SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

office
401 North Garfield
Alhambra, California 91801
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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1977

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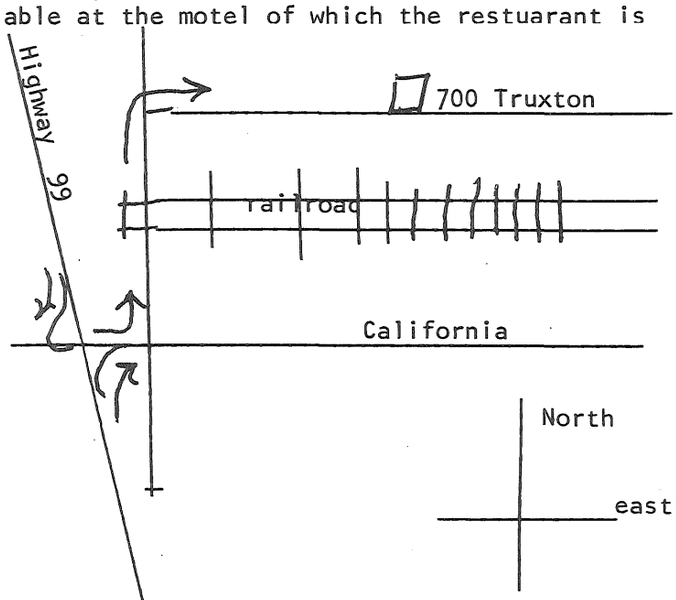
DINNER MEETING PLANNED FOR BAKERSFIELD

Society Director Marvin Wood of Lemoore has announced the plans for the Annual Dinner Meeting of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep is to be held at Maitia's Basque Restuarant ---700 Truxton Avenue, in Bakersfield. This is the same location as has been the site of these dinners over the past several years. The restuarant is under new management. Overnight accommodations are available at the motel of which the restuarant is a part. The after dinner speaker will be Mr. Dave Garber, Biologist for the Inyo National Forest, headquartered at Bishop, California. His topic is to be: The present status of the California Bighorn Sheep in California, their future and plans for transplanting. This topic is very apropos at this time. A recent report by Mr. Homer Harrison, President of the Kern Plateau Association tells us that the Forest Service has built a new road into the Horseshoe Meadow Area. This is close to the Trail Peak area looked upon by skiing enthusiasts as a site for development of ski facilities. It is also the area looked upon as a possible reintroduction area for california bighorns. Directions to the restuarant: turn off Hwy. 99 at California St. go one block east; then north over the railroad tracks; turn right on Truxton to Maitia's at 700 Truxton.



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MOJAVE PLANNING UNIT

You will note in another report -- from the Bureau of Land Management-Riverside, is making management plans for the Mojave Planning Unit.

On July 15, 1976 Dr. Loren L. Lutz, President of the Society and Myron Doornbos, Pres. of the Southern Council of Conservation Clubs released a report concerning this East Mojave Planning Unit. They are particularly interested in what they term 'the triangle formed by highways that extend to Las Vegas, Nevada and the one to Needles, California with an eastern boundary of the California - Nevada State line. This area has been the one where during the past two years an extra effort(s) have been made by members of these organizations to get the best possible census of all wildlife, especially the desert bighorns. Two counts have been made yearly; one to assess the numbers of upland game and also one later on in the summer in efforts to census the numbers of sheep.

This area contains the Granite Mts, Providence Mts., the New York Mts., and the Mid Hills, and the Piute Range. Here the elevations are greater than in most of the desert areas and consequently there is a greater amount of rain and snow fall. As a result the area has better water conditions for wildlife than does the lower elevation mountains of the desert.

There are several livestock grazing permittees in this area and they range over virtually all of these mountains. Unfortunately, this entire area is also being degredated by large numbers of feral burros. In 1972 Dick Weaver and Jerry Mensch while making their study of the bighorn sheep in California also compiled a population census of burros in the same areas. They gave a population of a little over 600 burros in this triangle. With an annual increment of about 20% there would now be approximately 1200 burros.

This Mojave Planning Unit also was the scene of a great deal of mining efforts. The

remains of this mining are seen in much of the area-there are open mine shafts and tunnels, remains of mining camps and vestiges of the mining towns. At Kelso all that remains is a tall chimney, the site of a long abandoned smelter. The miners did have a very adverse effect on all wildlife of the areas wherethere was mining activity. It is difficult to assess any blame to these people. Wildlife was the only available source of fresh meat.

It is difficult to justify a numbers count of various species of native or feral wildlife, except as it shows a trend of changing populations of birds and mammals using the area. The trend in this area of study is for sheep downward in numbers and burros sharply increasing, in a sharp incline-decline relationship. In those parts of the Mid Hills, Granite Mts. and New York Mts. where the editor has been, he could find no evidence of sheep at all. As Dr. Robert Omart of the Arizona State University has said,"The burro like other herbivors does prefer grasses and forbs of the range being used. The burro will, however eat any vegetation which grows on the arid desert lands."

