SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

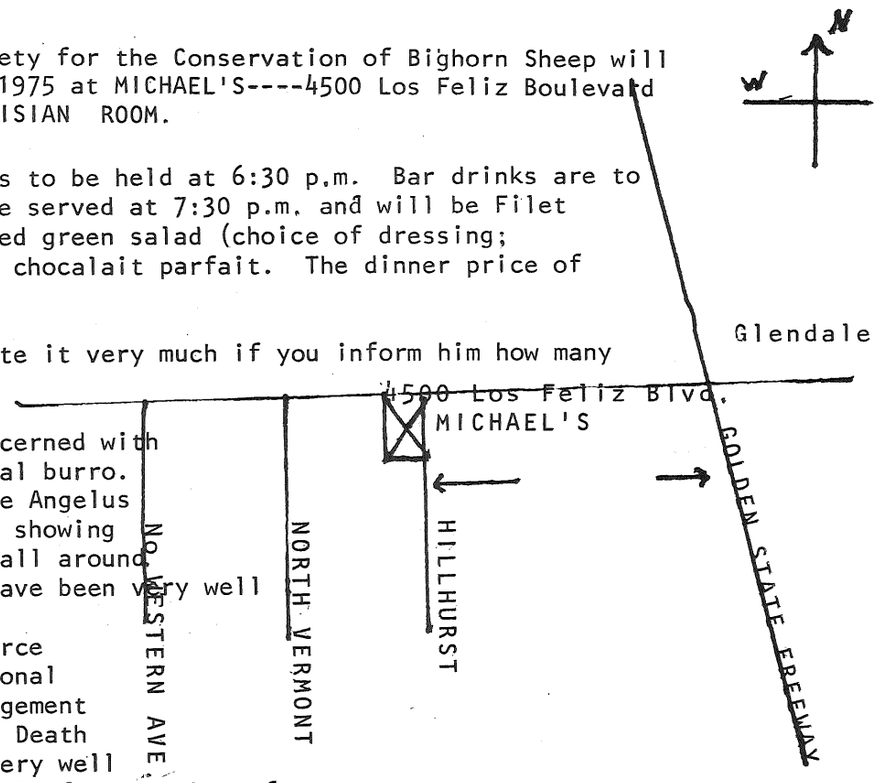
office
401 North Garfield
Alhambra, California 91801
213 284-5113

editor
LEWIS E. CARPENTER
815 W. Gettysburg
Fresno, Ca. 93705
209 227-9140

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1975

SOCIETY'S ANNUAL BANQUET SET FOR OCTOBER 4, 1975

The Annual Banquet of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep will be held Saturday evening October 4. 1975 at MICHAEL'S----4500 Los Feliz Boulevard in Los Angeles California----THE PARISIAN ROOM.



The No-Host Adjustment Hour is to be held at 6:30 p.m. Bar drinks are to be priced at $1.10. Dinner is to be served at 7:30 p.m. and will be Filet Mignon, baked potato, vegetable, mixed green salad (choice of dressing; tea, coffee or milk; dessert will be chocalait parfait. The dinner price of $7.50 includes taxes and gratuities.

Dr. Loren L. Lutz will appreciate it very much if you inform him how many will be in your party.

The after dinner program will be concerned with the problems associated with the feral burro. Ben and Miriam Romero, members of the Angelus Chapter of the Sierra Club have been showing their program -THE JACKS ARE WILD, all around the Southern California area, and have been very well received.

Peter G. Sanchez, Natural Resource Specialist for the Death Valley National Monument will discuss the Burro Management Policy as is being carried on at the Death Valley National Monument. Pete is very well versed on this topic having studied it for a number of years

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Current status involving amendments to Wild Horse and Burro Act.

As has been previously reported in these columes, your editor has, through the good offices of Congresssman Whitehurst of Virginia had H^2935--which would amend the Wild Horse and urro Act of 1971--PL92-195 amended to provide management and management techniques of the feral horses and burros on Natural Resource Lands. This same language is also now a part of the BLM Organic Act of 1975. Letters from Congressmen Sisk of Fresno and Whitehurst inform me that these bill are now in the "MARK-UP" process and that a'clean" bill. This bill should be ready for discussion by mid-October, or possibly by late September and that it will then be introduced. Congressman John Melcher, Chairman of the Sucommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs of the U. S. House of Representatives held a public field hearing on August 12th in the Court Room of the Federal Building in Billings, Montana.

The Wild Horse Board was to hold a meeting in Rock Springs, Wyoming on September 4th and 5th. To date , your editor has seen no report concerning this meeting.

Bureau of Land Management, New Release of September 17, 1975 states that 3,000 acres of N National Resource Lands have been added to the Pryor Mountain W ild Horse Range on the Montana-Wyoming Border. The range is a 32,000 acre Federal Reservation established by the Secretary of the Interior in 1968, (This is 3 years prior to the enactment of the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971. The previous range had a maximum carrying capacity of 100 horses. This added acreage will permit the herd to increase to about 125 horses. In requesting the additional

BLM field officials said the action will distribute wild horses on the lower frail desert range over a larger area, add additional open space and forage while restoring some of the historical Pryor Mountain wild horse wintering areas to the present range, and increase opportunities for the public to see wild horses.

