SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

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A CALIFORNIA BIGHORN SHEEP TRANSPLANT A DOUBLE SUCCESS

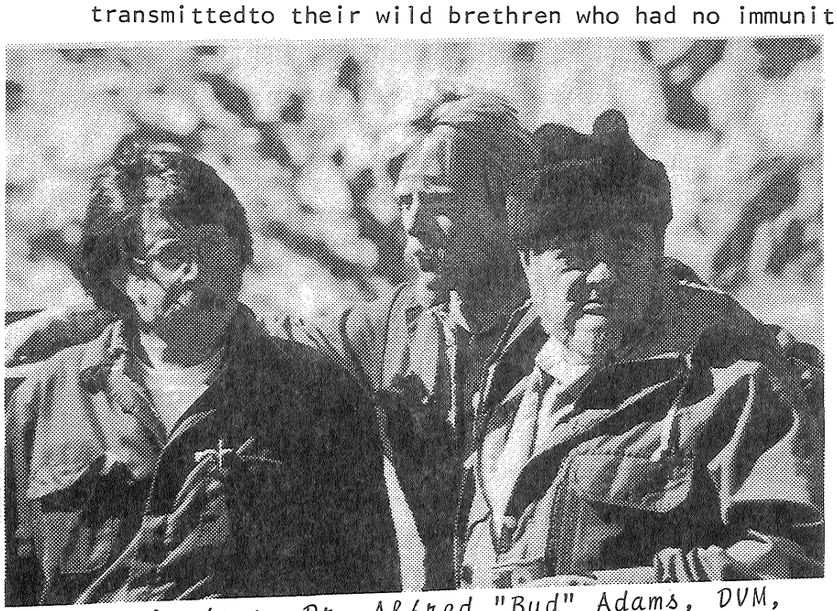
It was reported in THE SHEEPHERDER issue of March-April 1979 that a probable transplant from the Mt. Baxter herd on the eastern side of the Sierras and westerly of Big Pine was at that time imminent. The trap had been relocated into an area free from the interference of the mule deer and the bighorns were getting addicted to the apple pulp.

The trap was sprung in early March with seven bighorns under the net. Of these four were adult ewes; two rams and two lambs were caught in this effort. Within two hours time these seven sheep were enroute by truck to their new residence on Wheeler Ridge, near Pine Creek to the Northwest of the town of Bishop. Later in the day Dick Weaver and Bud Adams, a Veterinarian for the DFG were able to capture two adult rams by drugs from a helicopter. Six of the nine sheep were outfitted with radio telemetry collars in order that department personnel and Larry While can monitor their movements and keep track of their whereabouts. Within the first few days one of the collared rams had climbed the mountain to the 9,000 ft. level, and had then returned part way down to the release site.

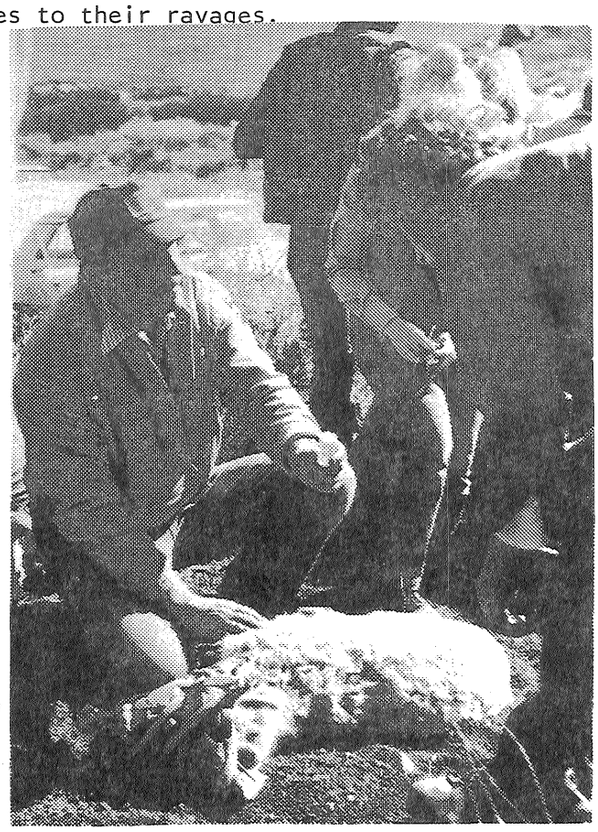
Through the first month this band of nine animals has remained fairly close to the release site area. Now (May 2nd.) all nine sheep are within one and one-half miles of the point of release.

The second bit of good news came today from Dick Weaver (DFG). Dick reported that he had just heard from Larry While of Big Pine who will be working with this project until this September. Larry had reported to Dick that two of the pregnant ewes had given birth to their lamb, and that these lambs appeared to be healthy. While also reported that the other two ewes gave the appearances that their lambs would also be born very shortly.

The Wheeler Ridge area is an historic bighorn sheep range, from which the wild sheep had been extirpated long ago. The reason for this loss of the herd is not definite. However it is a well known fact that the early day miners and other pioneers did rely on wild meat to a large extent and the meat of the bighorn sheep has always been a prized table fare. Also, the sierras were widely ranged by hords of domestic sheep. Their parasites and diseases were transmittedto their wild brethren who had no immunities to their ravages.



