SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

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JULY - AUGUST 1978

REPORTS FROM THE DESERT BIGHORN COUNCIL MEETING

The Desert Bighorn Council met in Kingman, Arizona, April 5, 6 & 7. The set dates are always the first Wednesday, Thursday and Friday of April. Each year the chairman of the year faces an ever increasing number of people who are vitally interested in the welfare of the bighorn sheep and especially that of the desert bighorns. Welcomes to the convention were by Mr. Joe Torres, Mayor of Kingman and by Mr. Robert A. Jantzen, Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department. The display of mounted desert bighorn heads were by the efforts of the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society.

Kingman Mayor Mr. Joe Torres welcomes the Desert Bighorn Council to Kingman

Robert A. Jantzen, Director, Arizona Game and Fish Department adds his welcome. Kelly Neal, Chrm. Desert Bighorn Council seated at the table

BOTFLY CAUSES DEATH OF MANY DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP

The first paper to be presented during this conference of 1978 was one titled: CHRONIC FRONTAL SINUSITIS IN A CAPTIVE POPULATION OF NELSON'S BIGHORN. Thomas D. Bunch led the presentation and was assisted by Stephen Paul both of the Utah State University. Henry McCutchen Biologist of the Zion National Park works with captive bighorn under discussion and participated in the discussion. The team had many displays that showed the ravages to the bone structure of the numerous sheep heads and skulls.

Hunter ram kills show that an average of 7% of all rams taken do have a necrosis (deterioration) of the frontal bones of the skulls. Many horns are deformed. The ewes also show some cases of necrosis---however the ratio is less than in rams.

The transplant of 12 sheep from the River Mountain Herd of desert bighorn of Nevada to the enclosure of Zion National Park has been reported in this newsletter, from time to time. In 1974 one of the rams showed an abscess and lesions near the base of one horn. On discovery that the ram was ailing he was captured. His weight loss at that time was down to 100 pounds. The Veterinarian treated this open sinus lesion for a period of three weeks. It was thought the ram could then be returned to the flock in the enclosure and this was done. However the animal then did die of pneumonia. A post-mortum examination showed that there was a 3" abscess into the brain near the base of the affected horn. The infection had also caused a protrusion of the left eye.....In all there were four bighorns in the Zion enclosure that were diagnosed as having sinusitus. Two of the three ewes discovered and then captured died within a 24 hour period. Their sinuses w ere full of puss. Postmortum examinations showed but little if any deterioration of the skulls, although all four of the sheep had shown very severe dehydration and their horn cores did show fracturing, as causes by a secondary infection. Treatment by catheterization through a hole through the upper horn base, but proved ineffective.....This secondary infection results when the botfly larvae dies in the sinus of the afflicted animal..... Another four sheep of Zion died between

1974 and 977. Remains of the skulls showed that botfly larvae had destroyed the inner bone structure of the sinuses.....The incidence of botfly parasitism in the Nevada big horn sheep is approximately 41%. .....The botfly *Oestrus ovis*, parasitism enters the sheep through the nasal opening and enters the sinuses of the skull where eggs are laid. The highly chambered structure of the ram skulls have no drainage. This makes the rams more susceptible to infection than in the cases of the ewes. The horn bases therefore become infected and enlarged.. .....There is no effective method of treating these infections, except by capture followed by the previously mentioned catheterization. Sheep, once captured are easy to work with for a few days by the above flushing method.....This sinusitus seems to be a high cause of mortallity among desert bighorns and is an important factor to be considered in the success of a re-introduction effort.

There is no effective method of botfly control, as yet known---other that to move the animals away from an area having a botfly population. The botfly on sheep ranges was probably brought in to the areas by the introduction of domestic sheep many years ago. If the sinuses of the sheep could drain, then the botfly would not be considered a significant problem.

In sheep habitat areas of high elevations and extreme cold weather there is a very low incidence of botflies.