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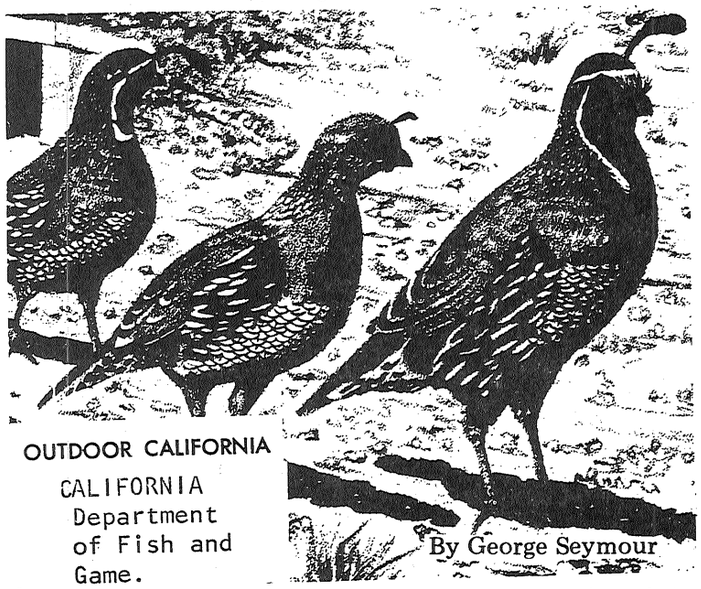
THE PROTECTOR

by

Bud Wiedeman

On June 7, 1975, I left for a brood count on chukar and Gambel quail. My destination was a 'guzzler' in the Providence Mountains of eastern San Bernardino County. My companion was a 4 year old Labrador Retriever named Gypsy.. I got all set up about 75 yards from the guzzler. I then checked the tank for water and rattle snakes. There were no snakes in sight around the tank which was about 3/4th full of water. The exterior of the tank and it's apron were in good condition.

Action began about 6:00 a.m. and continued until 11:40 a.m.. During this time 40 came in singly to drink. In addition to these there were47 adult quial that came in with a total of 264 young. These were in three stages of developement.



OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA

CALIFORNIA Department of Fish and Game.

By George Seymour

The high light of the morning occurred at 11:13 when two adult Gambel quail with their very tiny chicks came in to drink. The male took his position on top of the tank above the opening, and the female had just walked up on the apron of the guzzler; the young ones were strung out about 15 feet behind her. This is when the action really did get started. Two antelope ground squirrels came running in, trying to cut the young ones off. The The male adult came down off the tank and hit the ground between the squirrels and the young quail. His iwngs were dragging in the dust; his neck was arched. He hit the first squirrel head on, beating his wings and darting his head. This knocked the squirrel end over end. The male quail then took after the second squirrel, beating him with his wings, and driving him back. He soom had both squirrels headed back the way they had come. They had had enough of this bird for the day. By this time the female and young had reached the tank. The female went in and checked the tank, she then came out and all of the young went in and had a drink. The female later went in and drank. The male, in the meantime had taken a 'lookout on the rim of the apron. Aater the female and the young had finished drinking she stood guard with her young while the male went in and drank. Then they left as a group, with the male leading and the female following with her young very closely grouped around her.

"I found out one thing, and that is these ground squirrels will eat almost anything, even their own kind, if they are dear." bud.

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DATES TO REMEMBER AND PUT ON YOUR CALENDAR

September 27th, 1975 WATERHOLE PROJECT -- Will be at the Parrish Spring at the upper end of T ravis Wash in the Chemehuevi Mountains of eastern San Bernardino County. John Massie, Wildlife Habitat Supervisor may contact previous participants. If interested Write to John at the DFG, 350 Golden Shore, Long Beach, California 90802 or phone his office (213) 435 - 7741 OR write or call Doctor Lutz, his address and phone are on the masthead.

October 4, 1975 Annual Southern California Dinner Meeting of the Society. See Special article

November 8th----WATER PROJECT IN THE CLARK MOUNTAINS.-----This is subject to change. Contact either John Massie or Doctor Lutz on this one for verification, as the possibility does exist that the location of project may be changed to either Old Dad Peak area or to the Smith Spring in the Sacramento Mts.

Water Projects for the spring of 1976 are: in March probably the Kelso Peak area and then in May in the Mopah Mts. Dates not yet set Nor are exact locations firm.

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A telephone communication from John Massie, Department of Fish and Game, Long Beach, August 14th:

Concerning the drilling of horizontal wells. The Southern California Safari Club donated this $ 7,928.80 piece of equipment to the Department of Fish and Game for use in the development of water sources for the desert bighorn sheep and is getting anxious to see some results. Your editor feels this way also as he has been pushing for this equipment for nearly four years. Two things have held up drilling activities. One is the transfer of Mike Bird, a strong member of Massie's crew to the DFG office in Red Bluff. This leaves Les Coombes the only remaining crew member. A replacement for Bird has been requested and

will probably be soon assigned. The other thing holding up production is the need for a diamond drill bit to use with this equipment. It has been found that the rock at the project site of Magnesia Spring is terribly hard rock. Your editor has done considerable hard rock drilling and can verify that rock does come is varying degrees of hardness. Some rock is so very hard as to practically defy the best of equipment. This diamond drill bit is expensive, $1486. Purchase has been requested through the State Procurement Division and it is expected that purchase will soon be authorized.
Magnesia Spring is within the recently purchased area, by the Wildlife Conservation Board of the City of Rancho Mirage. This Ecological Reserve is entirely surrounded by that part of the City which by stipulation of deeds will never be subdivided. Although the City of Rancho Mirage does plan to build hiking and equestrian trail in the area outside the Ecological Reserve there will be no trails of any nature established within the area. This drilling site, Magnesia Spring can be reached by truck to bring in the drilling equipment.

