number of footprints on the path of wildlife management." We submit that Weaver did not leave a few footprints—instead he established the path of wildlife management for desert bighorn sheep in the American southwest, a path that others will be following for many decades to come.

Editors Note: Rick Brigham served with Weaver on a variety of Desert Bighorn Council committees and working groups for 46 years. Glenn Sudmeier, a founding member of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, worked actively with Weaver on desert bighorn sheep issues for >40 years. Following Weaver's retirement in 1989, Steve Torres became the CDFG Bighorn Sheep Coordinator and worked closely with Dick for nearly 30 years. In 1973, Vern Bleich began work with CDFG and was assigned to Federal Aid Project W-26-D constructing the water developments that Weaver advocated on behalf of bighorn sheep; Bleich worked closely with Weaver on a multitude of bighorn sheep conservation issues for the next 44 years. Rick, Glenn, Steve, and Vern each learned much from Weaver, as have countless others. We are honored to provide the readers of California Wild Sheep with this opportunity to memorialize Mr. Bighorn's contributions.



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2017 WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION CHAPTER AND AFFILIATE MEETING REPORT

by Beverly Valdez with photos by Donald C Martin

In June just over 75 delegates from over a dozen WSF state chapters and affiliates representatives met at the KwaTaqNuk Resort on Flathead Lake near Kalispell, Montana for the 10th annual Wild Sheep Foundation Chapter and Affiliate meeting. The event was organized by Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) and hosted by the Montana chapter of WSF.

The two days were an intense combination of business and fun. Morning discussions were about wild sheep, about conservation efforts, and ideas for member recruitment and fundraising were shared. Afternoons were free time for networking (or getting other work done) and enjoying the beautiful Wild Horse Island. Evening dinners provided even more time to get to know the great people who make up the Wild Sheep Foundation and it's Chapters and Affiliates.

Gray Thornton started the meeting with an overview of Wild Sheep Foundation. He gave a brief update on the 2017 Sheep Show which netted another record amount (\$1,611,000+) while maintaining the reputation for family, friends, and fun. The 2018 Sheep Show plans to expand into Hall 3 of the Reno Convention Center. Gray also reported that a revenue/spending review shows that most of the convention net has consistently been spent on mission program funding. In the last three years over \$13 million of convention net revenue has been dedicated to putting and keeping sheep on the mountains. That equates to just over \$2,000 per WSF member. And membership has also grown, with 280 new Life members and 117 new Summit Life members so far in 2017. The biggest task was the transition of WSF headquarters to Bozeman Montana while maintaining a Cody annex. New Board of Directors members include Darryl Williams, our own Chapter President.

Montana WSF provided an overview of Wild Horse Island and the Stimson Lumber Land Project which they hope to complete with funds raised at the meeting. The wild sheep habitat on this 440 acres as well as its location among adjoining public lands makes this a good candidate for public ownership.

The meeting continued with a report on the Montana bighorn sheep and domestic sheep symposium held in February 2017. The symposium sponsored by MT Wool Growers Assn and MT Wild Sheep Foundation with MT FWP so discuss the current status of disease among sheep. Followup plans include continuing with a working group.

The formal sessions closed with an open forum discussion of membership and fundraising activities among the chapters following a briefing about updates to the WSF website, joint membership opportunity, and a new member web portal. There were many ideas shared which we plan to implement with a touch of California style that will help our members and make our fundraiser even better.

The afternoon activity was a trip across the lake by boat to Wild Horse Island. At 2,160 acres, Wild Horse Island is the largest island in a freshwater lake west of Minnesota. The park is noted for its wildlife including bighorn sheep, mule deer, songbirds, waterfowl, bald eagles, and falcons, as well as five wild horses.

Wild Horse Island is managed as primitive area and we needed to have a special permit taking only 15 members at a time. On the Island we were guided by Park Manager Amy Grout. We never saw the wild horses that the Island is known for but we did see a nice herd of bighorn sheep and had a chance to wander about the Island. Sporting clays was an alternative activity and many people had fishing on their mind. Don Martin came prepared with his own



boat and spent mornings before the meetings and one afternoon on the lake fishing.

Dr. Ryan Brock gave an overview of the WSF Youth Program over dinner reporting that youth programs have increased 42% and the number of youth impacted has increased 28% since the program began in 2012.

The second day of meetings opened with Greg Schildwachter sharing a Legislative Action Plan which will be at the state/provincial level. The goal is to work “on” the rules, not just by the rules, to put and keep sheep on the mountains. Greg provided a framework overview of the actions needed and requested a point person from each state or province to work on issues and relationships. Don Priest and Kyle Meintzer are the California go-to people. You can read more about their latest activities in this issue.

