

California Wild Sheep

Fall 2021



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Plus

Photos from the Field,
Recipes, Humor, and More

Chad Cola
California Desert Bighorn
Cady Mountains
2021 with Dry Creek Outfitters



ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921



From the Editor's Desk

Glorious Fall and the start of hunting season (at least for the Northern Hemisphere). I am SOOO ready!! I feel more alive with the cooling air and the anticipation of hunting trips. This issue includes some great hunting stories, info on new directors, fun humor, lots of legislative info, a recap of WSF Chapter & Affiliates Meeting at Hell's Canyon, AND MORE!

Your feedback, ideas, articles, pictures & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 4Q21 issue is November 20, 2021.

Wishing you great success in your hunting this fall!



Delicious Wild Game or Beef Easy Stew

This Use-What-You-Got stew is perfect for the long winter months ahead. This recipe easily translates from the Dutch oven to slow cooker to Instant Pot. Grab the game from the freezer and veggies from the root cellar and you've got yourself a hearty stew that sticks to your ribs. It also makes amazing leftovers that freeze beautifully.

Ingredients

- 2 lbs stew meat from moose, deer, elk, bison, beef...any red meat really
- Salt and pepper
- 1 onion chopped up
- Bacon fat, butter, lard, olive oil
- 2 tsp dried thyme
- 2 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cups broth/water
- 1/2 cup white or red wine
- 3-4 garlic cloves chopped (or sub 2 tsp dried garlic)
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 2 cups chopped carrots
- 1-2 cups chopped parsnips or beets optional, but adds a lovely sweetness
- 4 cups chopped potatoes
- 2 tbsp flour
- 1/4 cup water
- 1-2 oz frozen chopped kale, spinach or other greens

Instructions

1. Sprinkle your meat with a good dose of salt and pepper. A little heavier than if you were doing it on something you would eat straight as it's going to help season the whole pot.
2. If you plan to brown the meat first (recommended for InstaPot or slow cooker), either heat your Instant Pot on saute, or a heavy-bottomed pot on medium heat. Add bacon fat, butter, lard or olive oil and brown your meat in 1-2 batches, depending on the size of your pot, as to not crowd your meat. Add in your onions and saute until they've got a bit of color.
3. If you don't plan to brown, just add the meat and onions to your pot of choice and proceed.

- 4a. If you're using the Instant Pot, add the thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, broth/water, wine and garlic along with the meat and onions. Put the lid on, set to sealing and cook for 30 minutes on high pressure. Let it naturally release for at least 20 minutes before flipping the vent, doing a quick release can make your meat tough/dry.
- 4b. If you're going to use a slow cooker, add the thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, broth/water, wine and garlic along with the meat and onions. Put the lid on and cook on high for 2-3 hours or low for 4-6 hours.
- 4c. If you're using a Dutch oven in the oven, add the thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, broth/water, wine and garlic along with the meat and onions. Bake at 300F for 2-3 hours. After the first time is up, check that your meat is tender. It does not need to be fall apart tender but if it still feels like shoe leather...it should maybe go a bit longer on its own.
5. Then add in your celery, carrots, potatoes, and optional parsnips and beets. Instant Pot for another 15 minutes... Slow cooker for another 2 on high or 3-4 on low, or in the oven for another 1-1.5 hours.
6. When the time is up, check that your vegetables are fork tender and easily mash if you press a chunk against the side of the pot with a fork.
7. If you'd like to add any frozen vegetables, do so now.
8. For a thick gravy, put the flour and water in a canning jar with a lid, shake it up well, then stir it into the stew. In a slow cooker this needs a bit for it to actually thicken, so I wouldn't suggest doing it in the slow cooker if you're in a time crunch. In the Instant Pot, simply turn to saute and let it bubble and thicken. If you're using a Dutch oven, put it on the stovetop, turn onto medium heat, and let it bubble and thicken. Omit or use cornstarch instead of flour to keep it gluten-free.
9. Taste your stew, does it need salt? Pepper? Add as needed.
10. Serve up, enjoy with recipes such as sourdough biscuits, sourdough drop biscuits, sourdough focaccia, gluten free/dairy-free cornbread or a good ol' crusty sourdough boule.
11. Leftovers keep 3-4 days in the fridge, or freeze for quick meals another day!

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California Wild Sheep is published quarterly.

Please email all articles and photos to

mike.borel@contextnet.com

Photos should be high resolution and in color.

It is recommended that digital photos be sent by email.

Please include photo credits and captions.

Humorous outtakes provided by Tammy Scott

Published by Beverly Valdez, Gaiatec Services

Events

2021

September TBD	Wild Sheep Foundation Fly-In and Walk on Capitol Hill (Washington DC)
November 20	Due date for articles for 4Q2021 CAWSF Newsletter
December 10	Sheep Summit XXIX Ontario, CA

2022

January 12-15	WSF Sheep Show, Reno
January 19-22	Safari Club Convention, Las Vegas
January 26-29	GSCO Convention, Las Vegas
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2022 CAWSF Newsletter
April TBD	Desert Bighorn Council Mtg
April 29	Sheep Summit XXX Sacramento DoubleTree by Hilton
April 30	CA WSF Annual Fundraiser 20th Anniversary! Sacramento DoubleTree by Hilton
May 20	Due date for articles for 2Q2022 CAWSF Newsletter
June 1	Ballots out for Board of Directors election
June 28	Completed election ballots due
August 20	Due date for articles for 3Q2022 CAWSF Newsletter

President's Letter

As I write this, I am preparing to go into the field to guide my first sheep hunter of the 2021 season. In fact, due to a cancellation, Director Shawn Wood, winner of the 2021 life member raffle, will be that hunter. With some luck, by the time you read this, many of you will have already learned of his success. For sheep hunters, much of what we do is driven by hope and hard work.

With that said, I'm proud of the hard work your Board has done on your behalf this year. Currently, we are working hard to help mitigate the impacts of the current drought impacting California's desert bighorns. In this issue, there is much to read regarding our progress with emergency water hauls, temporary water projects to support CA's struggling wildlife, and legislative challenges facing CA's sportsmen and wildlife. We're very thankful for all of our collaborative efforts with other wildlife conservation NGO's and specifically our affiliate organization the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. All of us have a disproportionate responsibility that we gladly embrace to do our best for wildlife conservation.



As I prepare to board a Supercub and fly into Alaska's frontier, I regret that I have not had time to write up a proper update for our Annual Fundraiser upcoming in 2022. We are looking forward to an in-person event and expect that the turnout will be excellent. It's never too early to start planning to attend so plan now and save the date for our **April 30, 2022** event. We'll be giving away a couple great hunts again next year including a Stone sheep hunt with Golden Bear Outfitting. Tickets are on sale now at: cawsf.org/store.html and in addition, we will be giving away a Dall sheep hunt with Ultima Thule Outfitters to a lucky life member and the old rules will apply; YOU MUST BE IN THE ROOM TO WIN IT! So make plans to attend and don't miss out on our reunion event celebrating 20+ years of sheep conservation in California.

I've still got some gear to pack and prepare, so I will sum up by wishing all of you the best of luck this Fall and I look forward to seeing all of you in Sacramento next Spring.

Good hunting! Donald C. Martin

[Editor's note: See the photos of Shawn's Dall on page 24!]



MY DREAM COME TRUE

by Chad Cola

Just like most California hunters, every year I sit down and put in for the big game draw...selecting my favorite deer, pronghorn, and bighorn sheep zone. Like many bay area residents, I expect to end up with the typical A zone deer tag and points towards those coveted hunts that I figure I can only dream about. So, imagine my surprise when I sat down at home when results were out and saw I had received the X zone deer tag I was hoping for (with my son also selected for the same X zone apprentice hunt) AND...I did not think I was reading it right...saw a 'Y' next to my bighorn sheep results. I was in shock, had I just won the lottery of hunting this year? I even had to call my wife to verify what I was seeing. In a tough 2020, it was a dream come true.

In the few days that followed, I researched and realized that this was not a hunt I could do without someone experienced in sheep hunting. I'm an avid hunter, having hunted in and out of state...but never for sheep. So, I called in the big guns. After a great chat with Cliff St Martin at Dry Creek Outfitters, I booked my hunt for mid-December. Sheep shape began in earnest. I'm lucky to have a regional park in my backyard and spend most weekends in the Sierras. So, training began. I wanted to be ready for this hunt.

We arrived in the Cady Mountains at camp on December 12th and met Cliff and the guys from Dry Creek Outfitters. These were my kind of people, down to earth and easy going. Our hunt started with a long haul to the opposite side of the unit. They were seeing sheep on that side. I've hunted a lot, it's one of my greatest passions, and I really enjoy glassing. But I had no idea that we would be glassing from miles away. Although it took me a bit to get the hang of spotting the sheep, once I spotted my first sheep I had it figured out. And thank goodness for Cliff and Dry Creek Outfitters, I would have been glassing in the complete wrong areas.

Day one and two we didn't see much, some ewes and a few sickle horns. We walked, glassed, walked, glassed. I was in my element. On day three of the hunt, we located a group of rams and wanted to get a closer look. Split the group up and sent one guy in to get a look. No real shooters in the group. That afternoon as we were glassing more, we located a ram.



Chad with wife Heather, Cady Mountains ram

We decided to hold off, thanks to Cliff. He advised we continue hunting...it was a shooter, but we felt we could do better. Just seeing one close...I had the leg twitch. Man, I thought it looked good, but in hindsight...glad we held off. We named him the Tower Ram and proceeded to see him again a few days later.

Day four, we did a walk about of the interior. More small rams and ewes. Towards days end, we spotted a nice ram but as hunting would have it, the days end was closing in. While it was a tough call, we decided to head back to the truck. Hunting was hard this trip; we hunted our rears off the next few days. Didn't see much at all. Day six provided some action, we had spotted a group of rams and stalked in on them. Was on the gun and ready, but luck was not in our favor. They slipped out another way when they got up from being bed down.

