SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

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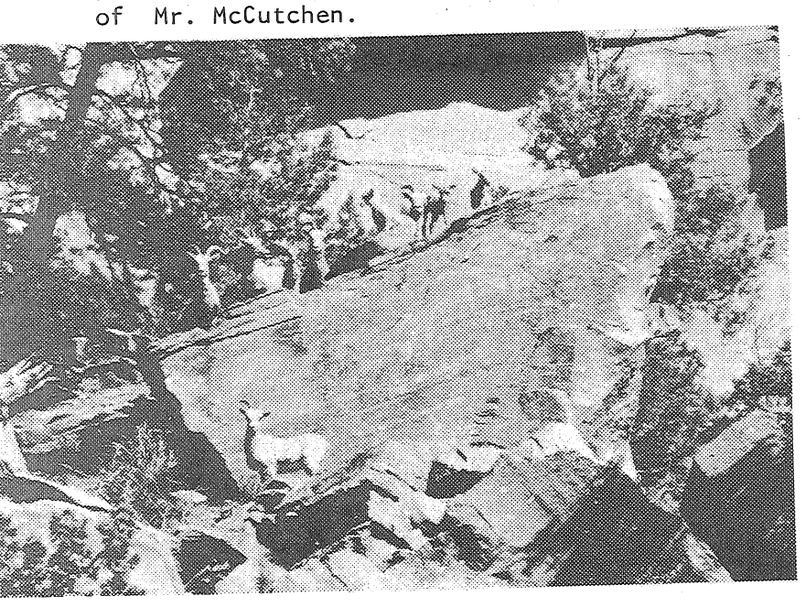
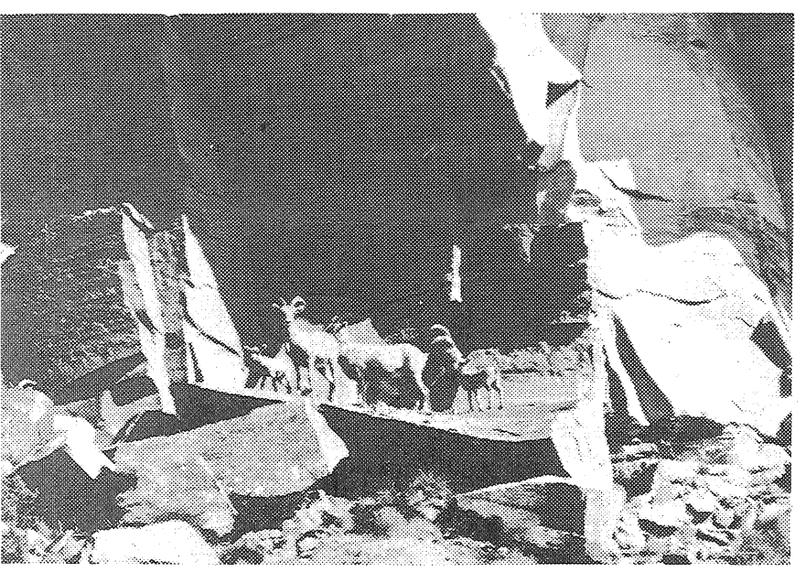
JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1976

BIGHORNS RETURN TO ZION

During the last meeting of the Desert Bighorn Council, held in Indio this past April 1975, Henry E. McCutchen, Research Biologist of the Zion National Park presented a paper entitled, DESERT BIGHORN RESTORATION AT ZION NATIONAL PARK, UTAH. Early in November Mr. McCutchen furnished the editor with a copy of the paper and also gave the accompanying photos of the bighorns now in the park. The following article is taken from the report of Mr. McCutchen.





Bighorn sheep (Ovis Canadensis) were extirpated in Zion National Park, Utah, in the early 1950's. A program is being conducted by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, the Utah State Division of Wildlife Resources and the Nevada State Department of Fish and Game to restore the species in Zion National Park and southwestern Utah. In 1973, 12 desert bighorns (Ovis Canadensis nelsoni), from Nevada, were released into an 80-acre holding-propogation enclosure in the park. Four mortalities of the original stock have occurred. Four lambs have been born and have survived. Management and research plans are discussed. The outlook for the project is optomistic.

The presence of desert bighorns in the park after an absence of over 20 years is a testimonial to the harmony with which federal and state agencies and individuals can work together to achieve a common worthwhile goal. In this case, it is to reestablish a species of wildlife facing an uncertain future into an area of former historic range. Hopefully, this project will help give the desert bighorn population an advantage over the forces that are working against it. Many people and several organizationa have been involved in this project. The two people whose efforts have been outstanding were the late Dr. Charles Hansen and Robert D. (Jake) Metherall. Their untimely deaths have been reported in THE SHEEPHERDER. Without their infectious enthusiasm it is doubtful if the project would have gotten "off-the-ground" for a number of years.