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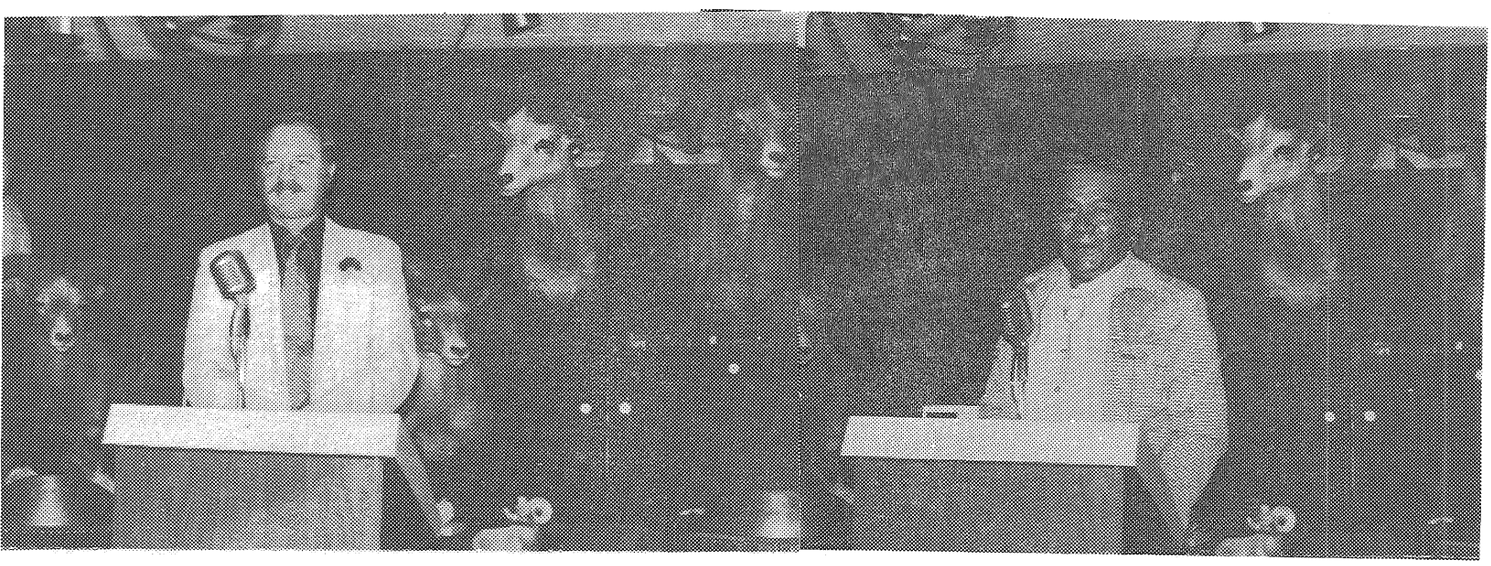

Thomas D. Bunch, Utah State University discussing the botfly problem

Monroe Beecher, Director, Hualapai Wildlife Department

STATUS OF HUALAPAI BIGHORN

Mr. Monroe Beecher, Director, Hualapai Wildlife Department reported that the Tribal Council makes a yearly census survey of the bighorn sheep on the Reservation. The latest census---1977--- shows that there is a bighorn population of at least 235 animals. The area of their habitat is so very extremely rough that access into it can be accomplished only by foot.

Beecher began his work with hunters on the Reservation in 1971. He reports that he knows of not less than 18 very good rams on the Reservation.....Lamb survival has not been good---seems to be about three out of seven lambs born that survive.....The home range of Reservation sheep is about seven miles in diameter.....The drought the past three years has been a very severe problem in their efforts to preserve the waters of the known seeps and springs.....Elevations of the Reservation and sheep habitat vary from a low of 1175' to over 7,000' in elevation.....B urros have become a problem on the Reservation. NOTE: IN a later conversation with Monroe Beecher he told me that he would contact Ernest Albitre, Chairman of the California Inter Tribal Council and its efforts to gain permission of the Federal Government for Native American Indians to utilize burros for food.---Lew. C.
The encroachment of civilization on bighorn habitat has had its impact upon the Hualapai sheep habitat as it has had elsewhere in the preservation of the species.....Beginning in 1971 only three permits were granted for the taking of a bighorn ram. This has been slowly increased to six in 1977. There are two different hunting periods---the first is in October and the late hunt is in December....Each year there has been a 100% harvest of permits granted. Hunters may shoot at only a designated animal by their Tribal Guide and escort. No person is granted more than one animal in a lifetime.....There has been very little, if any, poaching take place on the Hualapai. The costs for the permit is $800.00.....The best ram of 1977 scored 180 Boone & Crocket points.
NOTE: There has been a controversy over whether or not a hunter would also have to purchase a State license prior to hunting on the Hualapai Reservation.

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DURING 1978, in California 1078 acres of sorely needed desert bighorn sheep habitat was purchased using funds derived from the California Environmental license plates Fund for motor vehicles.

DO YOU HAVE A SET OF PERSONALIZED LICENSE PLATES ON YOUR VEHICLE?

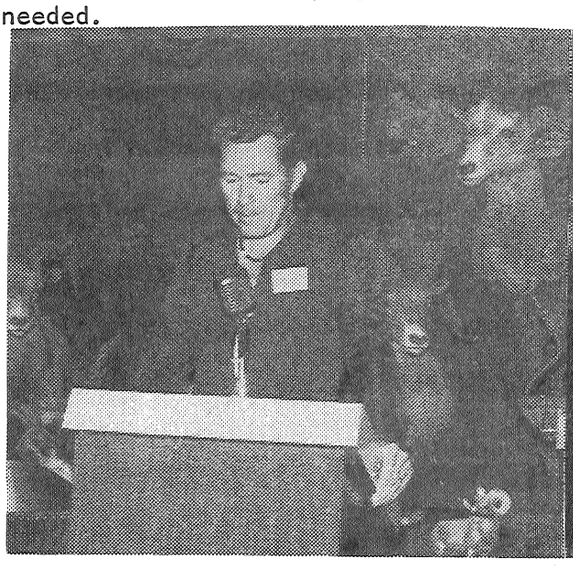
AN EFFICIENT AND RELIABLE METHOD FOR ESTIMATING BURRO DENSITIES

Reported by Robert D. Omart----Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona

