SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

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January - February 1979

THE TIDE BEGINS REVERSAL IN BATTERED McCAIN VALLEY

The problems concerning the McCain Valley were first written about in THE SHEEPHERDER in 1973. During sessions of the Desert Bighorn Council that year held in Hawthorne, Nevada, Mark C. Jorgensen read apaper about the bighorn sheep of the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park and some of the conflicting uses of the area. He reported at that timealmost six years ago, that the ORV'S (Off Road Vehicles) were out-of-hand and were ravaging many of the hillsides and valleys of the region. About two years latter the BLM did seriously consider some type of management of this desert region. BLM Has now 'taken-the-bit-in-their mouths', so to speak and has developed what appears to this writer to be an excellent Wildlife Habitat Management Plan. These things do take a lot of time to accomplish. The various Agencies have many restrictions and procedures that must be followed from a recognized need to and accomplishment and implementation of a broad based plan.

The editor of T.S. has on several occasions requested that members of the Society, and their friends get involved in the McCain Valley problems and then send reports to this editor. To this date not one single comment has been received by me, the editor.

However, under the date of October 26, 1978 Gerald E. 'Gerry' Hillier, Riverside District Manager for BLM has sent me a copy of THE MCCAIN VALLEY WILDLIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT PLAN (MHP) as has been written by the BLM and by the California Department of Fish and Game and finalized and signed off on August 8, 1978. The cover letter that Mr. Hillier sent to me with the Plan will explain the plan far better than I could do. Therefore, the letter from 'Gerry' will be quoted for the most part. QUOTE:

"The HMP was developed according to the priorities established in the Mangement Framework Plan completed in 1975. The HMP developed specific objectives for wildlife management in the entire McCain Valley Wildlife Hab'tat Area (including the McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area and the Oriflamme and Sawtooth areas). Action to date has been directed toward protecting and rehabilitating peninsular bighorn sheep habitat, conducting a wildlife inventory of the area, and analyzing spring water used by the bighorn sheep.

Bighorn sheep occupy the rocky escarpment and canyon areas around Carrizo Canyon north of Sombrero Peak in eastern McCain Valley. This sheep population is declining. Sheep censuses conducted at watering holes since 1971 have shown a downward trend in population recruitment with only two lambs being seen in 1977 and none being observed in early 1978. Further intensive studies in 1978 have since revealed two lambs. Reasons for this poor reproduction are not obvious, particularly because rains during the past two years have provided adequate water supplies and vegetative growth. Human disturbance may be affecting bighorn sheep populations, especially since recreational use has increased in the area while bighorn sheep recruitment levels have declined. The HMP is requiring that bighorn sheep populations be closely monitored to determine if bighorn recruitment and occupied range will increase with the level of protection provided by the HMP.

The primary level of protection that the HMP will provide is to reduce human disturbance in bighorn sheep habitat through closure of roads to vehicular traffic. Most roads leading east from McCain Valley Access Road and into the bighorns sheep habitat will be closed to recreational vehicular use. Sites for 8 gates and 16 barricades have been identified. These site locations supersede those in figure 6 of the McCain Valley Management Plan. Gate and barricade locations have beeen changed to facilitatte the enforcement and maintenance of the closure system. Closure sites have been shown to cattlemen (Grazing licensees) using the area and to landowners who have private inholdings in McCain Valley. The BLM is now developing agreements with cattlemen and landowners sothat access to private land and grazing leases is not deterred. Landowners, grazing licensees, and appropriate agencies will be provided keys to all locked gates. Construction of road closures will begin on December 1, 1978. Arrangements are being made to employ Young Adult Conservation Corps (YACC) personnel for the installation of the closures.

While vehicle use is being reduced, some vehicle recreation is provided by the HMP and the RAMP in appropriate areas. Roads to Sacatone Spring and Mt. Tule are to remain open for

access to rockhounding and sightseeing locations. The recreation plan to proposes to establish an area (approximately 1,000 acres west of the McCain Valley Road near Lark Canyon Campground as an existing roads and trails use area).

All gates and barricades will be accompanied by signs indicating that the closures were established to protect natural values. Additionally, information pamplets concerning camping hiking, ORV designated trails and roads, and wildlife will be available at the entrance to McCain Valley, at strategic closures, and at campgrounds. BLM Rangers and the San Diego County Sheriff, with assistance from California Department of Fish and Game and Department of Parks and Recreation, will patrol and enforce the road closures. Regulations will be promulgated under the authority of the Sikes Act (88 Stat. 1369, 1371).

