

California Wild Sheep

WINTER 2019



Bill Tittle
Newberry/Ord Mtns 2019
Archery Hunt
(first ram from new Zone 10)
Kika Worldwide Outfitters
Photo courtesy of Andrew Moeckel

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A Publication of the California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation


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From the Editor's Desk



I hope you enjoy this issue. It is chock full of great hunting stories (not all successful), appetite whetter for our 2020 Fundraiser, fun humor from Tammy, desert insights from Carlos, CA DBH Survey info, science articles, photos from the field, AND MUCH MORE! I hope you still have some hunting to do before the conventions and the your planning for next season.

Feedback, ideas, articles and requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 1Q20 issue is February 20.

RECIPE

Tammy Scott found these "venison saving" sauce recipes from Field & Stream Magazine where they say "Great sauces are like an insurance policy for venison roasts, which can easily overcook or dry out."

The Classic from England: Cumberland Sauce

Ingredients:
- -1 orange
- -½ lemon, juiced
- -1 cup ruby port
- -2 Tbsp. red currant jelly
- -¼ tsp. ground ginger
- -Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Remove the zest from the orange and reserve. Juice the orange, and combine the juice in a small saucepan with the zest, lemon juice, port, red currant jelly, and ginger. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Simmer for about 10 minutes, or until the wine has reduced and the mixture is glossy and syrupy, and easily coats a spoon.

The Curveball: Garlic and Cilantro Mojo Sauce

Ingredients:
- -1 bunch cilantro, washed
- -4 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped -1 tsp. salt
- -3⁄4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- -Sherry or red wine vinegar, to taste

Trim the thicker stems from the cilantro. Add the thinner stems and leaves to a blender with the garlic and salt. Process the mixture while slowly pouring in the olive oil. If the mixture is too thick, add a few tablespoons of water and pulse to combine--the mixture should be thick, but still pourable. Season to taste with a teaspoon or two of vinegar.

The Showstopper: Flamed Gin Sauce

Ingredients:
- -6 juniper berries
- -½ cup red wine
- -About 1 cup venison stock, or pan juices and/or chicken stock
- -1 Tbsp. butter
- -2 shallots, minced
- -¼ cup gin
- -Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

1. Crush the juniper berries with the flat side of a knife and add them to a small saucepan with the red wine. Cook over medium heat until the wine has reduced to a syrupy consistency. Add the stock, and continue to cook until the stock has reduced as well. Reserve.

2. Melt the butter in a saute pan over medium-high heat and add the shallots. Cook for about 2 minutes, or until the shallots are soft and golden.

3. Proceed with caution: Remove the pan from the heat and add the gin. To ignite it, you can either return the pan to the stove and tilt the pan (gas stoves only) or light the mixture with a long-handled match. Stand back; the flames will be high. Once they have subsided, stir, and continue to cook until most of the gin has evaporated. Add the reserved wine-and-stock mixture, and cook until it coats a spoon. Drain the sauce through a fine-mesh sieve to remove the shallots, salt and pepper to taste, and return to the saucepan to keep warm.

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California Wild Sheep is published quarterly.

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Photos should be high resolution and in color.
It is recommended that digital photos be sent by email.
Please include photo credits and captions.

Humorous outtakes provided by Tammy Scott
Published by Beverly Valdez, Gaiatec Services

Events

2020

January 16-18	WSF International Sheep Show Reno, NV
January 29-1	GSCO Convention, Las Vegaas, NV (Westgate Resort)
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2020 CAWSF Newsletter
April 20-23	Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council, Canmore, Alberta CA
May 1	Sheep Summit XXVII, Sacramento, CA (DoubleTree)
May 2	CA WSF 18th Annual Fundraiser Sacramento, CA (DoubleTree)
May TBD	WSF Chapter and Affiliates Meeting XIII
May 20	Due date for articles for 2Q2020 CAWSF Newsletter
June 1	Ballots out for Board of Directors Election
June 28	Completed CA WSF Ballots due
September	Wild Sheep Foundation Fly-In and Walk on Capitol Hill (Washington DC)

President's Letter



As I write this, many hunters are still in the field. The peak of the whitetail rut is upon us and congratulations to those of our members that have traveled East to pursue them. Here in the West, late season limited entry season hunts are under way and some of California's best deer hunts are just getting started. In addition, and more importantly to those chosen few, the general desert bighorn season is about to get underway. The season in the White Mountain unit has already come and gone and we wish to congratulate those lucky hunters who were fortunate enough to draw that permit and harvest a ram. I'd also like to extend my congratulations to those individuals who were fortunate enough to acquire one of our state's fundraising tags on their successful hunts.

Our hunting opportunities here in the Golden State are the by-product of a successful conservation effort and sound wildlife management rooted in science. Our members can take great pride in being a part of the success of California's expanding desert bighorn populations and hunt program. However, we can't rest on our previous achievements. California's desert bighorns continue to face challenges both new and old. Pathogens carried by domestic sheep and goats continue to represent the single biggest threat to all wild sheep. Here in California, expanding human population's demands for water and increased infrastructure continue to threaten habitat and desert sheep herd connectivity. As a result, we must remain vigilant and continue the hard work of all of those that came before us. We must never give up in our efforts to preserve the legacy of conservation that has been handed down to us.

So how do I do more, you may ask? It's actually quite simple. There are two ways to get directly involved. One is to participate in a drinker build with our affiliate organization, the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS). I can personally attest, it's the most fun you'll ever have carrying rocks. Also, you can see firsthand where our conservation dollars are going and how they directly benefit wildlife. Many of you are familiar with Give A Lamb A Drink (GALAD). Our GALAD program is dedicated to the goal of building nearly 100 drinkers in the California desert with the aim to double the number of desert bighorns in California. With your help and the help of SCBS, we will achieve that goal. More information about SCBS is available at www.sheepsociety.com. Learn more about GALAD at www.cawsf.org.

The second way to get directly involved is to make plans now to attend our fundraising banquet on May 2, 2020 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento. This is our only fundraising event of the year and it has become one of the most popular wildlife conservation banquets in California. If you haven't been in a while, we welcome you back. Don't miss out on the fun. It's the easiest way to support wildlife conservation here in California and have a good time doing it.

For those of you lucky enough to still have upcoming hunts, I wish you luck and I look forward to seeing you in May.

Donald C. Martin

TWENTY-TWO YEARS LATER

by Rick Garzoli, Jr

Back in 1996 at the FNAWS Convention, before we became The Wild Sheep Foundation, Kelly Haugen (who then owned Arctic Red River Outfitters) donated a Dall Sheep Hunt to be auctioned. I was the successful bidder and in July 1997 harvested a beautiful "Tipped" Ram.



Rick Garzoli, Jr. Dall Sheep hunting with Arctic Red River Outfitters

Fast forward to the 2018 WSF Convention. I was considering another Dall Sheep hunt and spoke with Tavis Molnar current owner of Arctic Red. He had one horseback hunt opening for 2019. A week after the convention I called him and booked the hunt.

I arrived in Norman Wells on Sunday August 4th and discovered the restaurants and liquor store were closed! I went to one of the two grocery stores and rustled up some items to serve as lunch and dinner. Fortunately, there was coffee in the hotel room for the next morning.

North Right Air met me and the rest of the Arctic Red hunters at 8:00 AM Monday and flew us to base camp where we enjoyed a hearty breakfast at 10:30. After checking my rifle at their range, Tavis flew me to a remote airstrip in the same Super Cub I had flown in 1997. Tavis informed me it had recently been re-built!

At the airstrip I met my guide Sam Richardson and "Wranglerette" Maya Poirier. After a half hour horseback ride to camp I arranged my bedding in my tent. A short time later we hiked up a small ridge behind camp to stretch our legs and do a little glassing while waiting for the hunt to start the next day.

On day one we rode down past the airstrip to check out the surrounding area. We sat through three rain squalls under Sam's Sil Tarp, which thankfully kept us protected from the pelting rain! We saw sixteen ewes and lambs, four young rams and a half dozen caribou. We got back to camp at 8:30, ate dinner and went to bed at 10:00.

On day two we woke up to dry but foggy conditions, with snow at the higher elevations. There was a cold wind blowing so we hiked back up the ridge behind camp to glass and wait for the fog to lift. Upon cresting the ridge, we came face to face with two bull caribou. Later I spotted four ewes and lambs and at 12:00 Maya spotted a lone ram at a mineral lick. One look through the spotting scope and I knew it was a ram I would be happy with if we could get on him!

At first, we dubbed him "The Licker", then he became "Mister Fidgety" as he was just ambling around refusing to bed down. We had to keep moving along the ridge to keep him in sight. He bedded briefly at 4:00 but was up and moving again at 4:30. He bedded again at 7:30 and at 8:00 Maya and I returned to camp. We could see him from camp so we motioned for Sam to come join us. Before long the ram walked over the ridge and disappeared into the next basin.

Day three we rode down to the airstrip so we had a better angle to glass the basin the ram disappeared into. We saw six ewes on the north side of the basin, and thirteen ewes and two young rams on the south side. After several hours, we rode the horses as far as we could up the next drainage, passed where we last saw the ram.

We started walking around 2:00 following the creek up the drainage. An hour in, after numerous creek crossings, I had wet feet even though I was wearing gaiters. Sam decided to hike ahead to a higher vantage point and glass and wait for Maya and I to catch up. At 4:00 we caught up to him. He said I have good news and I have bad news! I found the ram but he is farther and much higher up the drainage!

Sam said "I should stay here and sleep on the ram to see what he does. You and Maya should go back to camp and get back here as early as you can in the morning." I thought for a moment and said, "I'm up for trying for him tonight and a half a day tomorrow, sleeping on the mountain if necessary and taking the



Rick's 1997 Dall Sheep also with Arctic Red River Outfitters

next day off if we don't get him!" It turned out to be one of the best decisions I've ever made!

Three hours later Sam peeked over the top and saw the ram bedded 60 yards away. He ran the 30 yards back to Maya and me. We crawled on all fours back to where Sam could see him. As Sam was aging him we think the ram saw the spotting scope lens cap flutter. The ram jumped up and started running. Sam said "Get up here and shoot him!"

I flopped beside Sam as the ram stopped and looked back at 103 Yards. I got on him immediately and fired, I heard a solid "Ka-Whop" the ram dropped instantly and started to roll down the mountain. He came to a stop about 250 yards below us. High five's and hugs were exchanged! I was elated, he is a thirteen-year old Beauty! After many pictures, field dressing and loading packs we started off the mountain. At 12:30 we ran out of daylight. We found a place to tuck in and wait for first light. We put up the Sil Tarp, gathered wood and built a fire. The jet boil came out and we each had a cup of hot soup before trying to get some shut eye. I was unable to sleep, at 2:30 I looked up and said "Is that the Aurora Borealis?" Maya sat up and said "Oh my God it is"! We all enjoyed the light show. As it got light around 6:00 AM we each had a cup of coffee, loaded up and headed for the horses. We reached them at 8:30 and made it to camp at 10:30. After tending to the horses we had sheep meat for "Brunch"! I spent the rest of my trip relaxing in camp, eating lots of sheep including ribs roasted over the fire! I had time to get to know Sam and Maya better.

I explained to them part of the reason I'm still hunting sheep is in honor of my mother who passed in 2009. Her favorite and lucky number was three. When the opportunity arose, I became Summit Life Member #3. This was my third Dall, taken on day three of this hunt. I'm hopeful of completing FNAWS and Grand Slam number three before my sheep hunting days are over.

Unfortunately, I didn't hunt sheep from 1997 until I drew a Wyoming sheep tag in 2014. The Wyoming hunt made me realize how much I enjoyed sheep hunting. I have been trying to make up for lost time ever since.

Sam and Maya are two incredible youngsters who truly love what they do, they're good at it and are terrific people as well! Having them share my adventure with me made the experience even sweeter! I would hunt with them again in a heartbeat. I left knowing I have two new incredible friends!



CDFW has begun phasing out printed California fishing and hunting regulation booklets. Soon they will only be available online where they can be viewed, downloaded and printed.

Stay up-to-date with CDFW Regulations, News and Announcements. Verify your correct email address is on file with the Department and never miss out on the latest regulatory information.

HOW TO VERIFY YOUR EMAIL:

1. Log onto your online account at: www.ca.wildlifelicense.com/InternetSales
2. Click on: **Edit customer profile**
3. Scroll down to **Contact Information**: enter your valid email address

OR

Go to your nearest license vendor and ask to have your customer profile updated.

MID ASIAN IBEX HUNTING IN KAZAKHSTAN

by Jeremy Pechtel
CA WSF Distinguished Life Member

I was lucky enough to pick up a Mid Asian Ibex hunt at the California Wild Sheep Foundation fundraiser banquet in 2018. My friend Craig Van Arsdale decided to come with me and see what we could get into.

We flew into Almaty Kazakhstan and from there to Usharal where we were picked up by our interpreter and driver. We were off to base camp which was about a 6 hour drive. In the morning we took a few shots to verify our rifles were still on and off we went. The camp boss "Anatoly" took us to meet our guides who were bringing the horses to where we would meet at the base of the mountain. While we were waiting for the guides arrival we saw an Argali ewe.

