SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1974

STATE STOCKS BIGHORN RAM IN THE LAVA BEDS --WITH THE HELP OF SOME FRIENDS

The November - December issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried an article concerning the killing of the two adult bighorn rams in the small herd which had been introduced into the Lava Beds National Monument in 1970. This was followed shortly afterward with a letter carrying an appeal for funds to pay the cost of obtaining another ram or preferably two in order to assure that there will be alamb crop in the spring of 1974. At that time it was expected that the best source of a replacement ram would be from the same herd as the others had been obtained from, that is from a herd along the Fraser River near Williams Lake in British Columbia. The editor received a letter very shortly from Dr. Ian McTaggart Cowan, Dean of Graduate Studies, The University of British Columbia suggesting that perhaps the Fish and Game Department of the State of Washington should be contacted and perhaps a ram obtained from their herd in the Okanagan Valley in the Sinlaheyhin Refuge. However in the interval between the known loss of the rams and the first of December, Dick Weaver, California Department of Fish and Game made arrangements to get two rams from the State of Nevada's Sheldon-Hart National Antelope Range in the northwestern part of Nevada and about 135 miles to the east of the Lava Beds. This became a joint effort of the California and Nevada Departments of Fish and GAme and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A 2½ year old - 150 pound ram was captured and transferred to the Lava beds by truck. The picture at the right furnished by Jim Blaisdell of the National Park Service shows the truck used , at the release site. The Fish and Wildlife Service operate the refuge at Sheldon-Hart. Biologists expect the seven adult ewes in the flock to lamb next year, possibly later than usual because of the late arrival of the replacement ram. Unless of course there had been some unobserved rutting activity occuring prior to October 20th. which is unlikely . Also during the capture and transfer operations, a ram died after being immobilized this although procedures at the site were directed by a veterinarian experienced in wild animal restraint. The editor has heard that the ram which was lost had seccumed to the tranquilizer drug in a very deepand steep walled canyon and could not be reached soon enough to administer the usual antidote given after tranquilizing the animal...A fund has been established by the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep to meet costs of the DFG in the capture and transporting of the ram. The amounts contributed to date are not knwon to the editor. However it is known that the Fresno Audubon Society and two members of the Fresno County Sportsmen's Club have made worthwhile donations.

The Society and two others-- the Southern Council of Conservation Clubs and the Safari Club of Los Angeles have joined forces to post a reward which by December 9th had reached $3,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the poacher(s). Anyone with information should contact SECRET WITNESS , P.O. Box 865, Tulelake, Cal. 96034. They can use any random 4 digit number which can be used later to claim the reward. SECRET WITNESS was established at the request of the Lava Beds personnel and the Mt. Shasta Audubon Society of Yreka, Califronia.

A recently received report from Jim Blaisdell, our friend of the Klamath Falls Group of the National Park Service under date of report December 3, 1973, which gives the following information:"Progress, at least in population increase, has been good during the past year. Several unhappy incidents have saddened us all, however, and may set the program back nest year. Results of the loss of our two adult rams will not be known until spring." .... Last yaar's report stated, "The bighorns stayed in one group all through the rutting season and nearly to the end of April..." This was not true this year, when the herd was seldom observed in one group. Even after the lambs arrived in May, there were usually several ewes and lambs that did not congregate with the others. During the latter part of the study year, some of this was undoubtedly caused by the absence of the adult rams.....All lambs were born in May, as in 1972, 2 on May 5 and one each on the 6th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 17th and 18th. Losses to this flock have been previously reported--a ewe in mid-July, a lamb in early September--lastly the 2 rams in October-November. Pathological examination of the first killed ram showed no diseases or parasites. Study of the carcass of the second ram was very difficult, it was badly decayed. No broken bones or bullet fragments were found. This is not unexpected.....At the present time the population in the 1100 acre pen is seven ewes, 1 yearling ram, seven lambs and the 1 adult ram. Water was available in two of the three guzzlers during the past summer. The third guzzler was not completed until near the end of summer.....Deer use in the pen varies from three to thirty. The population is not building up, but fluctu ates as they enter and leave the area by jumping the fence. ($7\frac{1}{2}$ feet high--woven wire with two strands of barbed wire at the top.) Competition between the deer and sheep is not considered to be severe, and there is no need to do anything about it at least for the present. The major concern about the deer is that there is always the possibility that the deer may bring something infectious into the pen, such as bluetongue. Bluetongue has had disatrous effect on the wild sheep. However there has been no known incidence of bluetongue in the deer of the locallity.....Cougars have been reported in the area...but no evidence of attempts of predation have been observed. More signs of closure have been installed. However, no number of signs would prevent the act of poaching such as that of last October.

