SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

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VERNON BURANDT HONORED AT THE BAKERSFIELD BANQUET

The guest of honor at the bakersfield banquet of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep was Vernon Burandt. The many people who know Vern he is a conscientous hard working Fish and Game Wardern for the State of California. Others know him as a tireless hiker apt to be found most anywhere in the 'back country' of his area. He is also known for his efforts in the preservation of the pristine conditions of the Cottonwood Basin - Trail Peak area. Vern's backyard and main concern embraces the Owens Valley and its adjacent mountain ranges including the eastern escarpment of the Sierra Nevadas and down the eastern side of the Inyou mountains and on to the southward to the Avawatz mountains south of Death Valley National Monument. To the visiting sportsman Vern is a source of factual information. He has also zealously guarded the home of the golden trout and has successfully transplanted the very rare Paiute trout.

The Cottonwood Basin-Trail Peak area is the southernmost limit of the range of the Sierra Nevada Bighorn, one of the rarest of all sheep. Once threatened with a skiing development complex, the region has great importance for Bighorn and other forms of rare wildlife such as the fisher and wolverine.

Your editor first met Burandt at the old abandoned silver mining town of Panamint City in the mid 50's . We had talked a long time about the feral burro-desert bighorn conflict for living space.

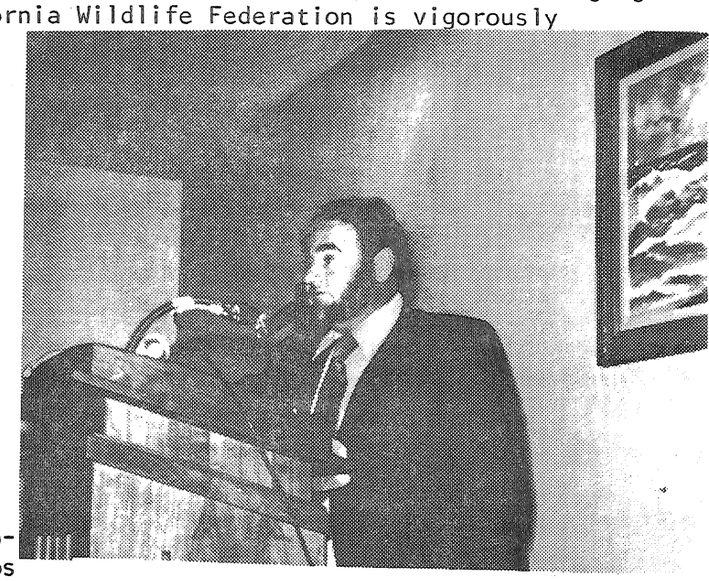
The picture on the right shows an award being presented to Vern by Society President Dr. Loren L. Lutz.

Burandt reported that he had during February seen two huge rams of the Mount Williamson herd and had counted some 80 members of the Mt. Baxter herd near Saw-Mill Flat. Vern believes that fewer than 100 members of California Bighorn remain in these herds. He stated that the Forest Service contemplates establishing 100 campsites in the Horseshoe Flat area. This will be a-foot-in-the-door toward further development and the establishment of ski facilities at Trail Peak. A ski development company is now pressing hard toward such a complex. The Public Lands Committee of the California Wildlife Federation is now working on this problem. The California Department of Fish and Game has taken a position in opposition to any construction in the area except a turn-around at the end of a Forest Service road. Burandt has been with the DFG since 1946. He reported that he had, during the previous week, carried the carcass of a small ram that had died on Telescope Peak down to his car and had then sent it to the laboratory in Sacramento for necropsy in an effort to establish the cause of death. The sheep had apparantly died of an infectious case of dermatosis na through carrying the carcass Vern himself contracted the infection, which hesaid was really giving him fits. Duties such as these are the lot of a conscientous Game Warden. Dick Thompson termed Vern Burandt"a real pro."