The agencies and organizations involved in this project have been the National Park Service, the Utah State Division of Wildlife REsources, the Nevada State Department of Fish and Game, the Arizona State Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. the Bureau of Land Management, Utah State University, Zion Natural History Association and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Zion National Pak comprises 147,034 acres. Elevations range from 3,700 feet in the south to 8,700 feet in the north. Many of the narrow canyons are 2,000 feet in depth. Within this varied topography there are several life zones with plant associations representing

the Lower Sonoran and Upper Sonoran Transition and Canadian life zones. Talus slopes and benches drop about 1,000 feet to the canyon floor. These areas have a varied vegetation. Pinyon, Juniper and sagebrush are dominant, with blackbrush communities occurring in the extreme lower elevations. The lower valley bottoms consist of flood plains containing grasses such as cheatgrass, sand dropseed and gallata. The average annual percipitation in Zion ranges from 22 inches in the higher elevations to 12 inches at the lower. This percipitation comes in two general seasons---during winter and early spring and then also in the summertime during the sometimes severe thunderstorms. Temperatures like other desert areas vary gratly. Extremes are from a -15 degrees to 112 degrees F.

Petroglyphs of bighorns found within the park suggest that the early indians observed the species frequently in the area and were familiar enough with them to inscribe their images upon stone. No written record of bighorns in the park have been found. The park was established in 1919 and since that time up through 1936 there are records of sightings. A record of 1938 gave an estimate ranging from 6 to 25 bighorns. Population numbers then seemed to decline with the last sighting of a ewe on Waterman Mountain in 1953. Although records are lacking, the settlers undoubtedly utilized the bighorn and other wild game for the table.. There was heavy grazing of the area by domètic sheep, cattle and horses until the 1930's. The Zion-Mount Camel Highway was completed in 1930, and this highway cut across a large portion of bighorn habitat making it more accessible to the park visitor. Poaching in the earlY days was suspected, but difficult to prevent. Mule deer population increased significantly between 1930 and the 1960's; mountain lions, coyotes and bobcats have been present in varying numbers. All of these factors probably have had an adverse impact of bighorn numbers leading to their decline and extirpation.

By 1964, Chief Park Ranger Delmer Armstrong was making an effort toward re-establishment of bighorn to the Zion area. He encouraged Wildlife Ranger Bruce Moorhead and Research Biologist Lowell Sumner in studies of the range and factors involving disappearance of the bighorns. In 1967 Dr. Charles Hansen visited the park for several days and became familiar with the area. He indicated that the area seemed favorable to bighorns and that the decreasing livestock use outside the park was an encouragement to a re-estlishment program. The next year Robert D. (Jake) Metherall transferred to the Park with new enthusiasm and he with Dr. Hansen made an extensive backcountry investigation of southeastern portion of the park. They found the area contained range in good condition and that there was adequate water and terrain for bighorns; with a carrying capacity of about 100 animals. Metherell also obtained the cooperation of Floyd Coles and Rodney Johns of the Utah State Division of Wildlife Services in this planning effort. In 1969, Park Superintendent Karl Gilbert submitted Metherell 's bighorn restoration plan to the Washington Office, and it was approved.

In 1940 Dr. Ian McTaggart Cowan (University of British Columbia) had referrred to the bighorns of Zion as being Ovis Canadensis canadensis, but that the area seemed to be one where there was an overlapping of o.c.c.; o.c. nelsoni; and o.c. mexicana . Stephen D. Durantt in 1952 reviewed the findings of Cowan and suggested that if adequate specimens were availble the bighorns of southwestern Utah would most likely be Ovis candensis nelsoni, as this specie is more readily adapted to desert conditions. The Zion Natural History Association contributed $3,000.00 and with Park funding a fencing of an enclosure was begun in 1969 and completed the next year.

The River Mountain Herd at Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Nevada was chosen as a likely source of bighorns for transplanting to Zion. National Park Service James A. Blaisdell (presently at Klamath Falls, Oregon) volunteered his services and began contacting the many agencies and individuals that would be involved in carrying out the project.

In 1971 Dr. Hansen again surveyed the Boulder Beach area and observed 100 different individual animals and estimated that 10 animals could be removed from this herd without harm. Further meetings were held that year making necessary plans for trapping and transportation. A cooperative agreement was signed in 1972 between the Park SErvice; Utah Div. of Wildlife Resources; and the Nevada Department of Fish and Game. It was agreed that the first 12 sheep to be released from the brood stock was to be made into the Zion National Park and the second 12 animals would be released by the State of Utah at their discretion.

In July 1973 there were quite a number of bighorns watering at the sewage lagoon site on Boulder Beach; the trap was prepared and transportation vehicles readied for use. The frst sheep were trapped on July 9th, a mature ewe and ram---five others were marked and released for study. On July 10, there were three trappings. Eight more sheep were obtained for Zion. Four animals were marked, or radio-collared, and released. Temperatures during the trapping process were up to 115 degrees F. The ten bighorns made the trip to Zion with no problems adn were released into the enclosure the next morning. On August 23, 1973, two additional rams were obtained for the project by the Nevada Department of Fish and Game. One, a three-year-old, was from the Corn Creek Field Station at the Desert National Wildlife RAnge, Nevada and the other, originally also from the River Mountain herd came from the enclosure at Hawthorne, Nevada.