Our two guides showed up with five horses. We put the saddle bags on the horses, packs on our backs and were off to our adventure. We rode horses for around two hours until we made it to the top of the mountain. This was my first experience riding horses up steep terrain and I was thoroughly surprised on what these animals could do. We got off our horses and started glassing hillsides. It wasn't very long and the guides had already spotted a group of three ibex. As we were checking out the ibex we spotted another group of about 15 that were 800 yards out. We put a plan together and headed out to close the distance. As we approached the hill they were getting up and started feeding towards us. They fed into 400 yards. Once the ibex turned broadside I squeezed off a round with my Christensen Arms 300 Ultra Mag. A miss — right over his back! The ibex took off and I lost him in the group.



Craig Van Arsdale's mid-Asian ibex



Jeremy Pechtel's mid-Asian ibex hunting with Asian Mountain Outfitters

I've heard there is a stat that 67% of hunters who hunt Asia miss on their first shot and now I was a member.

We made our way back to camp and continued to glass. We could see ibex all over the mountains, but they were a ways out and not enough daylight to get on them. We made some dinner and had some laughs with our guides. Communication was difficult as we did not speak Kazak and they did not speak English. There were times on the hunt that this was frustrating but ultimately a good new experience and we managed to get by through hand gestures. We finished up dinner and went to bed for the night.

The next morning was very cold, we were at about 9000 feet of elevation. We glassed for a half day and spotted some good ibex across the canyon. We packed up and headed to base camp which was a small wooden cabin. We drank tea, coffee, and had a nice Kazak meal with ibex. We burned sheep dung for fuel and slept nice and warm.

Day 3 we made our way up the mountain where we had spotted the ibex the day before. We got off the horses and made our way to the peak. We could not locate the herd we had seen the day before and decided to head back down the mountain and cross over to another ridge. After glassing for 30 minutes and not turning up any ibex, we hiked to another ridge where we spotted several ibex bedded. Our stalk was downhill approach. As we got into position and crept over the hill



Jeremy (L), two guides, and Craig (R) on the way in

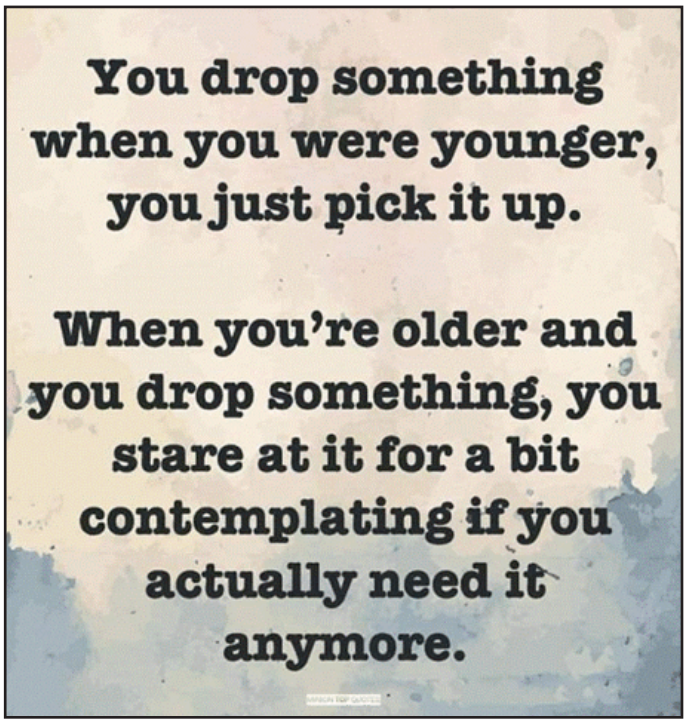


On the way out!

there was a much larger group than we had previously seen. The hill we were on was extremely steep and difficult to get a good rest. Craig had a decent rest so we decided I would follow him up if an opportunity presented itself. Craig took a shot and missed but quickly followed up with a perfect shot on his ibex. The pack out to the horses took until after dark and then we rode back to base camp for a nice meal.

Day 4 we went back to the same location we had gone the previous morning. We glassed up some females on the cliffs and not much later we saw some males. "Erjon" one of the guides and I headed down the mountain to get into position. As we approached where we thought they would be, we saw they had moved up the mountain. We started sidehilling to get into position. As we came to the last rocky cliff, we spotted three of them bedded in the snow. I took aim off a rock slate that worked as a perfect shooting bench, verified distance at 280 yards and sent a round. Bingo perfect shot! The ibex slid partially down the mountain to a frozen creek. The guide and I did not need words to communicate the excitement we felt.

This was a fun hunt and I would recommend this experience to anyone. Thank you California Wild Sheep for the opportunity and Brian Martin for the donation! Until next time happy hunting!



CONGRATULATIONS! DR. VERNON BLEICH APPOINTED TO WHBAB

Dr. Vernon Bleich (Vern) has been appointed to the National Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Board (WHBAB). He will serve as the wildlife management representative. We should see and hear much better ideas for wildlife conservation as Vern will be contributing in meaningful ways to recommendations regarding the management of free-roaming equids on public lands.

California Chapter of Wild Sheep Foundation supported Vern's nomination whole-heartedly!

"SUCCESS CAN BE YOURS, IF YOU CAN DREAM, IMAGINE, BELIEVE AND NEVER GIVE UP"

by Larry J. Johns
CA WSF Founding Member

Dream, Imagine *and* **Believe**, *three simple words hunters have used throughout time as they prepare for their adventure which, if used, can offer Success. Words that have helped to drive us, push us, and ultimately reward us for our sacrifices and hard work. What do these words mean and how do they fit into your preparation and experiences. How did each contribute to my recent Alaskan Dall's Sheep hunt and its success!*

Stepping back in time to August 2016 as some of our WSF members might remember, I wrote of my experience as a **FIRST TIMER** in the world of sheep hunting, which ran in the Fall 2016/17 issue of *Wild Sheep Magazine*. I wrote of my **Dream** to harvest a beautiful Alaskan Dall's Ram, of the beauty and majesty of the high mountain peaks, of crystal blue glacier waters winding through the valleys and of the amazing Dall's Sheep that call the Alaska Range home. I wrote of the challenges I faced over my ten day Dall's Sheep hunt, of being unable to locate a legal ram, of the feelings experienced due to being unsuccessful in my first attempt to harvest a ram, leaving my dream incomplete, and of overcoming the mindset that a harvest was all I could **Imagine** would fulfill my **Dreams**, not end them.

As that first time adventure hunt came to a close, I found that although the hunt had proved challenging and had been unsuccessful, it had also proved to be one of my most successful hunting experiences ever. I found that there was so much more to a hunt and adventure than only the harvest, and it did leave me with yet another dream, a dream to complete my quest to harvest my first North American Wild Sheep. I believed it could and would happen, if I continued to work hard and prepare myself both mentally and physically for what would prove to be my toughest hunt to date.

As my first Sheep hunt had come to a close and with my dream still alive, I remembered a quote from a world famous sheep hunter, Mr. Jack O'Conner, which he offered in The Bighorn, March 1960

"There is no half way. After his first exposure, a man is either a sheep hunter or he isn't. He either falls under the spell of sheep hunting and sheep country or he won't be caught dead on another sheep mountain."



Larry Johns Alaska Dall's Sheep hunting with Alaska Hunting

Leaving Alaska in 2016 without my ram was difficult but with a new dream in place, I reached out to Jack Atcheson Jr., a well-known booking agent and owner of Jack Atcheson & Sons, Inc. to book my return to Alaska and possibly to complete my dream of harvesting my first North American Sheep. Jack was able to match me up with Mr. Jim Kedrowski, owner of Alaska Hunting Expeditions, Inc. and my amazing guide Casey Barton.

My 2018 hunt, unlike my first hunt where I packed camp, food, gun and all else on my back each day, would be taken on horseback. My pack would handle only essentials, extra clothing, water, a lunch each day and my rifle, and would only be necessary on our ascent once a ram was located to help pack out my ram once successful. One additional change this time would be the Mountain Range of choice. I choose the Brooks Range for this hunt, one with less vertical climbing being necessary verses the straight up verticals and drops the Alaska Range had offered. This proved to be a Godsend, as I would later find in my ascent to reach my ram.

Now with an outfitter chosen, I secured a professional trainer Tyler Hoelzen, joined the Wilderness Athlete program, and began taking

supplements and vitamins created for hunting, trying to be in the best shape I could be when I arrived in camp.

Finally the travel day to sheep camp arrived and my travel to Fairbanks and then on to camp went flawlessly. It was great to once again experience the beautiful mountains of Alaska – this time the Brooks Range as we dropped into the river bed and arrived at base camp. As I began to get settled, I was introduced to my guide, Casey Barton and advised to enjoy the day, get my gear ready and get a good night's sleep. He said we would be up early and headed to a spike camp that we would hunt out of for the next few days. He told me that he had been in the area on an earlier hunt



and had seen some rams he would like to take a better look at and evaluate to see if there was a ram for me in the group that might be legal.

Arriving in spike camp the next day, Casey broke out the spotting scope to see if any sheep might be on the mountain to climb up and take a look at. With nothing in view from camp, he suggested we get our gear ready to climb and we could get a good fresh start in the morning and have a full day to work out a plan or stalk if we can locate the rams he had seen earlier.

Just before dinner, Casey brought my attention to a ram he glassed up way up river and said this might just be your ram. Due to the distance, he wasn't sure it was legal but felt he warranted a closer look in the morning. Sure enough, morning came and we located the ram in almost the same location, packed up the horses and began our ride back up river to see if we could sneak in and judge him better before heading up the mountain. If he was legal, game on! About noon we had reached an area approximately 2,000 yards from the ram and below him. We tied up the horses at tree line and prepared for the ascent and stalk. Now the real hunt began – we had a relatively easy ascent up to where we should be able to make a final determination on if he's legal

From our new perch Casey took one more look and said he looks legal but we need to be much closer. No sooner had he said we need to be closer, the ram stood and began to work his way towards us. Casey said get yourself set. I don't think he will come all the way and, at best, this is going to be a long shot if any. You said you're ready and can make a shot of this distance, it's time to step up or shut up.

As I positioned myself and focused on the Ram through my scope, I kept asking "is he legal?" with no response. He just needed a little better angle. At 537 yards directly in front of us, he stopped and finally gave us that broadside view we needed. Casey gave me the greenlight, and with the words, "yes, he's legal" my shot rang out. Success was mine! My dream was complete. A first day ram and short 2 hour stalk. I had **dreamed** of this ram, this shot for years. I had **imagined** it as possible and I **believed** it would happen! To say I was spent and emotion had taken over would be an understatement. As I laid there half not believing I had just realized my dream, I was completely exhausted. I don't think I have ever cried like I did over an animal I had harvested like I did this ram. High fives and a flow of relief that I had finally succeeded in harvesting my first North American Wild Sheep.

With that I can only add that I have a new dream and can imagine it becoming a reality. I see more sheep in my future and, if really lucky, maybe a FNAWS.



KEEP DREAMING, IMAGINE THAT YOUR DREAM IS POSSIBLE, BELIEVE IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN AND NEVER GIVE UP.

SMOKED OUT AND SNOWED OUT: MY 32-YEAR QUEST FOR A WYOMING RAM

by Dennis V. Swanson
CA WSF Founding Member

On May 13, 1988, Friday the 13th, I received an envelope from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. An Area 4 sheep tag! This was before preference points, and I had applied in March with 25:1 odds.

I quickly booked with an outfitter (Randy) I had hunted elk with October 1-10, 1986 in the same area, and I purchased a Remington synthetic stocked rifle, in 7mm Rem Mag. I was good to go.

The hunt was scheduled for the first week of September, but in late August Randy called and suggested we postpone to October. The Yellowstone fires had filled the mountains with smoke, and he was concerned about visibility. Back in those days the press of my career made it nearly impossible to schedule a vacation, and I had no choice but to go when planned or cancel. I flew into Cody on August 29, and over dinner Randy offered me the alternatives of postponing to October or cancelling the hunt with a full refund. I opted to hunt. Better to try than burn the tag.

We left the next day on horseback up the South Fork of the Shoshone River. The weather was hot, dry, and smoky. The horse trail up the South Fork is spectacular. After a six hour horseback ride, we arrived at camp near Marston Creek. The next two days we hiked into the high, steep and rugged country behind camp.

Then we ride to Gentian Creek where the wrangler/cook drops us off. We hike up and glass, up and glass, up and glass, no sheep. The next morning we are hiking by 6:00 am up Gentian Creek. Hot day, clear sky, smoke comes and goes as we hike and glass all day. As the day progresses, it becomes more and more smoky when the wind picks up, and visibility drops to a couple hundred yards.

Next morning we awake to dense smoke. Nevertheless, we hike and look, finding ewes and lambs but not rams. At 8:00 pm we head to camp cross-country in the dark. We take our boots off to cross the South Fork, with ice-cold water above our knees, and make it back to camp at 1:00 am.