The BLM is analyzing bighorn sheep habitat based on factors of elevation, degree of slope, vegetation types and density, and distances sheep were observed away from water sources and escape terrain. These data will aid in predicting where bighron sheep might be found in the future, and in identifying areas that sheep may reoccupy in their former range. These studies may also point to areas of competition between sheep and livestock as well.

Another major wildlife inventory effort is now being undertaken in the McCain Valley Area. Under terms of a lawsuit (NRDC versus Morton), the BLM is now making inventories to develop an Environmental Statement (ES) on grazing use of eastern San Diego County (including McCain Valley). These inventories will also be used to update the Management Framework Plan (MFP). The ES will be written on the updated MFP decisions for the McCain Valley ES area. Constraints imposed both by the Habitat Management Plan and the Recreation Activity Management Plan will be re-evaluated, although they will serve to guide the MFP and the ES. Studies of bighorn sheep conducted under the HMP eill be used in analyzing impacts of livestock use and human disruption to bighorn sheep habitat. Documentation of the conflicts between livestock use, Habitat impacts by recreational vehicles and human disruption of bighorn sheep habitat areas will be made in the ES.

I appreciate your interest and concern for public land management in the McCain Valley Resource Conservation Area. You can expect to receive additional updates and other documents concerning future management in McCain Valley. A copy of the final McCain Valley Habitat Management Plan is enclosed.

Signed: Gerald E. Hillier--District Manager.

NOTE: A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO GERRY HILLIER. lew.

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ARIZONA'S LARGEST BIGHORN RAM IS DECEASED

One of the nation's largest desert bighorn sheep has been found dead in Aravapai Canyon about 40 miles northwest of Willcox.

On October 28th Joe LaRue of Phoenix was in the Aravapai Canyon area on a deer hunting trip and while walking down a creek bed on a sttep hillside in a very brushy area he spotted the snout of the carcass sticking up out of the sand. LaRue and his companions carried the skull and horns home with them and then turned them over to the Game and Fish Department. Bill Sizer, Chief of the Departments Information and Education Division said that, "The head is awesome." The horn lengths were 44.4 and 40 inches respectively with bases measuring only 13.7 inches; while at the one-fourth curl they were 14.4 inches. The horn lengths are two and a half inches longer than any other ram recorded in the Arizona record book. The Boone and Crocket point score is 190.6 and ranks sixth largest of any found in the United States.

The big Aravapai ram was trapped as a lamb in the New Water Mountains and was turned loose in the Aravapai pasture in 1960. In 1973, the game and Fish Department removed a 10 foot section of the enclosure fence, and the 22 sheep were allowed to roam. Pictures of the ram taken at that time showed him to have more than a full curl and would rank near the top of the Arizona Wildlife Trophies record book. The horns are heavily weathered-opened up at the ends like an old board--which Sizer said probably cost several points on the Boone and Crocket scale. This would seem to indicate the ram must have been dead perhaps a year or two.

report courtesy-Ben and Betty Mayo, Cochise, Az.

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NOTE: The Arizona Game and Fish Department have a cape---probably from a road kill and will use it in having the Old Ram's horns mounted for departmental display.

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VALUABLE SHEEP COUNTRY: THE MUELLER RANCH

The Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society in cooperation with Nature Conservancy has undertaken as a project the purchase of the Dome Rock section of the Mueller Ranch, west of Pike's Peak in Colorado. Costs of the property is said to be $360,000. Of this amount $210,000 has been raised. The R.M.B. Society is in the process of raising another $20,000.

This area is said to be a very critical sheep range of the Pike's Peak herd of bighorn sheep. It is reported that the amount must be raised by March 1, 1979. Anyone wishing to donate to this habitat purchase may send checks to the R.M.B. Society at P.O. Box 1086 Denver, Colorado 80201.

The R.M. Bighorn Society has posted a $100. reward for information about any illegal sheep kills or harassment.

Department of Wildlife personnel have carried out several successful transplants and treatments for lungworm. Nine additional transplants are being planned for year 1979. Biggest problem has been a shortage of apple pulp, used to lure the sheep under the net used in the trapping area.

No non-resident sheep hunting permits are granted in Colorado.

The Denver Water Board has allocated $35,000/year to monitor the bighorns in Waterton Canyon south of Denver. These are the sheep which will be disturbed by the new dam and treatment plant construction in the canyon. This project for the City of Denver has been reported in these colums this past year.