I would be lying if I didn't confess, I was getting a little nervous as we marched toward the end of the hunt time. We were well into the ten-day hunt, we were not seeing a lot and the rams we were seeing, were moving. And I mean MOVING. Cliff and the guys from Dry Creek Outfitters were doing everything...we were glassing, walking, strategizing. Late on day eight, Cliff got a call from his spotter. I think we literally partially walked and ran two miles. Climbed a shale cliff and spotted the ram. He was nice, but likely 600+ yards out and my shooting position was horrible. We tried another spot, but he spooked and was gone.



Chad and Heather on the trail

Day nine we glassed and glassed and moved and moved ending up at one of our favorite glassing spots. Low and behold I spotted some rams. We were off. We drove closer hoping to get within a decent walking distance as the afternoon drew in. We stalked in and

there they were. We ranged them around 450 yards. I threw my pack down, Cliff ranged them again, kept me calm and told me to take the shot. A 440-yard shot and my dream was realized.

Walking up to the ram was surreal. I could not believe, and still can't, that I was lucky enough to be drawn for a California Bighorn sheep. What a once in a lifetime experience that I am thankful for. I got to experience it with my partner in life, my wife. She was a trooper. We made memories to last a lifetime, friends in the Dry Creek group, and enjoyed every moment. To say I am hooked on sheep hunting is an understatement. A huge thank you to Dry Creek Outfitters; Cliff St Martin, Kirk Stiltz, Casey Nick, and Shawn Pepper.

THE BATTLER : 2021 CALIFORNIA DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP HUNT

by Greg Gomes

This is the story of my hunt in Newberry/Rodman/Ord Mountains. I had put in for the last 23 years and I had maximum points, 18, so I decided to put in for unit 10 this year. When I saw that I was drawn on the computer, I checked it at least 2 more times and it said yes, I was drawn. I called everyone I knew, I was so excited and didn't expect it.

I called a friend of mine who drew the year before, Ernie Lindo, and asked him who he hunted with, he said Dry Creek Outfitters. I called Cliff St. Martin and after talking with him, I liked what he had to say and I booked my hunt of a lifetime.

My son, Brandon, and my brother, George, went on the hunt with me—what a blessing it was to have them along. I booked a 7-day hunt and Cliff set the date for the first week in January 2021. That was a long 7-month wait but it gave me time to get in shape.

We saw so many sheep and most of them were rams. We saw sheep every day—lots of sheep. We hunted from sun up to sun down, with cool mornings about mid 20's and warm afternoons. It was amazing, big country.

On the 4th day of the hunt, my son got a call. He is in the military and he needed to get back to his base. So, I talked to Cliff and said I would really like my son to be in on the kill with me. He said "We will get it done."

On the morning of the 5th day we were on our way to the area we were going and one of Cliff's guides,



Greg Gomes with Dry Creek Outfitters team

Brooks, called and said some rams were at a spring not far off the road. Cliff spotted four of the rams running up the mountain and he said, "Set up and take the bottom one." I shot twice and missed. I saw one down lower and told Cliff about it he said take it. My son said "240 yards Dad" and my dream came true—he was down. The excitement of that hunt will live with me forever. I'm so very Blessed!!

Thanks to my son, Brandon, my brother George, California Game & Fish, desert bighorn sheep people who help keep these sheep going. Thank you to Dry Creek Outfitters: Cliff, Brooks, Kirk, Carlos & Ernie and Cliff's wife for all those great meals. Thank you, you are a first-class operation and you truly know your sheep!

A Picture is Worth 1,000 Words

What will your hunting photo say about you?

Telling non-hunters the right story through your hunting photos is critical to increasing cultural support for legal, regulated hunting. Your photos say a lot about you and your adventure and are a way to share your experience and your pride of being a hunter. Capture that pride with the right photo. You never know where that photo might end up as it makes the rounds on social media.



Look at my new turkey hunting buddy



A beautiful spring morning in Virginia

Here are some tips to help you tell your story:

- **Be respectful of your harvest. All game animals and birds should be honored.**
 - Don't sit on top of, kneel on or "bear hug" your animal.
 - Tuck the animal's tongue in its mouth and clean any blood off the animal and yourself.
 - Cover any visible wounds or crop the photo to omit unnecessary blood or damage.
 - Position the animal so that its head is upright. If you plan to be in the photo, hold up its head.
 - Don't photograph the animal when it is on a 4-wheeler or in the bed of a truck.
- **Help a photo to tell your story. Don't just show it or post it on social media.**
 - Write a short description to accompany the photo. Even just a few thoughtful words such as "Thankful," "With all my respect" or "Great memories" help to set the right tone.
 - Share what you will do with the meat, such as using it to feed your family and friends or donating it to feed those less fortunate.

■ Share that your hunting adventure is about the journey.

- Show photos of your hunt preparation, the travel, your treestand placement, the outdoor setting and the game and non-game species you observed while remaining undetected.
- Tell a story about time spent with friends and/or family.

Other considerations:

- Make sure your firearm is unloaded and the action is open in all photos.
- Remember you are representing a whole community of hunters. What may seem appropriate to you at the time may not be to someone who sees your photo later and does not know the backstory.
- Is that photo you are about to post on social media how you want people to view you for the rest of your life?



TEAM TIBURÓN

*by Bill Tittle
Distinguished Life Member*

Oh my GOD! This just may happen! Pancho turns to me as we crest the mountain and whispers “Arco con fleche.” Now I don’t speak Spanish; but with Pancho’s hand gestures and the look of excitement his face, I clearly get his point. I place the arrow on my rest, grab my range finder, and slowly creep step by step behind Pancho along a sheep trail barely wide enough for my boot. Pancho peers around a rock outcropping, quickly turns to me with eyes as big as silver dollars.

In January of 2019 at The Sheep Show in Reno, NV, I was talking with Doug and Shelly Sayer about Doug’s spectacular Desert ram taken on Tiburón Island. Doug and Shelly were telling me Tiburón was the place to hunt big Desert rams. But with a bow? Friday night I bought the California Desert Bighorn Auction Tag so Tiburón was going to have to wait another year.

In November of 2019, I harvested a great archery Desert Bighorn. This finished my Archery Grand Slam in the Mohave Desert with Jake Franklin of Kika Worldwide. We ended up friends with great mutual respect for one another.

Sheep Show 2020 I searched out Luis Romero of Desert Hunts. I told Luis I wanted to do something really special on Tiburón Island. I wanted to see if we could challenge the archery World’s Record Desert Bighorn. I did my research on Boone and Crockett and SCI with rams taken on Tiburón. I quickly realized there were very few rams taken of the caliber of an archery World’s Record Desert, but there were a few. Luis was ready for the challenge. I wanted to bring 3 additional guides, Jake Franklin, Johnny Nikirk (BC), and Brady Lough (Alberta) to round out my team of guides. Pancho and Lalo, the very experienced Mexican guides would lead this team. Luis agreed and we set the plan in place. Jake, Johnny and Brady would head down a week before me to do some pre-scouting.

Well COVID hit and made things quite challenging for all of us to get to Tiburón, but we made it. Jake could not stay for the entire hunt. He had to return to California for family reasons. Jake and Brady scouted an area of the island eliminating a number of rams as well as coming up with a possible contender. Johnny and others were scouting other areas of the island. By the time I arrived on the island, Team Tiburón had three large rams we wanted to pursue.

After arriving on February 15th at the island base camp, Rafa filled me in on the logistics. Rafa and Luis



Bill Tittle

own/operate Desert Hunt Outfitters. He let me know each of us would be carrying four days of food and water in addition to our hunting/camping supplies. The Seri Indian people would replenish supplies every four days. We would text GPS coordinates and meet up with the Seris for supplies as needed. There is no accessible water for drinking on the island. All water has to be brought to the island.

The following morning, we jumped in vehicles and ATVs and headed to the south end of the island where our trip would start. Jake and Brady had located a large ram a few miles from the drop off point. Half of the team was heading to the north end of the island to locate a big ram known as “Ghost.” Both groups would keep in touch through InReach. Pancho and Lalo would split up between the two groups. Pancho was in my group and Lalo was with another group on the north end of the island.

On the south end, we met up with Johnny and Brady. We set a plan in motion to try and get a better look at the ram. Pancho and Johnny were leading the way up the mountain carefully paying attention to the wind direction. As Pancho and Johnny crawled over a knob to get their eyes on the ram, the wind switched direction. The ram immediately picked up his head and took his compadres with him.

We spent the next three days searching for him. Tiburón Island can be a very difficult place to hunt. The topography is so broken there are countless places for these rams to hide or evade trouble. We saw plenty of rams but not the ram we wanted.



Team Tiburón

On day four, Lalo texted us “ram #2 found.” We hiked the 4-5 miles back to where the vehicles would pick us up. We stopped at base camp, reloaded supplies and took off to meet up with Lalo. By the end of the fourth day, we were on the north end of the island setting a plan in place to pursue the No. 2 ram. Once again, the ram had disappeared by the time we arrived. Lalo and Pancho put a plan in place to divide and conquer to find the location of this ram.

On day five, the ram appeared. The ram bolted down a small drainage to get a drink out of a puddle 240 yds from us. With a rifle we most likely would have been celebrating. We continued to watch the ram the rest of the day until he bedded for the night.

The morning of day 6 we found the ram in the same location where he bedded the previous night. Pancho devised a plan to get on top of the ram for a 30- to 40-yard shot. What looked like a quick 30-40 minute hike to get over to the ram turned into 2-3 hours. Pancho was unbelievable. He knew exactly when the wind would change direction. Pancho would have us hold up until the winds changed then continue our pursuit.

Pancho, Rafa and I made it to the top of the cliff above the ram. I couldn't see the ram from my location. I gave Pancho my rangefinder to get a range. He said 29 yards. I drew my bow stepped forward to the cliff's edge and let the arrow fly. Right over the top of the bedded ram. The ram jumped up I loaded another arrow. Same thing over the back of the ram but now he was getting “out of dodge.” I wish I could say what happened for sure. There was brush covering part of the ram. Maybe Pancho wasn't quite familiar with my rangefinder and miscommunication. Well anyways the ram was gone. I needed to keep my confidence up and

head in the game. This ram was a good one, definitely the caliber of ram worthy of our pursuit.