The next day we hike above camp where we hunted the first two days but detour to a ridge above a different canyon. In thick smoke we hike down the canyon and then up a small creek where we find sheep sign, but no sheep. Around 5:00 two mature rams



Dennis Swanson — hunting the smoky and snowy mountains of Wyoming

walk out high above us along a high rock plateau. Smoke limits us to intermittent views. We cannot get behind them, we cannot go around them, our only choice to stay out of sight is to drop down, climb up 2000 feet to a rock outcropping, then hope we can work our way along a narrow ledge with serious exposure and get close enough while out of sight for a shot. We make the ledge before dark as the wind picks up to gusts that nearly blow us off the mountain, and there is no opportunity for a decent shot. We arrive back at camp on foot at 10:00 pm. The next day the wind has brought in so much smoke that there is no practical visibility. The hunt is over.

Fast forward 32 years to 2019. I have been applying for sheep tags in Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. I have never drawn another tag. Wyoming is one of the few states with sheep preference points, as opposed to bonus points, or squared bonus points, or no bonus points, and with 19 Wyoming points in 2019 I am close to drawing Area 4, but not Area 3 or 5. And at 73 years old, I am running out of time. And I have unfinished business in Area 4. Based on the distribution of point applicants and drawees in Area 4 in 2018 (the most complete data is available on "*gohunt.com*"), I might have a 10% chance in Area 4 and no chance in Areas 3 or 5 with 19 points. Area 4 it is.

May 9, 2019 — I received an envelope from the

Wyoming Game and Fish Department. An Area 4 sheep tag! After some research, recommendations and a first-choice being unavailable, I settled on a highly rated outfitter for Wyoming sheep, Josh Martoglio. I was booked for October 1-10.

Next I needed a rifle. My 1988 Remington 7mm had served me well, but after a thousand rounds its accuracy was suffering, it was heavy, and it was in California and I was in Alaska. I purchased a Kimber Mountain Ascent in 7mm Rem Mag, a Swarovski Z5, 3.5-18x44mm scope, with a ballistic turret, and a Javelin bipod. I had my lightweight mountain rifle.

My guide Chris called before I left for Wyoming and told me about the heavy snow and suggested I bring an extra pair of winter boots and other warm gear. I had heard about the unprecedented early and heavy snowfall in Montana in mid to late September, but I was hunting in Wyoming and was foolishly unconcerned.

When I arrived in Cody, it was cold winter weather, with six inches of snow on the ground and blustery. More snow was forecast. Chris, the second guide (Jeff) and I arranged to have dinner in Cody September 30. But only Jeff showed up. Chris had come down with an intestinal virus that afternoon and we needed to delay departure for a day or two. Jeff was concerned because they had two other sheep hunters booked after me in 10-day segments, a tight schedule.

Chris survived and we left one day late on October 2. We packed in on the same South Fork trail I had ridden in 1986 and 1988, except now there was ice floating in the river, snow drifts on the ground, and snow in the air. As we rode up the trail and along the steep rock slides, the full nature of the task in front of us became apparent. Snow everywhere. The mountain tops were covered in snow. As we worked our way up the trail, the snow became deeper, over two feet on the rock slides, drifted deeper in the trees. In early October?

I was riding a mule with Chris' eight month old puppy leading, weaving between us, and following; constantly moving, indefatigable, always close to being hit by a horse's hoof. About two hours in, I was in the back, the dog on the trail behind. The trail had a two foot bank above the sloping hillside below. One second I was riding comfortably along the trail and the next second the mule had shied from the dog, jumping perpendicular to the trail, over the bank and down the hill. When he landed, my right foot came out of the stirrup, as he started his second leap I rolled off the mule to the left, jerking my left foot out of the stirrup while doing a tuck so I would not be trampled. I landed hard in the snow with logs and rocks beneath. Except for a painful hip pointer, I was OK. This was a first. I do not claim to be a horseman, but I have been on ten horseback mountain hunts, including 14 days in British Columbia, sheep in Northwest Territories, and Tur in Azerbaijan, and that was the first time I had been thrown from a horse/mule. Unfortunately, this was not the only first on this hunt.

After a five hour ride in slippery, precarious trail conditions, we arrived at our campsite near Robinson Creek, set up camp in the snow, staked out the horses, and had dinner. Meals on this trip consisted of freeze-dried breakfast and dinner and for lunch various bars and a hunk of salami wrapped in a tortilla.

In the morning the sky is clear! We saddle up and Chris heads up the trail to scout and I go with Jeff down the trail to glass from several vantage points. When we return to camp at dark, Chris has seen one small group with no rams and Jeff and I have seen only one ewe. Next morning we repeat in different areas. The day starts clear, but late morning a front moves in, cold, thunder, wind, snow. Jeff spots two rams, one mature, with his spotting scope on top of a windswept mountain over two miles away and 4000 vertical feet above us. Chris returns at dark, having scouted miles of trails into the mountains without seeing a sheep or sheep tracks in the heavy snow. Next day it's snowing, windy, repeat. No sheep.

We move camp to try other areas. Jeff and I take the pack train to a campsite near Needle Creek and Chris peels off to try to clear an old rarely used trail up Silver Creek, the head of which is where he believes the ram we saw may have moved. Jeff and I glass along the way, seeing nothing, and finish setting up camp at dark. Chris shows up after dark. He spent six hours cutting an old trail up Silver Creek and reached 10,000 feet, but at that point the snow drifts were so deep it was not practical to continue. Wherever the ram went, he was safe from us.

Next morning opens with promise! The sky is clear, it's not windy, and we head up the trail along Needle Creek. Four hours later, after breaking trail through three feet of snow in steep wooded hillsides, we arrive at a 10,500 foot basin, with 12,242 foot Red Tops Mountain looming above, where in the first week of September Chris and Jeff had counted 25 rams and taken a mature ram. The snow is deep, there is not a sheep or a track to be seen. All the sheep have left. Chris says that in 16 years of guiding for sheep in these mountains this is more snow than he has ever seen at the end of October, and this is the first week of October. We head back to camp, glassing hillsides as we go. No sheep. At camp, I dismount and don't move for a couple of minutes before I take a step, waiting for my legs to recover after eight hours on horseback. Chris ties up my mule. He promptly rolls on the ground, on the side with my rifle scabbard. Chris retrieves my rifle and assures me it should be fine. Similar events have never resulted in a change of zero. It's now dark, but I insist on checking the zero in the morning. When I do so, prone with my bipod, two shots are within ¾ of an inch, but 1-1/4 inches to the left and 2-1/2 inches high at 100 yards. That is off enough to miss a sheep at 400 yards.

We again head up Needle Creek to a different headwaters branch. A longer ride, still blue sky. Different place, same result. As we head back to camp, we see a storm blowing in from the Southwest over the mountains. By the time we reach camp, heavy snow is falling and quickly accumulating. The weather forecast predicts the storm will last two or three days, making for impossible sheep hunting conditions. We pack up the next morning in the snow storm and ride in a blizzard back to the trailhead, with plans to pack into another area when the storm stops.

Two days later we pack up Deer Creek in sunny weather to reach the headwaters of Cabin Creek. There is no trail into the Cabin Creek drainage, so it is reached from the top. We plan for three nights. During the four hour ride in on steep trails we encounter snow and mud and abundant elk tracks, all heading down the mountain away from the high country. We make camp in 2-3 feet of snow in the woods below the Cabin Creek basin rim. It's cold, with a clear sky and full moon glistening off the snowy peaks all around.

We head out in the morning on the horses. The route to the rim is steep, covered with snow. Soon we are into four foot drifts in the swales and we are making a serpentine pattern as we force the horses to keep moving. The snow is above the bellies of these tall horses, and it is a struggle for them and us. We finally break free of the deep snow to an icy, slippery frozen rock slope and make the rim. Snow as far as the eye can see. We tie up the horses and split up to glass. Jeff and I hike a half mile along the rocky rim to glass on both sides, Chris heads down a ridge into the basin to look in the trees for sign and sheep. We see nothing.

About 3:30, Chris tells us he has spotted four rams, three small, one maybe a shooter. He cannot tell. Neither Jeff nor Chris has carried his spotting scope today. Jeff and I need to take a look. The rams are about 1-1/2 miles away as the crow flies below a huge rock outcropping that rises as a monolith at least 200 feet tall. Jeff and I take off. Soon we are busting trail in 2-3 feet of consolidated snow and walking across huge rock slides covered with snow. Very dangerous. The snow has bridged across the large rocks and it is impossible to tell where there is safe footing or a hole between the rocks ready to twist a leg or break an ankle. It is slow going, with much probing with a trekking pole and five point scrambling (the fifth point is one's butt). We finally get to the base of the monolith at 6:00 and look at the rams. They are feeding at 250 yards. The largest is a shy ¾ curl, a young ram. I pass.

We head back, retracing our steps. It's soon dark, with a full moon and hard wind on the ridge. When we get to the horses, Jeff leads them down the mountain and I walk. Jeff is soon ahead of me and I make my way in the horse track down the steep snow-covered slope. The snow is consolidated but will not bear my weight. The horses hooves reach solid ground through the snow, but mine do not, and the trail is a jumble of deep snow with horse punched tripping holes. I stumble and fall numerous times, and make it back to camp at 10:45.

Famished and dehydrated, I sit down in front of the bonfire and drink a quart of water. Chris hands me freeze dried beef stroganoff. Jeff says: "Your horse broke your rifle." "What!" "Coming down the mountain, your horse wedged between two trees. He struggled violently. I finally got him free, but when Chris took your rifle out of the scabbard in camp, the receiver came out first." "F***! Where is it." The carbon fiber stock on my brand new Kimber rifle had snapped in two at the back of the receiver. Who knows what that amount of force did to the barrel?

Although we had planned to hunt another day, the guides were not willing to force the horses up that hill again, too dangerous, we could not walk up, and we had not seen the sheep they had hoped for, so the hunt was over. We packed out the next day.

Postscript: I talked with Chris about options to come back. He and Jeff had two more hunts to complete (neither in Area 4), but he had a couple of ideas of what we could try if they were done in time. I talked to Josh after we came out, and he told me that as soon as there was a free guide, I could come back to try to fill my tag. I told Josh and Chris that I was free all of October and I would fly next day to Cody if called. Unfortunately, Chris and Jeff filled their next two hunters on October 21 and October 30, leaving no time for me. Josh said they were busy and could not bring me back. Several other outfitters in Wyoming, including Meade Dominick, promise to continue a hunt if there is no opportunity for a mature ram, but not Josh.

Chris and Jeff have worked as a team guiding more than 50 sheep hunters in the past nine years in Wyoming, including 2019. I am the only hunter who did not harvest a mature ram. Some things were not meant to be.

Editor's Note: Proving once again that hunting is not just killing and sometimes the most epic stories are the ones where we come home without filling our tag. We've all had that kind of hunt but it's especially painful in a "once-in-a-lifetime" hunt for sheep!

2020 ANNUAL CAWSF BANQUET

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR MAY 2, 2020!

YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS THIS!

by Don Martin
Fundraiser Co-Chair



It's never too early to start making plans! So plan on being at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento on May 2 for the California Wild Sheep Foundation Annual Banquet. It's our only fundraising event of the year and it is the most fun you'll have raising money for wildlife here in California! Make plans to attend now.

I'm so excited to be able to announce that the we have been awarded a **state of California 2020 desert bighorn permit** that will be our spotlight item in our live auction this year. The permit is zone specific and will allow the lucky bidder to hunt Zone 9, the Cady Mountains. Historically this has been one of our best units. Many of our members have been lucky enough to hunt this unit; Glenn Davis, Dave York, Kevin Townsend, Sean Brown, Perry Null, and Nate Treadwell, just to name a few. We thank California Fish and Wildlife for awarding this permit and I personally want to thank Board members Ben Gordon and Dwight Ortmann for their successful efforts in soliciting this permit. It will be the highlight of our live auction.

Once again, I'm proud to announce that we have been awarded the **Alaska State Governor's Permit for Bison**. This bison permit is for the Chitina River bison herd located in the heart of Alaska's famed Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve. It is arguably the best bison permit in North America. There is no greater adventure in bison hunts than pursuing them in North America's last frontier. This permit offers the lucky hunter a unique opportunity to hunt North America's largest game animal in a true wilderness environment. There are only 2 permits available through the State's public draw and chances to harvest a Boone and Crockett trophy are quite high. This permit sold for a record setting $25,500 last year at our event and will in all likelihood be in high demand again. Last year's winning bidder was able to harvest a tremendous bison bull on day 3 of her hunt. In 2018, CA WSF's own Beverly Valdez was the lucky winner of this same permit and she was able to harvest a tremendous Boone and Crockett bull on Day 4 of her hunt. If bison is on your short list, this permit is an awesome opportunity for the "bison hunt of a lifetime."

For our special random rifle drawing this year, I've reached out to Bob Beck of Oregon's **MOA Rifles** and host of "Extreme Outer Limits TV". Last year he was able to provide us with a spectacular custom rifle in 6.5 PRC. Bob and his wife Chris attended our event and were impressed. He has agreed to work with us again on our special rifle package. We are currently working out the details on the donation but we are working to have it all settled by Sheep Show in Reno and we will do our best to have tickets available for sale starting there.