Outlook: If the ram which was obtained from the Sheldon-Hart area was obtained in time for a second Oestrus cycle (if such occurs) we should b e increasing the herd again next spring. If on the other hand, if the ewes did not breed early, or if the ram obtained was too late, or if there was no second oestrus cycle, or if for some reason this new ram did not do his homework, then we may have to be satisfied with a stable population for the next year and a half. Let's h ope this is not the case.

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The Cady Mountains have recorded no rain since the project there was completed during the last of March 1972. The Department of Fish and Game are still trucking water to the tank. The water is being used by sheep and other wildlife of the area

CALIFORNIA BIGHORN SHEEP REINTRODUCTION TO THE CHARLES SHELDON ANTELOPE RANGE.

A paper was presented to the Wildlife Society-Western Section at their meeting at Cal-Neva Lodge, February 2, 1973 by Jack L Richardson of the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife con cerning the reintroduction of California Bighorn Sheep.

The California Bighorn (Ovis Canadensis californiana) once ranged from the Chilco and Williams Lakes area of British Columbia southward through most of eastern Washington and Oregon, southwestern Idaho, northwestern Nevada and along the Sierra Nevada of California as far south as Inyo County-(west of Lone Pine.) By the early part of the 20th century, these sheep had disappeared from most of their native range. A few remained in isolated areas of California's Sierra Nevada. Much of the British Columbia range remained occupied but in reduced numbers. A few sheep may have continued to spend summers in the extreme north Washington Cascades, crossing back into British Columbia to winter.

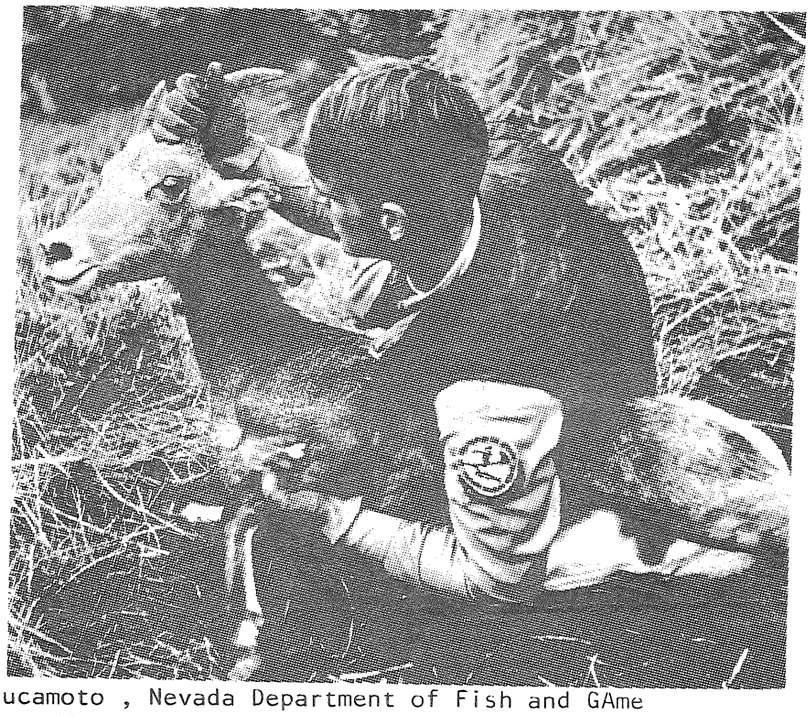
Attempts to reintroduce the California bighorn to its native ranges began in the early 1950's. To date, Transplants have been made in all states where the sheep were native and in North Dakota. The North Dakota introduction is on range once occupied by the extinct Badlands bighorn (Ovis Canadensis auduboni).