Don Swarthout did a chapter of this report on the Providence Mountains. He has had an intimate relationship with this area since his youth, and he does know the burros. Don has authored an article for CALIFORNIA OUTDOORS the publication of the California Department of Fish and Game -November-December 1975--The Other Side of the Burro. It has been reviewed in The Sheepherder.

Walt Powell is another contributor to this Report concerning the Mojave P.U. and its 1,623,000 acres. He recommends that this unit be managed for its wildlife habitat and its native wildlife values, and then permitting such recreational and other activities and developments as are compatible with the maintenance of these wildlife values. The wildlife populations of the Planning Unit, as with all land, are primarily dependent on the extent and quality of the habitat - the vegetation for food and cover, and the water supply. The habitat of this unit has been impacted and degraded over a long period of time by excessive cattle grazing, by appropriation of water supplies, and by an uncontrolled population of feral burros. More recently and increasing population with its demands for more recreational opportunities has brought more people into the area together with their roads, campgrounds and second homes. Off-road vehicles who will not stay out of restricted areas are further jeopardizing the habitat, and degrading its values. Now most recently the transmission lines for electricity and pipe lines to carry oil and gas supplies are further encroaching on these desert lands, and should be confined to present rights-of-way and along established public roads.

The contributors to this report do all recommend that the East Mojave Planning Unit be designated a Wildlife Management Unit and that it then be managed for its wildlife values. This will also require that exotic and non-native wildlife be eliminated from the area..

SOURCES OF TRACE MINERALS IN BIGHORN SHEEP NUTRITION

(From notes taken during the North American Wild Sheep Conference held in Denver, Colorado last April 22 - 23rd.)

Robert E. Keiss, Wildlife Researcher, Colorado Division of Wildlife spoke on the above title and has a series of slides to illustrate his paper. His presentation was judged to be the best technical paper presented during the conference. As the result he was awarded the "Bighorn Ram Award" of the Jonas Brothers taxidermy firm of Denver. Jack Jonas got up from a sick-bed to come to the conference and make the presentation in the photo at the left.

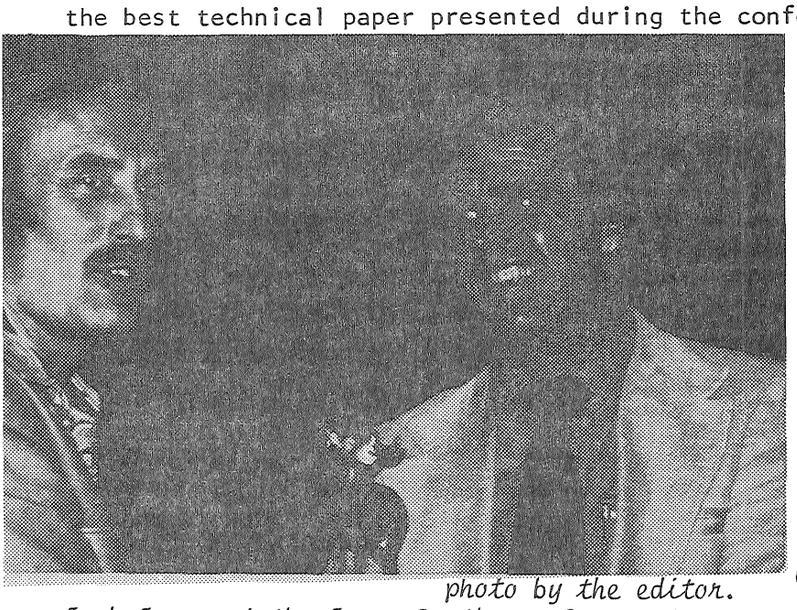

photo by the editor.
Jack Jonas of the Jonas Brothers, Denver (left) presents Robert E. Keiss with the BIGHORN RAM AWARD at the close of the conference.

Trace minerals in the diet of the bighorn is very important just as it is with we humans. These minerals are obtained from four primary sources: (1) from the vegetation that is eaten by the animals, (2) from mineral licks, (3) from the soil and its dust that falls on the vegetation and is then ingested with the vegetation--this is a very difficult task to measure the amounts of minerals used, and (4) from the water that the sheep drink.

Keiss during his studies utilized three different areas of Pikes Peak, the Trickle Mountain area and that of Buffalo Peak. Calcium is a very important mineral. Other minerals found were Phosphorus and manganese.-----These trace minerals tend to decrease in amounts as the year progresses from summer to fall and then into winter, except for the level of phosphoreswhich seems to hold its level much better than do either calcium of potassium. Levels of zinc varied throughout the study areas. Iron seems to be deficient and below desired levels all through the year. Amounts of copper are also below that needed. Selenium seems mainly adequate. Some of the mineral licks are as much as three feet thick and contain calcium, potassium, magnesium, potassium , zinc, copper and iron. Licks such as these are, of course, very important to the animals.