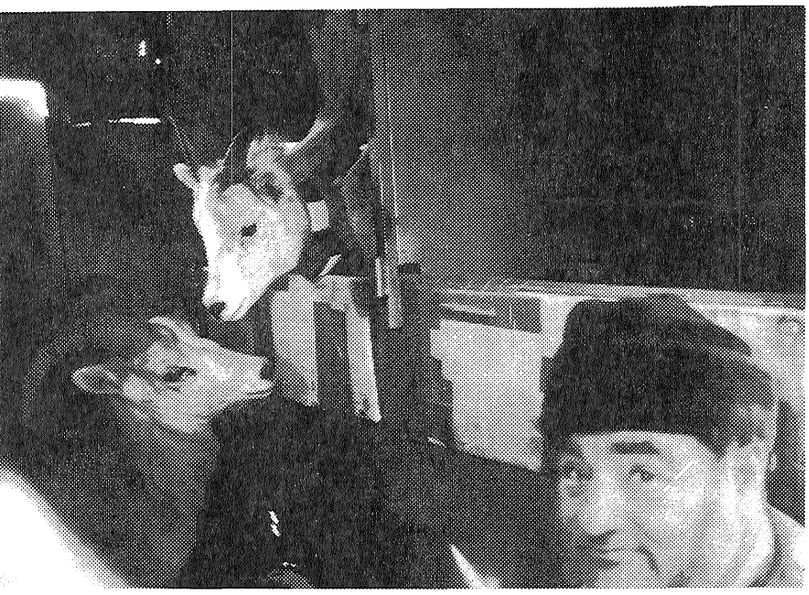
Above - l. to r. Dr. Alfred "Bud" Adams, DVM, Dr. David Jessup, DVM, for DFG; and California's Number one SHEEPHERDER--Richard "Dick" Weaver.

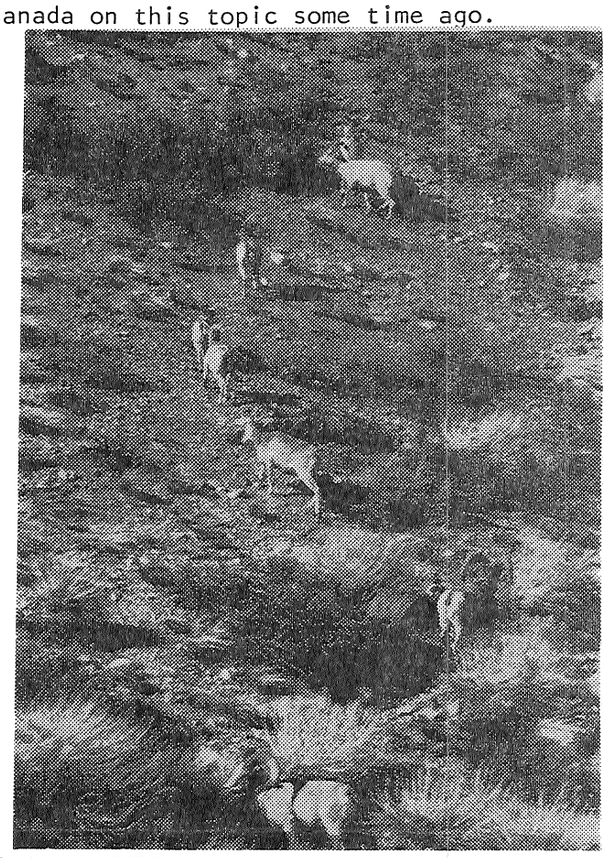


To the right Dr. Charles Jenner, DVM, and Society Director examines a blindfolded lamb.
Photos courtesy of Calif. De't. F. & G.

Meanwhile, the DFG is continuing to bait the Big Pine site where the animals from the Mt. Baxter herd were trapped and captured. This continued baiting is designed to enhance the DFG's chances of succeeding in capturing more animals for transplant next year.

There has been a considerable feeling of urgency in this project of transplanting into previously occupied ranges. Studies done of this Mt. Baxter-Mt. Wilwamsen herd by John Wehausen during the past two or three years has shown that this herd had multiplied to numbers that are considered to be at the peak or above the proper 'carrying capacity' of the vegetative resources of the area. It is also well known that bighorn sheep seem to be very loath to move out of their historic 'home range' and into another range that is at the time unoccupied by any other band or family group of sheep. For such movements out of one range and into another seems to require a set of very fortuitous circumstances to occur at one time. We reviewed a paper by Dr. Valerius Geist of Calgary, Canada on this topic some time ago.





On the left a young ram, a lamb in the manger and Dick Weaver in the darkened horse trailer.

To the right: The sheep following release on Wheeler Ridge. Photo by Dr. Bud Adams--taken from a helicopter. Photos courtesy Dep't. F & G.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING OF JANUARY 29, 1979

During the Annual Membership meeting held January 29th the following members were elected to the Board of Directors: James R. DeForge, Wayne A. Dickson, Charles W. Jenner, D.V.M., Robert A. Johnson, John "Bill" Lowery, Glenn W. Sudmeier, Michael Valencia, Ronald D. Vickrey, and A.W. "Bud" Wiedeman.