Lalo and team continued their quest to find “Ghost.” We never found “Ghost” over the next few days. We split up again, decided to try to locate the rams from day one and day six. On day 11, after hiking many miles in the hot sun, climbing mountains, not finding the rams on our hit list, it happened. A beautiful ram we had not seen before came out into plain view. He was a real beauty. We now had some excitement in camp and a plan for Day 12.

We decided to get up at 5:00 am and complete most of the 3-mile stalk before sun up. Right at 5:00 am literally hundreds of coyotes from the cliffs and mountain tops started their howling. Almost as if to say get up the hunt has started. Coyotes are considered sacred to the Seri Indian people. We very rarely saw one during the day, but I have never heard so many coyotes in the early morning hours.

Once again Pancho's patience and experience showed through. Pancho and I were alone on this stalk, no water, no backpack just the bow in my hand. We wanted to move quickly when required. I had been 7 hours on this stalk and it looked like it just may happen...

I made the move around the Mesquite tree ahead of Pancho. Now my eyes were as big as Pancho's seeing the ram standing broadside looking down the mountain. There was brush in the way at 40 yards. I had to wait until the ram made a move. He moved in our direction to 30 yards standing there twisting his head back and forth eating the fruit of the Ocotillo plant. I have never seen such a set of horns so close from every angle. A memory forever etched in my mind. There was still brush in the way at 30 yards. I did not have a shot.

It seemed like an hour but I am sure it was seconds. The ram moved even closer to 20 yards. He stood up on a rock plateau stretched broadside looking over the valley. Immediately I drew back and released the arrow. I heard the infamous “thwack.” The ram dropped off the plateau and laid not more than eight yards from where the arrow pierced his heart.

The celebration began! Pancho and I embraced nearly falling off the mountain screaming with excitement. Shortly thereafter we could hear the screams of joy from the rest of Team Tiburón watching through their spotting scopes more than 2 miles away.

Bowhunting can be a solo sport or a team sport. I have had many hunts in my past. By far the most memorable hunts are those spent with others. Everyone on this team poured a 100% into this hunt. No one gave up. No one quit. We held true to take the largest ram we possibly could off of Tiburón Island. It was not an archery World's Record. It was an accomplishment Team Tiburón can be proud of.



Great ram no matter how you look at it!

We called the ram Pilingano a nickname for the camp cook and manager for many years on Tiburón Island. Unfortunately, early this year Pilingano was taken by the tragic COVID virus. Pilingano—I understand—always made everyone feel at home. He made sure the food was perfect, bellies were full, and celebrations were festive! He believed a happy team was a successful team. In his honor, we called the ram Pilingano. Pilingano is the largest recorded archery ram taken off of Tiburón Island in history at 181 6/8”.

I have to say thanks to all my guides. Jake—your scouting efforts were a tremendous help. We sensed your presence through our journey. Johnny—we

go back a long way; several hunts together. One of the best damn sheep hunting guides I’ve had along my side. Brady—you gave all on our second hunt together to make it happen. Rafa—your attention to details, logistics and campsite dinners. Pancho—your incredible sheep hunting experience. I have never seen a guide predict sheep behavior as you did throughout this journey. Lalo—your never quit attitude, your desire to find the largest ram possible and unbelievable eyesight. Finally, thanks to the Seri Indians for letting us hunt this mystical, spiritual, beautiful Island Tiburón. I came as a guest and left as a friend.

WATER HAULING — FILLING FOR THE SHEEP AND FULFILLING FOR HUMANS

This summer and fall many volunteers have helped get water to the sheep. The next time you see the notice come out, be sure to volunteer!

The weekend of August 27 to August 30th saw the USMC flying water to up to eight guzzlers. Many volunteers were on hand to help with getting the water equipment, including water bladders, firehoses, pumps, and more. Volunteers were also there to help with any installation repairs and replacements necessary.

CA WSF funds the cost of equipment and other associated costs through the Give a Lamb a Drink (GALAD) program. In addition, many CA WSF members volunteer on various programs. Be sure to check your email for information on when and how to volunteer.

It’s hard work in the desert but it’s so worth it -- not only for the sheep but for the humans who participate too.

If you are interested in helping on any installations, repairs, or other field activities, contact Scott Gibson, water4sheep@gmail.com. To help with our Give a Lamb a Drink funding, please contact Mike Borel (mike.borel@contextnet.com).

SKY ROSE RANCH

TULE ELK HUNT DRAWING

Only 500 Tickets Available / \$100 Per Ticket

Hunt Information:

4 day 2022 California Tule Bull (management) Elk hunt on the Sky Rose Ranch near Paso Robles, CA.

Hunt includes 4 days of 1x1 guiding on private ranch, landowner elk tag, one management bull (guide's choice) one wild hog, meals, nice ranch house lodging, trophy field care, transportation of carcass and head to local processor and taxidermist, and hunt transportation.

Hunting license extra.

Tentative hunt dates are August/ September 2022.

This is a very good hunt in one of the few areas that have Tule elk available. The management bulls usually have one side that is a true trophy and the other side is not. Example 7x6, 6x5, or 5x4.



Collaboration with other organizations is one of the hallmarks of CA WSF. We are happy to support CDA, a very strong California conservation organization. All of the funds generated by this drawing will go to wildlife habitat projects here in California.

skyroseranchhunting.com

Ticket Order Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
Phone _____
Email _____
Payment Method: ☐ Check ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa
Credit Card Number _____
Expire Date _____ CCV Code _____
Signature _____

Mail Order Form - CDA, PO Box 494311, Redding, CA, 96049

Orders must be received by Feb. 5, 2022.

Drawing held Feb. 5, 2022 at Redding CDA Banquet.

Do not need to be present to win.

CA WSF BOARD AND OFFICER ELECTIONS 2022

Effective July 1, 2022 CA WSF Members elected two new Directors - Maggi Kouffeld and Matt Burke, and six incumbent Directors to the Board – Adam Casagrande, Ken Crother, Bob Keagy, Don Martin, Glen Pyne, Mike Torres.

Two directors retired – George Kerr and Renee Snider. Special thanks to all for your service to CA WSF!

The eight directors elected in 2022 to two-year terms, join – Mike Borel, Jim Fitzgerald, Ben Gordon, Don Priest, Paul Schultheis, Zack Walton, Darryl Williams, and Shawn Wood; who are in the middle of their current term.

Following the Director Election, the Board elects officers to 2-year terms. We have one new officer elected – Matt Burke will

be the new Secretary, replacing Don Priest who has served that capacity for multiple terms. Thank you, Don, and welcome Matt.

Don Martin was re-elected to a second term as President. Others re-elected are: Mike Borel to VP Operations, Ken Crother to VP Northern CA, Glen Pyne to VP Southern CA, and Adam Casagrande to Treasurer.

Matt Burke was an active Director in our earlier years, but stepped down due to potential conflict with his work. He has now retired and we are happy to have him rejoin the board and become one of the officers.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS



George Kerr



Renee Snider

WELCOME TO OUR 2021 NEW BOARD MEMBERS



Matt Burke



Maggi Kouffeld

OREGON BIGHORN SHEEP HUNT

*by Roger McCosker
Distinguished Life Member*

It was an incredible experience to win the Oregon sheep raffle.

- It was like a dream come true, one that I hadn't expected or anticipated.
- For two months, it changed my life: I rescheduled summer travel.
- I commenced a strict sheep-shape training regime (lost 20-25 lbs).
- I redirected my focus, and hired the best sheep outfitter in the Northwest.

When you win the sheep raffle, it is equivalent to the governor's tag.

You have the right to hunt any open sheep unit in Oregon, starting early and finishing late.

You can hunt exclusively the best units, pursuing the biggest/oldest rams available.

On my scouting trip with Dan and Todd, with Sheep Mountain Outfitters, I found really eye-opening, in that we spotted/viewed over five B&C rams from the mountain top.

I've never had this quality of experience. You start thinking of the opportunity getting a big ram, regularly, during all free moments. You kind of become obsessed, On regular sheep hunts, you pursue a "good" representative ram in unknown steep mountain ranges and terrain.

This hunt was focused on getting a "great" ram, and knowing that they were the vicinity.

My hunt and final stalk was focused, exciting and intense. The terrain was steep and treacherous. We jet boated up the Snake River and had to climb a couple



Roger McCosker — focus on a great ram

hours, from the river, after spotting the group of rams we were pursuing.

I got in position to make a steep uphill shot, on the adjacent mountain. A book ram was standing broadside. My guide, Todd, told me to hold off, that the ram I was looking at, was not the big ram we were after. Our ram was slightly higher on the mountain and sitting down in the grass, so we had to wait until he stood. We were sitting in blazing hot sun (105+ degrees) and I had to wait in shooting position for close to an hour, before he finally stood.

My shot was good. I was excited and pleased... and I was soaking in perspiration, as well as exhausted.

What a moment in time!

Still true today...

"It is one of the blessings of wilderness life that it shows us how few things we need in order to be happy."

Horace Kephart,
Camping and Woodcraft, 1916

True enough...

"Time spent hunting is never wasted — it is wisely invested!"

John Ware
Distinguished Life Member

SEVERAL “ANNIVERSARIES” TO BE CELEBRATED AT 2022 FUNDRAISER

*by Mike Borel
Distinguished Life Member, VP Operations*

Next year we will be celebrating our 21st anniversary since founding CA WSF to make a difference for wild sheep in California. It will also be 36th year of the “modern era” of California sheep hunting, the 61st Anniversary of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS), and the 20th anniversary of CA WSF’s annual fundraiser dinner! All this will be celebrated at the next annual fundraiser on Saturday evening, April 30, 2022. Join us as we continue our “Progress toward Increasing DBH Populations and Hunting Opportunities.”

This in-person event will return to the DoubleTree Hotel, 2001 Point W Way, Sacramento. There will be raffles along with both silent and live auctions that will include a wide array of exciting hunts, adventures and other items that you will have the chance to bid on and win. Whether it’s a once-in-a-lifetime hunt, a family trip to fill that empty space in your calendar, or that rifle you have always wanted, you will find it here.