Probably the most successful reintroduction thus far was made on the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge during 1954. The 20 California bighorns brought from British Columbia by the Oregon State Game Commission have done well and the Hart Mountain herd has provided 21 rams to hunters (through 1971) and furnished animals for three additional transplants in Oregon and one in Nevada. (The Oregon transplant has been reported previously in THE SHEEPHERDER)

Plans to reestablish bighorn sheep on the Charles Sheldon Antelope Range in northern Washoe and Humbolt Counties, Nevada, date back to the year 1950. At that time, consideration was given to the introduction of desert bighorns to the area. The reason for wanting tointroduce a non-native subspecies is not clear but was probably related to animal availability for transplanting.

A formal plan for the reintroduction of the California bighorn to Sheldon was prepared by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife in 1963. Concurrence in the plan was received from the Bureau of Land Management, joint administrators of the Range, in 1964 and a cooperative agreement with the Oregon Game Commission and the Nevada Fish and Game Commission was entered in to in 1966.

The site selected for the reintroduction is near the center of the Range on the breaks of Hell Creek. A Woven wire fence, six feet high, was constructed in 1966 and 1967 enclosing approxiametely 1,700 acres.



The picture above taken by George Tsucamoto , Nevada Department of Fish and GAme shows the capture of one of the ewes on Hart Mountain.

The Charles Sheldon Antelope Range lies at an elevation between 5,600' and 6,000'. The annual percipitation is between 10" and 11" . There are some 21 species of shrubs, grasses and forbs in the area of which the big sage and low sage are the predominant types. Two small meadows are found along the upper part of Hell Creek which flows all year through the enclosure. The area has extensive rimrock and talus slopes which form the walls of Hell Creek Canyon. (As noted previously this difficult type of terrain led to the losss of one of the rams being caught for the Lava Beds introduction.)

The first attempts to trap sheep for the reintroduction began in mid 1967. Personnel could not be mustered for the trapping operations, however, and the actual transplant was delayed until 1968.

On July 20, 1968, about 60 men from the Oregon State Game Commission, Order of the Antelope, and Bureau of Sprot Fisheries and Wildlife, staged a drive of the bighorn enclosure at Juniper Canyon on the Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge. Four California bighorns were captured. These animals were held in a small pasture at Hart Mt. for two days. They were then trapped andloaded for their trip to Sheldon. They were released at the Hell Creek enclosure the evening of July 20th. The first to head for "the high country" was a mature ewe followed by her lamb, a ram, a mature six year old ram and a two year old ram.

On August 14, 1968, another drive was made on Hart Mountain and four additional bighorns were captured. This capture was two mature ewes and two ewe lambs. This made a total of eight sheep from Hart Mt. released into the Hell Creek enclosure.

Only one mortallity has been known to have occurred. This was a mature ewe found in November of 1971. Reproduction has been good, ranging from 71 to 100% annually for ewes of three years of age or older. This little band of sheep had grown to 22 animals by the fall of 1972. This then is the background of the ram recently acquired for the Lava Beds Natioanl Monument . Therefore all of the sheep of this Lava Beds reintroduction have come historically from the same area in British Columbia.

Dr. Lutz Re-appointed.

Governor Ronald Reagan has recently re-appointed Doctor Loren L. Lutz as the Chairman of the California Parks and Recreation Commission.
This department"acquires, develops, and operates units of the State Park System for the people ofCalifornia....Preserves and administers State Recreation areas, parks, historic parks, historical monuments, beaches and reserves...Provides camping, picknicking, boating, riding and hiking trails, naturalist services, and administers concessions within the units.....Establishes rules and regulations governing activities at the more than 200 units of the State Park System, provides statewide coordination of recreation programs, reports annually to the Governor on statewide outdoor recreation needs and recommends state recreation policy."
It becomes difficult to see how Doctor Lutz can ever find the necessary time to pratice his Dentistry....It would seem that Dentistry has become a hobby rather than an occupation.