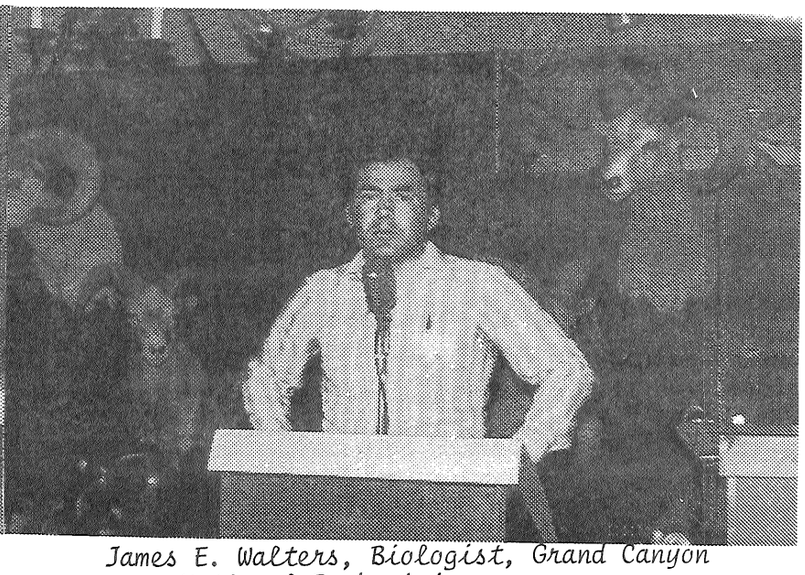
When introduced to the Desert Bighorn Council by Chairman Wes Martin of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, Martin made the statement that Omart was "an accomplished observer of wild asses".

O mart has made a number of reports to the DBC and to the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. Omart stated that the Bureau of Land Management had made an estimate of the burro population in the Lake Havasu area, and in this area had determined that there were between 300 and 500 burros in the population. About the same time the population of burro in the Grand Canyon National Park was estimated to be about 2,000 animals. Omart was convinced that these estimates were far too few in numbers. Bob has been working with the burros for a number of years and knows very well that getting a fairly accurate census is a very difficult task, Act ually the procedure used by Omart is very similar to that used by Bob McQuivey in studies of the River Mountain Herd of bighorn and in the studies made in the Santa Rosa Mountains of Southern California for bighorns by Dr. Jack Turner.

Procedure used by Omart was to mark 95 burros in a herd near Lake Havasu and then to make as careful a count of all burros that could be seen in that area together with a careful count of all burros that he had marked. As a census number he counted 500 burros and then found that of the total of 500 burros that there were only 37% of those counted that had been marked. This type of a sample and comparison then indicates that the 500 burros observed are actually only 37% of all the burros that actually do inhabit the area. This arial census was made at a cost less than the $,000. that it was thought would be the cost of a search of such intensity that few animals would be missed. People who have been in the desert areas inhabited by burros know that the multi-colored burro is very hard to see against the desert backgrounds.....The nubers of burros in sheep habitat is important. There is no question but that burros are supplanting bighorn sheep. There is a 7burro per square mile population in the Black Mountains along the Colorado River. This is considered a very high density.....Omart stated that there is need to put pressure on the Agencies for a more dependable survey of burro numbers and especially in those areas where burros have entered sheep habitat.....The method used by Omart to mark the burros for identification was to use a helicopter and then fly close enough to them so that they could be hit by paint pellets fired from a CO_2 pistol..... Orange seems to be the best color to use in this method of marking the burros. These paint marks will endure on the burro for 8 or 10 days. In the Alma Lake area the BLM trapped and removed 250 burros and stated that they had removed all the burros. Omart then went in the same area and marked 200 more burros and then counted 800 burros in the area. BLM has now removed a total of 650 burro from the area. Omart says there were at least 1050 burros in the are before any were captured.....During his studies in the Alma Lake area Bob said that every Jenny had a colt by her side....It is known that a jenny of age 10 Months will accept a Jack for breeding.....from then on she will produce a colt every 13 months for the next 24 to 25 years.....Omart reported that he has never seen or heard of a burro dying from starvation....A positive burro management program is badly needed.



Robert D. "Bob" Omart, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona



James E. Walters, Biologist, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona.

THE EVIDENCE OF FERAL BURRO COMPETITION WITH BIGHORN SHEEP IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK_____James Walters, Natural Resource Specialist
Grand Canyon National Park

THE EVIDENCE OF FERAL BURRO COMPETITION WITH BIGHORN SHEEP IN GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

The above was the title of a report given to the Desert Bighorn Council by James Walter, Natural Resource Specialist of the Grand Canyon National Park.