Dr. Lutz spoke of the Water for Wildlife Program of the Society . This program began in 1970, with the Blue Springs Project in the Anza Borrego State Park's Pinion Mountains, and was the scene of another project this past spring. During the first year there was donated some 4800 man days of effort. Since that time, while the man days of effort have declined, more is being accomplished. Increased knowledge of how to do the work and with better and more efficient tools have increased efficiency. Some $50,000 have been utilized in the program with wildlife benefits valued at half-amillion dollars. Projects are now being planned as much as five years in advance....WATERHOLE COUNTS ARE ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL AND MUST BE CONTINUED....MAKE YOUR PLANS NOW .

Myron 'Dutch' Doornbos of Fullerton, again served as the Master of Ceremony. Dutch kept the meeting running smoothly. Dutch thanked Marvin Wood for making all of the arrangments for the dinner and complimented him for a job well done. The diners than sang a rousing HAPPY BIRTHDAY to Pauline Wood, Marvins wife. Doornbos reported that State Senate Bill 1143 is now in the Assembly Committee for Natural Resources and Consevation of which Assemblyman Edwin L. Z'berg is the chairman. This bill by Senator Dennis Carpenter declares state policy re. the conservation and maintenance of wildlife resources by the stste. This is the first statement as to legislative intent in managing our wildlife. Dutch reported that the California Wildlife Federation is vigorously supporting the bill.

Dutch introduced Dick Weaver to the diners. Weaver is well known to the Society and is highly respected for his knowledge, enthusiasm and diligent effrots on behalf of the bighorn sheep. Dick reported concerning the status of the wild free-roaming feral burro in California. Present sheep population in California is believed to be in excess of 3,700, according to census established by observations made during waterhole counts during 1973. The California bighorn is truly rare, and this is primarily due to man's demand on the land. In 1968 the Legislature required that the Department of Fish and Game undertake a study of the wild bighorn sheep of California....Seven of the 14 bighorn study areas in California have populations of free-roaming feral burros. Burros have created a problem in each of these areas. The compete directly with bighorn for food, space, and water if it is in short supply. Burros have caused devastating damage to the vegetation and soil which has had a detrimental effect on the entire biota, ie. all the flora and fauna of the area.



Dick Weaver talks about burros and bighorns

With the knowledge gained during the bighorn investigations the 1968 burro inventory was revised. The present burro population is estimated at approximately 3,400 animals in the state.....Feral burro populations have become established in many widely separated areas of the California desert regions. These animals are the descendants of those that escaped from, or were allowed to range free by, the early day miners. Burro damage to the desert ecosystem has been recognized for many years by knowledgeable field biologists. Burro concentrations cause serious loss of vegetation and soil erosian and they may totally usurp a small water supply vital to wildlife. The feral burro has been protected by State laws enacted by the Legislature in 1953. In 1971 Congress passed and the President signed Public Law 92-195--which places wild horses and burros under the jurisdiction of the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior. A citizens Advisory Board has been set up and is to have a hearing in Washington D.C. on March 26 and 27, 1974.....Because burros have an effect on the welfare of the bighorn sheep it was decided while making bighorn investigations to delineate the burro range and abundance. Weaver had a series of slide which showed these long eared critters and those areas in California which have burro populations. These areas have been mapped and delineated. The impact of the burro on the habitat and effects on native wildlife was documented. A bibliography on the feral burro was brought up to date. The 1968 burro inventory made in cooperation with the National Park Service and the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife and the Bureau of Land Management was revised.....Findings show that in Northeastern San Bernardino County the burros have extended their range over the past 15 years....There is visible depletion of grass in these areas of extended range. Some springs have declined in flows of water. Most bighorn habitat that has had a heavy burro population for years does not now have a resident bighorn population....about 600 burro occupy this area.....In Eastern Imperial County the competition between the feral burros and bighon is extreme....Burros usurp the water from tinajas and then move down to the Colorado River....Bighorn by their nature avoid the heavy brush along the river and are reluctant to leave the escape terrain afforded in the mountains.... Northwestern San Bernardino and southwestern Inyo Counties contain two large military bases. Fort Irwin has no burros. However the Chinal Lake Naval Weapons Center has a very heavy population. The Avawatz Mountains of Fort Irwin have a good grass cover. a thrifty bighorn population and no burros. The Argus Mt. area of China Lake shows severe overgrazing, an abscence of perennial grasses and a very severly declining sheep population, with perhaps less than 15 sheep remaining in the area.