Although the potential is present, no predation has occurred within the enclosure. Trackings show that there are mountain lions, coyotes, and bobcats in the area. Dogs running at large have so far been no problem , although the town of Springdale, only a mile away, is outside the park. Mule deer do enter and leave the enclosure at will--over the fence. .....Rutting period during 1974 lasted from July into December...The ram from Lake Mead was injured during this period and kept to himself until his death. The ram from Corn Creek also seemed stressed, and continually attempted to get out of the enclosure until his death also. It would appear that a subordinate ram needed more space than was available within the enclosure in order to avoid conflicts with a more dominant ram. The first lamb to be born was on December 17, 1973; the second December 25; a third on March 27, 1974 and the fourth on April 1, 1974 . Two of the lambs that had been transplanted into the enclosure in July were found dead in August and September; whorled milkweed was

suspected as the caused of death of one as it was one of the two green plants in the enclosure at the time.

A letter from Henry E. McCutchen, Park Biologist states in part,: "During October our seven year old ram died and this was a great loss to the project. Also one of our yearling rams died from injuries sustained in a fight in October.
At present there are seventeen animals within the enclosure. There are seven mature ewes, one yearling ewe, two yearling rams (Which I believe will take care of the breeding), and seven lambs.
We are considering releasing ten or eleven animals outside the enclosure in late winter; however, would like to discuss this with our cooperators, the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Nevada Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Land Management, before any determination is made. If a release is made, we will keep five or six animals within the enclosure for breeding stock."

From this it seems apparant that the outlook for the restoration of desert bighorns in Zion National Park and southwestern Utah is optomistic. The animals are alert and in good condition and have adjusted well to the enclosure .

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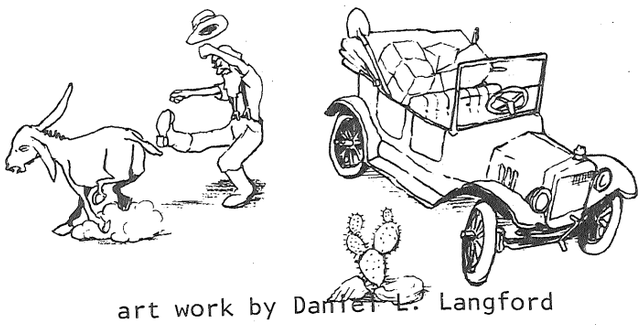
RECOMMENDED READING

If you have not already done so, then, be certain to readan article- BIGHORN ON THE RUN by Michael Tennesen in the October-November issue of the National Wildlife magazine. The Desert Bighorn Council members and some from the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep furnished Tennesen with a lot of background information.



art work by Daniel L. Langford

Also read---THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BURRO written by our own Don Swarthout in the November- December issue of OUTDOOR CALIFORNIA the bi-monthly publication of the California Department of Fish and Game. Subscriptions to this publication are only $2.00 per year. Subscription address is:
Documents Section,
P.O. Box 20191,
Sacramento, California 95820

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WILD HORSE AND BURRO HEARING HELD AT CHINA LAKE

On December 5, 1975 a public hearing was held at the Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, California before the National Advisory Board on Wild and Free-Roaming Horses and Burros. Unfortunately the Board did not have a quorum present to hear the testimony given that day, nor to see first hand the environmental degredation which has taken place on the Naval Weapons Center due to heavy livestock grazing and also that of the some 300 so-called wild horses and another 1,600 feral burros. There were between 70 and 75 people who were present at the hearing. Natural Resource Specialists Mrs. Tilly Barling of the NWC and Peter G. Sanchez of the Death Valley National Monument had a series of slides which showed the effects of this overgrazing on the desert environment. They together with Dr. Milford Fletcher of the Bandolier National Monument in New Mexico, Richard S. Rayner, Acting Superintendent of the DVNM and Dick Weaver of the California Department of Fish and Game were present and answered many questions put to them by Advisory Board Members.. Jim De Forge gave a presentation for the Desert Bighorn Council; Walter Powell and Bud Weideman for the Society; your Editor represented the Sportsmen's Council of Central California; there were many others present who testified and requested that management procedures be instituted at once for the control of numbers of the wild and/ or feral animals. There was no testimony given that supported the continuing protection given to the feral burro, There were three people present who did testify in support of complete protection for the 'wild horses'. One individual , who was not present, did send in a lengthy and bitterly scathing paper. This was read to the Board and assemblage by Bill Reavley, a member of the Board. It is presently thought that there are in California at least 3,600 feral burros. These are most highly concentrated in the area of the NWC, the Death Vally National Monument and those National Resource Lands adjacent to and joing them. This is the area where initial management efforts need be directed

The California Natural Resources Federation (the California affiliate of the National Wildlife Federation) told the National Advisory Board on December 5th that management agencies must have whatever authority and funding is necessary for the control, management and disposition of horses and burros in a practical humane manner. In addition to testifying CNRF also published a news release on their statement. The news release quotes President Russ Penny : "CNRF supports the maintenance of a wild horse and burro population for aesthetic and histroical values but strongly concludes that wild horse and burro numbers must be kept in control, protecting soil resources and providing for other uses on the public lands in addition to the horses and burros. CNRF consulted with representatives of the Wildlife Society and the Society of Range Management in obtaining scientific data. Members desiring more specific information are advised to ask the office for copies of the staement and the news release. (Address-CNRF 451 Parkfair Drive, Suite 2, Sacramento California 95825.