The Environmental Impact Statement has been prepared and written by Walters for the NPS and was still in the Regional Park Office in San Francisco undergoing 'In House' evaluation. Park Service census has determined that there are 450 bighorn sheep in the Grand Canyon National Park. There are 2,000-3,000 burro in the Park and in the habitat of the sheep. There are areas where burros move in and out of park lands andBLM or Forest Service lands.

these burros then come under the provisions of the PL 92-195---the Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971.....Studies show that there is a 63% overlap in the food utilization of burros and bighorn sheep.....Cost studies have shown that the capture and removal of one burro from the Park lands is $1,200.....on the Tonto Plateau (Upstream and adjoining the Lake Mead Recreation Area sheep have been observed. There is also a heavy concentration of burros in this area. Burros do use hillsides having slopes from 30% to 60% in steepness....300 burros are in the area near the Tonto Plateau and across from the Wallheim area of the Park. These are increasing at a late of 17% annually.....Water supplies in the G.C.N.P. is not considered a problem as aerial flights show that there are many available water so urces...Inventory of bighorn numbers continues using helicopter for the survey....This is being handicapped by lack of funding.....Park Service is now using the term "Habitat is being changed" rather than"habitat is being damaged". Damage is very difficult to quantify---'change' is easily shown by the emerging dominance of species of vegetation that were previously kept in less profusion by dominant species-----with the destruction of one type of plant specie that is a desired food plant by the herbivores a less desireable plant emerges and takes over and because it is less desireable these herbivores refrain from using it.

Jim Walters had no idea when the 'in-house review' of the EIS would be completed and released to the public.

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SPORTSMEN'S COUNCIL OF CENTRAL CALIFORNIA

COUNTIES OF
FRESNO, KERN, KINGS, MADERA, MARIPOSA, MERCED, MONTEREY, SAN BENITO, STANISLAUS, SAN LUIS OBISPO, SANTA BARBARA, SANTA CRUZ AND TULARE

A letter under date-line of July 11th from the Honorable G. William Whitehurst of Virginia will be of interest, I believe. The letter, in part, says: "Thanks for your thoughtful letter, which was waiting for me when I returned to Washington from a subcommittee trip over the Fourth of July. Your comments about the rumor regarding the Barbary Sheep and Mexican Desert Bighorn are most interesting, and I will look forward to further details. If you feel there is anything I might do, please be sure to let me know.

HR 10587 passed the House on June 29, and is now awaiting action by the Senate. The section dealing with the management of feral horses and burros was retained -- we can just hope that the Senate will go along with what the House has done....." end quote.

NOTE: The Hon. Whitehurst has introduced two resolutions in the House during the present and the last Congress in an effort to assist in the proper management of the feral horses and burros. The first one, HR 2931 became a part of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. In 1977 Whitehurst introduced HR 7121 which would have transferred title of captured feral horses and burros to private individuals or organizations for non commercial uses. This was the part deleted from the HR 2931 in 1976. However, Honorable Teno Roncalio of Wyoming introduced a stronger bill than HR 7121 and it has become the section mentioned above of HR 10587 . Without the assistance of Bill Whitehurst we would not be as far down the road to the needed management of these feral animals as we are at present. We do OWE special thanks to Congressman Whitehurst for his efforts.

READERS ARE URGED TO WRITE TO THEIR SENATORS AND URGE THEM TO ASSIST IN THE ADOPTION OF THE HR 10587. Help is needed in this matter.

Concerning the item related to the rumor of Barbary Sheep in habitat of New Mexico's desert bighorns. There is said to be a remnant band of Mexican desert bighorn sheep in the San Andres Mountains of New Mexico, and also that some one has planted some of the Barbary sheep in that area as well. THIS IS NOT CONFIRMED. And, whether or not it can be confirmed is not known at this time by the editor. The reason is that the San Andres Mts, and the adjacent White Sands National Monument are partly within the White Sands Missle Range and the Army will not permit the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to enter the area in order to determine the truth or falsity of this rumor. The Editor of T.S. has written to Andrew Sandoval at Las Cruces, N.M. in an attempt to gain more information. A rumor also has been heard that Andy has been transferred to another area of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. Probably his mail has not yet caught up with him.

Lew Carpenter, Ed.

I have also learned, by way of Dick Weaver, that the HR 10587 was amended in May so that a person may not adopt and then later gain title to more than five (5) feral horses and/or burros during any one calendar year. This should help to cool the antagonism of the burro protectionists objections to such transfer of title.

BURROS IN NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM

1. Grand Canyon National Park

Both the Environmental Impact Study and the NPS Management Plan are in the hands of Assistant Secretary Herbst. Although the December deadline was missed by about two months they neverthless await approval from the Department of the Interior prior to subsequent "polishing." Printing of the final draft for public review, and all other bureaucratic steps will eventually lead to final approval. Requests for additional information have added to delays. There is no information on when confirmation as to when Departmental review and decision can be expected. However, there may be a Departmental statement released in early August.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT.