NORTHERN INYO AND SOUTHERN MONO COUNTIES: the desert portion of Inyo County was designated a burro sanctuary by the California Legislature in 1957. Saline Valley and the lower elevations of the Inyo, Last Chance, Saline, and Nelson ranges that surround the valley and all of Hunter Mountain has long had a heavy burro population. The lower elevations have been wintering areas for bighorn in the past.....Conflict between bighorn and burro is not obvious in the Inyo Mts. because at the present time there is very little overlap of burro bighorn ranges. Burros are confined to the lower elevations by the nearly vertical topography. There is a remnant band of about 15 bighorn.....In the southeastern San Bernardino County competition between bighorn and feral burro is evident primarily in the areas adjacent to the Colorado River. Areas where burros have ranged are severely utilized and the perennial grasses so important

to bighorn have been almost eliminated....Investigation revealed the most serious competition is for the available water.....One area whee burro influence appears to have contributed to sheep loss is the Whipple Mountains. Sheep habitat exists directly across the Colorado River in the Buckskin Mts. A comparison of the two areas is nearly identical except for burro numbers. On the Arizona side the burros are not abundant and sheep are known to drink from the Colorado River. On the California side burro numbers are high and sheep have never been seen to use the Colorado River. Burros are dominant and bighorn sheep will not challenge them even for water. No sheep have been seen in the Whipple Mts. since 1956. In the Chemehuevi Mts. the sheep which remain are severely stressed by burro usurping the water and depleting the range. Burros are also estabished in the Fenner Spring area of the (Little) Piute Mountains south of the town of Essex....Population established by escapement of one pregnant jennie in 1952..now thought to be 25 to 30 burro in the area...There is no evidence of any sheep now in the in this small mountain range.....-..Competition between burro and bighorn is evident in the eastern portions of the Clark range....There are also cattle on this range. Here perennial grasses are absent...areas free of the cattle and burro have quite abundant grasses.....Three burros have been released to roam free on the range in the Kingston Mountains and may present a problem in the future.....Weaver also spoke of the burro--sheep situation that exists in the Death Valley National Monument. This was reviewed in the January-February issue of THE SHEEPHERDER and will not be repeated. RECOMMENDATIONS: Public Law 92-195 is a clear mandate to preserve the wild burro. In preserving they must also be managed. There fore management that will preserve the wild burro and the range is the first step in any program directed toward this animal. Sample burro management plans have not been implemented because the legislation was pending or directives in compliance with the legislation have not been formulated. Further studies on the burro distribution, population, food habits, behavior or other general life history aspects of burro are not needed for sound management plans. Research could aid in rehabilitating the ecosystems after burro numbers have been reduced. An informed public is necessary to secure the sanction of the public of any burro management program. The Department of Fish and Game is ready to assist in developing and gaining support for, or implementing management plans of any agency.

NOTE: THE SPORTSMEN'S COUNCIL OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA AND THE CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE FEDERATION HAVE ADOPTED----THIS MONTH-- a resolution requesting that a burro management plan be instituted and carried out on the public lands of California, and that the National Advisory Board for Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros at their meeting to be held March 26-27,1974 give first considerations to the native wildlife of the [illegible] ranges occupied by these feral animals.

From the MINUTES of the Board of Directors meeting of March 9, 1974 in Bakersfield.