During the meeting of the Board of Directors which followed the general membership meeting the following members were elected to serve as officers for the ensuing year:

President.....	Loren L. Lutz, D.D.S.
1st Vice President	Marvin Wood
2nd Vice President	William D. Phifer,
3rd Vice President	Thomas R. Clotfelter,
Secretary	John E.O. Larronde,
Treasurer	Wayne A. Dickson,
Sheepherder Editor	Lewis E. "Lew" Carpenter,
Waterhole Count and Projects Coordinator	Glenn W. Sudmeier.

The Board has set the evening of April 21, 1979 as the time for the Spring 'get-together'. This year it is to be held in the Townhouse in the city of Fresno. Bob Wood will coordinate this event, whose primary objective is gain membership in the San Joaquin Valley area and to stimulate interest in the proper management of the bighorn sheep and its habitat.

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REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

Rocklin Wooley writes: " I may have discovered two previously unknown water sources that may be important to wildlife. One of them is in one of our most important sheep ranges. .....I only wish that I had more information on these water sources. Dick Weaver tells me (Wooley) that he hadn't known about either of these prior to my letter to him. He (Dick) sent my letter and my little map to Bonnar Blong (DFG Biologist stationed at Idylwild). Perhpas these reports of mine are redundant, but, if so I do not mind. .....I am very optomistic about "Wooley Tank". It appears that this tank may be supporting both sheep and deer. I found the only really old deer pellets that were not within 1/2 mile of the river (Colorado). This past summer was unusally dry, but apparantly this tank was able to support these animals through it. I hope so. They need relief from those *&¢%$# burros."

Wooley reports the tank to be in the Chocolate Mts., Quartz Pk. topo. Quad.
Wooley can be contacted at 3423 Hillsborough Way, San Jose, Ca. 95121 -ph. 408-274-1132

Wooley checked the 39 Stick Tank also in the Chocolate Mts. found it full---saw six burros in the area. Tracks and trails showed deer and/or sheep use---but not recent. Also he checked an unnamed tank also in the same mountains---found it full---saw no burro---their droppings were present also sign of bighorn and deer although none seen.

BOB CAMPBELL--- has been in to check the Hummingbird Spring in the Clipper Mts.---found it clean and accessible---saw coyote tracks. Found the small steel tank needed cleaning out as it was full of reeds and muck----apparantly being fed by an underground pipe that was not visible.

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In a recent note from Dr. Loren L. Lutz he reports that he had recently (May 1) taken a group of people down to the Santa Rosa Mts. on a hiking tour near Palm Springs. They had seen lots of lamb sign---hopefully they will survive. He says:" The City of Palm Springs is of course anti-sheep (in their actions) because of their stupid zoning and extension of city boundaries. I hope the lambs will survive, but I doubt it."

NOTE: It has become very evident that, with few exceptions, the various city councils; Planning Commissions of cities and counties and county boards of supervisors have made the dollar sign so large that they behold before their eyes that they cannot, or will not, recognize any other values. Bye and large the populace in general is too, too complacent.

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VIRGIN MOUNTAIN SHEEP ENCLOSURE COMPLETED

The Arizona Game and Fish Department announced on March 2, 1979 that the Bureau of Land Management had completed construction of a 600-acre enclosure located in the Virgin Mountains in northwestern Arizona, which will be the initial release site for the reintroduction of bighorn sheep into the area. Next fall the Department will initially stock the enclosure with twelve bighorn sheep, which will be captured in various mountain ranges in western Arizona. If the herd establishes itself and reproduces as well as is expected, the enclosure will one day be opened, allowing the herd to establish a resident population in the wild.

NOTE: THE SHEEPHERDER reported, a year ago, concerning the plans that had been made for this project.

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May 19 & 20 ---NOTE A CHANGE IN PLANS FOR THIS WEEKEND. A month ago Glenn Sudmeier Chairman of the Water Projects Committee for the Society did send out notices to a large number of the usual volunteers who participate on these work projects. It is true that this issue of T.S. will be too late for many to shape their plans for a weekend in the desert. HOWEVER, just in case----THE WORK ON THESE DATES IS TO BE ON THE OLD DAD MOUNTAINS - BIG GAME GUZZLER. CAMPSITE is to be near the road leading into the Old Dad Mts. on the northeastern side of the Devil's Playground. Take the KELBAKER ROAD easterly out of BAKER toward Kelso. Turn-off southwesterly on a road toward SANDS. The route off Kelbaker Road will be signed.

It is time to be making your plans for your waterhole counts for this summer. Ever effort should be made to complete these before mid-July in order to avoid a possible summer thunder-storm that would negate your efforts.

LABOR-DAY WEEKEND----Pete Sanchez Resource Management Specialist of the Death Valley National Monument has asked me, the Editor, to make a request for PEOPLE WILLING TO MAKE A BACKPACK that weekend to make waterhole counts in the Panamint MOuntains. The areas that Pete wishes to cover in this count are nearly all well beyond all 'road-ends'. This is the reason for the EARLY CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS.

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Society's dinner in Fresno had a total of 70 persons in attendance. Your Editor had planned to be in attendance. However, the day after Easter he was laid very low by the Flu bug and couldn't make the meeting. He did request that someone give him a 'write-up' of that which did occur. None has been received. He did learn that John Weihausen gave a report concerning the transplant of bighorns from the Mt. Baxter area to the Wheeler Ridge; and that Dick Weaver did show the 16mm. motion picture of that transplant.