National legislation for the control of wild horses and burros and the protection of the environmnet is still in limbo. Aletter from the Honorable John Melcher, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Interior and Insular Committee informs me, the editor, that the wording of H.R. 2935 has been deleted from the so called BLM Organic Act until such time as a public hearing is held, (probably in Washington).

As previously noted, The National Advisory Board on Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros did not have a quorum present at the meeting in China Lake and can make no recommendations until such time as they hold a meeting of the Board. George Lea of the Washington Office of the Bureau of Land Management has informed the editor that no such meeting of the Board has been set. It is believed that a recommendation for management will come from the Board, as all of those present recognize that there is a severe problem between these feral animals and the desert environment. Mrs. Velma Johnston, known far and wide as "Wild Horse Annie", stated that she had filed an affadavit with the U.S. Court that she considers management of the numbers of wild horses and burros to be needed.

On December 6th there were about 30 of the people present on the 5th who took the field trip arranged for and led by Mrs. Tilly Barling into some of the more remote parts of the Naval Weapons Center. Mrs. Barling had also arranged for the use of a Navy jet-powered helicopter to take the members of the Advisory Board into areas not visible from the roads within the NWC. They were impressed with what they saw. They even saw 5 bighorn sheep in one area. The caravan in cars saw 67 burros and 5 wild horses during the day. Near the Junction Ranch where we had lunch, the Department of Fish and Game had built an exclosure in 1973. The vegetation within this exclosure is already showing a great deal of improvement. The vegetation outside the exclosure is available to usage of cattle, horses and burros. In those areas which are beyond the distance that cattle, horses and burros can travel from water there is also a very great difference and improvement of the vegetation.

It is not known at this time what the decision of the US Supreme Court will be in their judgement of the constitutionallity of PL 92-195 the so Called Wild Hore and Burro Act of 1971. The US District Court on February 28, 1975 ruled the Act unconstitutional. We understand that the Supreme Court will discuss this matter sometime in January 1976. There is no idea of when a judgement will be rendered. In the meantime the horses and burros will continue to "do their thing".

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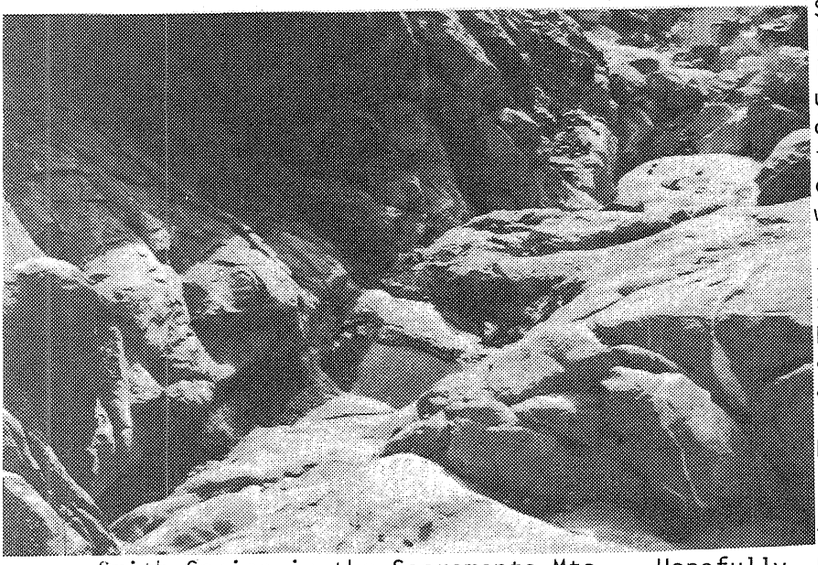
VOLUNTEER DESERT WATER PROGRAM LEADERS

ATTENTION



Smith Spring in the Sacramento Mts. Hopefully a water developement and storage site for 1976. Lew Carpenter--project leader.

Glenn W. Sudmeier, Chairman of the Society's Committee on Water for Wildlife is requesting that each member of the Society who is currently doing any field work under this program to forward to him all of the various reports concerning their field work; water source restoration and/or developement projects; their search for water and the finding of water or the finding that once listed waters no longer exist; their fin dings of suitable water developement sites and recommendations concerning such project(s); Photos of the site recommended as at left; waterhole counts listing types and numbers of species using the water;etc.

Glenn's address is: 1728 Hillside Ave., Norco, California 91760. His telephone (714) 735-4387. Glenn will transmit the information on to the proper destinations. The reason for this is so the Society will have first hand information on which areas are being covered and which areas are still in need of active volunteer leaders. There are many areas that have had no leadership to the present and other areas where the one time leaders have ceased to be active. Glenn will be glad to assign any volunteers to the specific areas of their choice, if possible. Report forms are available through Glenn. He has sent in the following report concerning the :

REHABILITATION OF WEAVERNOY GUZZLER.