PRESENT--Directors James DeForge, Wayne Dickson, John Larronde, Dr. Loren L. Lutz, and Richard Thompson. Absent Dr. E.R. Hein. Other officers present Donald Swarthout-- and Marvin Wood. Members present: Bud Weideman and Dick Weaver. Dr. Glen Stewart-guest. There was no report from Treasurer Dr. Earl r Hein. Bylaws as proposed January 28, 1974 were re-affirmed.....Date and place of the fall dinner of the Society were set---Saturday October 19, 1974 at the TAIL O' THE COCK restaurant, 477 South La Cienega Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. Dr. Lutz stated that he would try to get Jim Blaisdell as guest speaker for the dinner. The Board voted to invite Jim Blaisdell as the speaker Jim has been a leader in the re-introduction of the California Bighorn Sheep to the Lava Beds National Monument in northern California. He has been pampering these sheep ever since they were let loose in the enclosure. Jim is also one of the leaders of the DESERT BIGHORN COUNCIL, which meets in Moab, Utah, April 9 through the 12th. He is also one of the writers of a book, THE DESERT BIGHORN, IT'S LIFE HISTORY, ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT, a publication of the Council and a book which every lover of the desert sheep should have on his or her bookshelf for reading and study. The book is unique in the field. (Your editor highly recommends it, having a pre-publication copy.).....Dr. Lutz talked about the Parks and Recreation Bond Issue to be voted on this coming June election, stating that we should all back this important issue. He also stated that the Society should support other wildlife projects beside those relating to sheep and that one was the proposed purchase of lands at the junction of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers where Tule Elk and Antelope would be established.....Meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Marvin and Pauline Wood

Society member, Frank Adams of Garden Grove and President of the California Bowmen Hunters has passed along a letter from the Montana Bowhunters Association.....

"I would like to offer to you a word of advice if you are able to obtain two more bighorn rams from British Columbia. Before you even start to transport them from Canada, have their horns sawed off on the ends. I can't understand why this wasn't done in the first place, as it would have discouraged the poaching of the other two.....The two rams heads and capes are worth more on the black market than you will pay for the whole animal to Canada. It is a sad state of affairs, but it seems that the United States has their hands tied as far as prosecution goes. Many men who are found guilty of poaching and selling our bighorns are fined such a small sum for their deed, that it is almost insane.

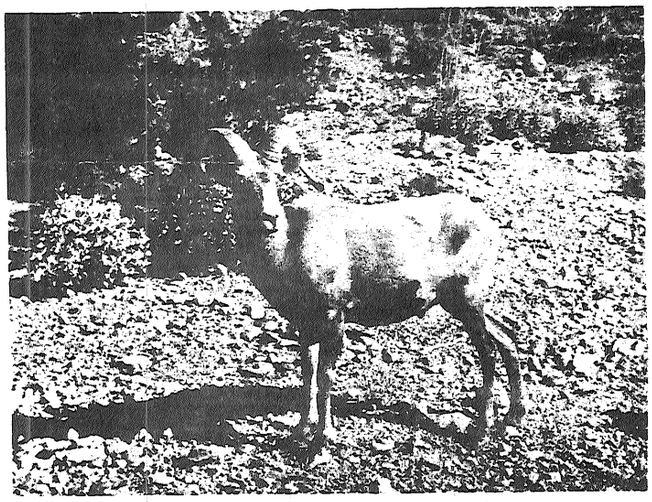
After you raise enough money to buy the rams, I would suggest you direct your efforts towards obtaining reasonable punishment for illegal taking our wild animals. A guide and his son, here in Montana, were turned loose after being caught poaching game on the Crow Reservation andin Yellowstone Park.....We lost a ram just 35 miles from here about a monthago. There is an $800 reward out for the one that did it. There are also reports of rams missing in other areas near here.....Being a sheep hunter and guide, it truly grieves me to see these wonderful animals abused by poaching rings. I hope that someday, our country will realize the lawlessness that is running over our country and do something about it.