Although not yet formally committed, we expect to once again have desert bighorn auction tags for California and Mexico, along with a special auction tag from Alaska.

Plans are being made to have a “work in progress” auction list up on the chapter website in the near future. Check the website for the upcoming auction list, and then check back for updated information on hunts and other auction items to plan your auction purchases. The list will have outfitter information so you can “do your homework” prior to the event.

The 2022 Anniversary Fundraiser Committee also has plans in the works for more taxidermy displays and exhibits. There will also be plenty of time to share stories and have that face-to-face experience we have all been missing!

Save the date (April 30, 2022), plan to attend and bring friends! Watch the website and e-mails for future information and reservation details.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 HUNTS / TRIPS DONORS!

*You have donated generously! Our thanks and sincere appreciation for helping us in our goal of
PUTTING AND KEEPING WILD SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS.*

Alaska Dept of Fish and
Game

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Gray Thornton

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www.diamondoutfitters.com

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Keaton Kelso
www.duckandbuck.com

Point Blank Hunts
Joe Jacob
www.pointblankhunts.com

UC Hopland Research Station
hrec.ucanr.edu

Ultima Thule Outfitters
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www.ultimathulelodge.com

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www.ominica.bc.ca

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

SHOW YOUR TRUE COMMITMENT TO THE WILD SHEEP OF CALIFORNIA AND THE WORLD! JOIN OR UPGRADE YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY.

You will be joining a hard working, and hard hunting, group of CA WSF Distinguished Life members when you join or upgrade. Meet our Distinguished Life Members:

PEGGY BARNETT LEE
VINCE BLOOM
MIKE BOREL
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Join as a Life Member (\$500)

Make a commitment now to continue PUTTING AND KEEPING WILD SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS of California! Join CA WSF as a Life Member or a Junior Life Member and receive ONE chance to WIN the special Life Members hunt in 2022.

Upgrade your CA WSF Life Membership (\$1,000)

Upgrade your CA WSF Life Membership to DISTINGUISHED Life Membership (\$1,000) to receive THREE chances to WIN the special Life Members hunt in 2022.

You may also join at the Distinguished Life Member level for \$1,500.

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

CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION LIFE MEMBERS

THANKS to our devoted Life Members we have been able to meet our goal of **PUTTING AND KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS** for more than 20 years! Your dedication and participation matters to the wild sheep of California.

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Terry B. Anderson
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Stanford Atwood
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DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP PROGRAM UPDATE

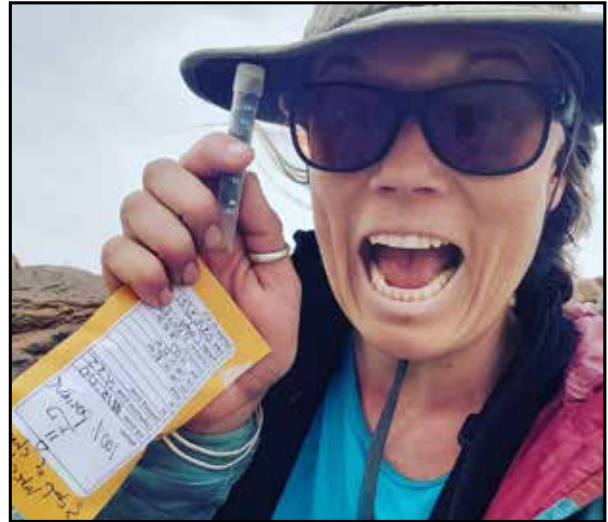
California Department of Fish & Wildlife, Region 6

*by Paige Prentice, Wildlife Biologist and
and Rick Ianniello, Environmental Scientist*

This summer started off with Rick Ianniello getting hired as a permanent intermittent (9-month) Environmental Scientist for the Region 6 Desert Bighorn Program. Rick was a dedicated and hard-working scientific aide for this program for five years and we're delighted to have him in this new position. Region 6 is also in the process of hiring four new scientific aides for the program.

On behalf of the Department, we would like to express our gratitude to all the dedicated volunteers that have spent many long, hot hours hauling over 130,000 gallons of water to various wildlife water developments this year. Your efforts are heroic—thank you! These drought conditions have also sparked new collaborations with fellow government agencies. During the weekend of June 25th, CalFire helped haul over 10,000 gallons of water via helicopter to three different water sources in the Clipper and Marble Mountains. The U.S. Marine Corps also helped haul water via helicopter and they are planning to haul water to some additional critical sources by the end of summer.

Other collaborative efforts, with Oregon State University (OSU), have resulted in extensive field work and data collection throughout the summer. Last fall, we captured 100 animals across eight ranges in and around the Mojave National Preserve. As part of a large disease ecology study through OSU, these



Paige Prentice

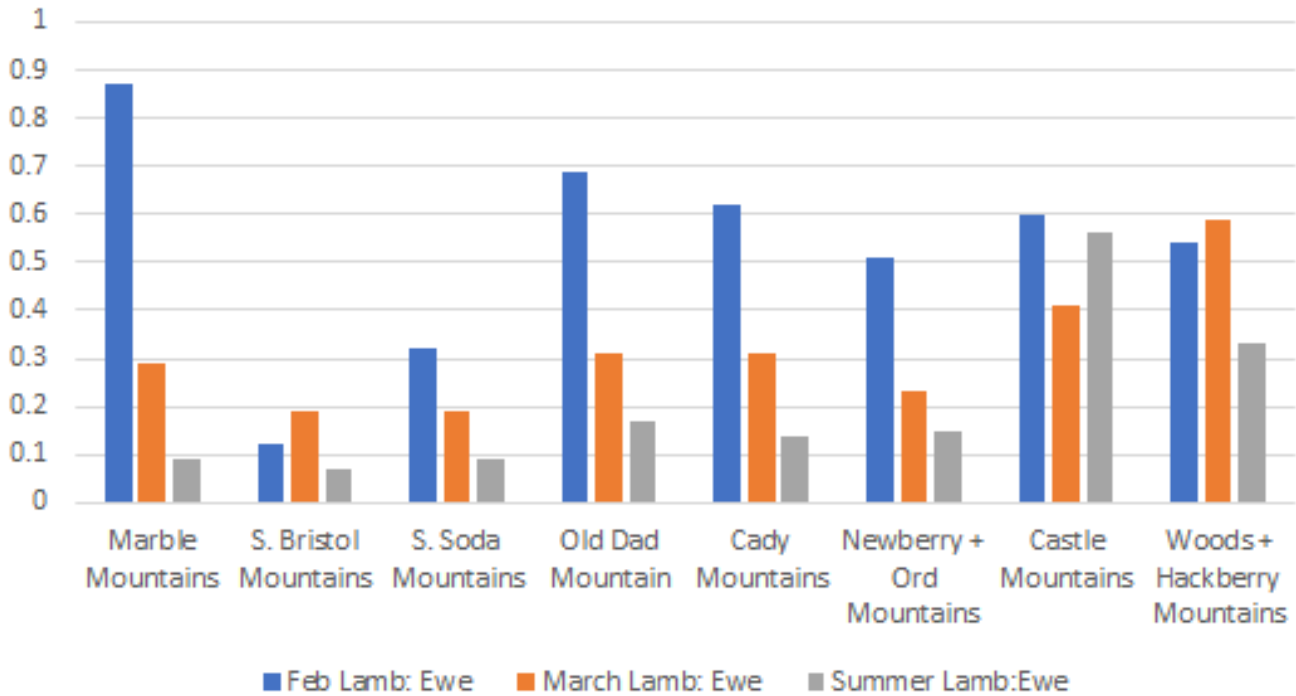
100 animals are being followed for three, 2-month periods (Winter/Spring, Summer, Fall) during 2021. These periods require field staff to collect fecal pellets from each collared individual, once every 20 days. The fecal pellets are used to study the microbiome, parasite loads, diet quality, and genetics of individual bighorn. During the tracking process, observers record group composition, lambing status, activity, and body condition.



Rick Ianniello



2021 Field Observation, Lamb:Ewe Ratios



During June and July, field efforts resulted in a total of 263 observations. The large number of observations throughout the study has allowed us to collect some measures of this year's recruitment, simply by comparing the total number of adult ewe observations to the total number of lamb observations (lamb:ewe) in each range. It's important to accept that these ratios are based on a subset of each population (i.e. the target bighorn and the bighorn they grouped with), but the trends give us an idea of how recruitment has gone in this dry year.

In short, it's been a hard year. Even most of the lamb to ewe ratios seen in February were lower than what

we often expect, except in the Marble Mountains, where the ratio of .87 is typical for early in the year. However, by March the lamb counts declined sharply in many of the ranges, a trend which appears to have continued through the summer.

The good news is that the numbers in some of our higher elevation ranges (Castle, Woods, and Hackberry Mountains) are maintaining relatively good recruitment so far, and, we finally received some real monsoonal moisture across most of the desert, and the forage is starting to look better than it has all year!

CA WSF WANTS YOU – As a Member!



Please share this info with your friends.

Are you a Californian? A transplant to or from? Do you hunt wild sheep? Do you dream about hunting wild sheep, especially in California? Do you want to help assure that wild sheep thrive for future generations? Do you want to be part of a growing organization that is making a positive difference?

If you answered yes to one or more of those questions – please join CA WSF! If you are able, join or upgrade to Life Membership or to Distinguished Life Membership. The Desert Bighorn in California are doing well and CA WSF is making a real difference by raising funds, getting connected, working with CDFW, and by collaborating with SCBS to add rainwater catchments to preserve and enhance Desert Bighorn populations in California.

Joining is very easy – www.cawsf.org or email Beverly Valdez at forthesheep@gmail.com.

Want to get even more involved? Email Don Martin, President, at don-martin@earthlink.net.

CA WSF is a proud Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation – you'll want to be a member there too! www.wildsheepfoundation.org.

Only 600
tickets
available

100 Tickets
reserved for
4/30/22

Stone Sheep Raffle 2022



\$100 per ticket

Enter to win a 16-day Stone Sheep Hunt with Golden Bear Outfitters July 29 - August 13, 2023 in the the Telegraph Creek and Stikine River area of British Columbia. Golden Bear Outfitters' hunt area is over 8,000 square miles of rugged, mostly untouched wilderness in one of the oldest guide regions of BC. This is a hunt any mountain hunter will remember as "once-in-a-life!"