Due also to losing the bout with the 'flu' the Editor did not get down into the Sacramento Mts. for the Smith Spring construction project. Again, he did request a 'write-up' of that project. Again, nothing has been received.

My apologies. Lew.

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SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAIN SHEEP COUNT COMPLETED

On Sunday March 11th, the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the Southern Council of Conservation Clubs held their annual bighron sheep count in the San Gabriel Mountains. Five hundred (500) sheep were counted.

Started in 1976 as a part of a research study by the Sheep Society and headed by James "Jim" DeForge, a research biologist, the count is a part of the monitoring system which determines the status of the bighorn in this mountain range.

These particular animals are classified as desert species, but do not live in the desert. They have been hard pressed in surviving because of people pressure - hikers, campers, road developement, ski developments, trail construction, and mining activities.

People involved in the count range from Safari Club International Club members, California Association of Four-wheel Drive Clubs, to students of Cal Poly and Pierce College. Veterinarians, college professors, and other wildlife enthusiasts participated. Fixed wing aircraft piloted by Don Carper and Ron Peters also participated in the count.

The U.S. Forest Service, State Fish and Game Department, and the County of Los Angeles are supportive agencies of this effort.

Most of the sheep were counted by hiking into the rugged terrain and observing the sheep through high-powered binoculars and spotting scopes. A helicopter also was used as a counting method.

by Loren L. Lutz, DDS, Pres. Soc. C. B.H.S.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGHORN SOCIETY PAYS REWARD

The Colorado R.M.B. Society is taking an active part in the protection of the State's bighorns. In February, this year, they paid a $100. reward to Ronald Shanke and Ronald Coleman, both of Georgetown, for their efforts in the apprehension of two men shooting at the sheep outside Georgetown. A ewe and lamb were killed, but Bruce Goforth, area Wildlife Conservation Officer made the arrest and both men were convicted. Fines of less than $300. were levied against each of the sheepshooters, who thought they were shooting at deer. The men who tipped authorities are miners for AMAX at Henderson.

NOTE: Actions such as the above by persons who observe such game law violations would certainly be a very large asset toward the protection and care of wildlife species. The St ates of Arizona and New Mexico offer rewards for information leading to conviction of game law violators and both do have toll-free telephone numbers for citizens use who desire to help. It is unfort nate that the State of California has no such programs or any methods of reporting such violations. California's very Liberal Legislation seems better geared to the protection of the Civil rights of law violators.

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Colorado R.M.B.Society has pledged $20,000 toward the purchase of the 640 acre Dome Rock section of the Mueller Ranch. The Nature Conservancy has an option to purchase this section of prime bighorn habitat, with its own resident herd and which is the wintering range and lambing ground of a segment of the Pikes Peak herd.

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Colorado RMB Soc. held a Field trip on April 7th in the Queen's Canyon area, watching and photgraphing some 25 ewes, lambs and rams. They were able, in some instances, to get within about 20 feet of the sheep. Everyone had had a good time during the day that had been arranged by Wildlife Conservation Officers Jim Morris and Jim Dennis.

During the year of 1978 92 hunters of the total of 212 had been successful. This was a 43.4 percent success ratio. Of the animals harvested 86 were rams. Between the years of 1955 and 1975 the success ratio has ranged from as low as 11.6 percent in 1966 to a high of 26.5 percent in 1972.

During the 1978 hunting season there had been 781 applications received in the drawing for the 180 rifle permits in the 33 hunting units. The total harvest being 91 sheep including the 86 rams as previously noted. Fifty-two applications were made for the 32 permits issued for an aichery season. Only one archery hunter had been successful.

Sheep hunting in Colorado has since its inception been limited to residents of Colorado exclusively, with only one successful attempt in a lifetime.

It has been noted in previous reports concerning Colorado that in some areas it has been determined by careful population surveys and trends of the population that some control of some ewe populations is necessary for proper management of herd numbers. It has been beleived that a limited hunting of ewes in some over-populat'ed herds will, perhaps, help to disperse members of that herd into nearby but presently unoccupied ranges and in so doing reduce the very great likelihood of a severe die-off of whole sheep herds as has occurred during several periods in the history of Colorado bighorn sheep over the past 100 years. Colorado has long had a history of severe lungworm problems and periods of very severe die-off in which herds have been decimated. Many experiments have been conducted in efforts to treat and to prevent such outbreaks. They have also had some very excellent results of this treatment. These efforts have been reported in these columes from time-to-time.