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DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT _ BURRO CENSUS 1978

On August 7, 8, & 9, 1978 Pete Sanchez and James Unruh, Biologists of the DVNM spent a total of 21.4 hours flying over sections of the Monument in a Bell 47G-3B1 helicopter in an effort to determine the population of feral burros in the Monument and in close proximeity. The area covered by these flight originating in the Wild Rose area covered some 800 square miles. A total of 1,426 burros were counted. Additionally, 36 bighorn sheep, 28 horses and 12 deer were seen. Some 194 burros were counted on lands immediately adjacent to the Monument.

It is believed that the use of a helicopter produces more effective census results than could be obtained by the use of a fixed wing aircraft. This is because of the slower speed of travel that is permitted--generally being between 20 and 40 miles per hour during the census.

One observer surveyed the front-left quadrant and the other the front-right quadrant. The pilot assisted the left hand observer who plotted each animal observed on 15 minute Topagraphic quadrant maps. Three different types of grids were flown during the census. In complex drainages such as Johnson Canyon this was on a contour basis with approximately 800 to not more than 1,500 feet difference; over large and relatively flat areas such as Butte Valley parallel lines were flown; in steep canyon areas such as Marble Canyon flight paths were parallel to the bottom of the wash.

The method used for this census is felt to be reliable and on a conservative side. The reason for the number of animals observed probably being below the actual population is that burros frequently take advantage of natural concealment in areas of thick vegetation. Also the area surveyed is only a portion of the Monument's total area. However, it was thought that the areas not surveyed do have but few if any burros in them. The Monument toal area is about 3,000 square miles.

Some of the lands outside the Monument that are known to have burro populations were also flown over during the census period. It is known that many burros do wander in and out of the Monument and do not respect these boundaries. 22 of the 28 wild free roaming horses were observed on the Hunter Mountain. The 12 deer observed were mainly in the Grapevine Mountains on the eastern side. Trail Canyon and Tin Mountain held 29 of the 36 bighorn sheep observed during the flights.

Peter G. Sanchez, Natural Resource Specialist, who sent the report to me, the Editor, also wrote that from the census it is believed the actual burro population of Monument lands is at least 1,800 animals, using these lands.

CONCERNING WATERHOLE COUNT over the Labor Day weekend. Pete says: "Tropical storm Norman hit Death Valley the day <u>after</u> the Labor Day period. Bighorn waterhole census conditions were good during the count period. However, so far 17 bighorn were sighted. We had a good turnout and a very enthusiastic group of observers.

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The Non-game wildlife decal pictured at the left is the decal for year 1979. The winner of the designing competition was 14 year old Pam Poole of Napa. She is the second 14-year old to receive the honor. The peregrine falcon design done last year was by 14-year old Robin Martinez of Atwater. There is also a poster available to those who contribute $5.00 or more to the program. As has been previously reported in THE SHEEPHERDER money derived by this program did pay for three water storage facilities in the desert during the water construction year of 1977 - 1978. Make checks payable to NON-GAME WILDLIFE and send them to:
WILDLIFE, Box DFG, Sacramento, California 95801

This program has also had successes in Peregrine falcon augmentation on the Morro Rock in Morro Bay, California, eagle nesting area in Shasta County, Foresters tern nesting area on Blair Island and a Natural Area in San Joaquin County.

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February 2 & 3, 1979 The Wildlife Society and Fisheries Society will hold a Joint Annual Conference on the Queen Mary based in Long Beach. Meeting are open to the public on payment of a small Registration fee. A number of topics should be of intest to 'sheepherders' and other wildlife enthusiasts. Some of these are: the morning of the 2nd--Keynote speaker Heuy D. Johnson, Secretary, California Resource Agency. Other speakers from US Fish & Wildlife Service US Forest SErvice; US Bureau of Land Management; Audubon Society.

Afternoon session papers related to Advances in Wildlife Research and Management and "Wildlife Research in Association with Energy Development"---one paper of which is "Capture and Radio Telemetry Success on Desert Bighorn Sheep----Southern California Edison Company. THE SHEEP-HERDER has reported that such a study was being undertaken as preliminary to building a transmission line from Arizona into the Southern California area near Palm Springs.
Saturday pm topics have general headings of: "Fire, Chapparal and Wildlife" and "The effects of Livestock Grazing in the Arid Southwest".