The second drilling project is scheduled to be the Mopah Spring of the Turtle Mountains, which lie between Needles and Blythe. No date has been set for this work. Not less than two men and preferably three are needed on the drilling crew, for safety reasons.

Bonnar Blong, California DFG, at Idylwild, is the project leader for the Ecological Reserve at Magnesia Spring.

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BIGHORN SHEEP POACHING CASE IS WINDING DOWN AS OF SEPTEMBER 4th 1975

The poaching of trophy desert bighorn rams may well continue. The greed of man and his desire for "status symbols" will undoubtedly continue to plague the proper management of wildlife in America.

However, the "Summary of Civil Actions in Bighorn Sheep Cases (Swanson) - Settlements and Pending Actions" should give potential poachers food for thought when they contemplate such activities. The July-August issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried the results of a poaching attmpt at the Lava Beds National Monument and which resulted in the death of the two breeding age rams. This summary continues:

Settlements paid in full (12 defendants) $36,000		
Settlement agreements signed and timely payments being made (10 defendants) .....-.. 34,000		$70,000
Settlement agreement signed, but payments defaulted and defendant's whereabouts unknown (1 defendant)	4,000	
Default Judgement entered (one defandant in Canada and little or no change of payment	20,000	$24,000

Total amount of judgements.....$94,000

Cases dismissed, no sheep taken (4 defendants)

Cases pending (2 defendants)

It appears we are assured of receiving at least $70,000 from the cases where settkement has been reached, and possibly an additional $4,000 from the two pending cases. We should not expect any payment from the citizen and resident of Canada."

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UNUSUAL HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT THREATENS BIGHORNS

Habitat for the dexert bighorn sheep, already under assault from many sides, is about to be reduced still further. The Montezuma Project, aproposed hydroelectric complex in the Sierra Estrella Mountains 25 miles southwest of Phoenix, is designed to produce electricity during the peak summer hours. The project is a joint venture by Arizona Public Service, Salt River Project and the Arizona Power Othority. It will consist of two reservoirs, and an underground generating station located right in the middle of a mountain range that for many years has harboured a herd of desert bighorn sheep, Arizona's most prized big game animal.

John Russo, game management chief for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, isn't so much bothered by the reservoirs themselves, as by the tremendous disturbance to the local environment caused by their construction. He feels the bighorn sheep simply will not be able to tolerate such disruption.

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ALSO FROM ARIZONA

All 1975 sheep permit holders are invited to attend the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society's annual sheep hunters' clinic October 4 at Black Canyon Shooting Range. Specialists of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, various other fields, and some of Arizona's top big

game guides will participate in the clinic, which will begin at noon following lunch served in the Range facilities Building by the Arizona Varmettes. Subjects to be covered at the clinic will include: finding and identifying trophy sheep, and optics and physical fitness. Motion pictures and slides of Arizona bighorn sheep will also be shown. Clinic ends at 6:00 pm.

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ITEMS FROM NEW MEXICO

THE SHEEPHERDER has carried reports from the State of New Mexico concerning their re-introduction of two species of bighorns, ie., Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep,(Ovis Canddensis) and desert bighorns from Mexico, Ovis Mexicniana. The latter was on a trade for some 50 head of antelope. The July-August issue of New Mexico Wildlife states: "New Mexico is fortunate in having both Rocky Mountain as well as desert bighorn sheep in huntable populations. Three of the 15 Rocky Mountain sheep hunters took home a ram. On the San Andres hunt near Las Cruces, five of six hunters were successful in tagging a desert bighorn ram."

New Mexico has a population of exotic wild sheep. The same report states: " Of the 115 hunters stalking Barbary sheep during the Canadien River hunt, 47 were successful for a 43.8 percent success. The success rate of the Large Canyon was higher at 71.4 percent, but only 24 hunters were in the area; they took home 17 sheep."

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TEMPORARY ROAD CLOSURE EXPLAINED

On August 15th the Resource Agency's Department of Parks and Recreation reviewed the reasons for the temporary closure of the Coyote Canyon Road in the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.. This particular area has been determined to one of extreme importance to the survival of the endangered Peninsular Bighorn Sheep.

During the April 1974 meeting of the Desert Bighorn Council, Mark C. Jorgensen gave an illustrated report of his study he had made of the Coyote Creek Canyon; it's water supply; and the effects of human visitations in the area. This was all reported in the May-June,1974 issue of THE SHEEPHERDER. Now, during the following year of this report of Mr. Jorgensen the Departments of Parks and Recreation and the Fish and Game have implemented the recommendations made in this report.

The closure of this road are the dates of July 1st and September 30th. The report of the Departmens , State, "It is not the mode of transportation that is dangerous to the welfare of the bighorns, but the physical presence of people at the limited watering places. This presence keeps the bighorns away from the water." Therefore all visitations whether on foot, on horseback, or in vehicles has been forbidden.