Sudmeier"s report states that on December 6, 1975 that he and 11 other men did restore this water project to working condition. Glenn states:, "(We) dug out behind both dams and insta lled new water pick-up screens (Johnson type); back filled with large rocks for screen support, protection and water flow. All tools, buckets and screens were supplied by the Department of Fish and Game. The Weavernoy large animal guzzler was originally installed in the spring of 1974 (May 18) the lower dam which was constructed to trap the spring water has worked periodically. However, the major effort which was the upper dam and storage tank assembly has not functioned yet. This is <u>not</u> due to lack of rainfall but lack of a proper pickup system. With new professionally made screen intact and with the drinker valve held manually shut with a large rock the storage tanks should fill with the next rain. There were a total of 12 people involved in the modification project:

they were: Rick Caine, Paul Gavis, Roger Cole, Wayne Safford (guest), Doug Bundy, Mike Feance, Ron Vickery and John Rice all of the Sylmar Sportsmen's Club; From the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep - Glenn Sudmeier and his guests Dick Graham, Mike Schmidt and Linda Zickefoose. No DFG personnel were present on this project.

The Sylmar Sportsmen's Club drove 3 vehicles and traveled a total of 1680 vehicle miles. The Sheep Society used two vehicles and traveled a total of 887 vehicle miles. All 12 people were involved in the work, which began at 9:30 a.m. and ended at 11:30 a.m., which totals 24 man hours. There waa also a 45 minute walk to and from the project site. Glenn adds, "I intend to visit the project again after the next major rain storm. If water has been collected, I will start the drinker and adjust the float valve, and submit another report at that time."

Glenn also reports that this past August he and Mike Scmidt had gone to the Weavernoy project intending to make a 3 day count. However, there was no water nor were there any sheep sign present. In August of 1974 he had observed 6 sheep in the area during a 3 day observation period.

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ALASKAN WILDS CLAIM EX-PROF.

Dr. William Graf, retired Professor of Biology who taught for almost 30 years at San Jose State University was found dead of exposure in the Alaskan Wilderness on September 22nd.

Graf, 62, retired last June. He had been a specialist on wildlife management and was on vacation near Dillingham in the Bristol Bay area.

He was pursuing his wildlife studies when he apparantly was caught in a storm while boating. Searchers reported that Graf caught in the storm with night approaching, beached his boat and set up camp. Apparantly the storm inundated his camp and drove him to higher, unprotected ground.

Graf a native of Odessa, Russia came to the United States at a young age.

He received his Ph.D. at Oregon State University and taught a year at Arizona State University before joining the SJS faculty just after World War II. He served in the Army in France during the war.

Graf had made many trips to Alaska both in pursuit of his own studies and as consultant for private firms.

ARE THERE ANY BIGHORNS IN THE YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK?

This is a recurring question. The March-April issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried a report sent the editor by Dick Riegelhuth, Chief, Resources Management of the Yosemite National Park. During the November meeting of the California Conservation Council the editor was asked concerning plans for re-introduction of bighorns into the park. Actually there has been no change during the intervening 9 month period. Actually, the question can not be answered at present. As noted in the March report information is not full and complete. There have been only 26 sightings of bighorns in the Park since the year 1901 that have been logged. It is quite possible there may have been other sightings that were not reported or not logged. There is no knowledge to confirm whether the sheep sightings reported were of resident animals or were only transient in the area. Sheep frequently do wonder quite a distance. A recent letter from Dick Riegelhuth does contain information of interest that has not been previously reported. Dick writes:

"The idea of reestablishing bighorn in Yosemite National Park originated in the landmark report, "Wildlife Management in the National Parks," submitted by the Secretary's Advisory Board on Wildlife Management, March 4, 1963. That Board recommended a primary management goal, 'that the biotic associations within each park be maintained, or where necessary, recreated, as nearly as possible in the condition that prevailed when the area was first visited by the white man."

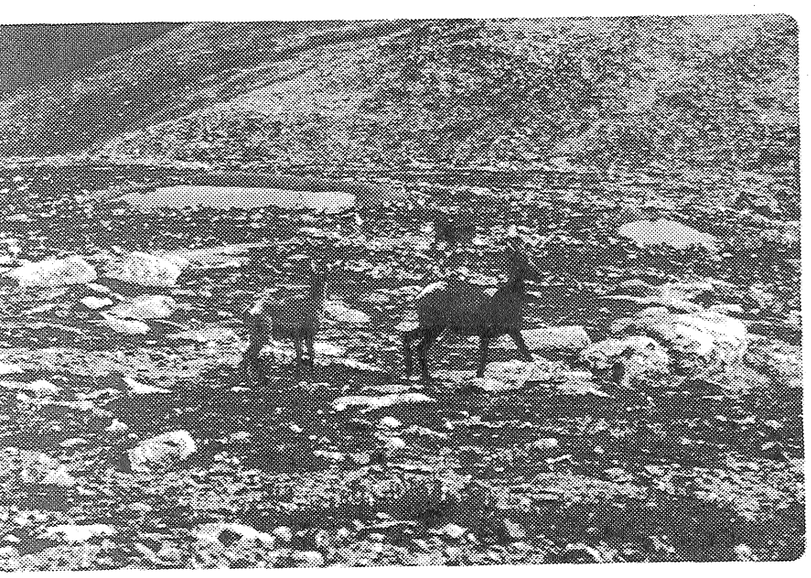

Photo of ewe and her lamb taken on Mount Evans---State of Colorado---August 1975 at the 14,000' level-----the editor

As a method, the Board suggested the National Park Service take the lead in studying the bighorn problem and in formulating cooperative management plans with other agencies even though the management problem lies outside the Park boundary. Our recent efforts have mostly entailed aerial surveys designed to further delineate the ancestral summer ranges and refine our knowledge on zones of potential bighorn habitat, within existing patterns of public use. Levels of back country use, travel behaviour and a variety of factors contributing to "human pressure" are now being evaluated for their effect on the Park's backcountry and wildlife.