Feb. 3 & 4 Chuckwalla Big Game Guzzler-----replumb the tanks.

February 24 & 25 Install new tanks at the Pyramid Big Game Guzzler.

March 17 & 18 Install a new drinker at the Old Dad Mt. Big Game Guzzler.

April 5 - 6 - 7 Desert Bighorn Council in Boulder City----see related article on this.

April 7 & 8 Reposition the drinker and build a burro exclosure at the Big Game guzzler on South I - 40
April 28 & 29 a new development at the Smith Spring in the Sacrament Mountains to the Southwest of Needles---There will be a two-and a half mile walk to get to this one.

May 19 & 20 Paint the tanks of the two big Game guzzlers in the Piute Mountains and in the Clipper Mountains.

IF YOU CAN PARTICIPATE BE SURE TO CONTACT GLENN SUDMEIER at 1728 Hillside, Norco, Calif. 92760 or telephone him at (714) 735-4387 well in advance of the above dates

FRED A. WORTHLEY IS NAMED REGIONAL MANAGER

On January 6th E.C. "Charlie" Fullerton announced his replacement for Robert D. Montgomery who is retiring from the Department of Fish and Game after 26 years of service with the DFG, the last 10 years of which he has been the Manager of Region 5 based in Long Beach.

Worthley joined the Department in 1962 serving in Lassen County. In 1967 he was transferred to the desert area of Blythe in Riverside County as the coordinator of field activities on the lower Colorado River. He therefore comes to the Southern California Region with prior knowledge of that area. Region 5 encompasses ten of California's Counties, extending northerly along the eastern side of the Sierra Nevadas including the Mono Lake area where at present a very serious wildlife problem is developing due to the draining of the waters of Mono Lake by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

Worthley has had current responsibilities that have included coordination of DFG programs on land acquisition, coastal wetlands and oil sumps, as well as staff services and work on military installations, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

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DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP STRATEGIC PLAN

In Arizona an estimated 3,000 desert bighorn sheep occupy 7,113 square miles of desert-scrub and grasslands, according to the Desert Bighorn Sheep Strategic Plan recently adopted by the Commission. It is the goal of the Department of Game and Fish to increase the current population of the species while maintaining the harvest at approximately its present level. The harvest of bighons in Arizona is considered biologically conservative with only 1.3 percent of the population being taken annually (as compared to about ten percent for deer, elk and javelina).

Arizona Ram donated to Game and Fish Department

Thanks to the benevolence of its finder, the State record bighorn ram will be displayed for public viewing at the Phoenix office of the Department. The skull and horns of the world famous desert bighorn were found last October by Joe LaRue of Phoenix while hunting deer with his brother, James. NOTE: see related article--this issue.

DESERT BIGHORN

DESERT BIGHORN COUNCIL MEETINGS SCHEDULED

The Annual meetings of the Desert Bighorn Souncil are to be held this coming April 5th and 6th with a Field trip on April 7th. The meeting for 1979 will be held at the Elk's Lodge (BPOE) in Boulder City, Nevada. The host motel will be the El Rancho Boulder located at 725 Nevada Highway also in Boulder City 89005, The rates will be: Single--$20. doubles $24. Reservations may also be made by phone at (702) 293-1085. Boulder City is not served by commercial airlines. Scheduled airline service to Las Vegas is available. There is camping available near to B.C. At the Lake Mead National Recreation Area. Keynote speakers of the conference will be J. Juan Spillett and Thomas D. Bunch of the Utah State University.
This years field trip will be to the River Mountains. There is to be a demonstration of the working of the Drop Gate Panel Trap that has been used so very successfully in the trapping of bighorn sheep in this area both for study purposes as well as transplants of sheep into other areas. Many sheep have been marked at this facility. Hopefully some sheep may be observed. Membership in the DBC is open to any interested persons. Annual fees of $5.00 are very modest and does include a copy of the Transactions of the current year---ready for distribution at the following meeting.