Golden Bear Outfitting provides: Air and ground transportation within the hunting area, a guide for each hunter and support personnel, lodging and meals, snacks and soft drinks, camping equipment, trophy preparation.

Value of the hunt is \$48,500.

Winner will be drawn at the California WSF Annual Banquet April 30, 2022. Winner will be notified by email or phone.

ADDITIONAL COSTS TO BE PAID BY WINNER (due July 15, 2023):

Air charter: \$1,500
Hunt Package GST tax: \$2,500
Wildlife Stewardship Fund: \$250
Government Royalty: \$450
License/tags: \$980

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
Non resident firearms fee



Wild Sheep Foundation President and CEO Gray Thornton hunted with Golden Bear Outfitters and says "...cannot recommend them highly enough!! The best!"

Tickets available at www.cawsf.org/store



California Chapter
Wild Sheep Foundation
1630 Williams Hwy #151 Grants Pass, OR 97527
(650-605-4009 PH / 650-649-1958 Fax)
cawsf@cawsf.org www.cawsf.org



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

Name: _____

Phone: Primary: _____ Alternate: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

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

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

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

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

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

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

Have you hunted Sheep? Yes No

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

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

CA WSF Membership:

Annual Membership (\$40) = \$ _____

Life Membership (\$500) = \$ _____

Distinguished Life Membership (\$1,500) = \$ _____

Distinguished Life Membership (\$1,000) (Life upgrade) = \$ _____

Youth Annual Membership (\$25) = \$ _____

Youth Life Membership (\$400) = \$ _____

Wild Sheep Foundation Membership:

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3-Year (\$120) = \$ _____

Family (\$80) = \$ _____

Life Membership Under age 59 - \$1,000 = \$ _____

Age 59-64 - \$750 = \$ _____

Age 65+ - \$500 = \$ _____

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

Credit Card Type: Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ AMEX ☐

Cardholder Name: _____ CCV: _____

Credit Card #: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____/____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail this form to CA WSF, 1630 Williams Hwy #151, Grants Pass, OR 97527 or fax to 650-649-1958.

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

EASY OLD-FASHIONED SKILLET CORNBREAD WITH SOURDOUGH

from "Our Gabled Home"

This flavorful and subtly moist sourdough skillet cornbread is the perfect side dish for any wild game chili or BBQ! Use your cast iron skillet for best results.

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups cornmeal
- ½ cup flour
- 1 cup sourdough starter
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 1/2 cup butter, melted
- ¼ cup maple syrup
- 2 whole eggs
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda

www.ourgabledhome.com

Instructions

1. Add the cornmeal and flour to a non-reactive. You can use a wood, glass, pottery, or enamel bowl but try to avoid metal bowls.
2. To that, add the sourdough starter and buttermilk. With a whisk, mix all these ingredients until well combined, cover the bowl, and let the dough sit for at least 4 hours.
3. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
4. Once everything is properly fermented, add the remaining ingredients. I like to add the baking powder and baking soda last, giving the batter only a quick stir.
5. I like to give this cornbread a "jump-start" by heating up a cast-iron skillet on the stove. Then I add 1-2 TBSP of oil and pour the batter into the hot skillet. When the edges are beginning to bake, transfer the skillet to the oven.
6. Bake for 35 minutes or until an inserted toothpick comes out clean.

FROM THE "NEVER TOO YOUNG" FILE

WSF Director Wayne Henderson's granddaughter with her Canadian Moose from North Dakota! Love that ND "pack horse"!



PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Shawn Wood (right)
Dall Sheep, Alaska
with Don Martin (L), Ultima Thule Outfitters



Steve Gingras
Dall Sheep, Alaska
Hunted with Jim Kedrowski, Alaska Hunting
Expeditions
“Close to the Arctic Circle, the low fog cleared
enough for the stalk — I’m very happy!”



Roger McCosker
California Bighorn, Oregon
See story page 14



Robert McClelland (R)
White Mountains ram
Hunted with Dry Creek Outfitters

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD

These photos were taken by Steven Michael Cannon. Steve is the first Iowan to complete the 1000 Mile Iditarod Trail Invitational, and the first to Run Around Lake Michigan (1037 Miles). He is a Fundraiser, Author, Filmmaker, Keynote Speaker, and Believer in the infinite possibilities of YOU!

www.expandyourpossible.com



BIGHORN SHEEP HABITAT MANAGEMENT IN THE MARBLE MOUNTAINS:

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

by *Vernon C. Bleich*

Life Member

The ‘corporate memory’ among agency personnel and others involved in bighorn sheep habitat work across the Mojave Desert nearly is gone, and what little remains is waning rapidly. In an absence of efforts to memorialize information regarding habitat enhancement activities, much of that history will be lost. This article provides a brief history of habitat management actions in the Marble Mountains, and is written in the hope that those efforts on behalf of the conservation of bighorn sheep and the hunting public are not relegated to the trash bins of history.

History is important, and science and wildlife conservation can sometimes be less informative than if they are viewed in an historical context. In a previous article in *California Wild Sheep*, I addressed some aspects of fire and fire history, and their collective importance, to bighorn sheep occupying the San Gabriel Mountains and other chaparral-dominated landscapes in southern California. The intent of this article, and additional articles that doubtlessly will follow, is to acquaint those with an interest in, but virtually no connection with or understanding of, past efforts to enhance habitat conditions for desert bighorn sheep in California. Here, I provide a brief account of the history of our knowledge of bighorn sheep in the Marble Mountains, and a detailed description of the habitat enhancements that have occurred in that mountain range.

I am beginning this series with the Marble Mountains because it is one of only two desert mountain ranges in California that have served as a source of translocation stock, and was among the first for which recreational hunting was established as a management objective (Bleich et al. 1987). From 1983 to 1985, 46 bighorn sheep were translocated from the Marble Mountains and 8 were translocated to the Eagle Craggs in efforts to help re-establish populations of bighorn sheep in those ranges (Bleich et al. 1990). Further, many dozens of mature male bighorn sheep have been harvested since 1987, when a hunting season was established. The second area referred to above also provided translocation stock for additional reintroductions and sport hunting of bighorn sheep also became a reality, and the historical aspects of bighorn sheep management at Old Dad Peak and the Kelso Mountains certainly will be the subject of a forthcoming article.



Dr. Vern Bleich

As recently as 1960, the number of bighorn sheep occupying the Marble Mountains was “none”, according to information attributed to Fred Jones (an early California Department of Fish and Game [CDFG] wildlife biologist) by Helmut Buechner (1960) in his monograph on bighorn sheep in the United States. Indeed, bighorn sheep were not known to inhabit the Marble Mountains prior to 1969 (Wehausen 1999). That changed on 12 March 1969, however, when CDFG Wildlife Biologist Richard Weaver observed a single male in that range. Following that observation and some additional field work, Weaver et al. (1969) ‘estimated’ the population in the Marble Mountains to be 20 animals. The realization that bighorn sheep likely occupied the Marble Mountains compelled Mensch (1970) to write, “Construction and fencing of multilane freeways in or between sheep ranges cause[es] loss of movement and loss of use of what may be necessary seasonal ranges. This is becoming a more serious problem and special under-crossings and fencing are being recommended as an integral part of the highway construction.” As a result of those concerns, right-of-way fencing along Interstate Highway 40 proximate to the Marble Mountains (and other ranges adjacent to the right-of-way) was changed from what had been the standard, multi-strand barbed-wire fence to

woven wire; it was thought that design would lessen the chances of sheep being 'hooked' by their horns and caught in the fence. Additionally, design specifications were revised, and two planned culverts were enlarged and installed to encourage movement by bighorn sheep under the multiple lanes of the soon-to-be constructed freeway.

In addition to the modified fencing and the enlarged culverts, the California Division of Highways installed an enormous (10,000-gallon) water tank that collected run-off from the surface of the highway and stored that water for use by bighorn sheep and other wildlife. Weaver (1972) later wrote, "We [CDFG] have worked with the Division of Highways engineers, and have been successful in getting freeway fencing and culverts modified in sheep habitat. We have planned with the Highway Department to build two 10,000 gallon catchments, using highway runoff water". In addition to the catchment adjacent to the Marble Mountains, a similar tank was installed proximate to the Bristol Mountains, approximately 10 miles west of the Marble Mountains; these catchments are known as the South I-40 and the North I-40 Big Game Guzzlers, respectively.

Interstate Highway 40 was constructed in various stages, but I recall it not yet being open from Ludlow to Needles in the early 1970s, just before I went to work for CDFG. By July 1973, when I joined the CDFG habitat crew, however, it had been completed and traffic flowed uninterrupted between Barstow and Needles. Thus, the first habitat enhancements to benefit bighorn sheep in the Marble Mountains were implemented in the early 1970s. My records indicate that the first formal inspection of the South I-40 BGG occurred on 29 June 1976, and in August 1977 an additional report recommended the drinker, which originally was located adjacent to the freeway, be moved further to the south and that a fence be installed to prevent access by feral asses; earlier inspections likely had occurred, but they apparently were not entered into the permanent record.

On 1 March 1978 I assumed the role of Project Leader for the Wildlife Habitat Development Program, which was supported by the Pittman-Robertson Act and known formally as Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-26-D, but was referred to simply as the 'Habitat Crew', or the 'Crew'. On 7 April 1979, the Crew, personnel from the Bureau of Land Management, and volunteers from the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) relocated the South I-40 wildlife drinker 1,100 feet further from the freeway and built a fence around the drinker. Members and volunteers representing SCBS expended 93 man-days of labor and 5,226 vehicle miles while assisting the Crew with that project. Additionally, SCBS contributed \$300 to purchase the material needed to extend the pipeline.