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'74 State Beach, Park, Recreational and HistoricalFacilities Bond Act of 1974.

The Z'ber-Collier Bond Act, to go before the voters June 4, 1974, provides $25 Million

for State and local park acquisition and development in California, and for State fish and wildlife conservation projects. Your editor has been assured that land purchase projects for the protection of wildlife such as the bighorn sheep would qualify under terms of the act.

However, a series of public hearings will be held during the coming year prior to the June 4, 1974 election date. It is advised that everyone interested in this subject attend one or more of these hearings in order to dertermine your position concerning this issue. The Act provides that the $250 million will be divided as follows:

Local Government---counties and cities for the acquisition and development of parks, recreation areas, beaches, or historical units(allocated on a population basis), but no county to receive less than $200,000.....$90 Million

State Government for State Park System Acquisition....general $75 Million

acquisition of inholdings ..... $15 MILLION

State Park System Development.-.....General ..... $45 Million

Historical .....$15 Million

Wildlife Conservation Board, to acquire or develope property for fish and wildlife conservation.....-..... $10 Million

DATES TO REMEMBER

February 2nd and 3rd Work scheduled for the Dry Mountain in Inyo County has been CANCELLED THERE IS TOO MUCH SNOW TO GET INTO THE AREA.

SOME MORE DATES TO REMEMBER

February 9 - 10 - 11---perhaps you have a long weekend--A GOOD TIME TO GET OUT IN THE DESERT AND LOOK FOR SOME OF THOSE HISTORIC WATERS -- THAT YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND SO FAR.

February 14 ---St. Valentine's Day -- remember your SWEETIE,

February 23 and 24, 1974 a work project weekend -,s scheduled in the San Bernardino County.

March 9th -----Annual Banquet - meeting at Vagabond - Hill House-Bakersfield

April 9- 10 -11, Desert Bighorn Council--Moab, Utah.

April 7 thru 14 many will have an Easter week vacation--make it a happening--go out in the desert and do some work , clean-out some waterholes, etc.,

May 18 and 19, 1974 Work project scheduled in San Bernardino County.

PLEASE NOTE: Doctor Lutz is requesting a pre-committment on each of the work projects of Feb. 23-24 and May 18 and 19th. LET HIM KNOW WELL IN ADVANCE IF YOU PLAN TO PARTICIPATE. Dr. Lutz will in turn send you a map and directions of where to go and how to get there. The editor can give no additional information as he does not know the locations of these projects.

SHEEP CAMP SPRING PROJECT

The Sheep Camp Spring is on the western slope of the Old Woman Mountains toward the southern end and to the north from the abandoned Black Metal Mine. This spring has been found dry during the month of February and so can not be considered a reliable source of water.

December 1, 1973, thirty-five men gathered at the road's end and then hiked the three miles in to the project site. Here they constructed a 4½ to 5' high dam and laid 150 feet of two inch pipe from the dam to site of the two ste el tanks which were flown in to the project the following week. John Massie Habitat Supervisor for the Department of Fish and Game had the concrete mixer, pipe, tools,cement and other required supplies flown in to the project site prior to the work day. The engine on the mixer refused to cooperate when the men were ready to go to work. However, one of the men present knew enough about such engines to correct the difficulty . The dam across the ten foot span of the ravine was completed during the day: The work party consisted of men from the Society and men from the Long Beach Sportsmen's Club. The upstream side of the dam is a good size expanse of hard shelving rock and so will channel all rain water to the catchment dam. Doctor Loren Lutz was present when the tanks were installed. The Department is now getting their tanks from another source. The tanks given to the Society in November of 1971 have given considerable trouble with leakage. They are also too lightly constructed to withstand being dropped even three to four feet when ferried in by helicopter. The project is now ready for the rains

The Red Rocks Caves project was checked the first week in July 1973. At that time the tanks still contained several hundred gallons of water and the sheep had found the drinker and were using the water. To me, your editor,it is very interesting but hard to explain why the sheep seem to prefer to drink from a spring or drinker from the uphill side.