DESERT BIGHORN BOOK------update

Gale Munson recently received word from the Director of the University of Arizona University Press that the desert bighorn book has been accepted for publication. It is expected to take about a year to complete the process. We have hope to have an update from Gale at this years meeting. We will attempt to keep you informed on this publication. It is one that just about every sheep enthusiast will wish to have in their library. The Editor-- T.S. has read the preliminary copy

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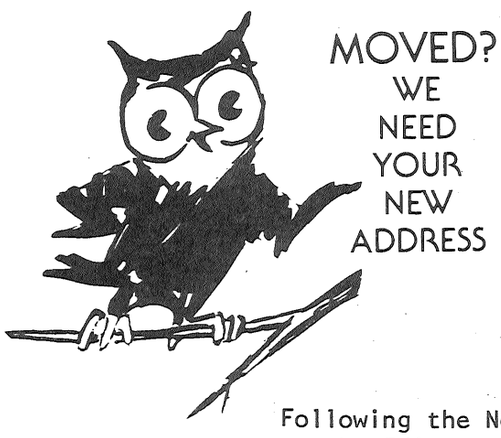

WE DO MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP OUR MEMBERS ADDRESSES AS CURRENT AS POSSIBLE. YOU CAN HELP BY PUTTING THE Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep on your list of people to notify when you move--or before you move. This will assure that you will receive your bi-monthly issue of THE SHEEPHERDER, and other pertinant information on time and schedule to the best we can do. Each copy returned costs the Society not less than 25¢ PLUS then sending it on to you by FIRST CLASS MAIL PROVIDED the Postal Department has a forwarding address and then sends it to this office of the Editor.

Following the November-December 1978 issue there were 30 copies returned to the Editor. The Postal Service had no forwarding addresses for some. These persons had to be dropped from further mailings until address are obtained. Copies were then sent to addresses furnished by the Postal Service at an additional cost of first class postage. YOU CAN HELP THE SOCIETY AND YOURSELVES, BY sending in your change of address.

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WILD HORSE ISLAND BIGHORN SHEEP UPDATE

Some time ago the T.S. reported that there had been a die-off of bighorn sheep on the Wild Horse Island in Flathead Lake, Montana. Some years ago Mr. Jim Bond of Portland, Oregon, a wildlife photographer and lecturer had arroused a lot of interest in the bighorns of the area, as he travelled around the United States with his programs.

In early summer 1978 the editor directed a letter to the Montana Department of Fish and Game concerning this herd of sheep, and especially so as this island was privately owned and had not been hunted. A response was received from Fletcher E. Newly, acting for the Director. Mr. Newly stated in his letter,: "It is true that the sheep on Wildhorse Island had a considerable die-off last year. This is not the first time this situation has developed on Wild Horse Island. We feel that we must reduce the bighorn population in this area to a reasonable number. The sheep that we will trap and transplant from the island will be moved into the State of Montana. We do not have any plans, at this time, to fulfill any obligations that we might have outside the State of Montana."

Mr. Newley also enclosed a copy of Montana's Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, from the Management Division. This is a report of the various herds of Montana as of October 1975.

The Wild Horse Island is now the Property of the State of Montana. The bighorn herd of the island has had several studies beginning in 1954 and up to the year of the publication. The report states that "This herd at least in recent times evidently started with the introduction of two yearling bighorn sheep (one male, and one female) on the island in 1939. They increased to six by 1947, and at that time six more sheep from the Sun River were transplanted by the Montana Department of Fish and Game. The population was estimated to be about 90 sheep in 1954 when the first study on the island was completed as a Masters Theseis by H.A. Ogren. In 1963 the population was estimated to be about 125 with some 200 mule deer also on the island. During the interveneing years the horse population had decreased from approximately 100 to only three. Observed lamb production in 1961 was reported to be 33 lambs per 100 ewes. The sheep population increased to about 300 at this time. It was also noted that the deciduos browse species were gone and that the deer herd had diminished to about 75. D uring the winter of 1972 the sheep population suffered a die-off with 58 dead sheep being found. The examination of carcasses revealed that malnutrition was a major cause of the die-off. Spring lamb survival dropped to 12 lambs per 100 ewes.

"Although only three sheep have been trapped and removed from the island since 1959, it is probably conservative estimate that several hundred sheep (172 can actually be accounted for) have been removed from this population. Trapping accounts for only 50. Vertually all the remainder have been removed by starvation. When we view hunter harvest removals from other major herds, it is difficult to imagine hunting as a detrimental factor to mountain sheep populations."