From 1979 to 1988, the pipe-rail fence was modified and repainted several times, the drinker was replaced and, following damage from freeze-breaks, the drinker again was relocated. During that project, the pipeline was shortened by 500 feet to lessen the potential for soil erosion to expose the pipe and to prevent damage by vehicles. During this time, and especially following construction of the fence, there was a substantial decline in the population of feral asses occupying the Marble Mountains. Simultaneously, an upward trend in the number of bighorn sheep pellet groups on permanent transects that had been established by the Crew in 1978 indicated an increase in use of habitat near the South I-40 Big Game Guzzler. In February 1980, and out of concern that water collected in the in the storage tank might contain unhealthy levels of toxic elements from freeway runoff, Crew members collected and submitted samples for laboratory analysis; results indicated that there were no water quality issues with which to be concerned.

The upward trend in use of habitat near the South I-40 BGG, combined with an observation of a young male bighorn sheep about 1/4 mile southeast of the catchment, compelled the Crew to further evaluate potential locations for water developments. One such site had been identified in the south end of the Marble Mountains by Weaver et al. (1969), who had recommended construction of an artificial water catchment and drinker. In May 1981, and again in May 1982, the Crew conducted several aerial surveys during which the location identified by Weaver et al. (1969) was carefully evaluated. The Crew's ability to locate the specific location described by Weaver et al. (1969) was aided greatly by Glenn Sudmeier, a very active member of SCBS, who had visited the location on the ground and constructed a large rock cairn to aid in identifying the site. Following planning and coordination meetings with Bureau of Land Management personnel and SCBS, the project was scheduled for construction in January 1983. During aerial transport of material and equipment to the project location, the Crew observed a yearling male bighorn sheep; that sighting provided further support for the presence of a reproducing population in the Marble Mountains.

Development of the Marble Mountains South BGG took place in January 1983, and Charlie Fullerton, at the time Director of CDFG and who had a sincere interest in bighorn sheep conservation and in the habitat development program, participated in the construction project. While flying from the project site to meet Charlie at the intersection of Kelbaker Road and I-40, helicopter pilot Don Landells and I tallied at least 83 individual bighorn sheep! Don, Charlie, and I returned to the work location along a different flight path, and we tallied at least 17 additional individuals, bringing the total number of sheep seen during those two short flights to at least 100. These observations created intense interest in the population of bighorn

sheep occupying the Marble Mountains; following completion of the project, there was quite a celebration with the news that at least 100 bighorn sheep had been seen that day. SCBS members and the volunteers they had organized provided 171 man-days of labor, and travelled 12,948 vehicle-miles to assist with construction of the South Marble Mountains BGG.

In April 1983, the Crew observed 72 bighorn sheep during a short flight to explore the potential for additional habitat improvements, and surface water was noted at a site that eventually would be named VernAndyLes Spring. Following coordination and planning meetings with SCBS and BLM personnel, VernAndyLes Spring was placed on the Crew's development agenda and work was scheduled to occur during April 1984. Despite careful planning, however, that project would be delayed by an unforeseen event. Early in April 1984, and just prior to project implementation, the Crew transported the material and equipment needed to enhance VernAndyLes Spring to the Marble Mountains and deposited those items in a secure location. Those materials and construction equipment were to be picked up and delivered to the anticipated work site several days later when Don Landells was in transit to another location in the northern Mojave Desert. We were not able to provide Don with precise geographic coordinates (there was no GPS system at the time), but we did give him a detailed verbal description of the project site, and included the definitive statement, "You can't miss it; it will be the only surface water you will see". Just as planned, Don transported the equipment and machinery to the location he determined from our site description to be VernAndyLes Spring but, instead, delivered those materials to a site that later would be christened Teresa Spring. Despite several previous flights over the area, surface water at the Teresa Spring site had not been detected by the Crew; Don had seen the surface water at Teresa Spring while in transit to pick up the equipment, and had concluded it was the location of VernAndyLes Spring! As a result of this fortuitous and unanticipated event, Teresa Spring was developed in April of 1984, and SCBS members and volunteers contributed 225 man-days of assistance and 13,540 vehicle miles to that project. In October 1984, and again in March 1985, the Crew further evaluated the development potential at VernAndyLes Spring, and in April 1985 the Crew developed and fenced that site with the assistance of SCBS, during which members and volunteers contributed 138 man-days of labor and 8,596 vehicle miles to the project.

Later in April 1985 the Crew, assisted by highly skilled observers, recorded 150 bighorn sheep during an aerial survey of the entire Marble Mountains. During that flight, Glenn Sudmeier spotted a wet cliff-face that would become known as McLaren Seep. McLaren Seep is located on the northwestern slope of the range, not far from Teresa Spring or VernAndyLes Spring, and was

developed in February 1986 by crew members Andy Pauli and Vern Bleich, and Jim Bicket, the Bureau of Land Management wildlife biologist with whom we worked so closely. McLaren Seep is located on a rock face above a small basin that stores a tiny amount of water, and is named for a long-deceased miner who had established a claim at that location in the early 1900s.

During the same flight we also evaluated development potential at the Castle Mine Adit, the location of which was described in detail by Weaver et al. (1969), and is located on the southwestern slope of the Marble Mountains. Since 1985, the Castle Mine Adit has been cleaned out, maintained, and improved on a recurring basis. My notes do not indicate the dates on which the various work projects took place, but the Crew and personnel from SCBS worked on the Castle Mine Adit on many occasions to ensure the availability of surface water there. More recently, members of SCBS have conducted considerable work at that location, including the installation of an SCBS Raincatcher tank that stores water produced by the adit.

On 6 October 1986, Jim Bicket and Don Landells died in a helicopter crash while conducting an aerial survey at Clark Mountain, an incident in which Dick Weaver was severely injured. In recognition of Jim's many contributions to conservation and to honor his efforts on behalf of desert bighorn sheep, CDFG, BLM and SCBS worked together and developed Bicket Tank in the north end of the Marble Mountains. That project took place in April 1988, and agency personnel were joined by volunteers from the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, who contributed 250 man-days of labor and travelled 16,250 vehicle-miles to recognize and memorialize Jim's contributions to wildlife conservation.

Since construction of the South I-40 BGG in the early 1970s, which might best be described as 'mitigation' for impacts associated with construction of the interstate highway, there have been concentrated efforts to ensure the availability of surface water at six additional locations in the Marble Mountains. Two of these involved the enhancement of 'natural' sources (VernAndyLes Spring, Teresa Spring) that did not have surface water during the 1950s or 1960s when Dick Weaver spent so much time in the eastern Mojave Desert, either as an early member of the Crew or while overseeing and conducting the statewide survey of bighorn sheep in the very late 1960s. Two other locations (McLaren Seep and Castle Mine Adit) had been discovered and improved earlier in the century, but likely provided surface water on, at most, an ephemeral basis. Although the location of the Castle Mine Adit was known to CDFG personnel, Weaver et al. (1969) made no suggestion for further development, and McLaren Seep and the Castle Mine Adit were not developed for the benefit of bighorn sheep until much later. Two additional water sources (South Marble

Mountains BGG and Bicket Tank) have been developed to augment the four natural sources and the water available at the South I-40 BGG. In combination, these seven developments provide dependable surface water for bighorn sheep and other desert wildlife.

It is essential that there be a commitment to inspect and maintain these, and all water sources across the Mojave and Sonoran deserts upon which bighorn sheep are dependent, on a regular basis. Collectively, the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the California Wild Sheep Foundation continue to do all they can to be helpful, but the responsibility for inspections and maintenance ultimately belongs to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. I am hopeful, albeit not optimistic, that the long-promised management plan will acknowledge that necessity, and that CDFW administrators will ensure that obligation is met.

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- Dr. Vern Bleich was employed by the California Department of Fish and Game for 34 years. During that period, he directed the activities of, or had supervisory responsibility for, Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project W-26-D for more than 12 years.

“If someone who has never owned a gun or rod should ask me what I have gotten out of nearly fifty years of fishing and hunting, the very nature of the question would prompt me to say, “Nothing.” It would be practically impossible to explain to such a person what the practice of these sports in boyhood means to a man in later life. He never could even guess that sitting by a pond, waiting for a bite, or watching a woodchuck hole could lay the foundation for patience and perseverance; that a full creel or the legal limit of birds developed restraint, nor would he see that endless miles in pure air and bright sunshine meant health and strength for a better manhood.”

Austin D. Haight,
The Biography of a Sportsman, 1939

WSF CHAPTERS & AFFILIATES SUMMIT: OPTIMISM AND CONCERN

Reprint from Wild Sheep Foundation Magazine

The Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) recently concluded its 13th Chapter and Affiliates Summit in Lewistown, Idaho. The event was hosted by Idaho and Washington WSF, and Oregon FNAWS. On tap were discussions and scientific presentations on the present and future of wild sheep populations in North America. The result was a mix of celebration, optimism, concern, and action.

"Overall, our meeting was upbeat and positive," said Gray N. Thornton, president, and CEO of the Wild Sheep Foundation. "We have a lot to be thankful for, especially when our collective efforts are paying dividends with new herds and many populations healthy and stable, yet there is more that needs to be done. We have herds still struggling with disease transmitted from domestics sheep, and it's already shaping up to be a tough water year in our southern latitudes."

More than 70 delegates attended from throughout WSF's Chapter and Affiliate network, which encompasses North America, Africa, Europe, and Central Asia.

Thornton said, "It was great to see everyone again. Last year's Summit was canceled due to COVID. Only our brothers and sisters from Canada couldn't attend in person because of the border restrictions. They joined us via Zoom."

The number one problem negatively impacting wild sheep populations is disease (M.ovi) passed from domestic sheep to wild populations. Presentations included and update on the Hells Canyon initiative (est. 1995) to study, monitor, trap, test, and remove disease infected individuals from contaminating entire herds; new findings and strategies for disease mitigation; the impact on bighorn sheep from open-pit coal mining; a new WSF program titled Women Hunt™; and the challenges being brought to wild sheep populations from exploding, non-native Aoudad populations.

Attendees were treated to a grizzly bear experience and tour of the new Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory (WADDL) at Washington State University and a jet boat trip up the Snake River to view what has become the shining star of modern-day wild sheep conservation, the bighorn herds of Hells Canyon in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.