For the time being, the bighorn project lives in the hearts of many Park personnel, but the funding realities are overshadowed by major programs involving management of visitors. I am sorry to report the fiscal outlook does not appear capable of supporting a substantive effort for at least the next three years or longer." end quote.

There is no evidence at the present that any relict band of bighorn exist in the Park.

BIGHORN SEASON RATED ABOVE AVERAGE

As the Bighorn sheep hunt ended on December 21, information from the Arizona Game and Fish Department's regional offices, although incomplete- was enough to give some idea of how the hunt went this past season, of 1975.

Kelly Neal, the Departments regional game specialist in Phoenix, said this year's hunt was about average, but the size of the rams was a bit smaller than usual. The largest ram checked through Phoenix was a monster whose horns measured 36-7/8 on the right side and 39-1/8 on the left.

In the Department's Region 3 Kingman office, Game Specialist Kent Jackson said the hunt in that area had gone very well, but agreed with Neal that the overall size of the rams this year was a bit small.

The best horns checked out at Kingman taped 32-6/8 on the right side, and 34-3/8 on the left. Jackson said all four of the Region's units, including the Hualapai Reservation, reported sheep taken.

Bob Weaver, the Department's game specialist in Yuma, said that Region 4 had had a pretty good hunt.

According to the Department officer, units 44B, 45A and the Growler and Childs Mountains in 46A had shown 100% success, and units 43A and the Cabeza Prieta and Tule Mountains in 46B had no rams taken at all.

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NEW WILD SHEEP PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

The Boone and Crockett Club has published an outstanding new book on wild sheep management, the Wildlife Management Institute reports. Entitled THE WILD SHEEP IN MODERN AMERICA, the book undoubtedly is the most definitive work of its kind yet compiled.

The text is the proceedings of a workshop on the management of wild sheep held at the University of Montana in June 1974. It represents the most comprehensive collection of data available on the past, present, future status of those important game animals. Each chapter was contributed by renown wild sheep authorities from throughout North America.

Copies of the 302 page, illustrated volume and accompanying maps are available from the Boone and Crockett Club, 413 N. Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 for $10.00 each, which is less than the printing cost. Scholastic and government agencies may purchase multiple copies at a 30 percent discount.

NOTE: Dick Weaver, who sent me the above notice of printing was a participant in the Workshop held in Montana, and is therefore a contributor of this book.

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BIGHORN SHEEP POACHING CASE RESOLVED

The November-December issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried an article concerning the poaching charge against Louis Roque of San Diego, alleged to have taken place in the Anza Borrego State Park.

Louis Roque has now had his day in the Ramona Court of Justice Alfred Haworth. Justice Haworth sentenced Roque to 180 days in jail, but suspended the sentence with the stipulation that Roque spend five weekends in jail and pay the state for the loss of the bighorn sheep. Roque must also pay the Department of Fish and Game $1,800 in restitution for taking the life of a rare peninsular bighorn sheep.

Roque was cited on October 13 by Fish and Game Warden Carl Bumgarner, who seized part of a bighorn carcass in Roque's garage.

Warden Bumgarner went to Roque's home following up a report of a bighorn sheep being shot the day before in Anza-Borrego State Park. Witnesses had reported Roque's license number to state park rangers.

Peninsular bighorn sheep are classed as rare by the California Department of Fish and Game. Less than 1,200 are believed left in the mountain ranges of Riverside and San Diego Counties where they make their home.

(EDITORS NOTE):

The person who observed this crime against our wildlife are to be commended for taking a stand against it and making a report to the authorities.

If every person who observes a game law violation was to make a similar report of such violation(s) it would have a significant effect in the reduction of the numbers of such crimes against our fish and wildlife. The Department of Fish and Game's Law Enforcement Officer in Region 4, Fresno, Bill Auman is working up a card by which such violations may be reported and yet keep the informant anonymous if so desired.

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SHORT REPORT FROM DOCTOR LUTZ

Doctor Lutz reports that he and Glenn Sudmeier have recently been on an exploratory trip into the southeastern part of the Sierras in the vicinity of Horseshoe Meadows, trying to determine whether or not there is any substance to the rumor that there may be a relict band of sheep in that area. Readers will recall that the Society has been in opposition to the up-grading of roads and campgrounds in the Horseshoe Meadow area as there is consideralble habitat in that area which is suitable for bighorn sheep, and if there are now no sheep in the area, then it is an area which should be considered as a possible reintroduction site. No sighting of sheep were made. However, they came away with the belief that it is quite possible that there are or maybe sheep in the area.