The report quotes from Wildlife Monograph No.4, the Wildlife Society---THE BIGHORN SHEEP IN THE UNITED STATES, ITS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE (1960). This monograph is virtually impossible to get a copy of. B uechner, Helmet K, stated,"It is not good, sound thinking to believe preservation of native animals requires complete abstinence from hunting. Overpopulations are possible, and a sensible program of harvest is necessary as a technique to prevent catastrophic mortallities. There is no more dramatic illustration of the fallacy of rigid protection than the collapse of the Tarryall herd in Colorado. Had the population density been kept at about half its maximum peak, the catastrophe might have been averted. General principles of population behaviour suggest that it is correct to recommend that density be kept below the maximum in habitats where overpopulations develop. Keeping a bighorn sheep herd at the right level requires harvesting individuals of both sexes."

The report states further: "It is not the intent here to consider whether or not hunting should be allowed on Wild Horse Island, itdoes seem apparant that some type of program designed to remove the harvestable segment of the bighorns population from the area is not only desireable but necessary.....In addition, when we see that the known hunter harvest from the hunted sheep herds in Administrative Region One is around 100 and that these herds are still maintaining themselves, we further establish that hunting does not seem to be the limiting factor."

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DESERT WATER REPORTS ----Continued

Some reports concerning water in the desert mountains were written in the issue of November-December. Lack of space prevented complete reports.

Bob Campbell is very dedicated to making these observations and then sending in these reports. He has done extensive walking in the Orocopia Mts. of Riverside County. On 28 September he found an unknown spring and trough containing about 75 gallons of bitter water. There was considerable sheep sign and tracks in the mud of the area, indicating at least two different age class animals. The Slab Tank was dry; Orocopia Tank was dry except for some water back under a rock and the area was fetid in odor;
Washingtonia Spring Canyon is very much inhabited. From an overlook he saw some 15 cars, three people, three goats, sheds a trailer and a house. There was nosign of a mine. This area would probably not be frequented by sheep.

NOTE: There lare many of these type of illegal uses in the desert mountains. The same type of uses are common also on the U.S. National Forests. People claim to have discovered minerals, and then stake a claim and use the area as a week-end retreat or vacation spot. Under the archaic mining law of 1872 and the $100 amount of 'assessment work' to be done each year, it becomes very difficult for the land managing agencies to evict these illegal squatters. Cases taken to Court are long drawn-out and expensive to prosecute, and are frequently inconclusive in settlement.
Bob reported that the Clark Mt. B.G.G. was dry as of June 30 and therefore no count was made.
Piute Range B.G.G. (July 2-3 & 4) tanks were two-thirds full -- saw 30 to 40 chukar, a few quail, doves beyond counting, No sheep sign in vicinity.
Jail Canyon, Panamint Range, Sept. 2 - 3-4---water flowing for three or four miles. Area was occupied by seven burros; the four jacks were fighting day and night---saw 30 chukar, some sheep dropping in area but none were seen.
Bob visited the Chuckwalla Mts B.G.G. in early August and found one of the tanks blown over. He reported this by Water Committee Chairman Glenn Sudmeier.(Scheduled for repairs on this coming February 3rd and 4th)
In the Orocopias he found very distinct sheep tracks in wet mud around an unnamed spring west of Canyon Springs. He saw several covey of quail. One covey had 60 birds in it. Also seen. a roadrunner and two coyote----No doves in evidence. Presumed that the doves had migrated to Mexico as this was the last of September.
Bob continues: " Found good water at West Canyon Springs---heavily overgrown with grass but

fresh and accessible. No sheep sign observed..-.....Two days of exploring by motorcycle from along the Bradshaw Road indicates that every drivable wash on this side of the Orocopias will have a recreational jeep trail going up it as far as possible. Presence of a jeep trail in this area therefore is not an indicator of water, mine or scenic wonder".

Ron Vickery who has participated in virtually every construction project had been in to the Kidney Spring in the Castle Mts and reports the water clean and about 40 gallons available for wildlife. He reported sheep track and those of quail, chukar as well.

Gary Roberts sends in a report concerning the Cady Mountain installation. There has finally after several years of drought been a rain in the Cady Mts above the project site. He found the 3,000 gallon tank about three-fourths full. The dam and piping all in good condition. Many bees around the project---many of them dead. Evidence shows that the drinker is receiving heavy use by birds as well as bighorns. Many sheep beds in the vicinity---many rodents in the area and also tracks made by bobcats. Gary recommends that a new and better cover be erected over the tank to lessen evaporation.
NOTE: The tank for this project had been donated by the Adohr Milk Farms in Tulare and had been freighted to Daggett Air Base by Marvin Wood of Lemoore. Thence, it had been carried in to the project site by Major Evans of the Air National Guard based in Long Beach. The Marine Corps Base at Barstow-Daggett had assisted on this project of February 1973.