Trampling removes vegetative cover and permits accelerated erosian during the infrequent but often severe storms, and/or high winds. Soil compaction prevents or retards plant growth and forage production. Burro trails on steep hillsides are numerous and cause accelerated erosian.

Burros tend to congregate around waterholes. They generally do not travel more than 5 or 6 miles from water unless food is scarce. Burros usurp available water at the expense of native wildlife. Most of the springs do not supply enough water for both the burros and the native wildlife. Trampling around springs plugs flow arteries; reduces cover for birds and small animals; and increases water turbidity and siltation.

Beginning in 1939 there has been a token control of burro numbers. Each year a good many burro have been trapped and given to people having permits. This has however not been enough to take care of the natural increase.

(This then is the problem---Now what to do about the problem?)

Management consideration as a basis for planning and management action is the National Park Service Resource Management Policy for natural areas: "Management will minimize, give direction to, or control those changes in the native environment and scenic landscape resulting from human influences on natural processes of ecological succession. Missing life forms may be reestablished where practicable. Native environmental complexes will be restored, protected, and maintained, where practicable, at levels determined through historical and ecological research of plant-animal relationships. Non-native species may not be introduced into natural areas. Where they have become established or threaten invasion of a natural area, an appropriate management plan should be developed to control them, where feasible."
EDITORS NOTE: The last sentence is the crux of the very sticky problem. Under the terms of the Wild Horse and Burro Act, this is a very difficult situation, and a solution has not yet been found. In the Act however it does state that the land holding agencies of the Federal Government can be authorized to manage and to control the wild horses and burros. However, before this can be done it is necessary that the Agency write a management plan and an environmental impact state ment. This is now being done by Death Valley National Monument. When completed these will be presented to the Wild Horse and Burro Advisory Committee for their consideration. A report concerning this committee appeared in a previous issue of THE SHEEPHERDER.

HIDDEN PALMS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

The Hidden Palms Ecological Reserve is located six miles south of Palm Desert in the Santa Rosa Mts. of Riverside County. This 63 acre reserve was purchased by the Wildlife Conservation Board with funds derived through the sale of personalized license plates. This fund has generated a 1973-1974 budget in the Environmental Protection Fund of $539,000.00 Since mid-1972 six parcels of land have been purchased and negotiations continue on 14 other parcels. The Hidden Palms Ecological Reserve is basically to protect the endangered desert slender salamander. The area obtained is also a crossing for the rare peninsular bighorn sheep (Ovis canadensis cremnobates) and so will give the herd in this area further protection, especially should a highway be built through the area. It is hoped this area will be augmented by the purchase of an adjoining 72 acre parcel during 1974, and through the same source of funds. The University of California at Riverside will incorporate this Hidden Palms Ecological Reserve with their Biological Sciences Departments' Desert Research Center at Deep Canyon. Some of the research studies conducted by Doctor Jack C. Turner, now of the University of Wyoming, have been conducted here and have been reported on at various times through these columes. The necessity for such reserves is pointed up by the statement in a report concerning rare and endangered fish and wildlife of the Department of Fish and Game's Howard R. Leach of the Wildlife Management Branch and John M. Brode and Stephen J. Nicola of the Inland Fisheries Branch. Here they state," A factor contributing the most heavily to the demise of nearly all of the life forms herein listed, is the loss or alteration of habitat associated with such things as urbanization, agriculture, flood control and water development."

PENINSULAR BIGHORN SHEEP. Sketch by Diane Colcord.

DESERT BIGHORN

DESERT BIGHORN COUNCIL

The Desert Bighorn Council was established to promote the advancement of knowledge concerning the Desert Bighorn Sheep and the long-range welfare of these animals.

An invitation to attend the Annual meeting of this organization has been extended to all members and interested individuals. Your editor considers this to a very dedicated group of men and women. The members are, with two exceptions, all professionals in the fields the Biological Sciences and Game and Wildlife Management, and who are specializing in problems concerning the wild sheep of North America. Members come from as far away as British Columbia and Mexico, as well as from all of the Western States.