The question was posed: Would artificial licks be beneficial to the sheep in areas where there were mineral deficiencies and would sheep utilize such licks? As a result some

artificial licks have been established using bentonite as a base material and mixing the needed trace minerals in it. Bentonite has the advantage of slowing down the passage of food through the animals digestive system and would therefore increase the assimilation of these minerals into the animals body. Time has not yet been long enough to determine the use of such artificial licks or its effectiveness.

NOTE: **********

Domestic sheep raisers along the northern California Coast do use this procedure and it does seem to have beneficial effects.

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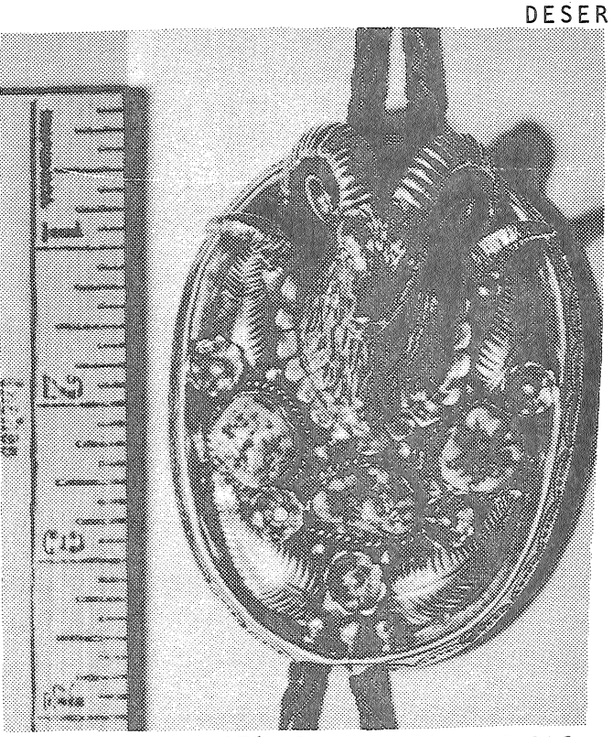
DESERT BIGHORN COUNCIL



The Annual Meeting of the Desert Bighorn Council is to be held in Las Cruces, New Mexico April 6 - 7 - and 8th. Las Cruces can be reached by air lines. There are, we are informed, no direct flights from either Denver of Los Angeles. Transfers will have to be made. Las Cruces is close to desert bighorn ranges and a one day field trip is scheduled into that area. The city is also close to the Mexican border for those who wish to cross over into Mexico either for shpping or 'fun'.

A well rounded program is promised by Walter A. Snyder, Chairman of the D.B.C.

The Desert Bighorn Council was"Established to promote the advancement of knowledge concerning the desert bighorn sheep and the long-range welfare of these animals." Over the years a great deal has been learned about the wild sheep and has first been reported during sessions of this organization.

Memebership is open to anyone who has a desire to work for improvement of living conditions for the desert bighorns. Yearly membership does include a printed copy of the 'Transactions of the meeting." These dues of $5. can be paid to Peter G. Sanchez, Natural Resource Specalist for the Death Valley National Monument. Address P.O. Box 276, Death Valley, California 92328.

During the meeting the above pictured bolo tie will be raffeled in order to pay part of the costs of the meeting. Your Editor has a supply of these raffle tickets and will be glad to send any number you may wish to you on receipt of $1.00 for each ticket. The Indian made bolo was donated to the Council by Edward Munoz of the N.M. Game Commission. It has a value of $450.00

Ladies are welcome to attend these Council meetings and do have special trips arranged by "The Ewes Club".

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DATES TO REMEMBER

January 31, 1977 - Membership meeting at 401 North Garfield, Alhambra. To be followed by a meeting of the Board of Directors.

March 6, 1977-----A ONE DAY SHEEP COUNT ON THE SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAIN---such as was held last year. 200 volunteers are needed to accomplish this count. PLEASE CONTACT JAMES DE FORGE 218 East J Street, Ontario, Calif. 91764.
Telephone: (714) 983-3272

March 12, 1977 ----Water development project---Nopah Range--North of Kingston Mts. near the Nevada State Line-----See map for directions and other specifics.

March 19, 1977 -- ANNUAL BAKERSFIELD DINNER---700 Truxton Ave., Bakersfield, Calif. at Maitia's Basque Restuarant---Waterhole Count 6:30p.m. Dinner--7:30 p.m. After dinner speaker Dave Garber, Inyo National Forest--"Present Status of the california bighorn sheep *Ovis canadensis californiana* their future and Plans for Transplanting. "
Will everyone receiving a card please return it whether or not you will be attending.