Coyote Canyon is the most important watering area for the sheep in the entire one-half million acre park. This is due to a year-long flowing stream at two locations in Coyote Canyon, at; Middle Willows and Lower Willows. The roadway runs in the streambed in several places.

When the temperature gets over 105 degrees the sheep need water daily. This is especially important for young lambs and nursing ewes. When vehicles or people are at the watering sites, the animals stay up on the dry exposed hillsides until the people are gone. If they are down in the creek when humans arrive, they retreat up the hill. When the adults go up the hills, the lambs go with them even though they may not have had their fill of water. The disturbance of the sheep could lead to mortallity in an animal species that is barely surviving.

The road is closed at the park boundary in Borrego Valley to the Riverside County Line.

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SOME RECCOMENDED READING

YOUR EDITOR wishes to reccomend that if you are not now subscribing to OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA the Bimonthly publication of the California Department of Fish and Game, that you should do so and request a copy of the July - August 1975 issue. This particular issue carries as it's lead article titled VOLUNTEER OF THE DESERT . The writer of the article is Mr. John Massie, the Wildlife Habitat Spervisor for Region 5 of the California DFG, based in Long Beach. Massie has written an excellent report.

If not now receiving OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA you may subscribe for it by writing to the Documents Section, P.O. Box 20191, Sacramento, California 95820. A one year subscription is only two dollars. It is a real good buy.

ANOTHER REASON TO GET the OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA: A letter from Donald Swarthout, First Vice President of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, informs the editor that an article which Mr. Swarthout has written entitled, "THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BURRO". is to be published in the November - December issue of OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA. This is an interesting article and is written from the personal experiences of Mr. Swarthout extending back to his early ranching days as a youth in the Swarthout Valley of San Bernardino County. His father was a pioneer of the area settling there in 1851 and establishing the Heart-Bar Cattle Ranch in 1907. At the request of the San Bernardino County Museum Mr. Swarthout has collected specimens of animals and birds in the Kalihari Desert of Africa and in 1970 collected a ram(Ovis Ammon Darwini) from the Gobi Desert of Outer Mongolia.

SO, DO NOT MISS THIS ARTICLE BY our Vice President Donald M. Swarthout.

SHEEP DISEASE REPORT

BY
Carol Neilsen and Kenneth A. Neiland
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

With increasing pressure on Alaskan Dall sheep (Ovis dalli) populations from land selection and development, increased hunting and recreation etc., it has become imperative to understand the factors which govern sheep population fluctuations if the species is to be properly managed. The debilitating effects of parasites and chronic diseases interact with and aggravate, the effects of decreasing range size, range deterioration, bad weather, deep snow, predation and overpopulation, thus leading to serious population declines.

The most serious and pathogenic parasites of domestic sheep (Ovis aries) are the gastrointestinal trichostongylids These nematodes are worldwide in distribution and, as bloodsuckers, are chronically debilitating and even lethal to weakened adults and to lambs. These "stomach worms" were the most abundant parasite encountered in the Dall sheep gastrointestinal tract. During the period beginning in 1970 and through 1973 a total of 79 Dall sheep were collected for study, and from various ranges of the wild sheep. These 79 sheep were not examined with uniform thoroughness, largely due to field conditions. In general, the greatest numbers of these nematodes were found in the abosasum(stomach), duodenum and the the anterior two meters of the small intestine. They are difficult to detect, recover and estimate in numbers. The investigations showed that these nematodes are present in the sheep in at least modest numbers at all times of the year.....The 5 to 7 year age class contained the largest number of the mature nematodes.....Among sheep older than a year, there appears to be considerable variation in whether or not a substantial increase in the mature trichostrongylid burden occurs sometime during March, April or May. This phenomenon, well know in domestic sheep as the "spring rise" in Dall sheep is probably due to a complex of factors. Nutritional stress, associated with environmental conditions in the late winter and early spring, lowers the resistance of all animals, especially the pregnant ewes carrying near-term fetuses. Lowered resistance invites an increase in these parasites, which are dormant in temperatures below 10 degrees C. (50 F.) Unfortunately the "spring rise" phenomenon and greater infestation of the ewes corresponds precisely with the lambs period of greatest susceptibility to infection. All lambs probably become infected, particularly those whose mothers are heavily infected. If the infection becomes serious, it can, in conjunction withother stresses, ultimately be fatal to weak lambs. In most cases, however, the lamb probably ingests a moderate amount of infective larvae, but in small doses. The lamb will be chronically but not seriously weakened by the resulting infection. Lambs in herds with uncrowded, abundant pasture, and those whose mothers can resist or purge infection will obviously be at an advantage. Nematode eggs will have accumulated to some extent on the pasture by the end of the summer, at which time the lambs are becoming increasingly dependent on grazing rather than suckling. At this time, however, the lambs are also old enough to begin developing a resistance to infection by these internal parasites.- The bone marrow fat is an index by which the general condition of the animal can be determined. A low percentage of marrow fat indicates mobilization of the body energy reserves under prolonged conditions of negative energy balance.