Photos: Hells Canyon ram, ewes and lambs from WSF C&A jet boat tour



"The last time we took this trip, if we saw a bighorn spring lamb, it was coughing and sneezing, a sure sign its days were numbered," Thornton explained. "This trip, we were ecstatic to hear of an 80% lamb survival."

The high lamb recruitment is the result of the Hells Canyon Initiative led by Frances Cassirer, Research Biologist with IDF&G and Scott Peckham of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the removal of all domestic sheep from the canyon, and the “test & remove” protocol of removing M.ov1 positive wild sheep.

The area of most concern was the current extreme drought situation in southern Nevada and elsewhere in the southern Rockies.

Thornton said, “The entire state of Nevada is a conservation success story with their bold approach to putting and keeping wild sheep on the mountain. But, unfortunately, water developments installed for sheep and other wildlife collect water only when it rains. Over the last year, precipitation has been scarce to nothing, so we’re taking action.”

Eighty thousand dollars was raised between the WSF Chapters and Affiliates to fly water via helicopter into dry water entrapment stations throughout southern



PHOTOS FROM THE “RASOR” BIG GAME WATER TANK PROJECT



GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

by Don Priest

2021 California Wild Fire Season

With the numerous and extensive wildfires this summer, wildlife is being greatly impacted. Though this isn't directly affecting most of our states Desert Bighorn Sheep, other big game animals and critters are being pressured.

Some mitigating measures being taken by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) include the closure of eight of their properties next to or near the ten National Forests that have been closed by the US Department of Agriculture due to active wildfires and/or extreme fire conditions. And with archery season already open in many Hunt Zones, hunters are also being impacted.

CDFW is actively looking at proposing some measures to assist hunters with tags in these and other 2021 wildfire impacted areas at the upcoming California Fish and Game Commission's (Commission) Wildlife Resource Committee (WRC) meeting on September 16th. Many of these proposals will most likely be similar to the 2020 regulation package regards last year's wildfires. This may include a refund of hunting tags for elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, and some select deer zones in those areas affected by wildfire and/or land closures. Unfortunately, in the 2020 package, resident deer tags were non-refundable. However, non-resident deer tags were partially refundable.

In addition, in 2020 an impacted hunter had restored their premium elk, pronghorn antelope or bighorn sheep tag preference points that were used in attaining their 2020 tag, and were also given a preference point for that 2020 hunt year species tag.

The process will not end with September's WRC meeting. The Commission will "notice" the CDFW proposal to authorize the refunding of tags and restoration of preference points for elk, pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep and deer zones where opportunity was heavily impacted by fire-related closures on their mid-October meeting agenda. Additional public comment and discussion of this regulation change proposal will be scheduled for their December Commission meeting. Then lastly, adoption of any final proposals will occur at the Commission's February 2022 meeting. This is certainly a long process, but that is how CDFW regulation additions and changes are made.

Given the recurring nature of the wildfire problem within the state, CDFW will also be discussing a more permanent solution at this WRC meeting for future years. Any proposal, if adopted by the Commission



as a regulation, may also allow CDFW at their determination to refund hunt tags fees within future wildfire impacted areas and provide for preference point reinstatements. We are hoping that this regulatory package will follow the same timeframe as the 2021 wildfire regulatory package discussed above. The good news is that should an adoption of a permanent regulatory solution be made, some form of future hunt year tag refunds and preference point adjustments can be expedited by the CDFW due to wildfires without returning to the Commission for regulatory approval.

This look at mitigating future hunting opportunity, tag fees and preference points impacted by wildfires is currently very fluid. If you should have a desire to comment on how best to organize these potential regulations now is the time by contacting the CDFW or CA WSF with your comments. We at CA WSF will be keeping a close watch on and participating in these developments, doing our part to make sure that the best and most reasoned regulatory outcomes are reached for wildlife conservation and hunting interests.

Given that all of this is over wildfires, let us hope any regulatory changes are rarely utilized; regrettably, this most likely will be a more permanent part of CDFW's wildlife conservation work.

For additional and updated information or to reach out to CDFW with comments, please go to the CDFW website at wildlife.ca.gov.

2021 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION IN FULL SWING

CA WSF — WORKING THE HALLS

THE GOOD AND THE BAD

*by Bill Gaines
Gaines and Associates*

Each year, the dog days of August not only bring us the worst of summer heat, but also the nastiest of legislative activity. Following a one-month summer recess, Legislators returned to the State Capitol on August 16th recharged and ready for the frantic four-week push to the close of the 2021 Session on September 10th. While several bills of concern to the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) have been tabled until the 2022 Session, some bills of interest are still in play.

Arguably the bill currently of greatest concern to CA WSF is AB 1223 – the “Gun Violence Prevention, Healing, and Recovery Act”. Authored by Assembly Member Marc Levine (D/10-San Rafael), AB 1223 would impose an additional excise tax in the amount of 11% on the price of long guns, and all firearm parts and ammunition and 10% on the price of handguns, and earmark the revenues to fund gun violence education, research, and prevention programs.

Pursuant to long-standing Pittman-Robertson Act (PR), law-abiding hunters and shooters already pay an 11% excise tax on long guns, ammunition, archery, and other hunting equipment and a 10% excise tax on handguns. However, those federal dollars are earmarked for uses that hunters and shooters value – including wildlife habitat projects, hunter safety classes and shooting/target ranges. AB 1223 would double the excise tax currently assessed on the sales of firearms and ammunition – not only serving to notably increase their cost, but also decrease their sales and the federal PR funding annually made available to California for wild sheep conservation projects and other positive wildlife and hunting related programs. Further, AB 1223 would unacceptably target only the law-abiding hunting and shooting community to fund programs which address problems associated with illegal criminal gun violence.

Regardless of the intense effort CA WSF and our conservation partners have put forth to kill the bill, AB 1223 swiftly passed through three Assembly committees and to the Assembly Floor via party-line votes by mid-May. But we knew our best chance to kill the measure was yet to come. Although only a simple



majority vote was necessary for AB 1223 to pass out of committee, because it proposed a higher tax, AB 1223 would require a 2/3rds vote to pass off the Floor.

With CA WSF and our partners in conservation in overdrive working every possible Assembly office on the measure, AB 1223 became eligible for an Assembly Floor vote on May 28th. But with the legislative deadline for bills to pass out of their “house of origin” being Friday, June 4th, AB 1223 could not linger for long. With no Floor Session slated for June 4th, AB 1223 was brought up for a Floor vote on June 3rd – the bill’s last opportunity to beat deadline – but fell eight votes short of the 54 votes needed to reach the 2/3rds vote necessary to pass. Was it time to celebrate? Not yet.

When AB 1223 failed, the author immediately requested, and was granted, reconsideration – a motion that would allow the measure to be heard again on the Assembly Floor. Just moments later we also got word that the author would appeal to Assembly Rules for consent to amend the bill to add an “urgency clause” – a shrewd move which would not only relieve AB 1223 from meeting the following day’s deadline, but also allow the bill to linger on the Floor all the way up to the “house of origin” deadline in January 2022. Further, “urgency” would also allow AB 1223 to take effect immediately, should the bill be signed into law. On June 10th, with the author’s request granted, the bill was amended to add the urgency clause.

One may think that if we killed the bill once, it should be easy to kill it a second time, right? Wrong. When AB 1223 fell eight votes short of the 54 votes necessary to pass off the Floor in June it was not because an overwhelming majority of Assembly Members voted “no” on the bill, but rather because several did not vote on the bill at all. In fact, a few of the Assembly Members that did not vote, initially voted “aye” on the bill, but pulled their “aye” vote once it appeared the bill would fall short of the necessary 2/3rds majority. With the bill’s author and its proponents granted ample time to sway the few votes necessary to pass the bill, CA WSF has continued to work 24/7 to ensure that those who Members who previously voted against the bill or who did not vote hold solid.

As of late August, AB 1223 has yet to be brought up for another vote on the Assembly Floor – a clear indicator that the author has yet to sway those few critical votes. But with a few weeks left in the 2021 Legislative Session, and the bill granted the luxury of being brought up for vote on the Floor early next Session, CA WSF and our partners cannot, and will not rest in our effort to kill this unacceptable legislation.

A positive bill of great interest to CA WSF is AB 804 – legislation by Assemblywoman Megan Dahle (R/1-Redding) intended to take a big step towards addressing California’s long-term decline in hunting license sales. The ongoing drop in the annual sale of hunting licenses in our state has not only cut deeply into the size and breadth of our hunting community, but also resulted in a notable reduction in annual revenues generated from the sales of licenses, stamps, tags, and the federal PR dollars available to DFW to carry out its wildlife research, management, enforcement, and outdoor recreation mandates. Sponsored by the

wildlife conservation community, AB 804 would help reverse this chronic decline in license sales by requiring the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife to, by July 1, 2023, designate two days each year as “free hunting days” when an unlicensed hunter who has completed the Hunter Safety Course, but not purchased their hunting license, may hunt if mentored by a licensed hunter over 21 years of age.

To ensure safety in the field, AB 804 would require that mentors only accompany one unlicensed hunter at a time and require the unlicensed hunter and mentor to remain within close visual and verbal contact of each other so the mentor can provide adequate direction and immediately assume control of the unlicensed hunter’s firearm, if necessary. As recently amended, the bill would limit those participating in the free hunting day to taking only resident and migratory game birds, resident small game mammals, fur bearing mammals, nongame mammals, and – if 12 years of age or older – wild pigs with a wild pig tag. Further, AB 804 would prohibit participating unlicensed hunters from applying for any draw or lottery to obtain any tag, reservation, or other hunting opportunity.

AB 804 easily passed through the Assembly, off the Assembly Floor and over to the Senate before the end of April. Once on the Senate side, AB 804 maintained its momentum – passing out of Senate policy committee on consent in late June and passing out of the Senate fiscal committee and to the Senate Floor on a unanimous vote in late August.

AB 804 has until the final gavel drops on the 2021 Legislative Session late on September 10th to be heard and passed off the Senate Floor and to the Governor’s desk for his consideration.



“Hunting is one of the last ways we have to exercise our passion to belong to the earth, to be part of the natural world, to participate in the ecological drama, and to nurture the ember of wildness within ourselves.”