The evening of January 7th Doctor Lutz had an opportunity to appear on Channel 2 of the C.B.S. and gave the positions adopted by the Society in efforts for the bighorn sheep. He was also able to tell the T-V audience something of what the sportsmen-conservationists actually do for our fish and wildlife protection and enhancement, and not just give lip-service to conservation as is done by Cleveland Amory.

No work dates are presently on the calendar.

Doctor Lutz has been appointed to the Bureau of Land Managements Citizens Advisory Board and has been elected to the chairmanship of the Board in the Riverside District BLM. Homer Harrison of Bakersfield will be his(Lutz) counterpart in the Bakersfield District.

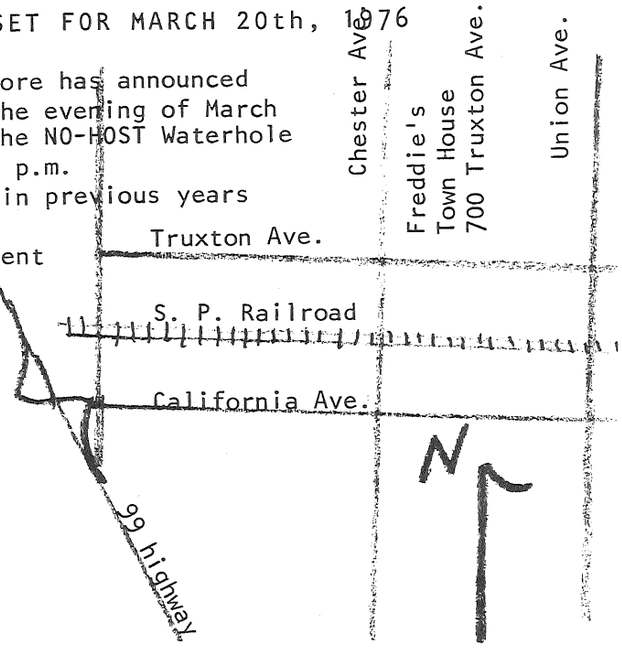
Tranquillization of sheep in the San Gabriel Mountains has not been successful to date.

ANNUAL BAKERSFIELD DINNER SET FOR MARCH 20th, 1976

Marvin Wood, the Society's Director from Lemoore has announced that the Annual Dinner of the Society will be held the evening of March 20th at Freddie's Town House, 700 Truxton Avenue. The NO-HOST Waterhole Count begins at 7:00 p.m. with dinner served at 8:00 p.m. Marvin promises that the superb steak dinner served in previous years will be repeated.

Docotr Lutz states that there will be an excellent program following the dinner.

Response cards are enclosed in most of letters. Will everyone receiving a card please respond, and state whether or not you will be present. This is needed in order to get a good estimate as to numbers of people who will attend. It also helps in checking our mailing lists.



California Bighorn Reestablishment Program

Lava Beds National Monument

James A. Blaisdell

Just over four years have passed since the ten bighorn arrived at Lava Beds National Monument. During this time there has been much to write about and discuss. Things will be no different in this report; crises continue.

NOTE: This report of Jim's was made to Members of the Interagency Bighorn Committee Lava Beds Project. The agencies involved are: The U.S.Forest Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; California Department of Fish and Game; Bureau of Land Management; and the National Park Service of which Blaisdell is a Research Biologist, Klamath Falls Group.

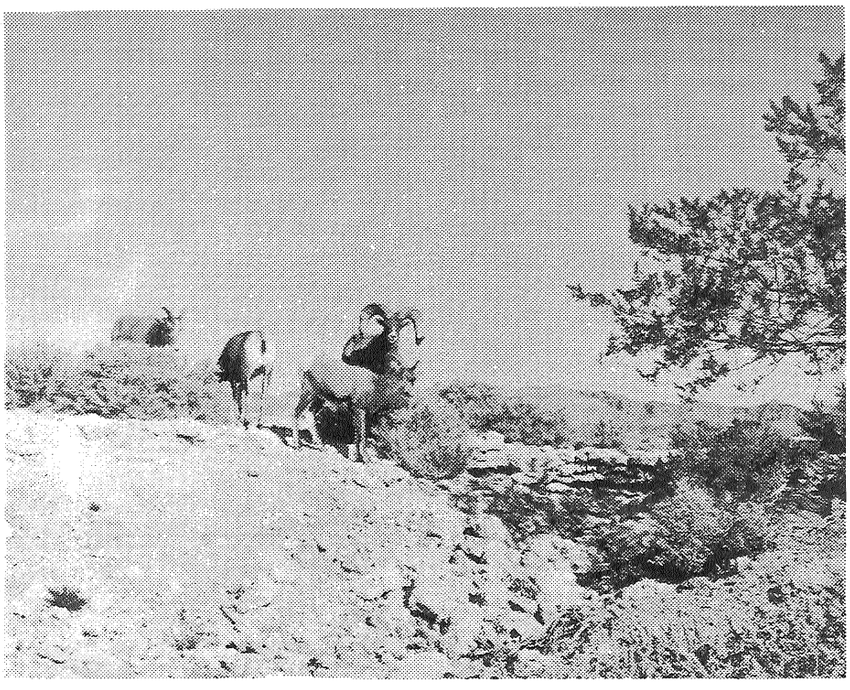


Photo above taken in Nevada by Jim Yoakum

Reproduction: At the May 27 committee meeting, I reported that onelamb had arrived (onMay22). Five more were born after that, one near July 21. Although the yearling rams accomplished the feat, breeding was relatively late---November through January. The total of six lambs gave us 100 percent production.