Glenn Sudmeier and Jim DeForge had been in the Coxcomb Mts of Riverside County and found Tactite Spring (Meek Seep) had about a gallon of water with a flow also of one gallon per hour. Coxcomb Big Game guzzler with plenty of water---recommended some drip irrigation to induce vegetation in the area, and the moving of drinker to a position against the mountain, and installation of a second drinker. He expresses concern that a leak in the acqueduct might be repaired, and, that if this is done the only source of water in the entire mountain would be removed. He also says: "By the abundance of trash, including clay birds, shot shells and high power rifle shell cases. The sheep demand another water source or they could be lost, either through careless human activity or by the aqueduct repair crew fixing the leak. I feel that part of the solution is in making the water at the Coxcomb B.G.G. more accessible by using the method mentioned above". They also found the carcass of a ewe lamb(approx. eight months old) dead and apparantly had been killed by coyotes----presumed the lamb had strayed from its mother onto the flats and fell victim of the predator. No evidence of disease or accident apparant.

They had also been to the Rustler Spring on the Northwestern end of the Sacramento Mts. It is in a rock lined tunnel and had about ten gallon storage----needs digging out. There is a nearby usable tank that could be used for water storage if water could be pumped from the tunnel into it---and from thence to a drinker. Sudmeier has seen sheep in this vicinity.

Parrish B.G.B in the Sawtooth Range holds about 4,500 gallons of water---there are many burros in the area. They are being excluded by the exclosure around this water---saw no sheep.

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JOSHUA TREE NATIONAL MONUMENT BIGHORN SHEEP STUDY UPDATE

The Jan.-Feb., 1978 issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried an articleconcerning a sheep study begun in the monument and the related adverse effects of human incursions into the Stubbe Spring Area. The results of a part of that study had been to place the Stubbe Spring area out of bounds to monument visitors, in hopes to lessen the conflicting uses. Recently--December 1, 1978 I have received a further report from Dr. Charles L. Douglas of the University of Nevada--Las Vegas, concerning this study Dr. Douglas writes: " Bighorn sheep are being studied in Joshua Tree National Monument to gather data that will help manage this species more effectively. A concentration of sheep in the Stubbe Spring area has caused concern about possible overutilization of the surrounding range, and dependence upon one water source by this herd, which is thought to be the largest group of sheep in the monument. A study of sheep movements in the Stubbe Spring area was undertaken to assist in selecting another guz - zler site in the Little San Bernardino Mountains. It is hped that installation of an additional guzzler will enable the herd to expand its range and numbers. Nine sheep were fitted with radio-telemetry collars in July of 1977. A total of 81 locations was recorded between July 1977 and April 1978. Doctor Douglas gave a report to the Desert Bighorn Council during one of the sessions held in Kingman, Arizona the first week of April 1978."

A previous report of Dr. Douglas in which he had used time-lapse photography has been reported in T.S. ---It had not been a great success.

"Two weeks of trapping were conducted at Stubbe Spring in July 1977. A drop gate corral trap (borrowed from Nevada Fish and Game) was constructed of heavy nylon mesh, supported by upright poles----as previously described. Trapping was conducted only three consecutive days each week so as not to deprive those individuals thatwould not enter the trap for water.

Nine sheep were captured and equipped with radio-telemetry collrs having lithium chloride batteries. Five ewes and four rams were collared. As previously noted they were later found in 81 different locations. The distances of travel from the Stubbe Spring have ranged from 1.25 to 5.5 miles. Rams tend to move farther south and east from the spring than do the ewes. The ewes tend to utilize those areas to the west and southwest of Stubbe Spring. Further study of these movements is deemed necessary before seasonal use areas can be defined for the sexes.

The study group were surprised to see considerable use of the arid and sparsely vegetated hills on the western side of the Little San Bernardino Mountains. The area to the west of Stubbe Spring has extensive trail systems that were noted on earlier survey flights. Closer

inspection revealed that grasses and herbaceous species occur in drainage areas and on protected slopes. Although vegetation is quite sparse, there is enough to attract the sheep. A helicopter survey of sheep habitat was conducted from October 3-5, 1977, for a total of 13 hours. A total of 51 individual sheep were counted throughout the Monument. The most encouraging aspect of the flight was that seven lambs and 33 ewes were seen. The majority of lambs were seen about two miles west of Stubbe Spring.