April 2, 1977 --Kelso Peak Project --Due east of the Old Dad Mts. and about 10 miles northwest of the town of Kelso, which is on the Kelbaker Road. See map for directions.

April 6th, 7th and 8th --Desert Bighorn Council meets in Las Cruces, N. M. These meetings are always interesting, even to the layman, as the Professionals in Wildlife Management report concerning studies that they have done in research concerning the bighorn sheep of North

May 7th and 8th Water developement project in the Clark Mountains near the Nevada border. The March-April issue of The Sheepherder will carry specifics.

WATER DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS -----1977

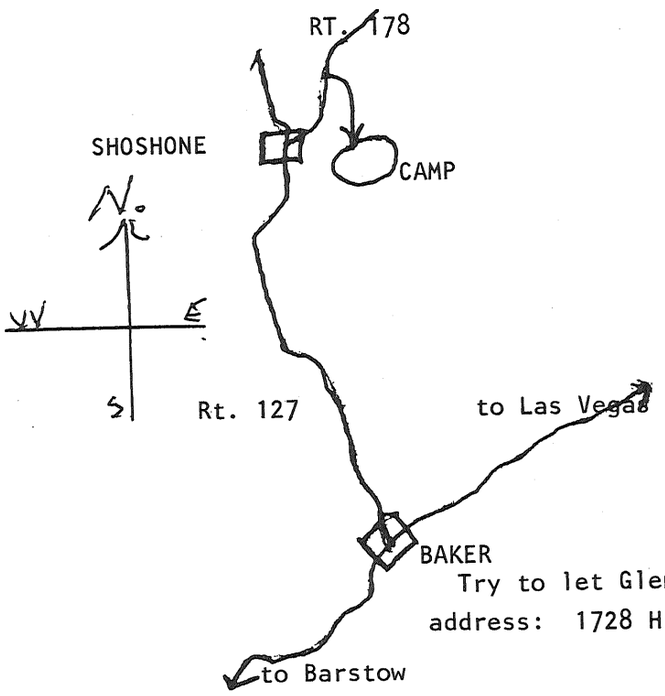
The three water development projects scheduled for this spring of 1977 will complete those scheduled for the desert areas. (PLEASE SEE A RELATED ARTICLE) These three projects will be funded from the NON-GAME WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROGRAM. This program is also known as the "DECAL PROGRAM" of the Department of Fish and Game.Project suitability is reviewed by the Department and then by the Citizens Advisory Committee which is composed of concerned

citizens who are also trained biologists. This does take additional time between the 'drawing board' and project authorization. However, it does assure the wise and proper spending of these finances donated. SO, Encourage a friend to give to the Nongame Conservation Program. Send a check of even a dollar (preferably more) to "WILDLIFE", Box DFG, Sacramento, Ca. 95801.

The projects that have been completed over the past few years together with these three----Nopah Range; Kelso Peak in the Lava Beds; and the one at Clark Mountain are the projects listed by Dick Weaver and Jerry Mensch in their original report to the Legislature after having completed their survey to which they had devoted two years of study. The Survey had begun in the fall of 1968, six months after the California Legislature had enacted Resolutions requesting that such studies be undertaken and had provided funds for the study. These Legislative bills had been introduced by Senator H. L. "Bill" Richardson, himself a hunter, and at the request of the Board of Directors of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep.

As is noted in the related article, before any more projects will be scheduled it will be necessary that the Department of Fish and Game and the Bureau of Land Management be made certain that presently operating projects are functional and are serving an effective water supply, that is, make certain that these water projects are actually doing that for which they were devised and built.

PLEASE NOTE ALSO: the pleas that have been made that all of those really interested in the welfare of the desert wildlife and its bighorns that you do seriously undertake the doing of those things that we have been requesting be done.