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THE STORY OF A BIGHORN RAM CELEBRITY

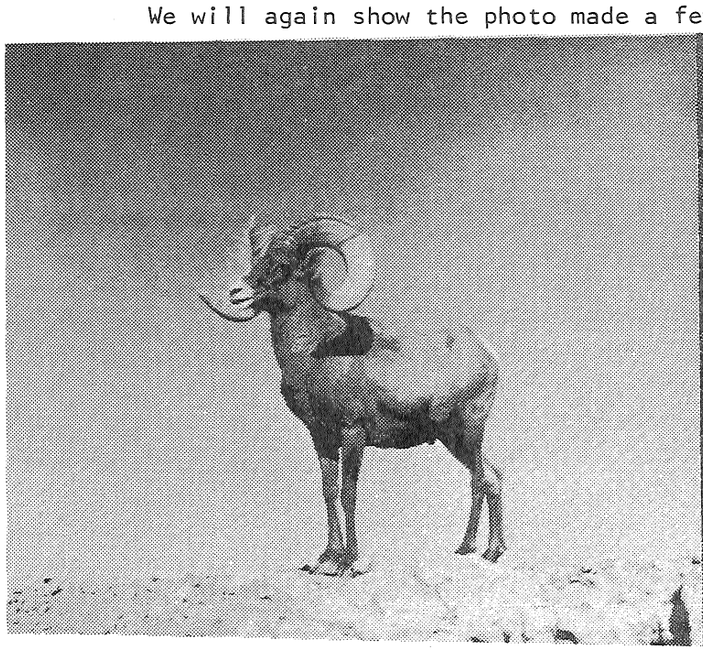
Mr. John P. Boone has written a sequel to "THE LEGEND OF SPOTS". It appears in the July-August issue of Taxidermy Review . We are indebted to both Dick Weaver and Michael Schmidt a part time taxidermist and a member of the Society for receiving copies of this publication. The March-April issue of THE SHEEPHERDER carried THE LEGEND OF SPOTS as written by Jim Yoakum, together with a beautiful picture of that imposing ram.

Spots was so named because of two small spots that appeared on his chest as a yearling. For a wild sheep Spots lived a long time. Like many people in their older years Spots developed an arthritic condition in his legs. This made it difficult for him to get around. As a result his hooves became enlarged. Under normal conditions the hooves are kept worn down. Early in July 1977 when death seemed imminent he was humanely "put to sleep" by a veterinarian. According to life expectancy tables only one in 1,000 desert rams even approach his age of nearly seventeen years. "Old Joe" the father of "Spots" had lived till 16years and ten months, and had also spent his entire lifetime in the Desert National Wildlife Range about 30 miles morth and west of Las Vegas.
Boone and Joe Kish had discussed the possibillity of their doing a full body mount of Spots after his demise. It is very seldom that a taxidermist/artist has an opportunity to recreate in a life like form such a distinguished animal. They made such a proposal to the Nevada Fish and Game Department, requesting that if their offer was acceptable that the carcass of Spots be frozen and then shipped to them by air.
The unofficial horn measurements were : horn length 42.3", basal circumference- 12.9"; and a tip-to-tip measurement of 26.1 inches. It is unusual that a bighorn ram not have at least one of his horns "broomed" that is the tip rubbed or broken off. The horns of Spots, however were symmetrical and with the same measurements. The curl dipped well below the line of the lower jaw in a manner similar to that of the Asiatic *Argalis*."We have been told that Spots will be placed on permanenet display in the Convention Center in Las Vegas, Nevada."

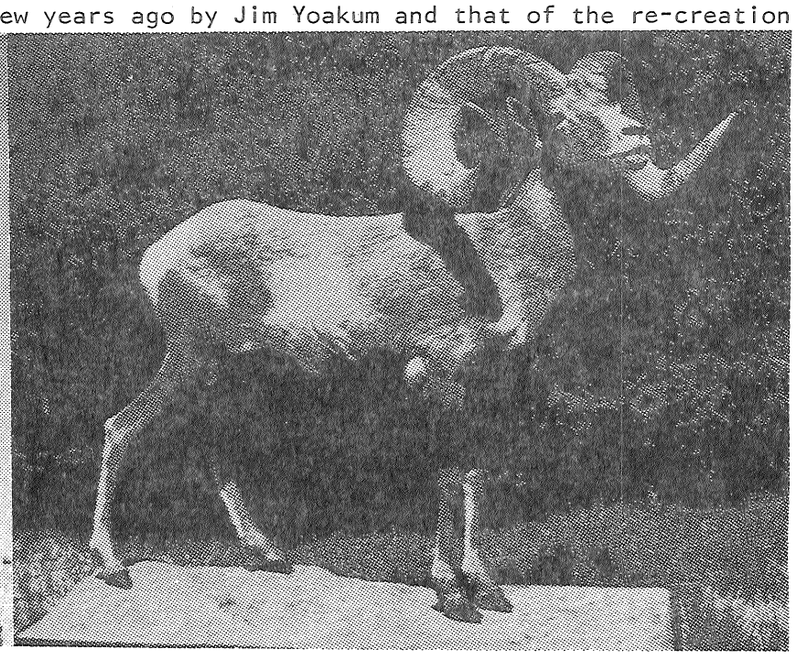
Joe Kish describes THE TECHNICAL SIDE of the procedures used by the team of seven taxidermists who cooperated in the life-like 'recreation' of Spots. Because of the extreme age of Spots at the time of his demise there was considerable dehydration; this coupled with the arthritic condition noted above and the loss of teeth all created especial problems for the Taxidermist-Artists to solve. The enthusiasm and competence of the all-volunteer team was equal to the task before them. Labor and travel expenses were all donated by the team, as well as some of the materials used kept the total expenses to a minimum.

It is the hope of these dedicated artists that their endeavors will be admired and appreciated by the millions of visitors to the Convention Center over the years to come.

We will again show the photo made a few years ago by Jim Yoakum and that of the re-creation



Spots --Photo by Jim Yoakum during Spots later years.