This year the Council meets at Moab,Utah. Sessions begin at noon on Tuesday April 9 and will continue until Thursday noon.....Program includes a short field trip to Deadhorse Point State Park on Thursday afternoon where typical bighorn habitat can be viewed. Alonger overnight field trip, for those wishing to stay overnight in beautiful desert scenery, will go into Canyonlands National Park on Thursday afternoon and return by 5:00p.m. Friday afternoon. There will be a banquet Wednesday evening. If interested write to your editor for particulars.

At the Desert Bighorn Council meeting of April 1973 Dick Weaver, California Department of Fish and Game spoke to the title of California's Management Plan. The California Legislature in 1968 passed a resolution requiring a management plan for California's bighorn sheep, to be divided into two parts: the status at the time and a proposed management plan forthe future. Objectives were: To keep the population at the present orat higher levels; future recreational use; education and restoration. In order to preserve the habitat it is evident that it is necessary to control human use in many of the areas; Key areas need to be acquired for the exclusive use of the bighorn---54 such areas have been identified and catalogued, these have been ranked in order of importance and in order of their being threatened. Lands held by railroads are not now threatened---school lands the state has ahold on these---the fiscal budget has dollar amounts to spend on acquisition of others. About the first of April the Director of the DFG Ray Arnett announced the purchas of 25 acres in the Avawatz Mountains south of Death Valley through a tax sale at a cost to sthe State of only about $300.---One method of giving protection would be through zoning by County Boards of Supervisors, if they would listen and then act for the best interest of the sheep...much of grazing lands should be purchased----Camping near specified waters should be prohibited,competition should be reduced between sheep and other grazing animals, especially around closely defined and actual sites of springs....If the Tule Elk is actually permitted or does reach the 2000 number then competition will become severe...competition with deer is not significant--but in areas of overlapping the deer is dominant ..There are some feral goats,but they have not done well and may disappear...Feral cattle are just hanging on and in a limited area--there are also some domestic cattle in the same area--so there are degrees of competition....some cattle watering devices have been abandoned--some of these should be acquired or re-established for wildlife-- some were originally wildlife watering places....Fencing of some areas should be done in order to exclude burro--specifications have been developed which are effective...movement of sheep needs further study in order to determine the importance of some waters which are only used occasionally..... to increase population water is a critical and limiting factor developement is an on going program headed by John Massie Habitat Supervisor for Region 5, Calif. DFG--HE IS A TIGER....30 sites have been listed where catchments are needed. An inventory has been made of water sites used by burro, 9 sites in the Sierras further study needed of other sites....For esthetic values---there is a long list of where it is sometimes possible for motorists to see sheep...Recreational hunting--none is advocated, nor will it be proposed until such time that the DFG may show that the wild sheep populatio n is being maintained or is being increased.

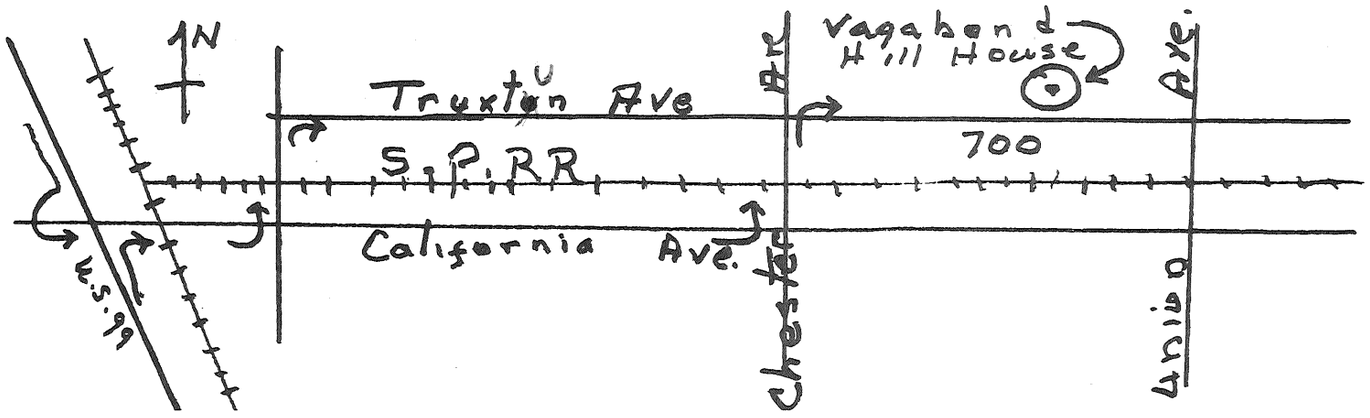
A bill, SB-1143 authored by State Senator Dennis Carpenter would , if passed implement such a plan. The California Wildlife at their Annual Meeting held in Fresno January 11 and 12, 1974 voted to support the measure.