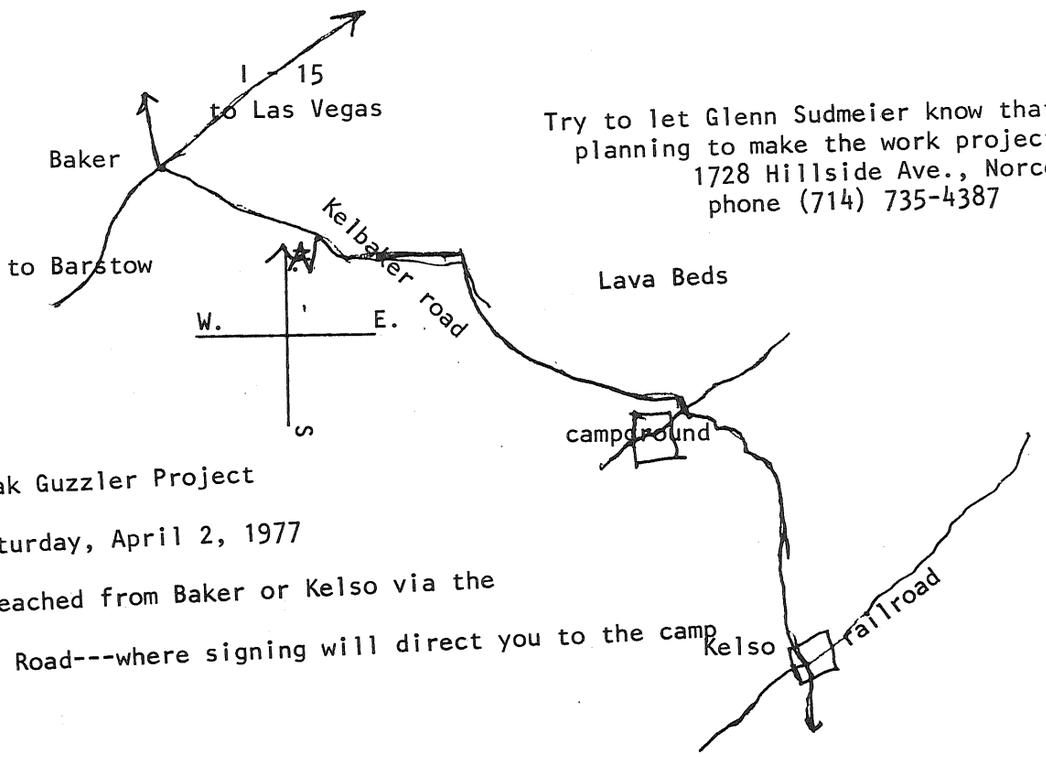


WATER PROJECT --NOPAH GUZZLER SITE
Leave camp - 0700 Saturday March 12,1977

Best reached from Baker on I-15.

At Baker take State Route #127 north to Shoshone. At Shoshone take State Route 178. A short distance beyond Shoshone--- not more than a mile or two there will be signs directing you south a short distance to the camp site.

Try to let Glenn Sudmeier know that you are coming.
address: 1728 Hillside Ave., Norco, Ca. Ph.(714) 735-4387



Try to let Glenn Sudmeier know that you are planning to make the work projects.
1728 Hillside Ave., Norco, Ca. 92760
phone (714) 735-4387

Kelso Peak Guzzler Project

0700 Saturday, April 2, 1977

May be reached from Baker or Kelso via the Kelbaker Road---where signing will direct you to the camp

SOME PROBLEMS THAT NEED STUDY AND CAREFUL WATCHING ::

The El Paso Gas Line which is planned through the Kofa Game Range of Arizona. It is feared that it will be traversing essential desert bighorn range. The Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society is up-in-arms about this one, and will undoutedly need all assistance possible.

A proposed Nuclear power plant at Sun Desert in southeastern California will have to be carefully monitored and efforts must be made to keep it out of bighorn habitat and from its usurping of vital water.

Standard Oil Company's oil transmission pipeline from San Pedro to Texas--must be confined to present rights of way and along present highways.

Ski facilities proposed over the years at Trail Peak--near Horshoe Meadows, should be opposed.

The area just south of Mt. Harwood and Mt. Baldy should be included in the Sheep Mountain Wilderness proposal. This is a lambing area for the bighorns and is of importance to them. The Sierra Club has a cabin in this area and uses it as a staging area. This, in the opinion of the editor, is a conflicting use and should be eliminated. ed.

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IDAHO BIGHORNS IMPROVE Report of Spring 1976.

Late winter surveys of bighorn sheep in the Morgan Creek area near Challis showed the herds there are in better shape than they have been for several years. Compared with the 1975 survey totals, this year there were 36 more bighorns recorded. The ratio of lambs to ewes is higher this year than it was in 1975. Indicating good lamb production and survival in that area. The ratio in 1975 was 35 lambs per 100 ewes, but it climbed to 62 lambs per 100 ewes in 1976.

Two mild winters in a row and a wet spring last year (1975) that kept ranges green through July undoubtedly provided better nutrition for the ewes and the lambs, and this may be primary reason for the dramatic increase.

The range had been severely overgrazed in recent years, and may require as much as 20 to 50 years to return to a healthy condition because of the low annual rate of rainfall in the Morgan Creek area.

Idaho Fish and Game News-Summer 1976.

NOTE:

The November-December 1973 issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried a report concerning the plight of this herd of bighorn sheep, and the efforts that had been made by James K. Morgan to get some positive action that would improve the range conditions for this particular herd of sheep. Morgan had been a Biologist for the Department of Fish and Game. His crusade to reduce grazing competition between bighorns and domestic livestock led to his being beaten, shot at, his pickup being sabotaged and finally his being discharged from his job through pressures engendered by the livestock grazing permitees. He had taken his case to the public forum of the National Geographic magazine of September 1973. However, the efforts of Morgan have not been in vain. The Bureau of Land Management has since that time made efforts to better manage the land. Livestock interests have been required to graze areas on a rest-rotation of use of grazing areas. This has begun to slowly heal the land and its potential for growing vegetation.