Spots as he looks today--a recreation by the art of taxidermy

ARIZONA BIGHORN SUCCESS AGAIN IS HIGH

The careful management of Arizona's wildlife is again reflected in the year end report of its Game and Fish Department, which states in part: " For the second year in a row, hunter success during the December bighorn sheep season was above eighty percent. Success this year (1978) was 83%, down slightly from last year's record 88%, but still in the range of excellent. This year, 48 hunters harvested 39 rams on non Indian lands and another six rams were taken on the Hualapai Indian Reservation.

This year seven rams scored more than 162 Boone and Crockett points with the largest scoring 183 points. That trophy was taken by James McCasland in the Kofa Mountains. The impresdive hunter success and the size of the rams indicates that those sheep populations that have suffered from human encroachment are in good shape.

WILDLIFE NEWSLETTER, Arizona G.&.F. 12/29/'78.

AND ANOTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

A news clipping from the Las Vegas Review-Journal of 12/19/'78 by way of friend Dick Weaver reports that "A 38-year old licensed state hunting guide was arrested during that weekend for the illegal killing of a prized desert bighorn sheep in a closed hunting section of Lake Mead National Recreation area."....Jeffrey Willis Starr of Las Vegas had been booked into the Clark County Jail and charged with illegal possession of a bighorn sheep, hunting without the required tag and hunting in a closed area. He posted $1,500. bail shortly after his booking. Starr had been arrested by authorities of the Nevada Department of Fish and Game , U.S. Forest Service and the National Park Service. Starr, a known sheep hunter, was observed entering the closed area where about 150 of these prized bighorn sheep can be found. Authorities had set up a surveillance team, after being notified of Starr's entry into the forbidden area and he had been stopped on the highway at River Mountain, 15 miles from Las Vegas, after he had allegedly came out of the hunting area. Authorities reportedly found the bighorn, Nevada's state animal, in his vehicle and a rifle and spotting scope. The ram had been six years old as determined by the D.F.& G. Starr may also face federal charges for violation of the Lacy Act which prohibits hunting of game animals without a license.

NOTE: This should help to point up to those of us who do have respect for laws, rules and regulations, that we need to both individually and collectively actively support the agencies of our several states in their efforts to sustain and protect our fish and wildlife resources, and that when we know of a violation occurring that we take the time and effort to inform the law enforcement agencies of what has occurred, when it occurred and give physical descriptions of the perpetrators and vehicle(s) involved, if there be one.

LEGISLATION AFFECTING BIGHORN SHEEP AND OTHER WILDLIFE

During hearings concerning the management of feral burro numbers in the Grand Canyon National Park the preponderance of testimony given is favorable to the management plan that was reported in the March-April issue of THE SHEEPHERDER. There were, of course, some persons representing the preservationist groups, who showed their complete lack of knowledge concerning the problems that have been engendered by the encroachment of the feral burros into the habitat of native wildlife of that area. Dr. Lutz writes that he attended one of these hearing sessions. He states: "I also heard some really weird testimony at the National Park Service hearing on the removal of burros from Grand Canyon, to wit: 'they are a native species, just returning to their native range. That is because equus was formed on the North American Continent."

NOTE: The feral burro (*Equus asinus*) Is not a native wildlife specie of North America or of Central or South America either. Instead this animal is a native of Northern Africa in Abyssinia where it was originally domesticated many thousands of years ago. Having a World-wide population of some 40 million burros; and with a population in the southwestern United States and in Mexico it is very far fetched for any person having any knowledge to make a claim that this specie of animal should be considered as an endangered specie and to the detriment of the native wildlife species. As Dr. Lutz says: " One would think that a supposedly rational people - our elected representatives --wouldn't listen to this claptrap ---but they do." Therefore, it is essential that we, each of us, write to our Legislative representatives and attempt to inform them of the actually occurring damages to the ecosystems that are infested with these feral animals.

In California--- On March 23rd, 1979 Senator H.L. "Bill" Richardson of Arcadia introduced SB 833 and SB 834. These were assigned to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife. Here they were heard on April 24th. SB 833 failed to get a pass out of the Committee on a four to two vote with Senator Omar Rains of Santa Barbara abstaining. Had Sen. Rains voted Aye it would have made the necessary five votes for passing out of Committee. SB 834 was adopted by the Same committee and has now gone to the Senate Finance Committee. Senators Watson and Keene were the only two opposition votes.

Senate Bill 833 wobld have declared the desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis Canadensis nelsoni*) be placed in the category of a game animal and under the management of the California Fish and Game Commission and the Department of Fish and Game. It would also required the the Peninsular bighorn (*O,c. cremnobates*) and the California bighorn (*O.c. californiana*) be retained in the completely protected category under the Legislature.

Senate Bill 834 according to the Legislative Analyst Digest states that: " Existing law contains no requirement that the Department of Fish and Game prepare and submit to the Fish and Game Commission by January 1, 1981, "a Plan for California Bighorn Sheep." This bill would declare legislative policy regarding the conservation of bighorn sheep, would require that the department submit such plan to the commission and include specified items therein. It would also require that the commission hold a public hearing, as specified, prior to the adoption of such plan."