Speaking of tickets… If you haven't purchased your Stone Sheep raffle tickets, now would be a good time to do just that. We will be awarding by random drawing on May 2 at our fundraising banquet one of North America's premiere stone sheep hunts. Aaron Florian's **Yukon Stone Outfitters has donated a 15 day hunt for stone sheep for August 12-26, 2021** in the Yukon's Pelly Mountains. This hunt is in high demand and Aaron is sold out. This will be your only chance to hunt stone sheep with Yukon Stone in 2021. There are only 500 tickets available at $100/each and this drawing will sell out. YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN. There is a 25 ticket limit per member. Don't wait. Go to www.cawsf.org/store to buy your tickets today. …and with Christmas coming up fast, what better gift to give than an opportunity to win a $45,000 stone sheep hunt. It could be the best $100 gift you ever gave.

For our life members, I'm proud once again to announce that **Paul and Donna Claus's Ultima Thule Outfitters** will be providing a 10 day Dall sheep hunt in Wrangell St. Elias National Park and Preserve for our life member drawing. YOU MUST BE IN THE ROOM TO WIN IT! So all life members should plan to attend. This 10 day hunt is tentatively scheduled for 2021 and is all inclusive from Anchorage, Alaska. Life members and Youth Life members will automatically be entered with one chance to win and Distinguished Life Members will automatically receive THREE chances to win. If you're not a life member now or you wish to triple your chances and have the best possible opportunity to win an incredible hunt for Dall sheep in the best concession on Earth for Dall sheep, go to www.cawsf.org/store to upgrade to life or distinguished life member today. And once again, with Christmas close at hand, give the gift of a life membership to someone you love and bring them with you to our event on May 2, 2020 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento. Ultima Thule Outfitters is sold out for the foreseeable future and if you are not on the waiting list right now, this is your only opportunity to hunt with UTO in 2021.

Your Board of Directors are working hard to once again, provide an event that is all about friends, family and fun! All of us here at CA WSF continue to work towards maintaining the high level of quality items in our general raffle, live and silent auction. If you wish to donate to our event please reach out to me, we always appreciate your donations and support. Plan to attend and bring your family and friends. All of us should strive to bring at least one new person, especially women and youth, and introduce them to our sheep family. I wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and I look forward to seeing all of you next year on May 2.

TROPHY HUNTING BANS IMPERIL BIODIVERSITY

Science, Vol 365, Issue 6456 / 30 August 2019

Trophy hunting is under pressure: There are high-profile campaigns to ban it, and several governments have legislated against it. In the United States, the CECIL Act would prohibit lion and elephant trophy imports from Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe and restrict imports of species listed as threatened or endangered on the Endangered Species Act. In addition to the United States, Australia, the Netherlands, and France have restricted trophy imports, and the United Kingdom is under pressure to follow. Calls for hunting bans usually cite conservation concerns. However, there is compelling evidence that banning trophy hunting would negatively affect conservation.

In African trophy hunting countries, more land has been conserved under trophy hunting than under National Parks and ending trophy hunting risks land conversion and biodiversity loss. Poorly managed trophy hunting can cause local population declines, but unless better land-use alternatives exist, hunting reforms — which have proved effective — should be prioritized over bans. Positive population impacts of well-regulated hunting have been demonstrated for many species, including rhinos, markhor, argali, bighorn sheep, and many African ungulates.

Trophy hunting can also provide income for marginalized and impoverished rural communities . Viable alternatives are often lacking; opponents of hunting promote the substitution of photo-tourism, but many hunting areas are too remote or unappealing to attract sufficient visitors. Species such as lions fare worst in areas without photo-tourism or trophy hunting, where unregulated killing can be far more prevalent than in hunting zones, with serious repercussions for conservation and animal welfare. Focusing on trophy hunting also distracts attention from the major threats to wildlife.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (TUCN), a global conservation authority, clearly concludes that "well managed trophy hunting can — and does — positively contribute to conservation and local livelihoods." Although there is considerable room for improvement, including in governance, management, and transparency of funding flows and community benefits, the TUCN calls for multiple steps to be taken before decisions are made that restrict or end trophy hunting programs. Crucially, as African countries call for a New Deal for Rural Communities that allows them to achieve the self-determination to sustainably manage wildlife and reduce poverty, it is incumbent on the international community not to undermine that. Some people find trophy hunting repugnant (including many of us), but conservation policy that is not based on science threatens habitat and biodiversity and thereby risks disempowering and impoverishing rural communities.

SEVENTH WORLD MOUNTAIN UNGULATE CONFERENCE, BOZEMAN, MONTANA

contributed by Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D.

On 10-13 September 2019, more than 150 of the world's leading ungulate biologists gathered in Bozeman, Montana, to participate in the 7th World Mountain Ungulate Conference, which was hosted by the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) and the Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF).



Scientists from more than 14 countries were in attendance, including some from as far away as central Asia. This was the first time this international conference has been held in North America and Kurt Alt, of WSF, largely was responsible for the organization and success of the meeting. Funds provided by WSF and SCIF were also instrumental in supporting travel costs for many of the attendees. In addition, the Conference was endorsed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Caprinae Specialist Group and the IUCN Species Survival Commission.

Scientists actively working in California were involved, either directly or indirectly, in 7 of the presentations on the biology, ecology, or conservation of North American wild sheep. Topics ranged from the evolutionary history of Stone's sheep to the constraints that legislated wilderness has imposed on efforts to conserve mountain ungulates in the American southwest, and just about everything in between. Appearing below are abstracts of papers either presented by scientists working in California, or on subjects having their genesis there and to which scientists from California have contributed. I have listed the senior author of each paper, followed parenthetically by the name(s) of collaborator(s) from California, and the total number of additional coauthors, an approach dictated by space limitations. Abstracts appear below in the relative order in which they were presented during the Conference.

Wehausen, J. D. (C. W. Epps + 1). Insights into the evolutionary history of North American wild sheep from analyses of skull shape and mitochondrial DNA sequence data.

We use results of analyses of cranial shape as a reflection of geographic patterns of nuclear DNA and compare those with analyses >5000 base pairs of DNA sequence data from 6 mitochondrial genes to elucidate important events in the evolution of North American wild sheep. Our results indicate that these sheep have a considerably more complex evolutionary history that previously thought, involving two colonizations of North American and a number of hybridization events between species and subspecies. these hybridization events result in a phenomenon known as cytonuclear genomic dissociation, where nuclear and mitochondrial DNA exhibit independent evolutionary histories. Bighorn sheep trace their ancestry to the first colonization of North America, with descendants from that colonization still present in the Brooks Range of Alaska and detectable via mitochondrial haplotypes. Dall's sheep stem from a second colonization with subsequent hybridization with the northern ancestors of bighorn sheep. Stone's sheep result from a northward colonization by Rocky Mountain bighorn, followed by hybridization with Dall's sheep.

Denryter, K. (T. R. Stephenson + 1). Plasticity in migratory behaviors of male bighorn sheep.

Migration is an evolutionary adaptation to seasonal environments that is functionally important to demography of populations. Among north-temperate ungulates, migratory behaviors of males are poorly understood compared to females. Our objectives were to better understand migratory flexibility of males and determine if there was an energetic underpinning for migration. We fit models of elevation migration to GPS locations of male Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep—a federally endangered subspecies—to categorize

migratory behaviors (and created a continuous index of migration to quantify intermediate migratory behaviors) and assessed relations between body fat and migratory strategy. Migration was the predominant migratory strategy of male Sierra bighorn followed by residency. Within migrants, 12 made multiple round-trip movements between seasonal ranges, whereas 15 residents wintered high, but moved down in elevation for ≤30 days in late spring–early summer. Among 69 potential strategy-switching events (i.e., males tracked for ≥2 years), 7 switches occurred. Mean body fat levels of resident males in autumn and spring were slightly greater than those of migratory males in autumn. Our results indicate that migratory strategies of males were less flexible than females and energetics underpinned migration. Our continuous metric of migration has utility in analyses of survival and other management questions because it accommodates the spectrum of migratory behaviors exhibited by ungulates, rather than forcing individuals into a false dichotomy of migratory behaviors. Results form our work exemplify the importance of accounting for unique physiology and behavior of male ungulates in their conservation and management.

LaSharr, T. N. (V. C. Bleich + 14). Horn size of mountain sheep: are current harvest practices evolutionary sustainable?

The influence of human harvest on evolution of secondary sexual characteristics has implications for sustainable management of wildlife populations. The evolutionary consequences of selectively removing males with large horns or antlers from ungulate populations has been a topic of heightened concern in recent years. harvest can affect size of horn-like structures in two ways: 1) shifting age structure toward younger age classes, which can reduce the mean size of horn-like structures; or 2) selecting against genes that produce large, fast-growing males. We evaluated effects of age, climatic and forage conditions, and metrics of harvest on horn size of mountain sheep (Ovis canadensis ssp.) in 72 hunt areas across North America from 1981 to 2016. In 50% of hunt areas, changes I mean horn size during the study period were related to changes in age structure of harvested sheep. environmental conditions explained directional changes in horn growth in 28% of hunt areas, while revealing directional change in growth in 7% that did not exhibit change before accounting for environment. After accounting for age and environment, horn size of mountain sheep was either stable or increasing in the majority (~78%) of hunt areas. Age-specific horn size declined in 44% of hunt areas where harvest was regulated solely by morphological criteria, which supports the notion that harvest practices that are simultaneously selective and intensive may lead to evolutionary changes in horn size. nevertheless, evolutionary consequences are not a foregone conclusion in the face of selective harvest; over half of the hunt areas with highly selective and intensive harvest did not exhibit age-specific declines in horn size. Our results demonstrate that while harvest regimes are an important consideration, horn growth of harvested male mountain sheep has remained largely stable, indicating that evolutionary changes are an unlikely consequence of harvest in most of North America.

Monteith, K. L. (T. R. Stephenson, V. C. Bleich + 3). Horn size and nutrition in mountain sheep: can ewe handle the truth?

Horns, antlers, and other horn-like structures are products of sexual selection, confer reproductive advantages, and are heritable and honest indicators of individual quality. In addition, horns and antlers garner societal interest that, when combined with the powerful motivation to acquire trophy animals, likely has spawned a growing hornographic culture fixated on males with exceptional horn-like structures. Intensive harvest of large, fast-growing males may have deleterious effects on the very trait being sought, which has led to considerable controversy in the popular and scientific literature. over the past 2 decades. Mountain sheep, possibly the only large ungulate in North America managed almost exclusively as trophy species, embody this controversy because of the emphasis on managing for large males. That controversy has led to polarizing views among scientists and stakeholders as to how mountain sheep should be managed. Our goal was to discuss the relative contributions of the key ecological and intrinsic factors that influence horn growth, how those factors might interact with harvest strategies, and identify what determinants of horn size are most amenable to management and most effective in achieving desired outcomes. Given the hyperbole surrounding trophy management and big horns, we suggest the importance of females in the management of bighorn sheep has been largely forgotten. Females play a critically important role, not just as the reproductive segment of the population responsible for producing young, but because maternal condition can produce life-long effects of on size and growth of males (via maternal effects); and additionally abundance of females, in turn, affects nutritional limitation within populations through density-dependent feedbacks. Ultimately, we call for greater recognition of the pervasive role of the ewe—and other female ungulates—in the production of large males and in contributions to population performance; and accordingly, that they be better integrated into harvest and management programs.

Stephenson, T. R. (D. R. German + 7). Linking population performance to nutritional condition in bighorn sheep.

Bighorn sheep can live in extremely harsh environments and subsist on submaintenance diets for much of the year. Under these conditions, energy stored as body fat serves as an essential reserve for supplementing dietary intake to meet metabolic demands of survival and reproduction. We developed equations to predict ingesta-free body fat in bighorn sheep using ultrasonography and condition scores in vivo and carcass measurements post-mortem. We then used in vivo equations to investigate the relationships between body fat, pregnancy, over-winter survival, and population growth in free-ranging bighorn sheep in California and Nevada. Among 11 subpopulations that included alpine winter residents and migrants, mean ingesta-free body fat of lactating adult females during autumn varied between 8.8 and 15.0%; mean body fat for non-lactating adult females during autumn ranged from 16.4 to 20.9%. In adult females, ingesta-free body fat >7.7% during January (early in second trimester) corresponded with a >90% probability of pregnancy and ingesta-free body fat > 13.5% during autumn predicted a probability of overwinter survival >90%. Mean ingesta-free body fat of lactating females in autumn predicted the rate of population increase over the subsequent year in bighorn subpopulations that wintered in alpine landscapes. Bighorn sheep with ingesta-free body fat levels of 26% and living in alpine environments possess energy reserves sufficient to survive at resting metabolic rate for 83 days on fat reserves alone. We demonstrated that nutritional condition can be a significant mechanism driving demography in bighorn sheep and characterizes the nutritional value of their occupied ranges. Mountain seep are capital survivals in addition to being capital breeders, and because they inhabit landscapes with extreme seasonal forage scarcity they are fat reserve obligates. Quantifying nutritional condition is essential for understanding the quality of habitats, how it drives demography, and the proximity of a population to carrying capacity.