A decision has been made by the National Park Service to require that a full-blown Environmental Impact Statement be written for the Death Valley National Monument. The Denver office of the NPS is working with the San Francisco office as well with personnel at the DVNM, in order to expedite this EIS. The date for submission to the Department of Interior in Washington has not been set.

EDITORIAL OPINION.

It would appear from newspaper articles that President Carter's swing through the Western states was not as successful as had been hoped for by the President. POLITICIANS DO HATE TO MAKE WAVES ESPECIALLY IN AN ELECTION YEAR. Consequently--this editor looks for a continuing series of delays in getting anything substantive out of the Department of Interior before the November elections take place.

Lew Carpenter, Legislative Secretary, Sp. Council of Cen. Cal.

WATERHOLE COUNTS IN DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT SET FOR LABOR DAY WEEKEND.

A recent letter from Peter G. Sanchez, Resource Management Specialist. Some people who have participated in previous years have already been contacted. Pete writes: "We are in need of volunteers to sit at springs for three consecutive days and record bighorn sightings. Persons who are strong backpackers and able to tolerate temperatures up to 110 degrees are especially needed. A high clearance vehicle, especially 4-wheel drive, is desired; your own transportation is essential..

This year's census is planned to cover the Panamint Mountains. Thecount period will run fromFriday, September 1 through Monday, September 4.

The first day (Friday) will be devoted to a briefing session which will include bighorn recognition and aging techniques, observation and reporting procedures, and spring assignments. Friday afternoon, all observers will travel to assigned springs and make ready for the count which begins at dawn on Saturday. Volunteers should be prepared to remain at the spring through Monday---three full days--to ensure an accurate count.

If you have other questions to ask Pete telephone him at the DVNM (714) 786-2331

The count in the Panamint Range begins with springs on Tucki Mt. on the north and extends to the south. Because it is very rugged country and has only a few rough roads, backpackers and persons with 4-wheel drive are needed. MORE VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED. Pete offers no additions to the following necessities for you to have with you on a waterhole count. This is a repeat from the May-June issus of T.S.-----THESE ARE IMPORTANT.

WHAT YOU NEEED TO TAKE WITH YOU TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL-SAFE COUNT

WATER is the primary need. Have enough for more than the three days spent on the count site.---Figure a minimum of two gallons per person per day. You will need some also for washing and bathing, cooking, etc.,

2. You will have to have shade during those three days of your count. If nature has not provided shade, then you must create some by use of a tarp, together with whatever needed poles, and ropes for guying--stakes---usuall ya rock or bush will do. I have found a large beach umbrella painted with FLAT NEUTRAL BLOBS OF COLOR to be handy,
3. Have a cot if possible to sleep off the ground. It is cooler and avoids some of the creepy crawly critters.
4. A light weight sleeping bag--nights do frequently get cool--largely dependent upon the altitude of your camp,
5. Reading material for use in your blind--otherwise you may go to sleep and miss the sight of watering wildlife,
6. Sunscreen ointment--and use it. You can get burned by the ultra-violet rays even while in complete shade,
7. First aid kit.--including a snake bite kit. Snakes like all other desert wildlife do look for shade in the desert;
8. Take no chances of any nature---walk the safe way---take no short-cuts they are frequently the direct causes of accidents;
9. Have a good companion---the days are long. Husband and wife teams are excellent;
10. Have good optics--a 20 power spotting scope should be in the blind, also each person should have a pair of binoculars in the blind with you;
11. You will want a good camera and film---keep them in the shade and as cool as possible. Take your telephoto lenses USE A TRIPOD. Your editor will appreciate any photos that you can send him. We can use Black & White, Color, or slides or negatives. I will return any that you want back.
12. Your watch station should be 100 to 200 yards from the waterhole--may be closer if a lot higher and well hidden. Sometimes even 50 yards is ample, if you keep quiet and have a good screen between you and the water source.
13. When you leave--take all of your debris with you--leave no evidence of your having been in the area, except your footprints made while going and coming.
14. Be in your blind from sun-up until sundown each day. HAVE A GOOD COUNT. Send in reports.

HUNTER SUCCESS SPEAKS WELL FOR SHEEP POPULATIONS IN ARIZONA

According to the WILDLIFE NEWSLETTER of the Arizona G. &. F. Department 'the bighorn sheep hunter success ratio has gone from 61% in 1975 to 75% in 1976 to 88% during the past December 3 through 18 (1977) hunt. This year's success is the highest ever recorded for the species in Arizona. A total of 44 sheep were taken in the state hunts, and six sheep were harvested in the Hualapai Indian Reservation hunt. Several good trophy heads were taken, and the outlook for the sheep herds is good except in those areas of the state where people pressure is mounting and threatening habitat.

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DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME ANNOUNCES ANOTHER LAND PURCHASE

On July first the California Department of Fish and Game announced another Bighorn Sheep range acquisition southeast of Palm Springs in Riverside County. This is the fifth in a series of purchases designed to help protect the largest band of the rare peninsular bighorns in the State.