"It is interesting that 27 ewes and three lambs were seen in the Stubbe Spring area during helicopter flight, whereas only seven ewes and no lambs were seen during the two weeks of trapping. Five of the seven ewes were equipped with transmitters. Only one yearling was observed at the spring in July. Of the 38 sheep seen in the Stubbe Spring area, three were marked. Since six of the marked individuals were not seen, this brings the known herd size in the Stubbe Spring area to 44 animals. It is possible that sheep in the Stubbe Spring area may be utilizing a water source other than Stubbe Spring. To date we have not located such a source, but we hope that further locational data may facilitate doing so."
NOTE: It would seem that the finding of sheep usage on the Little San Bernardino Mountain would further indicate the advisabillity of the building of a water storage facility on that mountain.

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FROM THE EDITOR:
Views on National Resource Lands and Acts effecting these lands.

The Editor has attempted to get some opinions concerning PL 95-514 - The Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 and on the BLM's DraftWilderness Inventory Phase from various Agencies and persons. The California Resource Agency in Sacramento does not even acknowledge letters directed to it; The California Department of Fish and Game had up to 26 December 1978 made no review of either the Act or of the DWIP. Public review period ends and comments must be submitted to the BLM not later than 31 January 1979. The Editor did give some of his opinions on these matters in the November - December issue of THE SHEEPHERDER.

Concerning management of burros under PL 95-514 the consensus of opinion obtained indicate that probably there can be very little change from present management levels and procedures, even though titles to captured and 'adopted' horses and/or burros can now be achieved after a year of adequate custodial care. One thing 'forgotten' by the Congress was the appropriation of any money to fund any management procedures. How can management of feral horses or burros be accomplished without such provisions? Congress did authorize expenditures of $15 million annually for "Range Improvements". A friend of the editor puts it very well when he writes: "The care and efforts made to consult with experts, even involving the President and the National Academy of Sciences, regarding horse and burro management will give us the best-managed animal populations anywhere in the world. It is discouraging to beleive our society thinks so much of donkeys and so little of our native wildlife.....Feral animals are a large part of that problem of the present unsatisfactory environmental conditions of the public rangelands, yet they receive the most protection and regulation. It seems odd that feral animals are allocated more space and special concern than cattle sheep and wildlife."

The NATIONAL WILDHORSE AND BURRO FORUM held a meeting in Reno, Nevada in late November and did decide that as a result of new legislation and Court decsions that this body should make some specific and positive statement concerning this issue. The primary aim in making the recommendations is to stabilize fresent populationsm reduce continued population growth and to stop further losses of horses and destruction of ranges incritical areas during the period of time needed to develop an effective long range management program. They did make the following recommendations: 1. that 10,000 wild horses be removed in 19 79 from western public lands in areas where at least two years of valid studies indicate over populations exist and ranges are overused. 2. Forum endorsed current efforts to improve the adoption program and recommend further development and expansion of distribution centers. With the provisions of the new law permitting a transfer of titleafter one year--the program can be carried out in a human and efficient manner. 3. In order to remove the excess animals, a percentage of the wild horses will be unadoptable and will therefore have to be desroyed under provisions of existing law. The regulations promulgated under Section 14 of the Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 should allow for disposal on the range or for live transportation of unadoptable excess horses under strict government supervision for disposal under humane conditions at an appropriate abattoir. The Forum further recommended that their Forum be consulted by the federal agencies that will be involved in developing the rules, procedures and study proposals necessary for the implementation of Setion 14 of the PRLI Act of 1978.

The recommendations by the Forum were based upon their evaluation of existing conditions and the outlook for the future; on studies and reports from Universities and others; and from recent governmental studies and inventories on range conditions, wild horse populations and on population dynamics. They were speaking specifically at that time to similar problems relating to wild burros or wild horse problems on other federal lands but the situation and the short range solutions should be similar.

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The evening of January 8th the ABC television network had a segment of their 20/20 program sponsored by the American Horse Protection Association with tlevision actor Lorne Greene as the 'voice' and narrator and did give a very distorted and one sided report concerning the alleged abuses of these so-called free-roaming wild horses. The AHPA is trying diligently to raise a vast amount of money. The President of the AHPA last year refused an all-expense tour of western ranges to see how the feral animals are depleting the ranges. No considerations are given to the plight of native wildlife species and the flora on which they depend.