I have asked my fellow officers and our board of directors to consider sending you a donation for your fund. We sincerely appreciate your concern for the bighorn sheep.....

Respectfully, Robert Savage, Pres, MGA!!

NOTE: also enclosed was the sketch at the right. NOW---I wonder will this draw some opinions concerning the sketch---and also the things which Savage speaks of---poaching---general lack of morallity---disregard for game laws both by segments of the public BUT ALSO OF THE COURTS. TOO FREQUENTLY THESE COURTS TREAT GAME LAW VIOLATIONS MERELY AS A PRANK. too frequently even when caught in the act the culprits are exonerated or given minimal suspended sentences. WE MUST LET THE COURTS KNOW THAT WE CONSIDER VIOLATIONS OF GAME LAWS ARE CRIMES AND THAT THEY MUST BE SO CONSIDERED.

Concerning the sawing off of the horns, I shall ask the opinions of the professionals of the DBC. ---Will the cutting of the horns stress the rams dangerously? Will it cause them to lose social acceptance of the ewes? or of status within the herd?



"Big Al" as he is called, proudly surveys his home at the Phoenix Zoo. He was the very first resident of the enclosure and is becoming a fine specimen. Also, "Big Al" is on first-name basis with most of the Society members who have participated in Phase II.

A few notes from the Arizona Desert Bighorn Society....The phase II of their Phoenix Zoo Project has met with a short setback. Therefore their dedication originally set for March 10 has been postponed for a time. Construction is however progressing. MANY OF THE SOCIETY's members will read with regret the following from THE RAM'S HORN. Quote," It is with deep regret that Ram's Horn must announce that Jack Walters, one of the proponents and initial originators of the Zoo Project, has a terminal disease and does not expect to be with us much longer. There, fore, Jack Walters has asked us to express on behalf of him and the Society our combined thanks to the multitude of his friends who so graciously contributed financially and materially to the zoo project. Wit hout their help this project would not be reality today.

Indeed, if a man ever deserved a memorial, the Desert Bighorn Sheep enclosure and the exhibit building at the Phoenix Zoo, will represent to all of us a truly fitting tribute to a great outdoorsman and a fine gentleman - Jack Walters." end quote.

The Arizona Society also has a number of water projects underway. Some have been completed already this year. Their Eighth Annual Awards dinner was Mardh 23rd in Phoenix.

During the last meeting of the Desert Bighorn Council held at Hawthorne, Nevada in April of 1973, Mr. John Gibson and his associate Edward M. Lacey of the Okanagan Game Farm at Penticton, British Columbia spoke concerning their experiences in working with the wild animals of their game farm. The area near Penticton is the furthest northerly extension of the desert region. It lies at an elevation of about 1000 ft. and has an annual percipitation of 10" to 14". The area is watered by natural springs which have a high mineral content. Supplementary feeding is carried on all year. At one time they had 12 bighorn rams and attempted a crossbreeding program using 5 domestic ewes. However, within one month all 12 rams had died of pneumonia.....They had obtained a permit in the Yukon for sheep, caribou and other game animals.....the licks near Muncho Lake contain the mineral selenium, which seems to be desired by the sheep.....In 1969 they captured 5 stone sheep in British Columbia. However it was too late in the year and one lamb was born during transportation, but it died. One ewe a yearling did deliver a lamb safely.... the drup M-99 was used as the tranquillizer. 4 rocky mountain bighorn were obtained from Waterton National Park... a dall sheep was captured near Atlin Lake on the 24th of May and was named "Vicky" in honor of the Queen, it being her birthday.....other sheep were obtained from a game farm near Whitehorse.....They feed alfalfa all the year.....18% to 21% protein....Cobalt is introduced in the salt. Blackbirds and magpies are attracted to the pens by the feed and they help in keeping down the numbers of ticks and other parasites.