Rominger, E. M. (J. D. Wehausen + 6). Puma as a predator of mountain ungulates in North America.

Following the extirpation of wolves in the western United States in the early 1900s, the formerly subordinate puma became the dominant predator of adult mountain ungulates in many ecosystems south of resident wolves. In the absence of wolves, the realized niche of puma has expanded and puma are documented to be a primary predator of North American mountain ungulates including bighorn sheep, mountain goats, woodland caribou, mule deer, and elk. Puma caused annual mortality rates in excess of 0.25 have been reported for all these species. The ecological shift of the apex predator guild form a coursing canid predator to a stalking felid predator has caused the decline of some mountain ungulate populations and contributed to listing as endangered species for Selkirk woodland caribou, Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, peninsular bighorn sheep, and New Mexico desert bighorn sheep. The role of apparent competition has been documented for all of these endangered populations whereby the ability of puma to prey-switch from more numerous sympatric ungulates, primarily deer and/or domestic cattle contributes to declining populations of the rarer mountain ungulate. It is hypothesized that some North American mountain ungulates have fallen into an ecological trap following the expansion of the realized ecological niche of pumas. The current facilitation of wolf recovery in many western states may have profound effects on the persistence of puma as a dominant predator in North American mountain ungulate communities.

Bleich, V. C. Mountain ungulates, conservation challenges, and American wilderness legislation.

Wilderness management objectives and wildlife conservation objectives often conflict with each other, despite conservation being one of six basic reasons for which wilderness is established. Many wilderness areas established by the United States Congress appear to have been the result of political or societal desires, but were designated in the absence of critical ecological thought, a problem that appears to be on an upward trend. In an era of increasing anthropogenic impacts to wildlife populations and to wildlife habitat outside of legislated wilderness, those ostensibly "pristine" areas in and of themselves will become less and less effective as conservation tools, particularly for large vagile mammals, among which are the three species of mountain ungulates native to North America. Impacts occurring outside of wilderness areas have ramifications for wide-ranging animals that use those areas during portions of their annual cycles, thereby affecting wilderness character. Similarly, impacts occurring inside of designated wilderness also have ramifications for large, vagile mammals that also utilize lands proximal to those 'pristine' lands. There is a need to re-ignite the debate over the value of wilderness as a wildlife conservation strategy, as well as in the context of its societal role. It is essential that wildlife populations and wildlife conservation objectives be elevated to the same level of value that is accorded solitude and other less tangible or subjective attributes of wilderness.

Dr. Vern Bleich worked for the California Department of Fish and Game for 35 years. He has relocated to North Dakota, but remains active in research and conservation of bighorn sheep and other large mammals occupying the arid lands of the southwestern United States. Vern can be contacted at vcbleich@gmail.com.

Stone's Sheep Raffle



Enter to win a 15-day Stone Sheep Hunt with Yukon Stone Outfitters August 12-26, 2021 in the renown Pelly Mountains of Canada's Yukon Territory.
Located in the heart of the Pelly Mountains, Yukon Stone Outfitters operates in one of the largest, most scenic and remote areas of Canada's Yukon Territory.
Horseback or Backpack. Accommodations during the hunt are included.
Value of the hunt is $44,500.

Winner will be drawn at the California WSF Banquet May 2, 2020. Winner will be notified by email or phone.

Additional costs to be paid by winner:
Bush flights: $1,400
Hunt Package 5% GST tax: $2,107.50
Hunt Preservation Fund, License and tags (includes all species): $500
Government Harvest Fee (Sheep only): $250
Transportation to and from Whitehorse, Yukon Territory Canada

NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR HUNT
Hotel before and after the hunt
Tips/Gratuities
Crate and Freight charges for shipping trophies
Additional hunters or non hunters if arranged with outfitter
Additional trophy fees if arranged with outfitter
Additional flights required to take out extra meat
Unscheduled charter flights (leaving early or arriving late, etc.) are in addition to charter included in hunt price



Species you may add to your hunt include:
Trophy grizzly - $10,500
Management grizzly - $5,500
Caribou - $7,500
Black bear - $2,500
Wolf/wolverine - $500
Prices may vary and will be at the current rate at time of your hunt.

YUKON STONE OUTFITTERS

2021 STONE SHEEP HUNT
Special Drawing

California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation

ONLY 500 TICKETS AVAILABLE **$100 PER TICKET**



Yukon Stone Outfitters

Hunt Information

15 day 1x1 hunt with Yukon Stone Outfitters
Dates: August 12 - August 26, 2021
Location: Pelly Mountains of Yukon Territory, Canada

Get Tickets by Mail, Fax, or ON LINE

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Orders must be received by April 25, 2020. Drawing held May 2, 2020.
Do not need to be present to win.



Are YOU a CA Wild Sheep Foundation Life Member? NOW is the time to join or upgrade!

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

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD





Gerard Smith
Cady Mountains, 2019
14 Year Old Ram
(l) With the Dry Creek Outfitters Team



Shelly Sayer
British Columbia Ram
November 2019



Rob Stamp
2018 Ultima Thule Outfitters Raffle winner
Dall Sheep 2019

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Tim Metcalf (l) with Don Martin
Caifornia Tule Elk, 2019
Completed his North American 29



Tim Draper (r) with Don Martin
Ultima Thule Outfitters
2019



Shelly Sayer (r) with Doug
Hunting with Ultima Thule Outiftters
Alaska Governor's Tag
Bison 2019



Life Member Tammy Scott
First moose and first cross-bow hunt
Hunting with Big Rack Outfitters in
Wyoming 2019

LOOK FOR ANOTHER ALASKA BISON GOVERNOR'S TAG ON AUCTION AT THE 2020 FUNDRAISER, MAY 2!

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD





Distinguished Life Member Bill Tittle
Completed his archery Grand Slam with "Rocky"
Newberry / Ord range (Zone 10) — First ram ever out of the new range
(r) With Kika Worldwide Outfitters — Photos courtesy of Andrew Moeckel



Life Member David Combs with wife Sona
Cow Bison from Utah Book Cliffs
Opening day, 8am!



Distinguished Life Member Jim Warner
Yukon Stone Sheep
Fall, 2019

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Dallas Cota
British Columbia Stone Sheep
October 2019
with Tuchodi River Outfitters



Beverly Valdez
Bison, Utah Book Cliffs 2019
Last day, last light with moon coming up
Second Free Range Bison in 3 years!



Sheep at the
Marvin Wood Drinker

Photo courtesy of
Terry Anderson,
San Gorgonio Wilderness
Outfitters

WYOMING ROCKY MOUNTAIN SHEEP DEJA VU

by Roger McCosker
CA WSF Life Member



In September 1999, I drew a Rocky Sheep tag in Wyoming, and shot the wrong ram, but still held the moment very special, as it was my Grand Slam Ram! My guide was Mark Condict.

In September 2019 (20 years later), I drew the same tag in Area 5 in Wyoming, and had the special opportunity to hunt with **Josh Martoglio's Trails West Outfitters/Shoshone Lodge Outfitter's**.



A week before my scheduled hunt, Josh offered me an opportunity to go in early with a group of his elk hunters. It was on the condition that if they filled early, I could start hunting sheep with lots of eyes helping. The first day, 4 of the 5 hunters filled, and my sheep hunt started.

It was definitely a team effort. My shot was 575 yards steep uphill, with supportive coaching by Josh, next to me. The hunt was a most memorable experience.

"Those who have never known the fatigue of the grueling climb up rocky crags and over frozen snow fields, the tense impatience of the final stalk, or the nerve-wracking uncertainty of success or failure cannot even begin to realize the toil and torture necessary to attain a good sheep head."

—James L. Clark, The Great Arc of the Wild Sheep

PHOTO: DONALDMJONES.COM

VISIT US AT SHEEP SHOW! BOOTH 1205



THIS GENERATION'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT IN HUNTING, FISHING AND THE SHOOTING SPORTS

by Jen Benedet, CDFW Statewide R3 Coordinator

"R3" has quickly become an industry-wide buzzword. It's even starting to trickle down into the hunting and fishing community. But it seems to get muddied along the way, lacking context and understanding of exactly what it means.

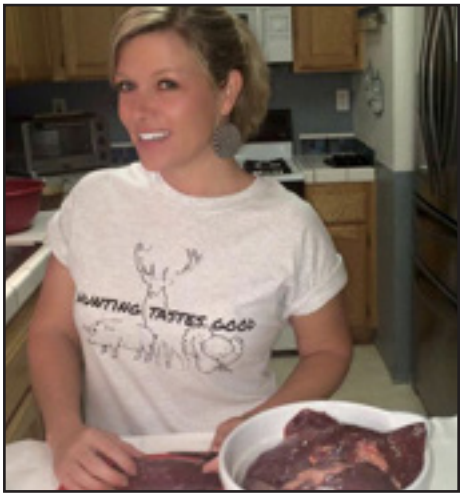
So, what is R3 and why should hunters care?

R3 stands for Recruit, Retain, and Reactivate. Meaning recruit new participants into hunting, fishing and the shooting sports, retain current participants and reactivate those that have stopped. It is a nationwide, collaborative effort to halt declining participation in these activities. The national decline in participation has had crippling effects on membership organizations, the outdoor economy, and conservation activities. This in turn, effects the opportunities and quality of hunting and fishing around the nation, including in California.

Various stakeholder groups, consisting of hunter and angler conservation organizations, clubs, agencies, guides, industry professionals, retailers, media, educators, volunteers, social media influencers, individual hunters and anglers, and others are working together to address the issues that are affecting participation rates.

R3 involves trying to improve a variety of issues including legislative and regulatory challenges, physical and geographical access limitations, programmatic improvements, quality and quantity of species available, and social appeal, values and generational relevancy of hunting, fishing and the shooting sports—among other things. Many of the issues listed above require changes that might feel intimidating, outside the reach of the average hunter or angler, or downright impossible for a variety of reasons. However, the idea behind R3 is by creating a cohesive and supportive community where we can build the resources and knowledge to find solutions that are mutually beneficial.

In short, the R3 effort is a reimagining of how we, as hunters and anglers, have been doing business and how we create community—and with whom, where, and under what circumstances. R3 is also about redefining and celebrating the identities, interests, and diverse activities that make us a unique collective in order to improve public perception and reclaim our image from the negative stereotypes that exist. Of course, this means different things for each of us depending on how we are involved in the outdoors.



I know that my role in R3 changes depending on the hat I am wearing.

For me personally, as a female millennial bowhunter, who is passionate about sustainable living, R3 is about sharing an authentic outdoor lifestyle with others. I want others to know that my lifestyle is inherently connected to responsibility, wild food, wild spaces, and that creating community around those ideas is attainable. R3 is about sharing my passion with others in a way that improves the social acceptability of the activities I partake in—not necessarily about getting everyone to join me.

As a volunteer hunter education instructor, R3 has inspired me to be adaptable in the moment and restructure my classes so they are more approachable by new and diverse demographics. Because of R3, I now do things like, use more inclusive language to acknowledge difference, apply relevant examples that are relatable to beginners that aren't always hunting related, and implement age-appropriate activities based on my audience for the day.

Professionally, however, as California's statewide R3 coordinator, my role is much more diverse than just sharing my personal passions or unorthodox teaching methods with the world. For example, after pulling licensing statistics for California, I realized that over 90% of first-time anglers and hunters in California, are over the age of 18. Similarly, I receive many public inquiries expressing a desire to learn but often citing challenges of not knowing who to reach out to or where to go, are primarily from young adults in their

mid-20's to mid-30's. While most existing learn-to-hunt and fish programs are focused on youth, the data tells us we should be creating new opportunities for adult participation, figure out the reasons for the participation gap, and address why youth programming hasn't been as effective as it could be.

One reason hunting and fishing participation is in decline could be that we have always assumed that if we teach kids, they will be able to participate. Without including their parents in the learning process, the people who control family time and money, they don't have the skills or knowledge to take their children even if their children express an interest. We've failed to include the people who can best close the gap to new participation. If we create adult programming, children will likely participate as a secondary outcome.

The point in sharing three of my roles is to illustrate that as members of the outdoor community, we can each take on different functions in the R3 effort based on where we are positioned on any given day. The spirit of R3 can adapt with our own passions, involvements, activities and identities. There is something that every one of us can do to help.

Hunting, as you probably know, has gone through several social and political shifts throughout history. The creation of the North American Wildlife Conservation Model is perhaps the most important shift that has taken place. Of course, this came from the rise of the conservation movement in the United States stemming from political debates between conservationists and preservationist during the Progressive Era, which were convoluted, lengthy and difficult. When I think about that era, the political climate and economy would have likely lent itself to a similar divide that we are experiencing now. I imagine that Theodore Roosevelt and George Grinnell probably got some pushback from those who wanted to keep the status quo. Coupled with the political challenges the protectionist adversaries created, they had a difficult environment to accomplish goals for the future of hunting and conservation work.