ANNUAL BAKERSFIELD DINNER ARRANGED

Society Director Marvin Wood of Lemoore has announced that all arrangements have been made for the Annual Banquet at Bakersfield . The meeting is scheduled for Saturday evening March 9, 1974 in the Mardis Gras- East Room of the Vagabond-Hill House located at 700 Truxton avenue, Bakersfield, Calif. 93301. The No-Host Waterhole Count will be at 7:00 p.m. The Filet Steak dinner will be served at 8:00 p.m. The dinner price of $7.50 will include tax and gratuities.

The program of the evening will i nclude Dick Graham a Wildlife-Biologist-Taxidermist who will talk about Wildlife Conservation and the Bighorn Sheep; Dick W eaver also a Wildlife Biologist and long associated with the Desert Bighorns will discuss , The Feral Burro in California. During his long years of study in the California Desert Dick has learned much concerning the interaction of the Feral Burro and the Bighorns.

For those interested in staying in Bakersfield overnight-- it will be a good idea to get room reservations in early. There is another convention being held in Bakersfield this same weekend--rooms will be on a first-come-first-served basis unless reserved. Rates at the Vagabond will be : 1 person - Queen bed--$13.00; 2 persons-Queen bed $17.00 plus a 6% room tax.



MARTINEZ CANYON PROJECT GETS A LIFT

The Safari Club International, a Los Angeles based organization of big game hunters from through out the world, early in January helped to make certain the preservation of California's rarest horned animal - the peninsular bighorn sheep (A drawing of this specie is with another article in this issue.)

The picture at the right shows Dick Thompson a Director of the Society accepting a $3,000 check from the Safari International Secretary Dante Morroco. Dr. Loren Lutz at the right is President of the Safari as well as the Society. The money is to be used as a down payment on 5,000 acres of valuable bighorn habitat in the Santa Rosa Mountains, near Palm Springs. For a number of years the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep has been worried that this property would fall into the hands of land developers, and thereby lead to the extinction of the rare sheep of these mountains. Dr. Lutz had reported to the Safari Club that there were in all about 500 of this particular race of bighorn sheep. This another instance where the sportsmen-Conservationists have come to the aid of non-game wildlife. This property, located in the Martinez Canyon will act as a buffer zone between the city of Palm Springs and the Santa Rosa Mountain sheep range. Acquisition funds totalling $400,000. are expected to be raised through donations and with the assistance of the Department of Fish and Game.

ANNUAL DUES TO THE SOCIETY BECAME DUE JANUARY FIRST

The annual dues to the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep became due and payable January 1, 1974.

Members will recall that the September-October issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried the report that the Board of Directors of the Society at their meeting of June 16, 1973 had voted unanimously that the dues be raised to $15.00 per year . Checks for renewals or for new memberships may be sent to Dr. Lutz at the business office address or to : Wayne Dickson, membership Chairman at 2844 Adelita Drive,Hacienda Heights Calif. 91745 ; Earl B. Hein,DDS, 1218 West Olive Ave., Burbank, Calif. 91506; or to John E.O. Larronde, SEcretary, P.O. Box 395, 26765 Latigo Shore, Malibu, Ca. 90265

LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

The Board of Directors have urged that all members who can do so should purchase a LIFE MEMBERSHIP in the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. The cost of this Life Membership is $200. This amount may be paid at one time or it may be paid at the annual rate of $50. per year over a four year period.