Comprised of 12 setions of land, the site extends in a checker-board pattern east from the Deep Canyon and south to Martinez Canyon. In addition to providing a connecting link with previous Wildlife Conservation Board acquisitions, the parcels would, when combined with adjoining Bureau of Land Management land and previous purchases, block in something like 80,000 acres in public domain.

Funds from the 1974 and 1975 Bond Act would be used for the states's one-third share of the $388,000 purchase price. The balance would come from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

NOTE: This was all begun by the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep with its getting an option for purchase of about 4,500 acres in the Martinez Canyon a few years ago.

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Desert Bighorn Council --Technical Staff Annual Report -----Courtesy James A. "Jim" Blaisdell

The following are excerpts from the above report presented to the Desert Bighorn Counil during the Annual Meeting at Kingman, Arizona the first week of April 1978 .

Members of this Technical Staff are: Jim Blaisdell Chairman, National Park Service; Jim DeForge, Research Biologist, Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep; Warren Kelly, Biologist, U.S Forest Service, Nevada; Richard Weaver, Research Biologist, California Department of Fish and Game; Juan Spillett, Biologist, Utah Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Utah State University;Jack C. Turner, Jr., Professor, University of Wyoming; and George Welsh, Biologist, Arizona Game and Fish Department. This Committee has been working on the following: Preparation of a DBC position concerning regulations dealing with burros and other exotics in national parks. Preparation of a dedication page to Dr. Charles G. Hansen, for the DBC's book THE DESERT BIGHORN; transmission of information to reasearch agencies of the government---Pacific Southwest Forest and Range Experiment Stations; Staff has been pushing for a permanent marking system for legally taken sheep heads by hunters in an effort to reduce poaching efforts; advising the National Trails people of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, in efforts to avaid important bighorn habitat; Have prepared a document---first draft---of the Desert Bighorn Habitat Requirements and Guidelines; Have participated in the planning of the Central Arizona Project in efforts to protect the bighorns that would be effected by the building of the Granite Reef Aqueduct in the Granite Wash Mountains; Has actively supported bills in the Congress that would better manage the feral burro and would give the Secretary of Interior authorization to transfer title to private individuals and has been active over the several years in the preparation of the DBC book---- "THE DESERT BIGHORN, ITS LIFE HISTORY, ECOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT". It is expected that this book will be ready for publishing this June 1978. Gale Monson and Lowell Sumner have worked on this project for several years and do deserve a great amount of credit.

ALSO--- a note from Jim Blaisdell tells the editor that tomidMay there had been five lambs born in the Lava Beds enclosure.

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ANOTHER RUMOR CONCERNING BARBARY SHEEP---THIS ONE ANSWERED--AND PUT TO REST

While talking with Dr. David Simpson of Texas Tech University in Lubbock the latter part of June we discussed the possibility of other incidence of Barbary sheep innative bighorn habitat. Simpson told your editor that he had heard rumor of a band of Barbary sheep in Arizona along the Colorado River to the north of Parker Dam. He had hoped to get to the Arizona site himself during the month of June. However obilgations at the University had prevented him going to Arizona. Therefore, the rumor was just that, a rumor. He had planned to make a field trip with Richard Remington of the Arizona Department of Fish and Game.

Whereupon the editor wrote to Paul Webb, A.D.G & F. for further information. The letter was then re-directed to Remington who is the Wildlife Manager at Parker ,Arizona. In his answer to my inquiry Remington informed me that there is a band of feral sheep and goats that are free-roaming in the Domerock Mountains about 7 miles southwest of Quartzite, Arizona. The Arizona Department has been watching this band of once domestic sheep and that in their consideration these sheep do not pose any threat to any wildlife species.

During the mid to late 1950's an unknown number of domestic sheep and goats were grazed in this area in conjunction with two mining operations. After the closing of the mining operation most of the sheep and goats were trapped and removed by about 1967. These sheep had been of the Angora variety and the goats were milk goats, along withbarbary and at least two other types of domestic sheep.

Approxi mately 8 years ago a mixed band of feral sheep and/or goats composed of something less than 20 individuals were seen in bighorn sheep habitat in the Domerock Mountains, by personnel of the Arizona Game and Fish Department during annual bighorn sheep surveys.

This herd has since steadily declined to my last sighting of five individuals comprised of three ewes, two rams and one lamb in November of 1977. Since that date I have not been able to relocate this band of feral sheep. If their numbers continue to decline at this rate they will extinct themselves from this range very shortly. It is interesting to note that while the band of feral sheep have declined the bighorn sheep population of this area has remained static or has increased slightly.

I am totally unfamiliar with barbary sheep but when I discussed these feral sheep with

Dr. Simpson in Kingman this year and described one of the rams to him. He believed it could possibly be a barbary sheep. It is doubtful that this remaining band of feral sheep is pure barbary sheep. However, Doctor Simpson is interested in observing and collecting data from them. When I relocatr these feral sheep I will take photographs, notes and fecal samples and forward these to Docotr Simpson.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is watching both the bighorn and feral sheep of this area and will rapidly eliminate any problem that may arise or is suspected of arising from this band of feral sheep. " end quote.