APOLOGIES TO THE PANORAMA SPORTSMEN"S CLUB

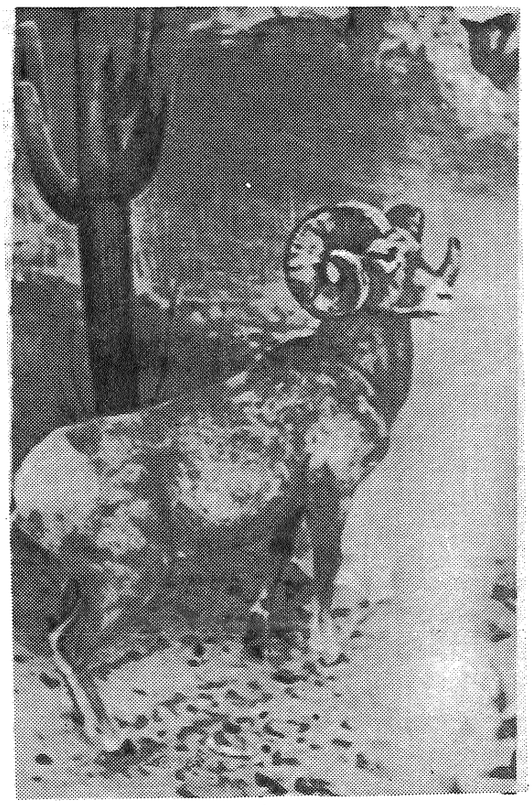
In the January-February issue of THE SHEEPHERDER credit was given to the Long Beach Sportsmen's Club for participating in the SHEEP CAMP SPRINGS PROJECT. Now we learn that the Panarama Sportsmen's Club was not given credit for their contribution of time, materials and diligent efforts on the project. Your editor is very sorry that he can not get to all projects underway. From here to Barstow is 250 miles. From here to Needles is 400+ miles---also he is involved in work with and for other conservation organizations.
YOUR EDITOR WOULD VERY MUCH APPRECIATE IT IF SOMEONE ON EACH PROJECT WOULD TAKE THE TIME AND EFFORT TO WRITE UP A REPORT OF WHAT IS DONE, WHERE, WHEN - AND WHAT ORGANIZATIONS ARE REPRESENTED AND BY WHOM.....ALSO SEND IN PHOTGRAPHS OR EVEN COLORED SLIDES CAN BE USED-----NEGATIVES COLOR OR BLACK AND WHITE.....I CAN USE IT.....AND IT WOULD MEASURABLE IMPROVE YOUR SHEEPHERDER..... MANY PEOPLE AS ME, " WHAT IS THE SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP DOING?"
HOW ABOUT A LITTLE BRAGGING?

THE TANKS AT THE BLUE SPRINGS PROJECT in the Pinion Mountains of Anza Borrego are full of water and running over.. STILL NO RAIN IN THE CADY MOUNTAINS---It has now been over two years since there has been any measureable rainfall here.

A letter from Delmar Vail, Riverside District Manager for the BLM---Lou Jurs has been transferred to Craig, Colorado---his replacement has not yet bee chosen. (March 7, 1974)

A letter from John Massie is of interest:"Dear Lew: Your slides are very informative. I believe we can make some decisions about the possibility of drilling on Smith Spring some time this coming fall, after we have reviewed the efforts of a contractor in the Inyo Forest.....I think that Smith Spring would be an excellent choice for our first remote drill site, but much is left to be done before we can let the contract. You are certainly right about how long it would take to climb down through every canyon in the Sacramentos.. I did stumble on the right canyon yesterday in the Sheep Hole Mountains and rediscovered the spot that gave them their name. The 16 foot wide tinaja holds more than adequate water for the bighorn of that range. We will keep a watch on it through this fall to see how it holds up and a sheep count there would be very worthwhile.....Keep up your good work."