We now see the rise of the North American Model as a huge win for conservation, but it's unlikely it started out that way. Important changes are never easy, or they wouldn't be worth doing. With that political shift, a social shift also occurred where beliefs and practices around hunting changed. Over time, this became our story that we now recite—and are proud of. The essence of the changes that occurred during this time isn't all that dissimilar to the challenges facing hunting and fishing today. We are at a turning point where the issues hunters and anglers are grappling with, both internally and externally, warrant a major effort to create change. Change that is both social and political. The R3 effort was created in order to do this and it should be a priority to every single one of us if we hope to leave an outdoor legacy for the future of not just California, but nationwide.

Next time you are out in the wild enjoying the endless beauty and opportunity, take a minute to reflect. How do you create community around hunting, fishing and the shooting sports? What could you do differently to encourage others to participate? Then make a commitment to yourself and the future of hunting, fishing and the shooting sports to get involved in R3.

A few ways to get involved in R3:

- Learn more about R3 by visiting: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/r3
- Join a local chapter or club's R3 effort and ask them if they're formally involved with the wider state and national movement.
- If a formal R3 committee doesn't exist for your local club or organization, volunteer to organize one and reach out to Jen to find out how to get connected to the larger state and national movement.
- Commit to taking out at least one new person from a non-outdoor family and mentoring them until they're proficient to go out on their own.
- Spread the word about R3 to your local outdoor retailers, clubs, schools, hunters and anglers, or other potential stakeholders and ask them to



DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP WATER DEVELOPMENTS AT OLD DAD PEAK REBUILT

by Debra Hughson, Chief, Science & Resource Stewardship

Over the weekend of October 4-6, 2019, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), volunteers from the Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, and the National Park Service, Mojave National Preserve, rebuilt the wildlife water development (WWD) for Desert Bighorn Sheep at Old Dad Peak in Mojave National Preserve. There are no springs or natural water sources in the area. The WWD are designed to collect and store precipitation and typically consist of a water collection system, storage tanks, and a drinker. The aging tanks that had been in place since 1995 were replaced, the check dam for water collection was repaired, new four-inch diameter aluminum piping was installed from the dam to the tanks, the drinker and all hoses and fittings were replaced.

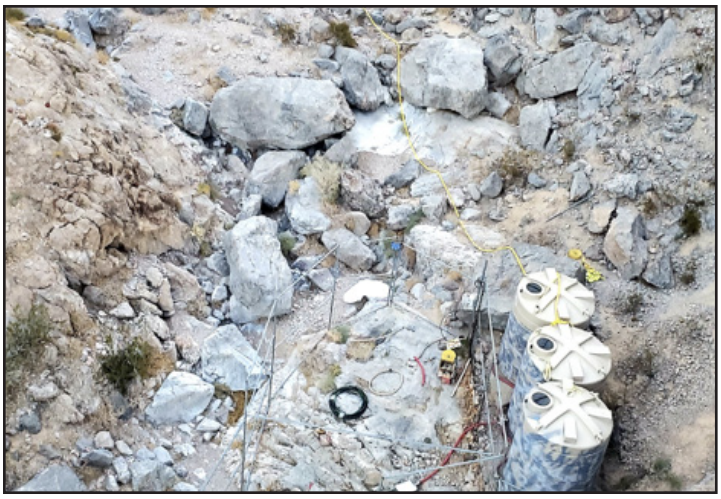


The Old Dad Peak WWD was originally installed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep in collaboration with the Bureau of Land Management in 1975. The tanks were replaced in the mid-1980's and again in 1995. After 24 years of service, they developed cracks and were leaking.



Installation of the WWD led to the establishment of an important population of desert bighorn sheep that has contributed to the recovery of numerous bighorn populations throughout the Mojave Desert. Presently this WWD supports a population of close to 100 desert bighorn.

Mojave National Preserve staff, CDFW staff, and the Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep will continue to work together to ensure a continuous water supply for desert bighorn sheep in the Preserve.



Photos

Top: The team

Center: Before reconstruction

Bottom: After

FUNDING FOR THIS WORK WAS PROVIDED BY CA WSF'S GIVE A LAMB A DRINK PROJECT

DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP HELICOPTER SURVEY RESULTS

California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Region 6

by Page Prentice
Wildlife Biologist

This October marked another successful round of desert bighorn sheep helicopter surveys across the Mojave Desert. Surveys were conducted through a contract with Air Shasta Rotor and Wing and pilot Dave Everson, over a 10-day period from October 7th-17th, 2019.



Five CDFW staff were consistent observers for the duration and seven other CDFW staff rotated in to assist. A total of 681 desert bighorn were counted across 7 populations: Clipper, Newberry/Ord, Resting Springs, Granite, Castle/Piute, Wood/Hackberry, and Orocopia. There was one no-fly day due to wind; otherwise, the weather was ideal for surveying.

Helicopter surveys are conducted with four observers: Pilot (right front), photographer (right rear), data recorder (left front), and the left rear observer. Surveys take place over predetermined polygons covering typical desert bighorn sheep habitat (> 10% grade) across the range. Transects are flown across each surveyed polygon with tightness of transects and speed of flight determined by visibility, complexity of the terrain, and flight conditions in order to allow the highest possibility of spotting animals. Transects are tracked and monitored during flight using Gaia GPS and/or Arc Collector on an iPad in order to ensure full coverage of each polygon. The photographer takes photos of each group using a Cannon EOS Rebel T3i camera with a Cannon 100-400mm Image Stabilizer lens. Photographs are examined post-flight to verify or correct group composition and compare with GPS data to check for double counts. Double counts are corrected and removed from the final data set.

This was the third year flying in the Newberry and Ord unit—CDFW's newest hunt zone. We were pleased to see the population is still increasing and the animals appeared healthy. Whereas the Newberry and Ord range is an area we will continue to survey regularly, we flew several other ranges that had not been flown in years. Specifically, the Wood & Hackberry and Granite ranges within the Mojave National Preserve, both of which we were pleasantly surprised by the number of bighorn counted. For the Granite Mountains it is worth noting that we included the Old Dad Mountains to the west,



Two ewes, a lamb and a ram in the Newberry Mountains. Photo by A. Evans.

generally considered part of the North Bristol range, because collar data has shown that area to be a part of the Granite animal's homerange. We also flew, for what I think is the first time, the Resting Spring range, due west of Pahrump. Given last's years success in the neighboring Nopah range, we decided it was worth the effort. As it turned out, we only saw a total of 6 animals, but it was new information and time well spent. Overall, every survey felt successful, we had a fantastic group of crew members, the weather was great, and we had the pleasure of counting 681 bighorn across beautiful desert country.

Population	Total Count	Lambs	Yearling Ewes	Adult Ewes	Yearling Rams	Adult Rams
Newberry/ Ord	278	37	12	126	21	80
Clipper	127	10	5	81	2	29
Resting Spring	6	1	0	1	1	3
Granite (MOJA)	59	12	3	26	1	17
Castle Mtn/ Piute Range	87	18	2	48	5	15
Wood/ Hackberry	78	9	1	36	3	27
Orocopia	46	8	1	21	1	15

THE DEATH OF COMMON SENSE

by Jim Shea, CRPA Board Member
Reprinted from "The Firing Line, 2007"

Today we mourn the passing of a beloved old friend, **Common Sense**, who has been with us for many years.

No one knows for sure how old he was, since his birth records were long ago lost in bureaucratic red tape.

He will be remembered as having cultivated such valuable lessons as: **Knowing** when to come in out of the rain; **Why** the early bird gets the worm; **Life** isn't always fair; and **Maybe** it was my fault.

Common Sense lived by simple, sound financial policies (don't spend more than you can earn) and reliable strategies (adults, not children, are in charge).

His health began to deteriorate rapidly when well-intentioned but overbearing regulations were set in place.

Reports of a 6-year-old boy charged with sexual harassment for kissing a classmate; teens suspended from school for using mouthwash after lunch; and a teacher fired for reprimanding an unruly student only worsened his condition.

Common Sense lost ground when parents attacked teachers for doing the job that they themselves had failed to do in disciplining their unruly children. It declined even further when schools were required to get parental consent to administer Caladryl, sun lotion, or a band-aid to a student but could not inform parents when a student became pregnant and wanted to have an abortion.

Common Sense lost the will to live as the Ten Commandments became contraband; churches became businesses, and criminals received better treatment than their victims.

Common Sense took a beating when you couldn't defend yourself from a burglar in your own home and the burglar could sue you for assault.

Common Sense finally gave up the will to live after a woman failed to realize that a steaming cup of coffee was hot. She spilled a little in her lap, and was promptly awarded a huge settlement.

Common Sense was preceded in death by his parents, **Truth** and **Trust**; his wife, **Discretion**; his daughter, **Responsibility**; and his son, **Reason**.

He is survived by his three stepbrothers: **I Know My Rights**, **Someone Else Is To Blame**, and **I'm a Victim**.

Not many attended his funeral because so few realized he was gone. If you still remember him, pass this on.

CONSERVATIONISTS AGREE TROPHY HUNTING CAN HELP WILDLIFE

Reprint from WBTV

SALISBURY, N.C. (WBTV) - From Catawba College: Two Catawba College professors are among the more than 130 signatories of a letter published Friday in the high-impact journal, Science. The letter states that there is compelling evidence that banning trophy hunting would negatively affect wildlife.

Dr. Luke Dollar and Dr. Andrew Jacobson, Professors in the College's Department of Environment & Sustainability, co-signed the letter, alongside additional experts and colleagues from around the world.

The letter is expected to generate controversy, discussions and dialogues in the general public and conservation community on a global scale.

While many of the authors find the practice of killing endangered free-ranging wildlife for sport distasteful, they point out that in areas without trophy hunting, species such as lions fare badly because unregulated killing can be far more prevalent than it would be in hunting zones.

The letter notes: "Trophy hunting can provide income for marginalized and impoverished rural communities. Viable alternatives are often lacking; opponents of hunting promote the substitution of photo-tourism, but many hunting areas are too remote or unappealing to attract sufficient visitors. Species such as lions fare worst in areas without photo-tourism or trophy hunting, where unregulated killing can be far more prevalent than in hunting zones, with serious repercussions for conservation and animal welfare. Focusing on trophy hunting also distracts attention from more severe threats to wildlife."

In African countries that do allow trophy hunting, "more land has been conserved [in hunting concessions] … than under National Parks," the authors cite. Regulated hunting has boosted populations of southern white rhinos, wild sheep and goats — such as bighorn, markhor, and argali — among many additional wildlife species. The authors acknowledge that poorly managed trophy hunting can cause local population declines, and that there is "considerable room for improvement," but, they say, "unless better land-use alternatives exist, hunting reforms — which have proved effective — should be prioritized over bans."

"We're not in a position where all the land currently in hunting concessions would magically be converted to new, additional National Parks if trophy hunting is banned," notes Dollar. "Without the presence of hunters and managed hunting, land may likely be quickly cleared of wildlife and converted for agricultural use to support cattle or crops," adds Jacobson. "When it comes to feeding their families versus preserving wildlife, the necessary choice for most local people is clear."

"The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), a global conservation authority, clearly concludes that "well-managed trophy hunting can — and does — positively contribute to conservation and local livelihoods."



GUT PILE GASTRONOMY

excerpted from petersenshunting.com 09/19

Offal Isn't Awful!" I'd like to see that phrase printed on a T-shirt and handed out at deer camps all across the country. Every fall hunters in the United States kill roughly 6 million deer. That's a lot of backstrap, hindquarters, front shoulders, and neck roasts. But too much exceptionally good venison is left behind in the woods. I'm not talking edible only if you were very hungry. I mean some tasty parts that rival even the vaunted backstrap as table fare. The heart, liver, kidneys, and the less familiar parts—collectively known as wobbly bits, jiggly bits, offal, or giblets, the stuff left in the gut pile or on the processing room floor—can be some of the best venison you will ever eat.

Heart The heart might be the most underrated part of the deer. It's pure muscle, just like the top round or front shoulder. The heart should be trimmed of all fat and connective tissue. The simplest way to do this is to butterfly it open from one side so that it unrolls into a flat steak. When the heart is sliced open like this, it's easy to see the fibrous tissue that runs along the inside and trim it away.

Just like backstrap, heart is best cooked to medium-rare for maximum flavor and tenderness.

Liver Liver is one of those polarizing foods people generally fall into one of two categories: You either love the rich, iron flavor, or you can't stand it. Rarely do you find someone in the middle.

If you are a liver fan, give venison liver a shot. The flavor comes in a bit stronger than that of pork or beef liver, but a soak in milk or saltwater for a night (or two) will tame even the oldest buck liver.

My favorite way to prepare venison liver is sliced, rolled in seasoned flour, and pan fried in butter. Once the venison has browned on the surface, move it to a warm plate and add a big handful of sliced onions to the pan. Cook them down a bit, add some flour, give it a good stir, then pour in a beer to make a thick onion gravy. Return the fried liver to the skillet and bring it back up to temperature by spooning onion gravy over it.