An important difference between wild and domestic sheep is the the latter are usually confin ed in far greater concentrations than would ever be encountered in wild sheep. How ever the domestic sheep are moved from pasture to pasture by herders, and the disease-producing effects of crowding are held in check by medication. In contrast, bighorn sheep quickly succumb to desease, often the lungworm-pneumonia complex, when their range becomes overcrowded. Overcrowding also reduces tange quality which, aside from the obvious nutritional effects, will have and additional insidious effect. When forage is poor in quality, sheep will crop it more closely to the ground, thus ingesting large numbers of infective larvae even where these larvae have not moved but a short distance up the stems of the vegetation. Because of urbanization and development in the western US. overcrowding on reduced pasture area is one of the most serious problems facing Ovis canadensis. Fortunately, most Alaskan O. dalli ranges are not yet overcrowded. The seasonal migration of dall sheep over their home ranges determine how long and how often the sheep revisit any one pasture where feces have been deposited and infective larvae are present on the vegetation. Gastrointestinal nematodes do not become abundant in Dall sheep populations as a whole because their traditional use areas are still large enough that infective larvae are not concentrated, except perhaps around some of the mineral licks.

The general effect of the gastrointestinal nemetodes found is to chronically weaken their host, but usually only negligibly. Nevertheless, animals with moderate nematode burdens, particularly lambs during their first winter, are less able to digest crude proteins and dry matter due to the nematodes' pathological effects on the gastrointestinal mucosa. When coupled with loss of apetite another effect of the infection, reduction in digestibility, has serious consequences for animals on a low quality winter diet. The significance of these infections to survival, population recruitment and range conditions is important.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS of the Alaskan Department of Fish and Game are that the Dall sheep population in Alaska should be maintained at levels low enough to avoid overcrowding and over-utulization of established ranges. Up to a critical point of population density, gastrointestinal nematodes will have little effect on the health of sheep although infections chronically weaken them. However, beyond the critical point, although range deterioration may not yet be detectable, the concentration of nematode eggs on pasture will increase logarithmicly as animals reinfect themselves. This will lead not only to weakened adults, but, more seriously, to a drastic decrease in retruitment to the population. Lambs-of-the-year will be lost during the autumn and winter, when heavy loads of larvae attempt to mature in their digestive tracts.....-.Land use planning should avoid decisions that limit the size of established Dall sheep ranges.....-.The role of mineral licks in transferring nematode parasite species among subpopulations of sheep should be examined.

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DESERT BIGHORN CENSUS FOR THE SOUTHERN SECTOR

of

Anza-Borrego Desert State Park
(July 11 - 13, 1975)

Location	Ram	Ewe	Lamb	Yearlings	Unidentified	Total
McCain Valley	1	0	0	0	0	1
Grapevine Spring	0	0	0	0	0	0
Jacumba Jim Spring	2	3	0	0	0	5
Cimaron Spring	5	24	4	1	0	34
Four Frogs Spring	0	1	0	0	0	1
Blackwater Spring	3	34	1 1	6	0	54[1]
Diablo Spring	3	14	0	0	0	17
Carrizo Spring	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carrizo Palms	0	0	0	0	0	0
Macho Spring	0	0	0	0	10	10
TOTALS	14	76	15	7	10	122

Age and Sex Ratios for the Southern Section

Lamb: Ewe	Ram :Ewe	Yearling: Ewe
20: 100	11: 100	9: 100

Northern Section of Anza-Borrego State Park------Total count 196 animals

34 :100	39: 100	30: 100

East Mojave Unit: total animals sighted not given

5:100	59: 100	2: 100

Burros sighted 144-----5 were foals of the year.

Glen Sudmeier counted 16 sheep in the Turtle Mountains;
John Massie and his crew couned 157 sheep at Hackberry and Old Dad Spring

Total sheep count given 502 animals.

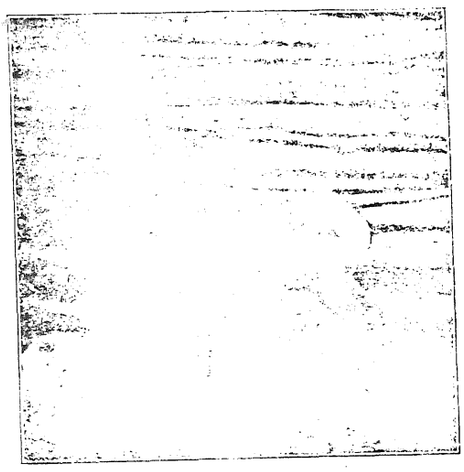
Total of quail counted given as 2,878
Total Chukar 529
Total doves counted . ..... 4,350 . In addition in this case, however, some watchers reported that there were too many doves to give even a close approximation.
Brood ratios given were:

Quail.....	7.8	young per each pair of adults
Chukar	8.1	" " " " " "
Mountain quail	8.7	" " " " " "

Many cottontail and jack rabbits were reported as were sightings of coyote

Individuals reported as sighting sheep were:
Loren Lutz at Tachevah and Blue Spring total 43, including 1 ram , 1 sick lamb
Maynard Swarthout at Sheep Spring-------18 ewes and 2 rams
James Deforge in Hurrican Canyon saw 1 ram
Lee Lutz in Blaisdell Canyon saw 47 sheep.