The placing of the bighorn sheep under the management of the DFG will permit that Agency to budget funds in the Preservation Funds for benefits to that specie. Under the present circumstances the bighorn not being under the Department of Fish and Game makes the expenditures of Preservation Funds for bighorn benefits an illegal expenditure. The State Legislature has consistently failed to budget sufficient funds for non-game wildlife here in California. It has only been during the past three years that the State Legislature has provided any funding at all for our non-game wildlife in California.

Therfore, we beleive that it is highly desireable that this Senate Bill 834- Richardson, be enacted. LETTERS ARE NEEDED NOW Addressed to the Members of the Senate Finance Committee composed of Senators: Albert S. Rodda; Lou Cusanovich; Alfred Alquist; John Briggs; William Campbell; Bill Greene; John W. Holmdahl; John A. Nejedly; Robert Nimmo; Nicholas C. Petris; David A. Roberti; Jerry Smith and Walter W. Stiern.

Address your letters to the Honorable_____, State Capitol, Sacramento, Calif. 95814

The anti-Conservation groups testifying against the above Senate Bills were: The Sierra Club; The Friends of Animals; the Animal Protection Institute; the Fund for Animals, etc. They presented "scientific" testimony such as "It's difficult to tell a ewe from a ram"; "Only old rams do the breeding"; Hunting is what destroyed the sheep". "The Department of Fish and Game should not conduct the sheep study, only a university is qualified"; and on and on with similar garbage.

NOTE: It is difficult for the Editor of T.S. to understand the reasons for these above organizations consistently making every effort to handicap those agencies of the several states from doing that which should be done for wildlife benefits. Some or perhaps all of the above named 'preservationists' are suing the Fish and Wildlife SErvice for the use of the Pitman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Funds. These funds derived by an 11% excise tax on all types of sporting arms and ammunition, at the request of the people who pay this excise tax. These funds being used for habitat acquisition, and habitat improvement projects for all species of wildlife--- not just the few game species. The States in turn are required to put 25% of the projct costs and these expenditures also are derived exclusively from those people who purchase the fishing and hunting licenses and special permits. NOT ONE THIN DIME OF ANY OF THESE EXPENDITURES COMES FROM ANY GENERAL FUND TAXATION PROGRAM OF ANY STATES.

NEW MEXICO TRANSPLANTS BIGHORNS

During the first day's sessions of the Desert Bighorn Council Andrew V. Sandoval reported concerning the present status of bighorn sheep in New Mexico. The New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, the U.S, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the New Mexico State University, is attempting to reestablish bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) on historic ranges where conditions are, or can be made, compatible with the sheep. Preliminary survey of historic sheep ranges was recently completed. The objectives were to determine which areas have the higher potential for the reestablishment and perpetuation of bighorn populations, and to evaluate and rank selected areas in order of sutability as bighorn habitat. There were sixteen historic desert bighon and six Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep ranges were evaluated in order of suitablity. A qualitative evaluation of environmental conditions and trends with emphasis on the ecosystem of the bighon was undertaken. Studies were made of topography, plant communities, forage availability, water availability, and land status and use. The State had been divided into three areas whose climatic conditions, general topography and ecosystems were similar for that region. The Region III to the eastern and southeastern part of the state is adjacent to the state of Texas. This area is also the one in which the Oudad or Barbary sheep are to be found. Much of this are while containing good bighorn habitat also has a widespread population of that exotic. This would probably preclude, it is believed, the successful reintroduction of bighorn sheep. The Department has recently addressed this situation by allowing an unlimited number of licenses for oudads of either sex in the Guadalupe Mountains and the Mount Taylor area north of Grants.

New Mexico's initial release of desert bighron took place on January 10-11, 1979. Twelve sheep (six ewes, two female lambs, two male lambs and two rams) we-e captured at Red Rock and transported to the Big Hatchet Mountains, 80 miles southeast. This action was prompted by the rapidly declining numbers of bighorn in the Big Hatchets which had reached a delicate balance between survival and extirpation. And secondly, immediate action was also necessary in the management of the captive population at Red Rock. The decline in productivity of the captive herd could possibly be detrimental effects of crowding conditions or disease within the enclosure. The day after capture the sheep were released into a 40-acre temporary holding paddock in Romney Canyon west of Big Hatchet Peak. The goal is to imprint the sheep to the release site. By imprinting the ewe segment to suitable winter range having lambing ground characteristics, it is hoped that the release site will become traditional lambing grounds. Bighorn will be retained for approximately six to eight months. By this time, the majority of the lambs should have been born, be agile and able to keep up with the adult sheep. When it is decided to free the bighorn, the paddock will be disassembled for possible use in subsequent releases. Pending the outcome of this initial release, it might be necessary to transplant additional ewes from Red Rock to achieve maxim um reproduction during the critical establishment phase of the population.

Forty-one Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep were removed between August 29 and September 8, 1978, via helicopter from the Pecos Wilderness northeast of Santa Fe.. During this project a total of six sheep were lost in different manners.

Also on September 1. 20 sheep were released in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains northeast of Taos. During the final transportation stage of the project the sheep were air-lifted by helicopter to an alpine ridge near Cabresto Peak, southwest of the Latir Lakes. On the seventh of September 16 sheep were released in Canon Monte Largo of the Manzano MOuntains southeast of Albuquerque . On that same date five sheep were released in Cimarron Canyon southwest of Raton. There had been a previous release in this last area in 1970.