Kidneys Kidneys are considered a delicacy in most of Europe, but they aren't as popular as heart and liver on this side of the pond. While they take a bit more prep work than other organs, venison kidneys make a fine meal. If you want to try them, start by peeling the membrane from the surface of the kidney. Cut the kidney in half, lengthwise. Trim away the hard, white centers. Now for the important part. Drop the kidneys into a bowl of milk and place the bowl in the refrigerator overnight. The next day, change out the milk and return the bowl to the fridge. After two days of soaking, rinse the kidneys and dice them up.

A great way to dip your culinary toes into kidneys are to use them in a steak and kidney pie. Sauté diced venison and kidneys in butter until well browned. Reserve the meat and cook down a large sliced onion. Add three tablespoons of flour and stir well. Follow with three cups of beef stock and bring the mixture to a boil. Return the meat to the pan and pour the mixture into a pastry-lined baking dish. Top with additional pastry and bake.

Testicles Rocky Mountain Oysters don't come from the sea. But when fried, they are just as tasty as their saltwater namesake. Testes from domestic animals like pork, cattle, and sheep are so popular you can find them on the menus of many restaurants.

Start by removing the sac holding the testicles when you field dress your buck. Use a sharp knife to trim away everything attached to the top of the scrotum. Use your fingers to pull away the skin surrounding the testes until you can pop them free with pressure from underneath.

Pull away the outer membrane and drop the oysters into a bowl of cold water. Refrigerate overnight to chill thoroughly. Use a sharp knife to remove the top section of tough tissue from the upper portion of the testicle. Next, make a shallow slice down one side, just cutting through the clear membrane. Tightly grip one side of the membrane and peel away enough to press down with the blade of your knife to separate the membrane from the inner meat. Press the blade of the knife down on a cutting board and, using steady pressure, pull the membrane from under the blade, leaving the soft inner meat.

Once you have removed the peel, you'll understand why they call them oysters. Raw, peeled testicles are soft and gelatinous. Toss the meat in seasoned flour and deep fry to a crispy golden brown.

Caul Fat You've probably noticed caul fat before, even if you didn't realize it. Caul fat is the lacy, thin membrane that surrounds the internal organs. Carefully peel it away and use it to wrap your venison roasts or anything that might benefit from being surrounded by slowly melting fat as it roasts.



CA WSF — WORKING TO KEEP YOU IN THE FIELD

by Bill Gaines
Gaines and Associates



The 2019 Legislative Session, the first year of the two-year 2019/2020 Legislative Session of the California State Legislature, formally concluded on Sunday, October 13th – the final day Governor Gavin Newsom could act on bills that made it to his desk this year. Below is a summary and final update on just a few of the many important bills the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) actively worked at our State Capitol in 2019, followed by a brief on what we can expect in 2020 – the second year of the two-year 2019/2020 Legislative Session. The below listed bills are in bill order, not in order of priority.

2019 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION WRAP UP

• AB 273 (Gonzalez) – Prohibition of Recreational and Commercial Fur Trapping – SIGNED

On September 4th, Governor Newsom signed AB 273 – legislation which, among other things, will make it illegal to trap any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal for purposes of recreation or commerce in fur. Coined the "Wildlife Protection Act of 2019," AB 273 also prohibits the purchasing or sale of the raw fur of any fur-bearing mammal or nongame mammal and eliminates fur dealer and fur agent licenses. AB 273 will go into effect on January 1, 2020.

CA WSF actively opposed AB 273 in 2019 for several reasons, not the least of which being that the bill bypasses the authority granted the CA Fish and Game Commission (Commission) by our State Legislature 150 years ago to manage our state's fish and wildlife species based on the best-available science – including the authority to regulate methods of take for game and nongame mammals. CA WSF also recognizes that regulated trapping is an essential element of responsible wildlife management in California and throughout North America.

AB 273 was authored by Assembly Member Lorena Gonzalez (D/80-San Diego).

• AB 1254 (Kamlager-Dove) – Ban on Bobcat Hunting – SIGNED

On October 12th, Governor Newsom signed AB 1254, legislation which will arbitrarily ban the hunting and other taking of bobcats statewide as of January 1, 2020 – effectively even cutting short the current bobcat season by two months.

Commencing January 1, 2025, the bill does authorize the Commission to reopen a bobcat hunting season in any area determined by the Commission to "require" a hunt. However, the bill requires that, before a bobcat season could be reopened, the Legislature will have to appropriate funds specifically for, among other things, CDFW to complete a bobcat management plan to inform future bobcat management decisions. AB 1254 also requires the Commission to set hunting license and bobcat hunting tags fees for any subsequent seasons in which bobcat hunting is allowed at levels necessary to fully recover all the reasonable administrative and implementation costs to CDFW and the Commission associated with the hunting of bobcats.

CA WSF actively opposed AB 1254 this past year for several reasons, including the fact that the bill was founded purely on emotions, and not based on science or sound wildlife management principles; proposed to wrongly bypass the science-based regulatory process of the Commission; and, if passed, would be the first time the entire take of a species would be fully banned by our State Legislature, as opposed to "only" prohibiting a specific "method of take" – setting a tremendously dangerous precedent for possible future legislative proposals to ban the take of other legally hunted species.

With AB 1254 now signed into law, CA WSF has no choice now but to turn its attention towards seeking a legislative earmark in a future State budget specifically to provide funding for CDFW to complete a bobcat management plan – a nearly impossible "ask", given the current makeup of the building.

AB 1254 was authored by Assembly Member Sydney Kamlager-Dove (D/54-Culver City).

• SB 395 (Archuleta) – "Wildlife Traffic Safety Act" – SIGNED

On October 13th, Governor Newsom signed SB 395 – legislation which will, upon appropriation of funding by the Legislature, improve public safety and help protect our wildlife resources by reducing the frequency of vehicle-wildlife collisions on California's roadways. Coined the "Wildlife Traffic Safety Act", SB 395 will facilitate critically needed reporting of where vehicle/wildlife collisions occur so Caltrans, CDFW, California Highway Patrol and other state agencies can better assess where the placement of wildlife highway crossings would provide the greatest benefits for both wildlife and motorists. The bill will also reduce the needless waste

of a healthy wild food source by authorizing motorists to salvage deer, elk, antelope or wild pigs killed as a result of a vehicle collision on a roadway.

Upon appropriation of necessary funding by the Legislature, SB 395 authorizes the Commission to establish a pilot program by no later than January 1, 2022 for the issuance of wildlife salvage permits via a cell-phone web-based portal to individuals desiring to salvage the meat of deer, elk, antelope or wild pigs killed via a vehicle collision. The bill also authorizes the Commission to restrict the roadways where wildlife salvage may be conducted and the species subject to salvage. Motorists who do not choose to salvage animals, although not required, are also strongly urged to report them to facilitate their removal and possible use.

SB 395 will also require CDFW to develop and implement a pilot program to collect and compile data on wildlife-vehicle collisions no later than six months after the Commission establishes the pilot program. The bill limits the pilot program to a maximum of three geographically dispersed sites identified by CDFW to be areas of frequent wildlife-vehicle collisions.

At the conclusion of the pilot program, SB 395 requires CDFW to report to the Commission on the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions identified during the study period, barriers to additional data collection, and the feasibility and estimated cost of creating a statewide wildlife-vehicle collision reporting system.

CA WSF strongly supported SB 395 during the 2019 Legislative Session because of the substantial long-term population health and genetic diversity benefits wild sheep and other wildlife would realize from the more educated placement of future wildlife crossings due to data gathered as a result of the program.

SB 395 was authored by Senator Bob Archuleta (D/32-Cerritos)

WHAT CAN WE EXPECT IN 2020?

As California's population swells and our once rural landscape becomes increasingly developed, our State Legislature is steadily transitioning to "urban" districts whose constituencies largely don't hunt, have had little exposure to hunting, and have little understanding of the essential role of hunters in wildlife conservation. With each election cycle, our once "balanced" State Capitol tilts a bit further to the left as a few more districts turn blue and often elect representatives that share their lack of understanding and appreciation for our hunting tradition. Our most recent statewide election was no exception.

When the dust settled on the November 2018 statewide election, we knew we really had our work cut out for us at the State Capitol. In the State Assembly, previously rural districts had lost five more Assembly seats – strengthening the liberal supermajority to an eye-popping 60 of the 80 total Assembly seats. In the State Senate, liberal interests extended their supermajority by grabbing three additional seats – giving them a whopping 29 of the 40 total Senate seats. California voters had also elected a new Governor who had made no secret of his strong stance on gun-control.

This past January, with our newly elected State Legislature and Governor in place, we expected a very challenging year when it came to firearms legislation. It was. Seemingly countless gun-control bills were introduced, with several signed into law – including, but certainly not limited to, legislation which limits the purchase of centerfire semi-automatic rifles to one per month; raises the fees we must pay when purchasing a firearm; and expands home gun storage laws to include a severe 10-year ban on firearm ownership for a violation.

What we didn't know was what to expect in the 2019 Session when it came to hunting and wildlife management issues. We weren't alone. Early in the Session, private discussions within the halls of our State Capitol revealed that members of the State Legislature were also unsure as to how the new Governor would react to animal-rights legislation placed on his desk. That uncertainly led to some restraint, but a few bills tested the waters, with all that made it to his desk – including those noted above – being signed.

With any uncertainty of how this Governor will react to animal-rights bills now removed, we are likely to see more damaging anti-hunting proposals introduced in the coming 2020 Legislative Session. Combined with the fresh stack of gun-control bills we will most certainly see, those who care about the future of hunting must brace for our greatest challenge yet in the halls of California's State Capitol.

What can we do? We must continue to canvas every corner of the Capitol to keep CA WSF membership updated on policy proposals of concern – along with the information our members need to have their voice also heard to help make a difference.

Among other things, during the upcoming 2020 Legislative Session, we will also continue to work to educate both new and experienced urban Legislators of the importance of science-based wildlife management and the critical lead role of hunting in wildlife conservation. To that end, we will continue to play an important role in building the size and breadth of the California Legislature Outdoor Sporting Caucus – a bipartisan, bicameral assemblage of State Legislators who support policy decisions which embrace and promote California's outdoor traditions. In close coordination with our partner wildlife organizations, CA WSF will again work with Caucus leadership to hold events and forums which educate, focus and coordinate the State Legislature's support of California's wildlife and fishery resources, and the outdoor-related activities that depend upon them.

Regardless of the challenges to our heritage we will all face in the coming year, CA WSF is up to the task and committed to keeping sheep on the hill and you in the field.

SOME THOUGHTS ON WILDLIFE AND LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

by Carlos Gallinger, thewayofthings.org

There's been a long-running controversy in the Western United States. This involves three factions. They are wildlife enthusiasts, the cattle industry, and those that champion the wild horse and burro populations.



Wildlife people have a straightforward desire to increase wildlife but this excludes invasive species. The cattle industry also has a fairly straightforward goal: to produce cattle to make a profit. The people who champion wild horses and burros have a somewhat different set of goals: they want to maintain a connection with the historic past.

While some want to protect what they perceive as wild animals, others see it more as a animal-rights issue. For the most part wild horse and burro people are willing to do this at the expense the cattle industry and wildlife populations. Most of the people that promote wild horses and burros do not like to talk about the cost to wildlife, though this is the central controversy they must deal with while promoting wild horses and burros. Sometimes the individual people and the issues between these groups are very clear, other times the individual people or the issue can be vague and difficult to define.

The damage done by wild horses and burros to the natural environment is immense, but generally goes unnoticed by the public due to the fact the public does not really comprehend the amount of missing wildlife. Nor is there an understanding of the damages done to archaeological sites, such as ancient game trails and small prehistoric campsites. These are some of the main reasons the general public views these animals as wildlife rather than what they are, rogue domestic livestock. Another major factor contributing to the public's point of view is that there is no profit in wild horses and burros, whereas the cattle industry is for profit, therefore cows are not viewed as wildlife.

For the most part the public supports a large vibrant population of wild horses and burros on public land. If a person does not see wild horses and burros as wildlife they are very likely to see them from an animal rights perspective, that is to say they have a right to be there. I have been out with groups of people that actually had the term wilderness as part of their group's name that were thrilled to see the wild and majestic burro. My efforts to educate them was met with rejection and disdain. For these reasons the public has long resisted any direct method of population control such as shooting them or rounding them up for slaughter, in spite of the efficiency of these methods. This has led to a long running conflict between the people who want to take care of the land and the indigenous wildlife, and those that want to take care of renegade livestock, i.e.,wild horses and burros.

A wild burro can weigh anywhere from 400 to 600 pounds; therefore one can roughly estimate this is the amount of water and feed for the equivalent amount of natural herbivores such as rabbits mice and small birds. Yet in this form, that of the burro, it does not feed the foxes, coyotes, bobcats, and birds of prey. If all this were not enough, presently the BLM alone spends a staggering $75 million a year on programs that are ineffective or designed to maintain this problem. One can only imagine the benefits if we ended this problem or reduced it to such a point there was no longer an environmental issue, and then spent the $75 million on wildlife. For a rough perspective on what this amount of money could do spent on the Western United States, a mountain range that had say 300 wild sheep might receive a budget of $100,000 to $300,000 per year for that herd alone. Regardless what one might view as the accuracy of these figures they do not account for what the Park service and the Forest service will spend on this issue.