Additional reports from B&C and the Fraternity of Desert Bighorn sheep were followed by continued open forums. These tended to be the most far-ranging discussions and were very insightful with much useful information. I came back even more enthused about WSF and (of course) what we can incorporate to make CA WSF even better.



The California delegation would like to express its sincere appreciation to Wild Sheep Foundation and all of its Directors that were in attendance. Also, a special thanks to the Montana Chapter of Wild Sheep Foundation for all of their hard work in arranging and hosting the event.

HISTORICAL INDIFFERENCE ... PREPARING FOR A MOUNTAIN SHEEP HUNT

by Dr. Ron Gabriel

Within the framework of “hunt ethics,” we must accept “sport hunting” as a necessary moral and irreducible aspect of the human condition. The methodology of “sport hunting” is complex. “Fair chase” in the free-ranging stalk and kill is only one, though crucial element, and has been well chronicled in “Wild Sheep” and “Boone and Crockett”, and other publications.

Yet there are other equally important elements in this methodology that make “sport hunting” humane and satisfying to our human needs and desires.

One vital element is preparation. This, of course, includes researching for the best venue of the game desired, the proper outfitter, the necessary equipment (never be under-gunned yet not so equipped as to give the animal no chance for escape), and mental and physical conditioning.

One aspect of preparation is generally overlooked; that is, the historical, better called “historical indifference.” To honor the past, consider deep reading in the classic historical records. This includes those individuals who have hunted a given territory and a given animal over the past 125 years without the tools of modern technology. All modern hunters tread paths

plowed by our forefathers.

A review of their trials and tribulations with limited equipment - no range finders, no specialized target scopes, no spotting scopes, no breathable, wet-resistant boots and clothing, no radio communication, no freeze-dried food packages, no air or surface mechanical transportation and no antibiotics and other modern medicines — is sobering, even awe inspiring. Say nothing of uncertain ballistics and barrels of dubious quality.

The narratives of such men as Carruthers, Dunmore, Cobbold, Demidoff, and Morden in Asia; Taylor, Kinloch, Bell, and Selous in Africa; and Young, Sheldon, and Etherington in North America are important to those of us who hunt big game. They tell of long treks requiring months and the large caravans of personnel and supplies (I had a taste of this in my Nepal hunt), primitive optics and limited guns. They traversed virgin and, at times, hostile territory with an untested team of horses, yaks, and local men. The privations suffered by these early hunter/explorers are humbling to the modern hunter, yet are ever so instructive.

Furthermore, these narratives detail the quarry’s anatomy and behavior, the indigenous peoples’

capabilities, game habitat, and the climatic conditions to be encountered. At high altitude, danger to the hunter was neither trivial nor rare. It remains so today.

Starting points would include Lydekker's many biological works on sheep and its cousins and other game animals written at the turn of the 20th century. Valdez's similar scientific studies in the last quarter of the 20th century are worthy of review.

For the actual mountain hunt experience for sheep and ibex, may I recommend books by Dunmore, "The Pamirs" two volumes; Demidoff, "After Wild Sheep in the Altai and Mongolia" and "A Shooting Trip to Kamchatka"; Carruthers, "Beyond the Caspian"; Cumberland, "Sport on the Pamir and Turkistan Steppes"; Kinloch, "Large Game Shooting in Thibet, the Himalayas, and Northern India"; Young, "Alaskan Yukon Trophies Won and Lost"; Armstrong and Sheldon in the Yukon; and Andrews, "The New Conquest of Central Asia." Selous, Taylor, and Kinloch in Africa are brilliant chronicles. Clarks, "The Great Arc of the Wild Sheep" is a panoramic view of mountain hunting. Corbett in British India for general hunting lore and Joll's "Big Game Hunting in New Zealand" are authoritative.

And, of course, the volumes of many hunter/explorers who have chronicled their hunts after World War II are available. All of these works are readily available as originals or as reprints from publishers such as Safari Press.

These many remarkable narratives will enrich our own experiences as we travel the same trails and kill the same animals as those who came before.

A word about physical conditioning, central to preparation, and avoid the body prep delusion.

Eschew heavy, even moderate weight training since this eventually breaks down the musculoskeletal system. Muscle over strength leads to joint deterioration with muscle tears, cartilage destruction, and ligament and tendon damage. This is the bane of many modern athletes. Rather, do push-ups, pull-ups, and chin-ups for upper torso conditioning. This was done by all athletes in all sports prior to the 1960's. Most had long sporting lives, unlike today.

Running, for those over the age of 35, is a great way to tear down lower extremity joints, ending up with early artificial hip and knee joints. We don't hunt running up and down the mountains as a rule. Indeed, running has spawned several generations of multimillionaire orthopedic surgeons.

Do walk up and down your local hills with a loaded backpack four to five trips a week. Alternative, and just as effective, do stair climbing and descending. This is the way we hunt! Slowly work up to 20 stories with two or three repetitions four or five times a week (be sure your physician approves). This will produce powerful lower extremities suitable for hunting. It is also excellent for aerobics.