Many others watched water sites across the desert for the three day period in the heat and always scanty shade,(usually provided by the observer) but saw no bighorns. Their contribution to the count is just as important to the census of bighorns as those who did have sightings of our wild sheep, and they are to be especially commended for their fulfillment of the task, even though not rewarded by seeing any sheep.



Count Boni de Castellane

but as I was doing so he threw his head around and struck me in the breast with the point of one of his sharp horns so hard that it cracked one of my ribs. I do not think the sheep was trying to fight, but was just struggling to get away.

I hardly got myself and the sheep out of sight behind my hiding place, when a full grown big-horn came in sight on top of the hill. I had another trap or two up there ready for him if he came down the right way, but I was not particularly pleased to see him, for my rib was hurting me so badly that I could hardly breath, and he had a wild, defiant bearing that seemed to say: "don't monkey with me."

But sheep were too scarce and hard to capture to think of scaring him away purposely; so I held the sheep that I had just captured the best I could to keep him from making any noise, and resolved to give the old boy the best fight I could if he got into a trap. After looking over the ground till he was satisfied, he came slowly down the hill following up the track of the little buck.

He was very nervous, and easily startled; for he well knew that all watering places were highly dangerous localities where he was liable to be killed. Whether guided by instinct or reason, he certainly felt a sense of security in following up the route of a sheep that had just went to water with safety so far as he could tell. And this conclusion on the part of the animal proved to be good judgment, and saved him from falling into the hands of an enemy. For when he came to where the little buck had been caught, he was able to tell that the other sheep had had trouble there, and knew that it would be dangerous to go any further. And although he must have been very thirsty, he turned and went away without coming any nearer to the spring.

A man going for water to a spring that he knew was most likely guarded by an enemy so terrible that he had no power to resist it, would wisely decide to follow the track of a friend that had just went to the spring ahead of him. But when he found where his friend had met some mysterious disaster that had most likely made away with him, he would very wisely decide to go no further, and to get away from there.

And now my critics,—would you say that the man was prompted by instinct, or reason.

"Why, by reason of course, and sound reason at that."

But when a dumb animal follows the same course of action for the same purpose, comes to the same wise conclusions, and saves its life; what is that?

"Oh, well, that's instinct."

Yes, I expect so; but I guess not.

I tied the little buck up very short to prevent him from hurting himself, gave him a drink of water, and took his picture. He was so high-headed, defiant and scrappy, that I decided to call him Count Boni de Castellane.

The next morning my sore rib was so bad that it hurt me to take a long breath, blow my nose, sneeze, lie down or get up. When I went to feed the Count, I suppose my etiquette must have been bad, for he would have nothing to do with me, and made me get around lively. I felt too sore to mix with him, and allowed him to have his own way for several days; which caused him to feel and act more like a Count than ever. When I got better he still acted like a Count, but one with his pockets turned inside out.

No sheep came around for several days, and I was very glad of it. The incompatibility that had existed between the Count and me was slowly fading away; but the Count loved neither me nor my coarse, crude manners. Still he put up with them—because I slapped his jaws till he had to.

It is necessary to go around and have a look at the traps once a day, whether any sheep come in or not; for the coyotes, wildcats, foxes and rabbits are a great nuisance and often spring the traps just before the sheep come along. The desert chipmunks seem to take great pleasure in digging them out in the daytime, and the rat does the same job by night.

Once I found where a sheep had come in and watered in the night without my knowing it. This they do not often do, although they will frequently come in just at the peep of day, and in the morning is their favorite time to water.

About ten days after I had captured the Count two sheep came in one morning, and were coming toward the water when the Count, who was tied where he could see up on the hill, bawled to them. Whether it was a call of welcome, or one of warning, I do not know; but I do know that they were afraid of it, and at once turned and started back up the hill. They only went a short distance, however, when they turned again and walked around the side of the hill to where one of my traps was set, and a full grown ewe stepped into it. I was greatly pleased for it was the first ewe that I had ever caught.

She came floundering down the side of the hill over the rocks as they usually do, and I was ready and caught her when she reached the foot of the bluff. She had managed to twist around in the trap some way and cut her foot rather badly. She made no attempt to fight me, and I tied her and carried her to camp. The Count was very glad to see her and bawled to her again, but she would have nothing to do with him.

The voice of a buck sheep is a low, coarse, rasping sound, that cannot be heard very far. The ewes bawl much louder, not so coarse, and the sound is rather long drawn, but neither sex do much bawling.

I then washed the ewe's foot, fixed it up the best I could, and tied her so that she and the Count could touch noses but could not tangle up. The sheep that was with the ewe when I captured her was her 20 months old lamb. If a ewe loses her lamb, or fails to have one in spring, her yearling ewe-lamb will follow her till one of the two has a lamb. But if her lamb be a male he will not follow his mother much after he is a year old, because the old bucks will not allow him to. Mountain sheep do not breed till they are two years old, and I never saw but one lamb with a ewe at a time. When born the little ones are the same color as the adults.

When this big lamb saw me capture its mother it did not run off nor seem badly scared, but stood up on the rocks about 100 yards away and watched me. I tied the old ewe and the Count where the lamb could see them, and made sure that I would have it in a day or two, at most. But I had hardly got things arranged to suit me, when another ewe and a little lamb, about two and a half or three months old, came in sight. The big lamb went over to them, and after the three of them had taken a look at the Count and the old ewe that I had tied up in camp, they appeared to be satisfied, and all came down to the spring at once. They came within about 25 yards of me, and I took several snaps at them with my kodak.