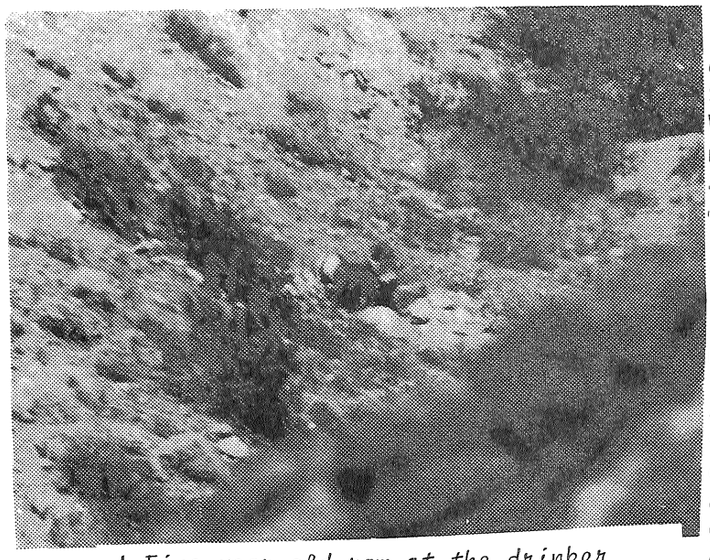
(signed) Richard Remington,Wildlife Manager,
Arizona Game and Fish Department.

NOTE::
I do wish to thank Richard Remington for his report. Lew Carpenter, Editor, T.S.

WATERHOLE COUNTS ---1978

Waterhole counts for this summer of 1978 are slow in coming to the editor. As a matter-of-fact we have only two to report. Telephone conversations with Dich Weaver, DFG in Sacramento and Bonnar Blong, DFG at Idlewild report that there has been a helicopter survey made in the Santa Rosa Mountains during t he past month. AGAIN FOR 1978 there are no reports of the sightings of any lambs in the Santa Rosa Mountains---This is the second year in succession for this to occur. There is plenty of water available in the Santa Rosas and there is more vegetation than can be utilized, and of good quality. The Department of Fish and Game is at a loss to determine why there are no lambs. It may be that there is some disease that is afflicting these recruitments to the herd. Last year it was thou ght that there might have been an outbreak of 'blue tongue'. But this was not established to be fact. Bonnar Blong believes that there must be a research study made in the Santa Rosa Mts. to determine the cause of this loss of sheep, which if continued very long will put the entire herd in the Santa Rosa Mts. in jeopardy. A thoroughly qualified Biologist is needed for this task, and it needs to be done now. Blong reports that the bighorns in the Chocolate Mts. are doing very well. A complete report will will be made in the Sepember-October issue.

SACRAMENTO MOUNTAINS



A Five year old ram at the drinker of the Red Rock Caves Water Storage Project (December 1972) Sacramento Mts.

Lew and Marguerite Carpenter spent the three days of June 22 to 24 sitting in a cave in the Sacramento Mts. overlooking the Red Rock Caves Water Storage installation. The cave which receives no reflective heat off other rocky areas only reached a maximum of 100 degrees--much ooler than in the open or down in the canyon. Hundreds of mourning doves formed a constant procession to the drinker, especially during the mornings before 11:00 a.m.; coyote were observed, and heard, on three ocassions; Six families of Gambel quail came to water each morning; the chicks were of three age groups. The total if quail was 80 or more birds in all. We saw only one bighorn sheep come to the water. He was a very sleek, dark grey, five year old ram. After drinking for about ten minutes he then browsed in and on a black bush for another ten minutes before going around a point of rock and out of sight. However, about 90 minutes later Marguerite said something to me, and seconds later the ram stuck his head up over a low ridge about 100 yards away. He was zeroed in on us perfectly, and apparantly decided that we were not for him and he then trotted off over the ridge and out of sight.

For some reason, as yet unknown to me, both of my cameras developed lens troubles, of which I was not aware until getting pictures back from processing. Hence the poor quality.

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THIRTEEN OREGON SHEEP HUNTERS SUCCESSFUL

Twenty-three out of the 24 applicants who were successful in drawing a permit to hunt bighorn sheep this year showed up to hunt and 13 were successful in taking a ram-literally the trophy of a lifetime.

All four hunters in the Owyhee area hunt took a ram. In two hunts for the Steens Mountain with six hunters authorized for each, three rams were taken during the first period and two during the second hunt. Hart Mountain also had two hunting periods with four hunters authorized in each. Two rams were taken during each hunt.