Lose a quick 10 to 20 lb. by abstaining from bread and deserts for two months. Eat smaller portions. I don't believe in "junk food" (nor did Jean Mayer, the great Harvard Public Health Specialist) only "junk portions." Mayer described the cheeseburger with onion, tomato, and lettuce as the perfect meal. Just watch the "portions."

Emphasis on such preparation will help the hunter to fully appreciate and savor what he or she will do in the field.

A parent taking a son or a daughter hunting would benefit his or her progeny if the mentoring included not only gun safety, training, and animal recognition but also tutoring in the history, geography, habitat, and biology of the game animal to be sought.

Deep reading and good physical conditioning are essential steps in preparation for what will be a memorable rendezvous with our natural world and our essential selves. It is a right but also a privilege to kill a large mammal for sport.

EVALUATING THE ROLE OF HARVEST,
DEMOGRAPHY AND CHANGING ENVIRONMENTS
ON HORN SIZE OF MOUNTAIN SHEEP
SUMMER 2017 UPDATE



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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Bill Gaines
Gaines & Associates Government Relations

CA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION WORKING TO SECURE LANGUAGE TO REDUCE RISK OF DISEASE TRANSMISSION

The Wild Sheep Foundation, it's California Chapter and other state chapters, are currently working with several bighorn organizations and other national and state wildlife conservation groups on trying to secure language in the federal Interior and Related Agencies appropriations report which would take steps towards reducing the risk of disease transmission between domestic and wild sheep. The letter was sent to Senator Feinstein's office in early August with agreement and signatures of additional conservation groups such as the Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Foundation, SCI San Francisco Bay Area, California Waterfowl Association, and others.

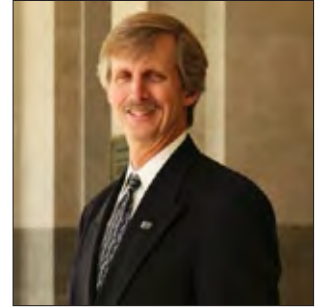
AB 8 (BLOOM) – DEPREDATION PERMITS: MOUNTAIN LIONS

Proposition 117, approved by the California public on June 1990 ballot, enacted "The California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990", which established that the mountain lion as a specially protected species. Although the Act made it illegal to hunt mountain lions, it did authorize a person whose livestock or property is being damaged or destroyed by a lion to request a depredation permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW). Further, the Act requires that DFW issue the permit if the reported damage is confirmed. AB 8 – legislation by Assembly Member Richard Bloom (D/50-Santa Monica) – proposed to change the language of the Act to simply "authorize" DFW to issue the permit, rather than "require" them to. The bill was pulled from legislature in favor of trying to address concerns administratively via working with the DFW. Gaines and Associates will be meeting soon to assist.

AB 1544, HUNTING/DEPREDATION: NONLEAD AMMUNITION RELIEF

Legislation co-authored by Assembly Members Brian Dahle (R/01-Bieber) and Devon Mathis (R/26-Visalia), would ensure that hunters can stay in the field and farmers and ranchers can continue to protect their property and livestock as California works to fully phase-in the requirement to use nonlead ammunition when hunting and managing

wildlife statewide. AB 1544 would give the Fish and Game Commission the authority to "temporarily suspend" the prohibition on the use of lead ammunition for a specific hunting season and caliber, if the Commission finds that nonlead ammunition of a specific caliber is not available for any reason. The bill also would require the Fish and Game Commission to adopt criteria by January 1, 2019 to determine when nonlead ammunition is considered not available, and would require those criteria to include regional availability and the cost of nonlead ammunition. AB 1544 will be first heard in the Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee in January 2018. AB 1544 is co-sponsored by the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, California Deer Association, California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation and the California Houndsmen for Conservation with the assistance of Gaines & Associates.



AB 1617 (BLOOM) – DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE: FUNDING

The Department of Fish and Wildlife is currently suffering from a funding shortfall due to, among other things, increasing responsibilities and associated staff costs, combined with declining fishing and hunting license, stamp and tag sale revenues. Currently, DFW has an annual operating shortfall of \$20 million in its Fish and Game Preservation Fund non-dedicated account. In his January 2017 budget proposal for FY 2017/2018, the Governor proposed to address the annual operating shortfall primarily through increased commercial fishing landing fees, and from a one-time shift of funds from a trust account funded by lifetime hunting and sport fishing licenses. There have been other attempts to take steps towards addressing this funding shortfall by amending AB 1617. Among others, AB 1617 would require DFW – in cooperation with the Legislature, recreational users, conservation organizations, the commercial fishing industry, and other interested parties – to identify and propose new sources of revenue to fund DFW's efforts.

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