The ewe that was tied up occasionally charged around and made a big noise, and the Count held his head up and looked wild; but the other sheep did not scare at them, and stayed there for several hours. When they finally started to leave, the little lamb stepped into one of the traps and was caught. Its mother and the big lamb ran up on some rocks a short distance away and stopped. I hurried out with the intention of staking the lamb out on the side of the hill with a long rope till I could get its mamma and the big lamb, for now I felt sure that I would get both of them.

So I hurridly took the lamb out of the trap and tied a long rope to it's neck, intending to let it run up on the rocks where the two other sheep could see it. But when I turned it loose, a circus began that I never saw the like of. Greatly to my surprise it did not try to run away, but would jump as high as it could, twist around, and sometimes turn over, alighting on its sides or on its back as often as it did on its feet. I saw that it was beating itself up badly, so caught it and carried it down to a little sand wash where there were no rocks and turned it loose again. But it was worse to cut up than any big sheep I ever captured. It continued to jump and fall down and beat its head on the ground and before I knew it had both eyes so badly hurt that it could not see a particle.

I saw at once that to use the lamb for a decoy to trap the ewe was a failure, that it would very soon kill itself if it hadn't already done so. So I took it into camp and held it very close with two ropes, as I did the old sheep. But its horns were only about two inches long, so I had to tie the ropes around its neck. And then it would turn summersaults enough in about a minute to twist the rope so tight that it could not breathe. So I took the ropes off its neck and tied it down, but it still continued to struggle and beat its head on the ground. I then took it over to my bed and held its head in my lap till dark; I got supper, and then had to be up with it all night. The next morning I put a long rope on its neck again, and let it up, but although it was stone blind, with head swelled so badly that it could hardly breathe, it was as bad as ever. I worked with it all that day and all that night, but the next morning it was so near dead that it could not get up. I took the ropes off it, laid it on my bed, and went and gathered some grass for the other sheep.

When I came back I was greatly surprised to find it standing up. I got it to drink a little water, then went to a mining camp, got some condensed milk, and in a few days it learned to eat boiled barley and milk. It could not see any for about two weeks, and one eye was blind for two months. Now, however, it is slick and fat and as tame and playful as a kitten.

(To be continued.)

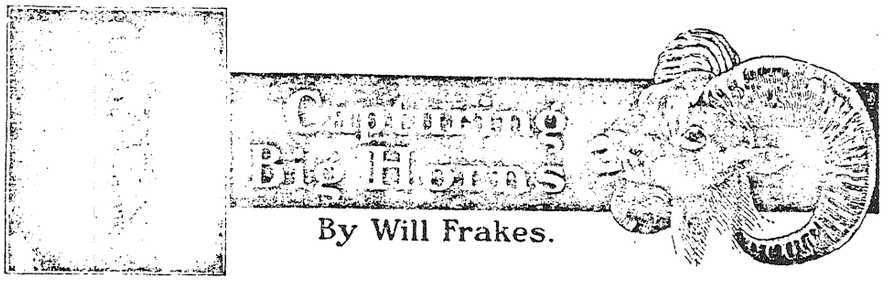
Please: return the enclosed post Card to Doctor Lutz and Come to the Annual Dinner at Michael's in Los Angeles October 4th

CAPTURING BIGHORNS
by
Will Frakes

NOTE:

A few months ago THE SHEEPHERDER carried one installment of the narrative of Will Frakes as he described his capturing of desert bighorn sheep nearly 70 years ago (1906) in the eastern Mojave Desert. His tale seems incredible. Yet, his pictures show that he actually did capture some bighorns. Late this spring (1975) a hand forged steel trap with offset jaws was found in one of the washes in the Avawatz Mountains to the south of Death Valley. It was still in working order, except that the pan which releases the trap when set was missing. QUESTION: was this perhaps one of the traps that was used by Will Frakes back in 1906? Let's continue with the story of Will Frakes.

This installment is photo copied from WESTERN FIELD - THE PACIFIC COAST MAGAZINE is not too clear. However if it were re-typed this installment would take up all the space in this issue of THE SHEEPHERDER



PART II.

NOW that the traps were set, and the camp fixed to suit me, the everlasting waiting and watching began. I lay there in the shade and watched the humming-birds sucking the flowers of the desert willows—which are not willows, but look like them and have flowers resembling a morning-glory. Each humming-bird appeared to own a portion of the tree, and would not allow the other birds to come near its flowers.

I peeped out many a time that day, but no sheep came in sight. The next day was the same. I studied the birds, the ants and the lizards, and watched for sheep, but none came. The next morning I had just settled down to business when I saw a buck sheep's head peep over the top of the hill. The humming-birds might all have massacred one another, and the ants swallowed the lizards: I would not have turned my head then to have seen the entire performance.

The sheep stepped up on to a rock and looked up and down the canon for a long time. As he stood there silhouetted against the sky, I thought he looked too big for the little buck, but when he came nearer I saw that it was the same sheep that I had seen at first. He came down the hill very cautiously, stopping every little ways to see if he could detect the presence of any enemy that might be there. He came down on top of a high bluff about 30 yards from me, and I took two snaps at him with my kodak without scaring him. He then climbed down a very steep place where I had no traps set, got a drink, climbed back the same way, and after standing around on the rocks for a while, left without going near any of the traps.