James Morgan is to be commended for his efforts to improve the living conditions of Idaho's bighorn sheep.

Editor.

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A SHEEP POACHING CASE RESOLVED

NOTE:

Our friend Dick Weaver gave me, your editor, a telephone call to inform me that another bighorn poaching case had been closed. Dick did not have the full particulars. A letter to John Massie, Region 5, DFG, Long Beach brought the response that I should contact Mr. John Roumasset, Captain of the Wildlife Protection Branch in San Diego. This was done. A telephone call to Mr. Roumasset gave this information:

While Mr. James Whitehead, Superintendent of the State Parks and Recreation was enroute to San Diego through the northern part of the Anza Borrego Desert State Park and about two miles from the western boundary he did observe what appeared to be a man dragging some type of animal down the slope of the mountain. To Superintendent Whitehead it appeared to be a sheep. He stopped and confirmed his observation. It was a female sheep. Whitehead then radioed Park personnel who called the San Diego Sheriff's Department and they arrested Michael George Lasher a 24 year old plumber and charged him with the killing of a completely protected specie and the possession of a desert bighorn ewe. Lasher was taken before the El Cajon Justice Court. Here Lasher pleaded guilty as charged and the Judge referred the case to the Probation Department for their recommendations. These recommendations were: that there be no fine but that Mr. Lasher be charged a restitution fee of $1,800.00 which was to be given into the Department of Fish and Game's Preservation Fund; that his marlin rifle be turned over to the DFG and sold, the proceeds to go into the Preservation Fund; that Lasher spend four weekends in jail; that he be placed on probation for three years during which time he is not to be permitted to possess a hunting license. The Judge of the El Cajon Court agreed with these recommendations and they were so assessed.

A full body mount of the ewe is being prepared by a taxidermist and will become a part of an exhibit of the Los Angeles County Museum.

Note: To me, the editor, this is the type of sentence and resolution of a case of a crime against our wildlife that should be a common solution in our Courts. Such too frequently is not the case, however. Too frequently these crimes are considered in the category of being just a prank. lew.

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Bureau of Land Management making Plans for the Management of Feral Horses and Burros in the Riverside District.

A recent letter from Gerald E. Hillier, District Manager, Riverside District, BLM states in part:

"There is only one known herd of truly feral horses in the Riverside District. These reportedly to be approximately 50 in number, reside in the Wild Horse Canyon area west of the Santa Rosa Mountains in Riverside County. Very little is known about these animals. They are currently under investigation. All other reported "wild horses" have proven to be estrays.

Burros are a different story. They are found, scattered about the entire district, in populations ranging from less than ten to several hundred. Virtually all of the Riverside's emphasis on burros has been in the eastern Mojave area of San Bernardino County. This is where they are causing the most problems.

We are in the process of completing three years of burro inventory and analysis in the East Mojave. Fourteen burro management areas have been isolated. Three of these - Clark Mountains, Wood's Hackberrys, and the Lava Beds - are considered top priority for Burro Management Plans. This is not necessarily the priority order however. We are presently deliberating which should come first, then we will start writting our first plan. We contemplate getting a person on board in the next few months to devote all of his or her time to burros in the East Mojave. This should greatly accelerate progress as present personnel are thinly spread over several other jobs. We hope to have our first plan completed by September 30, 1977, but unforseen factors such as difficulty in getting the new position and data gaps may delay this. The plan will be implemented immediately upon approval." end quote.

EDITOR's NOTE:---even after a plan is drawn up and approved---there will still a matter of MONEY TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN(s). Here, YOU WHO ARE INTERESTED IN GETTING THIS JOB UNDERWAY CAN HELP BY WRITING LETTERS TO YOUR CONGRESSMEN AND SENATORS---tell the necessity for speedy action and allocation of funds for these management plans. TIME IS RUNNING-OUT FOR SOME OUR DESERT WILDLIFE and this does include the desert bighorn sheep in affected areas.

CONCERNING WILDLIFE WATER DEVELOPEMENT PROGRAM Mr. Hillier continued, "With regard to water storage installations, the policy of the Riverside District has not changed substantially. The Fish and Game Department is going forward with plans for construction of big game guzzlers north of Clark Mountain and on Kelso Peak. Construction of these projects will complete the program for developement of bighorn waters in the Riverside District begun in 1974.

We have indicated to the Department that prior to initiation of a series of new installations we would like to evaluate what has already been done. Our concern is two fold: (1) we would like to be certain that existing developements are adequately maintained before launching into a new construction program, and (2) we want to make sure that the limited resources of the Department, the Bureau, and the various volunteer groups are used effectively as possible.