REALLY GOOD NEWS ON BOTH THE ABOVE ITEMS.



Notes from the Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn :

.....The Shikar Safari Club, an international sportsmens organization, has offered to donate approximately $7,000 a year for a 3 year period, to the Nevada Fish and Game Department, towards an intensive study of the bighorn sheep. These funds, matched with Federal funds, would enable the Fish and Game to hire a full time employee, plus the necessary equipment for this project. The department will present their program to the Commissioners later this month. (March) If the Commissioners endorse theprogram it would be started in July of this year, and hopefully, culminate in a comprehensive, long range plan for the bighorn sheep in Nevada. The objectives, set up by the Department are as follows:
To determine and designate limits of distribution, abundance, condition and trend of the Nelson Bighorn Sheep population in Nevada.
To document the basic physical ecology features of the habitat and it's relative importance;
To inventory and evaluate potential new sheep habitat or historical sheep habitat for possible re-introduction;
To provide basic information for the formulation of a bighorn species management plan;
To provide a bulletin on the status and trend of Bighorn Sheep in Nevada, with reference to hunting and management for the future."

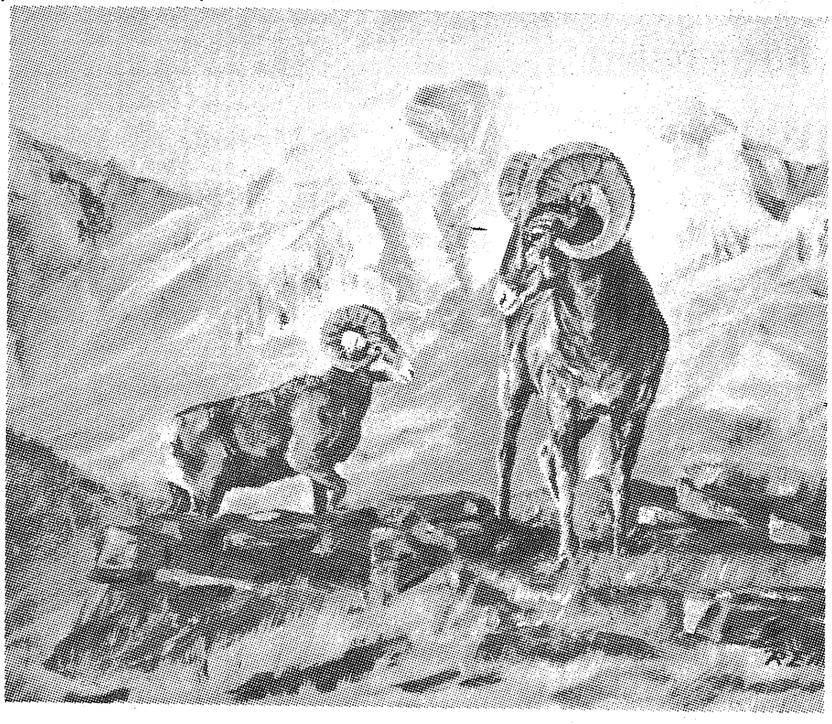
BIGHORNS OF WASHINGTON STATE DOING WELL

To the persisting remnant population of native California Bighorns in Okanagan County, State of Washington in October of 1957 eighteen sheep of the same specie, 13 ewes and 5 rams wee introduced from the Moon Ranch on Riske Creek, near Williams Lake, British Columbia. They were transplanted into an enclosure in the Sinlahekin Recreation Area in Okanagan County. This was a cooperative venture of the British Columbia Fish and Game Branch and the Fish and Game Department of Washington. These

in turn have now been transplanted into 11 other locations in Eastern Washington, and all populations have survived and are doing well.....California Bighorns, Ovis canadensis californiana,once occupied most of this range. Rocky Mountain bighorns, Ovis Canadensis canadensis,probably lived in the Blue Mountains, and perhaps in the Selkirks. The two races are similar in size and color and most certainly will cross. NOTE: Ian MacTaggart Cowan told me in a letter, one time, that the difference between these two specie is slight, and difficult to determine, being mostly in dentition,and skull characteristics.....In 1960, six bighorns were removed from the Silahekin pasture and transplanted to another enclosure in the W.T. Wooten Wildlife Recreation Area. This began a series of other transplants, which as noted above have led to the re-stocking of 11 areas in all.