Jim Posewitz

“SD TANK” REPAIRS AND WATER HAUL, SHEEPHOLE MOUNTAINS

by Scott Gibson, SCBS

The SD Tank is a 10,000-gallon underground storage tank with an approximate 1,000-gallon “walk-in” drinker located in the Sheephole Mountains, approximately 30-miles east of Twentynine Palms. The SD tank was constructed in December 2008 after the California Department of Fish & Wildlife spent nearly 7-years trying to obtain an Environmental Assessment (EA) or “permit” from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS) currently inspects and maintains four water developments in the Sheephole Mountains. We haven’t had enough rain in the last couple of years, thus none of the catchments have collected sufficient water.

On April 1, 2021, SCBS visited the SD Tank after hauling water to the Bearclaws temporary tank, also located in the Sheephole Mountains. Participating that day were Andrew Pontius, David Davidson, John Burnham and Monte Hammer. They discovered the tank and drinker to be empty. There also appeared to be some vandalism, as the redwood cover to the tank was missing and several 4” bungs on the top of the tank were busted out.

After sharing the photos from Andrew and discussion with Rob Yates of Desert Wildlife Unlimited, a plan was formed to repair and haul water and fill the SD Tank. June 26th was to be the date.

Early on Saturday morning, June 26th, we met up at the 29-Palms Water District potable water dispenser off of Utah Trail. DWU and SCBS volunteers began showing up at 6:30 as scheduled. We had a plan to fill 12,000-gallons of truck mounted tanks and water trailers. We began filling promptly at 06:30 AM and the last water truck wasn’t full until 08:30. The first (6) vehicles convoyed to the SD tank at 07:45 with the rest of us following about 8:30.

Aerial drone photo of Desert Wildlife Unlimited and SCBS filling with Water at 29-Palms Water District. Photo courtesy of Monte Hammer.

We all met up at a staging area about 1-mile from the SD Tank. The sand was deep and several loaded trucks and trailers got stuck on the way in to the staging area. New volunteers, Mike and Terry Nolan, helped the DWU and SCBS crew get people unstuck.

At the staging area, 4x4 trucks carrying 275-gallon water totes were filled. There was only room for (4) trucks at a time to discharge at the SD Tank. The 4x4 trail was also too narrow for trucks to pass each other



Preliminary visit showing vandalism and an empty tank.
Photos above courtesy Andrew Pontious



Aerial drone photo of Desert Wildlife Unlimited and SCBS filling with Water at 29-Palms Water District. Photo courtesy of Monte Hammer.



Staging area where we filled 4x4 trucks with totes for the rugged 1-mile trail up to the SD Tank.

coming or going from the wildlife drinker. Our crew had make many trips up and down the hill.

All told, volunteers from Desert Wildlife Unlimited and SCBS hauled over 11,000-gallons of water to the SD Tank and drinker. The DWU crew all came out of the Imperial and Coachella Valleys, so they all had over a 3-1/2 hour drive just to get to Twentynine Palms and then another hour to get to the staging area for the water delivery.

Participants:

Rob Yates	Jeremiah Yates (age 13)
Jess Johnson	Gretchen Johnson
Connor Johnson (age 9)	Haylee Johnson (age 15)
Mitch Edgmon	Steve Williams
Eddie Cordero	Christopher Ahlrich
Nikki Ahlrich	Audrey Ahlrich (age 6)
Ronnie Gibson	Von Mederas
Carlton King	Jarod Brady
Ken Stills	Mike Meyer
Ben Abatti, III	Bob Presley
Jerry Preece	Mike Higgins
Terrence Peeks	Monte Hammer SCBS
Scott Gibson	



We ran two water pumps to speed up unloading of the water delivery trucks.



Days end and a full tank



Photos this page by S Gibson

WATER DEVELOPMENT IN THE MOJAVE DESERT

*by Debra Miller Marschke
Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep*

The current state of California's drought has significantly impacted the Southern California desert regions. Historically, the winter season had provided some seasonal precipitation to fill our Big Game Guzzlers (BGG), provisionally filling them for the hot summer months. Last winter, rainfall was negligible to non-existent. Volunteers with the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep watched with alarm as the wildlife began coming in to use the guzzlers in January. Under normal circumstances, the natural rainfall and small pockets of trapped water (called tinajas) provided enough water afield to keep the animals disbursed and foraging until the weather began to warm up. Not this year. It has created the necessity for an emergency response to prevent a disastrous situation.

A good example to illustrate the scope of this issue has been the water hauling schedule maintained by SCBS volunteers to the Newberry BGG located in the Newberry Rodman Mountains near Barstow California. This guzzler is currently targeted for a complete rebuild; we are working with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) office in Barstow and waiting on the BLM staff to complete the fieldwork as part of the permit. Staffing has been at issue with the BLM office with the Covid 19 stay at home orders. In the meantime, a hearty crew of SCBS volunteers assembles every 3-6 weeks and hauls water to the water system with trucks. That crew would have expected to take a break in the schedule over the holidays, but not this season. They have been hauling water without a break in the schedule; essentially the fall water hauling season never ended for these folks and they have steadfastly maintained that guzzler as a dependable water source to the present day. They perform the service selflessly without fanfare or expectation for recognition. This type of solution is not sustainable, we need the BLM's permission to rebuild the Newberry BGG as soon as possible. We have our eyes fixed on the fall of 2021.

The SCBS volunteers have been operating on overdrive since January, hauling water to the Big Game Guzzlers that Mother Nature ignored over the winter. On January 14, a total of 5,000 gallons was delivered to the Cady Too system when it was discovered that only a few inches remained available in the three drinker boxes. On March 12 and 13, volunteers endeavored to accomplish the unprecedented task of filling the Nancy Andrew Guzzler (Bullion Mountains) with 4600 gallons by staging a water ladder. A bladder was staged at the base of the mountain and connected



Nancy Andrew BGG primary bladder; photo by D Miller Marschke



Laying hose at Nancy Andrew BGG ; photo by D Miller Marschke

to a second bladder halfway up the mountain. High pressure pumps were used to push the water over 3000 feet and over a 300-foot elevation gain. Two "first times": first time to fill this guzzler with a ground crew and first time we've used numerous bladders in a line. On April 10, water was hauled to the Big Gee's guzzler (Cady Mountains), filling it to capacity. On May 15 and May 16, volunteer crews worked in cooperation with the National Park Service to refill the Big Game Guzzlers within the Mojave National Preserve. The Kerr guzzler received 2300 gallons and the Kelso guzzler received 2000

gallons. On May 21 and 22, SCBS used the knowledge gained during the earlier project at Nancy Andrew to add water to the Little Fargo drinker (near Joshua Tree). This is another guzzler that has never been filled by a ground crew. A single bladder was used, connected with hoses, and water pushed through with a high-pressure pump to deliver approximately 5,000 gallons. This included spanning a 50-foot dryfall. On June 26, SCBS partnered with Desert Wildlife Unlimited to deliver 10,000 gallons to the “SD Tank” located in the Sheephole Mountains. Please note that the aforementioned projects represent some of our larger organized efforts. Smaller groups have been using 250-gallon totes in their personal vehicles to constantly add water to the dwindling sources as temperatures have climbed. It has taken aggressive measures to counter the drought, and the aforementioned summary of this year’s efforts is a condensed version of our efforts. Please consider becoming an annual member of SCBS and subscribing to our newsletter to learn more about the worthwhile work our volunteers do to “keep sheep on the mountain”.

An unprecedented event occurred from June 24-27, 2021. The biologists for the California Fish and Wildlife Department sounded the alarm that the water developments within the Bighorn sheep ranges in the Clipper and Marble Mountains had reached a critical level. Most of the guzzlers were dry and many of those identified sources can’t be replenished with a ground crew. However, the DFW currently did not have a current helicopter contract with a vendor. The grave nature of the impending disaster went up the chain of command to Governor Gavin Newsom’s office. The Governor approved an emergency provision, releasing and funding the helicopters with CAL Fire for use in an emergency water haul mission. By and through the cooperation of DFW and SCBS, we are happy to report a successful mission. As a team, the crews were able to fill up four guzzlers at Clipper BGG, Marvin Wood BGG, Burnt Spring BGG, and Teresa Spring BGG over the course of a four-day weekend. The heat was blistering at 109 degrees, which created difficult working conditions for the volunteers and staff. The ground crews facilitated the airlifting a total of 20,000 gallons via “Bambi Buckets” on a short line. Bladders were staged on the ground and the helicopters lifted buckets from the bladders to the water systems. This method is very inefficient; there is significant loss of water from the bucket during transport. The crews were successful in adding a total of 12,000 gallons to the targeted water systems. Ideally, it was the desire of CA DFW to move the operation over to the Sheephole Mountains, but the CAL Fire helicopters could not safely maneuver these narrow canyons without specialized equipment and additional time.

SCBS has been working on a long-term project since 2015 which will create more opportunities to

install alternative sources of water in the desert. We are seeking to lease up to 90 parcels of land from the California State Lands Commission. Once the approval process of these leases has been achieved, SCBS will set forth with plans to create more BGG guzzlers in the areas with the most critical need. It is our goal not to replace the current BGG systems, but to supplement them with alternative options that are more effective collectors and require less maintenance. We are getting fairly close to achieving this goal; we are waiting for CA DFW to complete their Management Plan document so that the application to State Lands can be finalized (the Permit is part of the application). Once SCBS achieves this goal, we will be coordinating with CA Wild Sheep Foundation’s “Give a Lamb a Drink” to make this dream a reality by constructing new developments. Thank you, CA Wild Sheep Foundation, for your continued support while we navigate this new frontier.



Hiking to Kerr BGG ; photo by S Gibson



Filling SD BGG ; photo by S Gibson

MORE PHOTOS FROM 2021 WATER HAULING



Filling SD Guzzler; photo by S Gibson



Nancy Andrew evening campfire; photo by D Haxhurst



Filling Big Gees; photo by D Miller Marschke



Filling Kelso BGG; photo by S Gibson



BHS at Little Fargo; photo by M Hammer



Filling Kerr BGG; photo by S Gibson



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