Furthermore, as you know, we are in the process of developing comprehensive land use plans for the desert. As part of this process we are developing a list of priorities for wildlife management including water development. This planning process will be used to determine where we will direct our manpower and funds for wildlife work." end quote.

EDITORIAL NOTE: Have you the Society's Volunteer Leaders and Team Captains gone into each and every one of the known springs, seeps, and storage facilities and checked them out for possible needed repairs as was requested by Water Project Chairman Glen Sudmeier in the November-December issue of THE SHEEPHERDER? If so, DID YOU MAKE YOUR WRITTEN REPORTS BOTH TO GLEN AND TO THE DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME IN LONG BEACH? If not WHY NOT? This is important. Did you make your waterhole counts last summer? Did you send in reports? AS NOTED BY MR. HILLIER THIS IS CRITICALLY NEEDED INFORMATION. LACK OF THIS INFORMATION MAY JEOPARDIZE FUTURE POSSIBLE PROJECTS.

GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK PLANS BURRO MANAGEMENT

Arizona Wildlife Federation issue, January 1977 reports that Merle Stitt, Superintendent of the park has announced that in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, an environmental assessment on the proposed plan has been prepared and that after research and review has determined that no significant or long term adverse impacts on the quality of the environment will occur. Hence a full environmental impact statement will not be prepared. The plan calls for the total removal of wild burros from the Park

over the next five years. This is to be accomplished through a program of shooting and exclusion fencing by National Park rangers. More than 1,000 burros live in the small canyons below the Rim, near the Colorado River. Stitt says: "We have determined that total removal of the exotic wild burro from the Park is necessary to protect many native plants and animals....delay in implementing the Plan would place numerous native species of plants and animals, including the desert bighorn sheep, in serious jeopardy. Because of their prolific breeding habits and the absence of predators, their numbers can be controlled only by man. Burros compete successfully in Grand Canyon with the native desert bighorn sheep and other animals for food, water and living space."

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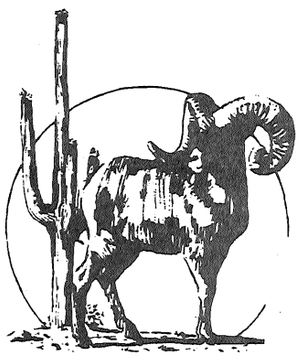


The Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society Inc.

Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society--New Program

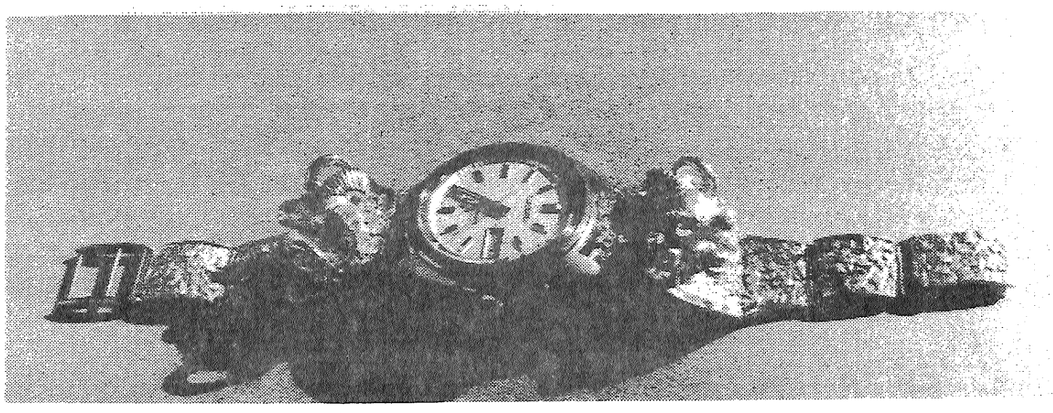
President John Krause in THE RAM'S HORN --December issue lays out a new phase of that Society's efforts. Krause says: "My concern is this: as worthy as our major activity has been - namely our waterhole effort--it is basically directed at maintaining what we have, and I can't help but feel that an organization dedicated primarily to the status quo is destined to failure in the long run.

I feel the Society should have a higher goal, namely the enlargement and improvement on the Desert Bighorn Sheep population in Arizona. While we're at it, why not borrow from our sister Society in Colorado and aim for a doubling of our sheep population in ten years?

No question about it, this will require a redirection of our effort with major emphasis on the support of research and transplants. At the same time we must not neglect our present committment to habitat improvement. In my opinion, the Society possesses the dedicated manpower to support these causes, and the financial resources are there to be tapped." end quote.

NOTE: I believe that John is on the right track. Our Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep has already begun its movement along these lines. From time-to-time you will have noted reports of research grants having been given to Graduate students and to Dr. Jack Turner for his studies of the bighorns at the Desert Research Center in Deep Canyon of Riverside County. Now if the Society can get the needed management(reduction) of the feral burros which have usurped bighorn ranges and have eliminated the bighorns from such areas, then the Society should push for transplants of bighorn back into these historic ranges. The first such area that comes to mind is the Little Piute Mountains near Essex in San Bernardino County. This mountain is part of my assigned area and this is, of course, why I think of it first. editor.