In 1969, Fred Hodgeboom, of the US Forest Service at Sullivan Lake suggested that bighorn sheep be re-introduced to the Hall MOuntain area of the Selkirk Mountains. This culminated in October 1971 with the formation of a sheep management plan and a cooperative agreement being signed by the Forest Service and the Washington Game Department. Habitat conditions of Hall Mt. were found to be good, with a variety of vegetative types rangeing from forests at the lower elevations through brush-timber zones, to brush-grassland and then grass to the top, where excellent meadows existed. There was no livestock grazing and the mule deer wintered on the mountain but there was no population of elk. A study of sheep history of Hall Mt. was undertaken. This tended to show that there had, historically been a sheep population in the Selkirks, and while inconclusive as whether they had been o.c. californiana or o.c. canadensis, it seemed more probable that it had been the latter. Therefore in November of 1971 a request was made to transplant bighorns from the Waterton Lakes area where the Canadian National Parks Branck has a policy of donating surplus bighorns to governmental agencies for restocking depleted ranges. The request was approved. The costs of the capture and removal of the sheep from Waterton Lakes Park to the release site on Hall Mountain was met by the Hunters, Inland Empire Big Game Council of Spokane, Washinton in April of 1972. The Pend Orielle and Columbia Rivers separate the two species. For an indefinite period, the Hall mountain bighorns will be protected. They have spread out over a larger area than it was supposed that they would. However, they do seem to all or nearly all of them return to the Hall MOuntain area for the winter. One of the rams from Waterton was named "Potato Chip Charlie" as he would eat the potato chips from the hands of tourists at Waterton. However, when it came to handling Charlie, he was found to be a rather fractious animal, and not at all docile.

Hunting for rams with three-quarter curl has been permitted by special permit since 1966. Nine rams were taken by twenty five permitees during the season of 1972. This brought the seven-year total of legal harves to 71 rams, an average of 10 per year. There were twenty nine permits recommended for the season of 1973, but at present there is no available data (to the editor) of what the actual harvest was this last year.



Also during 1973 the Game Department issued six either-sex bi g-horn sheep permits for the Tucannon Arez, named after theTucannon River which flows through the W.T.Wooten Wildlife Area, which was noted as the first re-plant site from the original stocking at the Sinlahekin There were two reasons for the issuing of the either-sex permits: the Tucannon herd has neared the winter-range carrying capacity, and biologists are concerned about a drop in lamb production. Since bighorns are a rare trophy animal Game Department officials belive that licensed hunters should take ewes rather than have biologists collect specimens. However, biologists were on hand to gather reproductive tracts and other basic information.

In October, 1973, a bow hunter Albert Rinaldi, Jr. took a record class ram while bow hunting on Clemons Mountain in a special archery hunt area near Yakima. This head will rank second in the all-time archery bighorn trophy list.

So now we find that the Washington State population of bighorns have increased from probably about 15 prior to 1957 to over 400, in only twenty six years, and nearly all of the animals are descendents of the eighteen animals trapped on the Moon Ranch near Williams Lake, British Columbia. Permits to hunt this population is on a lottery basis and is confined to residents of the State of Washington only. Through the 1972 season, there have been 139 permits issued and a total of 71 trophy rams have been harvested.

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HAVE YOU SENT IN YOUR $15.00 ANNUAL DUES FOR THE YEAR OF 1974?.....Why delay, DO IT TODAY.

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Did you know that the feral burros had destroyed the installation at the Wood Mountain Spring