I was not very badly disappointed, for I felt sure that he would come back again in a few days as I had been told that there was a mining camp at every other spring on the mountain, and I knew he would not go near a spring if he made the discovery that a man was around there. So I whiled away time with the bugs and lizards for two days more.

The third morning about sunrise I heard rocks rolling, and peeping out saw a ewe and her lamb. They were at the spring before I saw them, and stayed there for about half an hour. They seemed to be nearly perished for water and kept drinking every little while. They were within about 25 yards of me, and although I wanted to take their picture the worst way, my kodak was out of reach and I did not dare to try to get it for fear of scaring them. I felt sure they would come back again if they were not scared, so I remained very quiet and contented myself with having a good look at them so close; for it is not every day that one gets within 25 yards of a wild mountain sheep.

As they started up over the rocks I saw that they were going straight for one of the traps. When I saw that the old ewe was about to step into one of them, I hurriedly picked up a rope to tie her with, grabbed a clamp to get the trap off, inwardly hoping that she would not hurt her foot very badly—and she didn't; she turned out of the trail within a few feet of the trap, and walked quietly away up the side of the mountain.

That made me feel rather reckless, and as soon as the ewe and lamb were out of sight I began to abuse Old Luck and step around camp without my usual caution. Presently I looked up and just at the same time I saw the little buck's head pop up over the hill. I was in plain sight, but instantly dropped behind a bush.

"Some sheep will get me yet," I said to myself. I had to dodge, watch, and hide so much, not wanting to hurt nor kill them; that in a way it seemed that I was the hunted.

I lay there and watched him through the bush but could not tell whether he had seen me or not; but after he had kept me lying there in the sun till I was nearly cooked, he started to come on down and I knew that I was safe. The first time he stepped out of sight behind some rocks, I got into camp in a hurry.

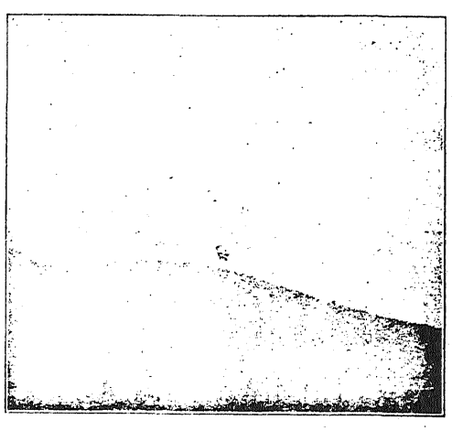
In a minute or two I peeped out to see where the sheep was, and saw him coming down the trail that the ewe and lamb had started up, and where my best trap was set. I thought sure I was going to get him, but the day before I had cut down a little foot high cactus that was in my way, and left it lying there, and he saw that. He knew that it was not there when he came along that road before, and he didn't like the looks of it. It looked like it might catch a sheep.

He finally ventured up and smelled of it, but still he was not quite satisfied; and it looked very much as if he was going to turn around and go back. He was then within about two feet of the trap, and stood there for quite awhile undecided what to do. He did not like the idea of going by that cactus, and still it did not look very bad, and he wanted a drink. So he concluded to run by it just to be safe, and the first jump he made he popped both forefeet into my best trap, and came rolling down the steep side hill in company with a log chained to the trap, about as heavy as the sheep. I expected that he thinks to this day that it was all the work of that devilish cactus.

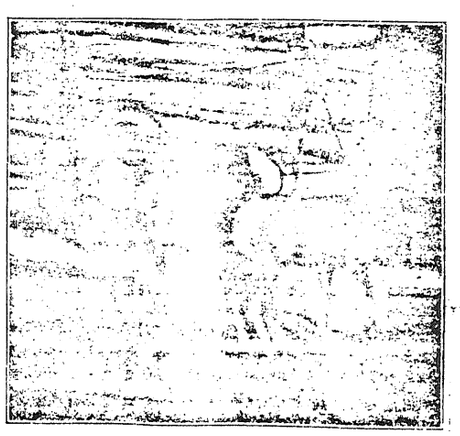
The chain wrapped around his body as he rolled and the heavy log drew the trap and his feet tight against his breast, and held them there so he could not get up. And to make matters worse, here came a great hairy looking man, and jumped right onto him. Did ever a poor sheep have such luck!

His heart was pounding away in a manner that certainly must have been dangerous, and his eyes looked as though they were ready to drop out. I did what I could, the next few minutes, to quiet his fears a little, for it is a fact that a mountain sheep can sometimes be scared to death. So soon as his heart quit beating so furiously, I tied him and took the trap off. He was the smallest sheep that I had ever captured, and would not have weighed over 75 or 80 pounds.

He was a regular tender-foot "ibex", with long graceful horns that pointed back, and a light trim body. He hardly looked as though he would some day develop into a heavy-bodied big-horn, with a head as heavy or nearly as heavy as his entire self was now. I picked him up and carried him into camp,



"As He Stood there Silhouetted Against the Sky"



A Tenderfoot "Ibex" (on right)