In order to implement the above program the Arizona Society is conducting a raffle of the below pictured gold watch and its band. The watch valued at $1300 was given to the Society by John Gillett for purposes of conservation of the Arizona Desert Bgihorn Sheep. The money is to help finance restoration and transplanting sheep to old ranges now void of sheep. Drawing is to be March 26th in Phoenix.



The Society for the Conservation of Bighon Sheep was created for the purpose of Conservation, preservation and proper utilization of the wild sheep of North America. Membership is open to persons of any age. The Society is specifically soliciting those who are concerned with our County's wildlife and the conservation of it's natural resources. The Society needs members who are aware of the vast problems in these areas, and are determined to assist in solving them. Aconservation attitude and a willingness to be of assistance, when called upon, are all that is necessary. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED---DO NOT DELAY, MAKE YOUR APPLICATION TODAY. The Bi-monthly -THE SHEEPHERDER attempts to encompass each aspect of events and causes that are of concern to this rare, and in some areas, an endangered specie.

The Society advocates: putting the bighorn sheep under the control and management of the Fish and Game Commission, rather than the Legislature; development and improvement of water sources; elimination of the checker-board patterns on National Resource Lands; reduce competition from domestic and feral animals on the sheep ranges; the transplanting of sheep into matched environments; continuing the annual censuse of sheep throughout their ranges, and the making of recommendations as a result of these censuses; find the basic cause(s) of infant mortallity and endeavor to correct the cause(s); and the obtaining of adequate funding for the Department of Fish and Game so that it may be effective.

OREGON
Fish & Wildlife
634 S. W. ALDER STREET
P. O. BOX 3503
ORTLAND, OREGON 97208

NEWS RELEASE-------Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
December 20, 1976

BIGHORN SHEEP TRANSPLANTED

The range of the California bighorn sheep in southeastern Oregon has been expanded with a recent transplant of 18 animals from Hart Mountain by the Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The latest effort culminated several unsuccessful attemps in the last few years to trap sheep on Hart Mountain for release in other suitable areas in the state.

Two days were spent in the most recent project. A helicopter was used to drive several bands of sheep toward the wire fence "wings" of a portable trap. The wings, set in a wide "V", directed the animals toward and into a nylon net enclosure where a man was hiding sprung the gate after the animals had safely entered.

Sixteen sheep were captured the first day and were transferred by truck to Van Horn Basin in the Pueblo Mountains southeast of Hart Mountain.

The second day's efforts were not as successful and only two animals were captured. They were both taken to the Poison Creek area of Abert Rim where three other sheep had been previously released several years ago. That group had already expanded slightly by several rams which apparantly migrated from Hart Mountain on their own. The new addition, a ewe and a lamb, will help bolster that small herd.

The new portable trap was constructed this summer specifically for trapping sheep on Hart Mountain but it can also be used in other areas to capture other big game species.

Although the Department had a permanent fence enclosure and trap at a more southerly location on the mountain that was used years ago for securing sheep, it has not been effective in recent years and was taken down this summer. The portable trap has an advantage in that it can be moved closer to the sheep rather than having to drive the sheep to the old permanent trap.

Driving and capturing sheep is always an "iffy" business. Sometimes the animals can be driven by helicopter. At other times they simply find a rock outcropping and hug its base, refusing to travel farther. Another time they may travel ahead of the aircraft but refuse to enter the trap. The terrain is too rugged to effectively conduct drives on foot.

Hart mountain is a productive area for bighorn sheep and has been the source for all the animals thus far transplanted to other parts of southeast Oregon. Healthy populations both on Steens Mountain and in the breaks of the Owyhee River had their beginnings on Hart Mountain.

At one time California bighorn sheep occupied most of the rugged areas throughout southeast and central Oregon. But unregulated hunting, competition from domestic livestock, disease, parasites, and the encroachment of man all contributed to is gradual decline and by 1916 the last California bighorn was gone from Oregon.

In 1954, twenty California bighorns were brought to the Hart Mountain from British Columbia and formed the start of a new population which has gradually expanded to more than 100 animals, providing both hunting and surpluses for transplant to other formerly occupied areas.

Another trapping effort is planned on Hart Mountain within the next few weeks, weather and availability of the helicopter permitting. The Department has been fortunate in being able to rent air time from a helicopter already in the area under a federal predator control contract. The Department would like to release California bighorn sheep on Aldrich Mountain in the Murderer's Creek wildlife Area and that is probably where any further animals captured this year will be taken.

(You are cordially invited to use this)

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

PHONE : Home _____ Business: _____

PLACE OF BIRTH _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

OCCUPATION: _____

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

Date of application _____ Signature _____