I believe that there is an answer that would be effective environmentally, economical, and acceptable to the public. And that is to design a plan that would regulate, exclude, and modify mineral sources that these animals use.

The first step would be to get a group of professionals up to speed on the mineral requirements that affect reproduction and survivability for the various species that inhabit the Southwest. This would

include horses, burros, deer, antelope, bighorn sheep and so on. Without a doubt the mineral requirement for proper health distribution and reproduction would have similarities and differences. Until we possess this knowledge we do not have the wherewithal to effectively manage any species or their habitat on public land. While this might sound outrageous I believe eventually this will be the prevailing point of view.

Once we've acquired this knowledge we could engineer a solution that takes into account the particular species that is targeted for reduction or eradication from the environment and at the same time design one that is advantageous for the indigenous species. With this basic information I believe we will find many situations where fencing off a single spring and its associated mineral source will reduce the population of horses and burros immensely.

While the effects will not be immediate it will be effective in both population control and reducing the geographic area the target species inhabits. In some places a number of springs and separate mineral sources may have to be fenced off to be effective. This can be done in a way where the burro is excluded from the resource and other wildlife is not. The design for such fencing is readily available and has been used effectively for many years around water sources. Though I know of no incident where this has been used to control or eliminate a mineral resource for horses and burros. I believe there will be examples where fencing off a single water/mineral source will have a relatively quick effect in making a large continuous population into two or more island populations. These smaller island populations will be easier to manage whether the goal is eradication or preserving a small representative population. The first round of such a management plan will inevitably show where other key water/mineral sources exist. With this knowledge it will generally make the second round easier and more effective.

Monitoring and adjusting an up-to-date modern mineral program will no doubt be done with equally modern technology, that we have on hand, such as trail cameras, GPS collars, and even sampling the animals blood or hair. This will tell the story of what's actually happening. The first pilot programs will no doubt provide a wealth of information and put wildlife management in to a whole new era of effectiveness.



THESE ANIMALS HAVE A HIGH LEVEL OF PROTECTION DUE TO THE PUBLIC'S PERCEPTION OF THEM AS CUTE FUZZY PETS

In many areas where this conflict of burros, horses, cattle, and wildlife occur, the cattle operations put out salt blocks. Of course they do this for the benefit of the cattle. Currently I don't know of any study or accepted mainstream concept that has an accurate and proper understanding of how this affects directly or indirectly other species. No doubt wild horses and burros utilize these salt blocks giving them an otherwise lacking and essential commodity, thus allowing them to successfully compete with all the other species for water and feed. Most salt blocks today are some sort of multi- mineral formula. They are not just sodium chloride, though these are available. In areas where there is a cattle operations it is very likely that the minerals/salt blocks are optimum or near optimum for the wild horses and burros. Finding measures for the cattle operations to exclude wild horses and burros from these artificial salt/mineral sources may go a long way to reducing the problem of wild horses and burros.

While some of this knowledge is of a general nature, more will be developed specific to a geographic location. This type of knowledge for the most part does not presently exist but can be developed. Once this knowledge is gained and applied we will see dwindling populations of horses and burros and increasing populations of wildlife.

This type of population reduction will not be as immediate as shooting or rounding them up. Rather it will take years and even decades. There is, however, advantages to this slower method. No one animal will suffer the consequences of being shot, starve, or thirst to death and few if any of these animals that are reduced under such a program would ever live out the majority of their life in a small crowded corral.

I believe that such a program due to its humane nature and slow measured benefit to wildlife will not be opposed by the general public. Furthermore I believe that if handled right in the modern media it will gain a lot of public support. In all likelihood the media component of this mineral plan can only get the credibility it needs by the volunteer environmental groups. It is critical to understand that this idea is not just a biological and land management program, it must have as an integral part of it, a proper modern media narrative. One of the many benefits of a properly designed and narrated program is that once it's initiated it will include a large number of people and motivate them in to a deeper understanding of the environment of the Southwest.

HAS TROPHY HUNTING'S CONSERVATION RECORD BEEN FORGOTTEN?

Excerpted from The Wildlife Society (wildlife.org)

The concept of "trophy hunting" can be a hot-button topic that raises emotions on various sides of the issue. Recently, the controversy has played out in the journal Science, where competing views have appeared on the letters pages.

"There is compelling evidence that banning trophy hunting would negatively affect conservation," wrote the authors of an Aug. 30 letter, which argued that many lands are protected specifically for trophy hunting.

That prompted responses this month from critics — including some TWS members — who insisted those arguments "overlook the role of values" in wildlife management. "Science can quantify risks," they wrote, "but it cannot tell us whether they are acceptable or by whose values they should be judged.

For the Boone and Crockett Club, what gets lost in the controversies is the role trophies have historically played in conservation.

"From the Boone and Crocket Club's perspective, what's being overlooked — and needs to be part of this conservation — is the fact that this concept of 'trophy' was a linchpin in launching the conservation movement itself," said Keith Balfourd, the club's director of marketing. (Read its position statement on trophies and trophy hunting here.)

Go back to the turn of the 20th century and the picture of North American wildlife — and game species in particular — looked very different, Balfourd said. A number of species were teetering on the edge of extinction due largely to market hunting, unregulated sport hunting and irresponsible land use. If unregulated hunting was part of the problem, early conservationists saw regulated hunting as part of the solution.

When Theodore Roosevelt formed the Boone and Crockett Club in 1887 to address the national decline of big game species, Balfourd said, he looked to sportsmen to advance the concept of conservation and game recovery.

"Roosevelt's vision was, the best way to save what game was left was to not eliminate public hunting, but to continue hunting," he said. "It was very counter-intuitive. But Roosevelt made a very important distinction and a very important decision: 'We're going to continue to allow public hunting. But it's going to be very well-regulated and guided by scientific game management to encourage natural recruitment, and allow species to recover and thrive once again.' The whole reason to allow hunting was to inspire conservation. The model was simple. Sportsmen had a vested interest in seeing game recover and thrive so they could continue this outdoor tradition and provide wild game meat for their families. You enlist these people to be part of the new model for the treatment of wild natural resources and the solution, which in this case was population recovery and resiliency, so there would be hunting tomorrow."

When game species were in dire straits, big game hunting was closed in certain areas until struggling species, like white-tailed deer (Odocoileus virginianus), had a chance to recover. As their numbers rebounded enough to allow limited hunting again, new regulations were put in place that allowed the hunting of males but protected breeding populations' females and their young. The oldest males had already done their part to build populations, Balfourd said, and they were often the wariest, the hardest to harvest and had the biggest antlers, which appealed to sportsmen.

"There was already interest in the largest of a species — taking a large bull elk, or moose or a well-antlered buck over a smaller, younger one," he said. "An older animal — a trophy — also represented a hunter's patience and skill as a woodsman and as a tracker. It was natural for sportsmen to aspire to that level.

The attraction of the biggest and the best was also instrumental in enlisting non-hunters to get behind the conservation movement, Balfourd said. That prompted the Boone and Crocket Club to unveil its "National Collection of Heads and Horns" — a taxidermy display of big game species from around the world — at the Bronx Zoo in 1926. The engraved stone over the entrance read, "In Memory of the Vanishing Big Game of the World."

"The club used trophies as a way to raise awareness to the plight of wildlife that only sportsmen were aware of at that point," Balfourd said.

Twenty years earlier, the Boone and Crockett Club had devised a system for measuring and scoring antlers, horns, tusks and skulls. In 1932, it published its first record book of exceptional animals, which Balfourd said also served as a track record of species recovery across time.

"These data have now become a conservation and wildlife management tool used by wildlife managers to track successful or unsuccessful management programs," he said. "Trophies are like the canary in the coalmine. If large male specimens are on the landscape, and hunters are finding them, it's an indication that mortality is low, the habitat is healthy, and there is a balance in age structure within a population. If mature males are absent, that is a population that needs attention."

This past gets lost in the controversies surrounding trophy hunting, Balfourd said.

"What's also missed in this conversation is that sportsmen have an innate responsibility to the wildlife," he said. "People value what they have access to and can benefit from and will fight to keep what they value."

The Boone and Crockett Club is a leading sponsor of The Wildlife Society.

HUNTING AND MOUNTAIN SHEEP: DO CURRENT HARVEST PRACTICES AFFECT HORN GROWTH?

by Taylor LaSharr et al. with partial funding from CA WSF

Editor's note: This is the second paper submitted from Taylor LaSharr which we inadvertantly omitted in our last issue. CA WSF provided generous financial support for Tayler's research on bighorn sheep. In 2018 Tayler completed her M.S. degree at the University of Wyoming under the guidance of Dr. Kevin Monteith, whose previous research has questioned the potential for harvest to impact horn or antler size of large mammals (Monteith et al. 2013, 2018). A primary stimulus for Tayler's work has been the ongoing and almost relentless criticism of the effects of harvest on the structure of large mammal populations and its evolutionary implications.

Until her contributions appear in total, Tayler wishes to share the results of her work in this abbreviated form, and offers her appreciation for the financial support provided by CA WSF. Tayler's thesis consisted of two chapters, each of which has been accepted for publication in a prestigious international journal (Evolutionary Applications and Journal of Mammalogy), and the abstracts of which appear below and in the Fall 2019 issue of CAWSF Magazine. Members of CA WSF can be very proud of their support for Tayler's research, and it is with gratitude that Tayler shares these abstracts.

The influence of human harvest on evolution of secondary sexual characteristics has implications for sustainable management of wildlife populations. The phenotypic consequences of selectively removing males with large horns or antlers from ungulate populations have been a topic of heightened concern in recent years. Harvest can affect size of horn-like structures in two ways: (a) shifting age structure toward younger age classes, which can reduce the mean size of horn-like structures, or (b) selecting against genes that produce large, fast-growing males. We evaluated effects of age, climatic and forage conditions, and metrics of harvest on horn size and growth of mountain sheep (Ovis canadensis ssp.) in 72 hunt areas across North America from 1981 to 2016. In 50% of hunt areas, changes in mean horn size during the study period were related to changes in age structure of harvested sheep. Environmental conditions explained directional changes in horn growth in 28% of hunt areas, 7% of which did not exhibit change before accounting for effects of the environment. After accounting for age and environment, horn size of mountain sheep was stable or increasing in the majority (~78%) of hunt areas. Age-specific horn size declined in 44% of hunt areas where harvest was regulated solely by morphological criteria, which supports the notion that harvest practices that are simultaneously selective and intensive might lead to changes in horn growth. Nevertheless, phenotypic consequences are not a foregone conclusion in the face of selective harvest; over half of the hunt areas with highly selective and intensive harvest did not exhibit age-specific declines in horn size. Our results demonstrate that while harvest regimes are an important consideration, horn growth of harvested male mountain sheep has remained largely stable, indicating that changes in horn growth patterns are an unlikely consequence of harvest across most of North America.

LaSharr, T. N., R. A. Long, J. R. Heffelfinger, V. C. Bleich, P. R. Krausman, R. T. Bowyer, J. M. Shannon, R. W. Klaver, C. E. Brewer, M. Cox, A. A. Holland, A. Hubbs, C. P. Lehman, J. D. Muir, B. Sterling, and K. L. Monteith. In press. Evolutionary Applications.



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Announcements and requests for volunteers will continue coming to you via email so that you can help in one or more installations.

Do you know of a program or organization that may provide a grant to help us complete the project? If so, please get in touch with Mike Borel (mike.borel@contextnet.com) or Beverly.

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

There are several exciting changes for hunters across America, including several refuges that will be opened to hunting new species for the first time!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has announced its final decision regarding new or expanded hunting opportunities on dozens of national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries. The decision follows a June 26 proposed rule change to increase hunting and fishing opportunities including species available for hunting, acreage open to hunting, method of take, and season date ranges.

SCI submitted comments supporting the opening of new refuges to hunting and the expansion of hunter and angler access on refuges already open to hunting and fishing. In the written comments, SCI specifically supported the expansion of available acreage available for hunting opportunities, longer seasons and hunting hours, saying, "**Because hunting is a necessary component of conservation and traditionally compatible with the purposes of the Refuge System, SCI supports the opening of refuges where hunting has not previously been permitted and the expansion of species available for harvest on areas already open to other hunting. SCI welcomes the many opportunities for hunter access, especially for underserved groups such as urban residents, youth, and disabled hunters, created by the Proposed Rule.**"

Following detailed comments on each Wildlife Refuge proposal, SCI concluded its comments by saying, "**SCI fully supports the opening of refuges to hunting and increasing hunting opportunities on refuges on which hunting is already allowed. SCI commends the FWS for taking these steps to increase hunting opportunities and access on federal public lands. Through the Proposed Rule, the FWS is increasing the number of refuges and the extent of refuge lands open to hunters, particularly to members of the public who currently lack access to hunting. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this important planning decision.**"

These are exciting changes for hunters across America, especially because several refuges are being opened to hunting for the first time and the FWS has added the hunting of new species on dozens of refuges!



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