The very large "fly-in-the-ointment" for New Mexico this past year was the finding of the scabies mite on all five of the rams harvested on the San Andreas National Wildlife Refuge. Efforts have been made to treat the sheep of this area to eradicate the mite. This is a very difficult problem. Whether or not it will be solved is presently unknown. This has been previously reported in THE SHEEPHERDER. What the affect this scabies mite outbreak has had and is having is not fully known. The loss of the entire population might occur.

Sandoval has no idea where the scabies mite infestation came from or how it entered the San Andreas National Wildlife Range. The area had been closed to grazing since 1951. The mite may have been present in this population over this period without previously contributing to decline in numbers. .....Extensive ground surveys have revealed very few sheep occupying the preferred habitats, suggesting large-scale emigration or mortallity. Sheep have been observed with drainage from the ears and with ears folded over. Excessive scratching, biting, head shaking and horning of shrubs have been observed. An intensive helicopter survey will be conducted this spring to ascertain numbers, composition, and distribution of the population.

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MORE ON THE PREVALENCE OF THE SCABIES MITE ---Excerpts from the FRESNO BEE issue 6 May 1979

Although it's only 1/50th of an inch long, the scabies mite(*Psoroptes cervinus*) is hitchhiking into California cattle country and giving the Golden State beef growers something else to worry about. Traveling on trucked cattle, scabies struck Southern California in 1976. Ten years earlier, seven cases had been reported and had been quickly erased. Relaxation of safeguards during the 10 years may well hav econtributed to the latest outbreaks in 1978., according to the California Department of Food and Agriculture. Somehow cattle from the "hotbed" of scabies infection radiating from the Texas Panhandle carried their infestation into California despite treatments and certification. It is believed thatthe foregoing treatments and certifications are subject to being suspected being very inadequate and poorly inspected. The best treatment for the Scabies mite, according to the California Cattlemens Association is the complete dipping of the cattle in a solution of Toxaphene. If even the head of one steer was not fully immersed there could be enough mites to reinfect an entire herd and its range. One dipping of Toxaphene is sufficient. After dipping, the animal must be kept away from any stream of water for the following seven days. In an infected herd it may, in some cases, be necessary to have a second dipping. In Texas the use of Co-Ral and Prolate are more commonly used as these two products also are effective on the control of grubs, even though not as effective as the Toxaphene.
NOTE: Sandoval reported that dust bags of CoRal had been suspended over and around varous sheep use areas. But that there had been no apparant benefits found for that effort.
Cattle in the many feedlots around the country can be treated for mite infestations rather readily. Treatment of cattle on the open range becomes a very difficult problem. Confinement for a seven day period--or for 21 days if a second treatment is required becomes logistically an almost insurmountable problem.

EDITORIAL COMMENT: I can well imagine that the present 'austerity program' demanded by the Governor of California may well have a very adverse effect on the control of possible scabies infestation or scabies that cam be brought in on infected cattle. Because of the 'austerity program' many of the California Border Inspection Stations have been closed; others are open only certain days or times of day. As a consequence the Agricultural Inspeciotns Station and lack of inspecions may cause severe outbreaks of scabies. AND if scabies gets onto the open range, THEN HOW SOON WILL INFESTATIONS BE TRANSMITTED TO THE BIGHORNS?

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WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT POLICY

"The highly controversial issue of removing wild horses and burros from the public rangelands was the focus of an oversight hearing conducted by the Senate Subcommittee on Government Efficiency chaired by Sen. Eagleton (MO) on April 24. Arguments were heard from both sides. Humane groups, in an emotional plea, cited cases of abuse and illegal sales and admitted they would rather have horses starve to death ("natural selection") than to have them removed. The National Wildlife Federation, as well as the Livestock Industry, urged for immediate removal of excess numbers of feral horses, citing severe habitat destruction of the public rangelands, increased soil erosian and increased competition for available forage.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) discussed their investigations and findings concerning the past mistakes of the program, further elaborating on the positive actions taken during the past year to improve the program.

It was clear to most observers from the testimony given thatthere is a definite overpopulation of feral horses and burros causing critical problems and upsetting the balance with other users of the range. In addition to the Adopt-a-horse program, the federal agencies need to go one step further, these observers felt, as mandated by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act, and destroy excess numbers, without delay, in order to bring the horse and burro population into balance with the carrying capacity of the range."

-----CONSERVATION REPORT---National Wildlife Federation, May 4, 1979

THE DESERT BIGHORN --- The up-coming book being published by the Desert Bighorn Council.

During the businesss session of the Desert Bighorn Council meeting on April 5th. Mr. Gale Munson reported that the Technical Staff of the DBC had now turned the book over to the publisher the University of Arizona Press for the printing. He stated that the book is not geared particularly for either the general public nor for the scientific community. It will therfore be readily readable. The expected release date is now projected for the first of January 1980. The book will contain approximately 325 pages and will probably be priced about $10.00 perhaps a little less. Any projected cost of anything in these days of inflation must be subject to change. The first six chapters have all been edited. The cover of this book is to be a soft but durable and tough one. Photos may still be added----they must tell a story.

THE SHEEPHERDER will endeavor to keep you informed concerning progress on this long awaited book.