Loss: Although no animals could be collected to ascertain actual causes of death, our veterinarians beleive that ecthyma (soremouth) took five of our six lambs in one week's time. Lambs were first noted in August with "swollen lips" and shortly thereafter all but one had disappeared. No sign was found of any of them. Ecthyma is a common disease of livestock, is a viral, contact and very contagious. Because it has been found to be common to herds which are supplied with salt, we have taken all salt blocks out of the pen. We have attempted during the past two weeks to obtain a total count, but this has been difficult because the herding and breeding activities keep the animals in small bunches which are constatly changing in composition. Sixteen animals have not been observed for sure since October 3. Fifteen were seen October 29.

Herd composition at this time is as follows:

Rams	Ewes	Lambs
2 - 2½ years old	8 or 9 adults	1 - male
3 - 1½ years old	1 - 1½ years old	

We have a potential of either eight or nine lambs next spring.

The skeleton of "Spook," our Nevada ram, was found about July 1; he had disappeared after our bluetongue losses in September 1974. No sign of foul play.

Law Enforcement: Carrying on from where we left off in our last report, Dennis Gomes, when he went to Superior Court, stated that he would plead guilty if the case were treated as a misdemeanor and if he did not have to spend time in jail. After review, the Court decided the case could not be treated so and Gomes would have to plead guilty or innocent of a felony. He plead guilty and was fined three years without a gun or hunting license, eight days in jail (on weekends if he wished), and $3,000.00. This far exceeded our expectations, but was more like a case like this should come out.

Enclosure Improvements! The Doublehead District of the Forest Service carried out improvements recommended to them at the last meeting. The rock jacks now have outriggers (tank traps!) around the inside to prevent bighorn getting so close they can jump up and out of the pen. A fence has also been placed around the northern guzzler. Either bighorn or deer were damaging the aluminum surface by walking on it.
Lava Beds maintenance personnel added a six to eight acre pasture to the trap set-up in case we need to hold the trapped sheep for any reason. Again, these men accomplished a bang-up job.

Report dated: November 20, 1975.

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NEW MEXICO BIGHORNS MAY BE IN TROUBLE

The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has determined that stringent management techniques must be adopted in order to stabilize sheep populations and to avert a dramatic crash in the Pecos Wilderness area which may well occur within the next five to ten years.

Historically, bighorn sheep numbers in virtually all herds in North America have risen and fallen dramatically over the past 80 years in cycles of 20 to 30 years periods. The main cause of death has been pneumonia, precipitated by lungworm infections. The parasites infect the lungs of young and adult animals, and can be transmitted from mother to fetus. They utilize an intermediate snail host in their life cycle-- a snail commonly found in the Pecos and other bighorn habitats. (THE SHEEPHERDER has carried articles about this infection from time to time--as it effects various areas).

A combination of lungworm infestation, increasing population, low mortallity rates and lim ited range will catalyze to decimate existing population, according to Departmental Veterinarian Bob Lange. Lange proposes a combination of trapping and transplanting of animals to other ranges, harvesting of ewes and initiating a medical treatment program in the future to reduce lungworm infections and sustain the health of the stabilized population. Historical precedent leaves no doubt about the future of all Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep herds which enjoyed rapid, large-scale increases. From Canada, to Montana, to Colorado, all suffered eventual large declines in numbers. Many of them rebuilt to some extent in 20 to 30 year cycles and crashed a second, and even a third time.
The Pecos herd was established in 1965 and 1966 with 15 animals transplanted from Canada, and nine from the Sandias. The herd now numbers between 250 and 300 animals. Only 13 rams have been harvested in the population's history.

The present health of the herd is excellent, said Lange, but fecal examinations have revealed increasing levels of lungworm larvae, and snail infections are also rising in areas of bighorn concentrations. This range had been uninhabited by sheep for many years, and so the lungworm larvae were absent from the range at the time of re-introduction.

The essential answer concluded by Lange is the stabilization of the population. This as previously noted to be done by transplanting programs and by harves of ewes as well as rams. In Colorado, an experimental drug, Cambendazole, has proven extremely successful in reducing lungworm infections and increasing lamb survival.(reported in July-August issue TS)

APPLICATION OF MEMBERSHIP
or renewal

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

PHONE : HOME _____ BUSINESS _____

PLACE OF BIRTH _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

OCCUPATION _____

ENCLOSED: you will find my check or money order for $20.00. This includes my initiation fee ($5.00) and my first year's dues ($15.00). I will endeavor to do my part on behalf of the Bighorn Sheep.

Signature _____