Robert Anthony of Corvallis took the largest ram from the Steens during the second period and it measured 167-4/8 on the Boone and Crockett Club scale, tying with one taken last year for the largest bighorn ram killed so far in Oregon. (Oregon Wildlife November 1977)

NOTE: The Sheepherder has carried articles several times during the past five years telling of the introduction of California bighorns into the former ranges of bighorns in the State of Oregon. Having a huntable population, even on a limited scale, is evidence of the success of the Oregon re-introduction program. The bighorns for this re-introduction program were obtained from the Williams Lake area herd, near the Fraser River in British Columbia. This has been the source of sheep used in other re-introduction programs in the States of Washington, California, Nevada, North Dakota as well as that of Oregon.

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REPORT CONCERNING THE SAN JACINTO MOUNTAINS

A telephone report from Doctor Loren L. Lutz concerning the first waterhole count to be made in the year 1978. Doctor Lutz reports that the 16 volunteers manned waterholes June 17th, 18th and 19th. During this time there were only 30 bighorns sighted. This number was composed of 20 ewes, and 10 rams of which one was a yearling. Again for the second year in succession there were no lambs reported. The sheep of the San Jacinto Mountains like those of the Santa Rosa Mountains to the southeast some 30 to fifty miles may be in dire trouble.

SIX YEARS AGO, and at the same waterholes the observers saw a total of 287 bighorn sheep that had a lamb to ewe ratio of 80 lambs per 100 ewes. We do not know what the problems are that are causing this very severe decline, apparantly, in bighorn populations. The D.F.G. reportedly made an air search of the Santa Rosa Mts. but could find no lambs. Dr. Lutz plans a similar air search in the San Jacinto Mts.

EDITORIAL NOTE: Hopefully the California Legislature will adopt theAB 3416 authored by Assemblyman Eugene T. Gualco which would make a substantial grant to the Department of Fish and Game for Non-game wildlife and for threatened and endangered species in California

A FEW NOTES FROM COLORADO

The Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep Society has posted a $100.00 reward--to be given for information leading to a citation and/or conviction of anyone illegally killing a bighorn sheep in Colorado. Colorado will be using a modified New Mexico "Stop Game Thief" program. Notice of this reward is to be printed on the Colorado Big Game Regulations for 1978.

Final reports of the 1977 sheep hunting season in Colorado showed that 78 rams had been harvested---eight of them by archers.

Colorado State University is conducting six bighorn sheep research projects during this summer 1978. One of these is "Desert Bighorn Sheep Introduction into Colorado". An evaluation of proposed release sites for desert bighorn sheep and the monitoring of future released desert bighorn sheep are the objectives of the study.

Forest Service approval has been granted for bighron sheep transplantsto the Division of Wildlife on the Poso Trail, Tobacco Road Trail and the Conejos River sites in the Rio Grande National Forest and the Pampant Range Langhauf Gulch, and Riverside sites in the Pike-Sanlsabel National Forest.

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National Park Service report. NPS Newsletter-----Courtesy Dick Thomas

During the Period May through July, 1977 "The Crater" on Specimen Mountain of the Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado, was closed to all cross-country travel. The closure was to give special protection to bighorn during the spring lambing period and was in addition to the regular seasonal closure above the 10,800-foot-level on Specimen and Shipler Mountains.

The current estimate is that between 150 and 200 bighorn live within the boundaries of the park. In march, 20 bighorn were transplanted into the park. They were trapped from the Tarryall Herd on the Pike National Forest by the Colorado Division of Wildlife personnel, and released into the northern portion of Rocky Mountain National Park. It is anticipated that they too, will aid in the effort to increase the sheep population within the park and in adjacent areas and that they will help "teach" the regular park herd the fine art of migration. If this happens, bighorn will cover more of their historic range, including lower elevation winter-range.

AUGUST 9th The Riverside District---Bureau of Land Management will hold a public meeting in the Kennedy Center, 1675 East Madison Ave. at 7:30 p.m. in El Cajon. The topic for discussion will deal with the Draft Recreation Management Plan for the McCain Valley. This is of importance to the well-being of the desert bighorn sheep of this area. WILL SOMEONE ATTEND AND THEN SEND THE EDITOR OF THE NEWSLETTER A SUMMARY OF THE PROCEDINGS----PLEASE

LABOR DAY WEEKEND WATERHOLE COUNT IN THE PANAMINT MTS. OF DEATH VALLEY---seepage 5

OCTOBER 7th Annual dinner meeting of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep for the Southern California area. It will be at Michaells again, 1500 Los Feliz Blvd. Waterhole count 6:30 and dinner served at 7:30 p.m. After dinner speaker is to be Mr. Lanny O. Wilson, of the Bureau of Land Management office in Boise, Idaho. Lanny O. Has been involved in the bighorns for many years in Utah and New Mexico as well as Idaho. He is a past Chairman and Past Secretary-Treasurer of the Desert Bighorn Council. Response cards will accompany the September-October issue of THE SHEEPHERDER.

ALSO HAVE YOU MADE YOUR WATERHOLE COUNT FOR THIS SUMMER OF 1978? It is not too late. The information that can be gathered is needed. AND THEN SEND IN YOUR REPORTS TO THE WATER COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN: Glenn Sudmeier, 1728 Norco, California 92760.