Funds generated by the Life Membership Fund will be earmarked for land acquisitions for the benefit of the bighorn sheep. The Martinez Canyon Project will continue to have first priority for such land acquisitions.

SLAMMING THE RAM INTO OBLIVION

This is the title of an article appearing in the November issue of the AUDUBON magazine. In this article James K. Morgan attacks modern game management practices and standards; the poaching and the trophy hunting of the bighorn sheep. Much of this article is his personal opinion and has been gained by observations he has made in the State of Idaho and in the Glacier National Park of Montana. Some of Morgan's statements must be recognized as having foundation based upon known and documented facts. Other of his statements certainly can be subject for debate. Many of his statements have not been verified by research and are contrary to other findings by other men and which have been documented. Some statements are emotional and can not be verified. Perhaps you will wish to get a copy of the AUDUBON magzine from the library and read it for yourself.

Mr. Morgan states:,"Trophy hunting had its official birth in this country in 1887, when Theodore Roosevelt founded the Boone and Crocket Club to ' promote manly sport with the rifle and work for preservation of the large game of this country'. The promotion of trophy hunting was seen as a means of achieving both sportsmanship and conservation. Later, the club initiated a system for recordingthe largest heads taken or found by the hunter, thereby establishing recognition to which hunters could aspire. Morgan states further," The practice of wildlife management is generally believed to have become a science, but it has not become enough of a science to escape the existence of a few quirks. Trophy hunting is the quirkiest, especially where the subject is mountain sheep, one of the few animals ever subjected to trophy-biased management throughout its entire management history .....It is assumed that under the 3/4 curl regulations, hunters take mostly old, senile rams that have passed their breeding prime." Morgan states that from his Idaho observations this is untrue.....Morgan recommends that,"Rewards for killing bighorns should be curtailed immediately. The Boone and Crocket Club, archery's Pope and Young Club, and similar clubs, in keeping with their philosophy of wildlife conservation, should stop registering bighorns in record books. The grand slam and Grand Slam Club should be dissolved. Patches, pins, and other grand slam recognitions should be stopped." Probably a great many of the sheep hunters would also agree with these recommendations.

The Fund For Animals, based in Washington, D.C. has taken Morgan's statements to all be facts,NOT JUST OPINIONS, and is urging that the Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed,(be) urged ..to immediately place the Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep on its list of native endangered fish and wildlife, and to take all possible steps to protect these threatened creatures." Fund For Animals' staff Biologist, Steve Seater, "called the present management practices,'a legalized betrayal of the basic principles of wildlife biology and conservation that should be terminated without further ado."

NOW FOR ANOTHER SIDE OF THE TOPIC

A letter under date of January 22, 1974 from Mr. Clyde R. Douglass, Information Officer for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, states," For years the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission has limited hunters to taking 3/4 (curl) rams. As near as our biologists can determine, the herds are in a static condition with no real apparant change. At this time there are no studies of the bighorns underway in W yoming so our staff biologist is unable to answer many of your questions.....The W yoming Game and Fish Department does have a sheep trapping and transplanting program which is conducted each year near Dubois, W yoming. The primary objective of the program is to reduce that particular herd and to re-establish populations in other suitable areas of the state know to have bighorn sheep populations in the past."

And then a statement prepared by Dr. Ian McTaggart Cowan, Dean of Graduate Studies at The University of British Columbia and his Assistant, Dr. Valerius Geist, Both of whom are widley renowned for their knowledge concerning the wild sheep of North America. They state in the chapter entitled, THE NORTH AMERICAN WILD SHEEP in the book, North American Big Game a publication of the Boone and Crocket Club, (1971).....
the last paragraph page 65, " Most ewes breed at 2½ years of age, but some on highly productive ranges breed at 1½. Rams become sexually active at the same ages--exceptionally later, but under normal circumstances get little or no chance to participate in the rut as they are excluded by the mature males. Groups that have been heavily hunted for trophies may find the mature ram group reduced to the point where the 2½ year-old rams are covering some ewes. There is no evidence that this results in a smaller lamb crop."