SOCIETY FOR THE CONSERVATION OF BIGHORN SHEEP

The Sheepherder

Non-Profit Organization
401 North Garfield
Alhambra, California 91801
213-284-5113

PRESIDENT LOREN L LUTZ DDS

EDITOR
LEWIS E. CARPENTER
815 W. GETTYSBURG
FRESNO, CAL 93705
(209) 227-9140)

Dedicated to study and promote the conservation, propagation and preservation of the wild sheep of North America.

SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1983

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAIN SHEEP

The San Bernardino National Forest has recently published a report written by Stephen A. Holl, District Wildlife Biologist of the San Bernardino National Forest and Vernon C. Bleich , Wildlife Biologist for the California Department of Fish and Game concerning the biological and management considerations of the Nelson bighorn sheep that occupy the San Bernardino and San Gabriel Mountains of Southern California. Their findings and recommendations are, in part, according to their Abstract:

"The current distribution and size of the San Gabriel mountain sheep *Ovis canadensis Nelsoni* population are probably not substantially different than that of 120 years ago. From 1976 to 1982 the population ranged from 665 to 740 animals. This is the largest population of mountain sheepin California.

For the past seven years the population has been at carrying capacity. High natality has been balanced by high juvenile mortality and low adult mortality. Approximately 40 percent of the lambs born in the spring survive to yearling status. Lamb recruitment is significantly correlated with an index of forage quality and quantity during pregnancy, and weather conditions during lambing. Ram:ewe ratios have averaged 70 mature rams to 100 mature ewes. The average age of the adult segment is increasing. Simulation modeling predicted the population will decline in the near future. It is hypothsized the duration and severity of the predicted decline will be dependent on changes in lamb and yearling survival rates.

Mountain sheep that inhabit the San Gabriel Mountains consist of both resident and migratory individuals. The single most important habitat component for mountain sheep is escape terrain.

Winter-Spring ranges are between 900 - 1800 m. elevation, on southern aspects. The Ceanothuse-mountain mahogany vegetation association is selected. Approxiamately 245 ha (about 610 acres) of winter-spring range is necessary to support 10 sheep. Summer ranges may extend to 3,300 m elevation. (!0,000 ft) Vegetation associations with less than 30 percent canopy cover, adjacent to escape terrain, are selected during summer. During fall, sheep relax their affinity for escape terrain, although it is still preferred. The widest variety of vegetation associations are used during fall. Vegetation associations that produce mast crops are preferred during the fall.

Mineral licks are used by mountain sheep from April through September. It is hypothesized that mountain sheep use mineral licks to supplement their dietary requirements for sodium.

Behavioral responses showed mountain sheep fled when people were within 100 m of sheep. This response is not unique to this population.

The development of winter recreation facilities in the San Gabriel mountains has apparantly had little effect on mountain sheep. The location of these facilities is not considered optimum mountain sheep habitat.

MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS:

The management goal for the San Gabriel mountain sheep population should be to provide diversified recreational opportunities.

All sheep inhabiting the san Gabriel Mountains should be managed as one population.

The populastion should be surveyed once annually to determine age and sex ratios and population trends.

Based upon the current population size and range of management activities the San Gabriel mountain sheep population should be de-classified as Fully Protected by the State and de-listed as Sensitive by the Forest Service.

A population mangement program should be considered.

The Current distribution associations should receive priority when vegetation manipulation is considered.

"Rural" and "Urban" recreation opportunities occur in areas where the natural environment is substantially modified. These two recreation opportunities should not be provided in mountain sheep habitat.

Cross-country travel in mountain sheep habitat should not be encouraged.

New roads and trails should not pass within 100 m of a mineral lick. Where established road or trail passes within 100 m of a mineral lick, the frequency of traffic, by people, should not exceed 1 group per three hours, on a sustained basis.

Roads and trails that pass through known lambing areas should not have levels of traffic exceeding 1 group per four hours, on a sustained basis, from April through June. Ski facilities should not be commercially operated during summer.

Ski runs and ski ways should be planted with a variety of palatable forage species. Perennial grasses and mixtures of forbs should be used.

The Forest Service, should consider acquiring more flexibility and streamline the decision making process in wilderness areas. Efforts should be targeted at vegetation manipulation and transplanting sheep. Lan Manangement PLanning, or another appropriate process, may provide this opportunity .

No domestic sheep grazing allotments should be within 3.Km. of mountain sheep habitat.

Predator control should be instituted only if it is determined there is an unacceptable loss of mountain sheep to predators.

It is concluded that there are sufficient technical knowledge, the capability, and tools required to implement a successful, progressive management program.".

********** ********** ***

The unregulated harvest of sheep by workers at the Bighorn Mine in the Prarie Fork, at the northern end of the East Fork of the San Gabriel River was reported by Lewis (1960). Three mines worked during the gold rush era of 1850 to 1910. The present investigation has shown that mountain sheep in the San Gabriel Mountains inhabit all but one of the known historical winter ranges. The exception to this is the Prarie Fork range. Thus it would appear that the only significant loss of a known historical mountain sheep group in the San Gabriels has been the Prarie Fork herd.

NOTE: This being the case and the fact also being that mountain sheep are very slow and reluctant to re-colonize even historic ranges it would appera to this editor that this Prarie Fork area should be a suitable area for a transplant and should be investigated as to desireability for such a transplant.

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The Angeles National Forest 150 So. Los Robles Ave., Pasadena, CA. 91101 has made its decision concerning the granting of access road to the Curtis Tungsten Mine. The have chosen their alternative Number 5 which would grant the mine operators to make four passes through the mountains sheep lambing area and by the nearby mineral lick during the lambing period of April through June. This despite the fact that their own biologist Stephen A. Noll and Department of Fish and Game Biologist Vernon C. Bleich's recommendation that there not be more than one pass through those areas during the period of April through June more frequently than once in four hours.

Other alternatives were: #1 would have granted Curtis the right to make 24 passes per day on a year around basis. This is the expressed desire of Curtis. Alternative #2Would have denied Curtis the use of road 2N06 but wpuld have allowed full acces on a reconstructed road #2N09. This alternative is the best for the sheep and has been the expressed desire of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep. Alternative #3 would grant 24 passes per day except during the period of April through June when none would be permitted. Alternative #4 qould grant 4 passes per day except during the period of April through June when none would be permitted. Alternative #5 would grant 24 passes per day, but limiting passes to 4 during the periodof April through June and these passes to be made before 8:00a.m. and after 2:00 p.m.

Alternative #5(issuing of the special use permit to Curtis Tungsten will be implemented no sooner than September 25, 1983.

Editorial note: It wo uld seem that any comments that interested persons might make should therefore be addressed to Mr. Henry H. Hazen, Acting Forest Supervisor prior to the date of September 25, 1983.

********** ********** ***** ********

BURROS' ROUNDUPS YIELD NEW DESERT VEGETATION

A Bureau of Land Management news release from Arizona notes that the removal of hundreds of wild burros has begun to change the landscape in northwestern Arizona's Black Mountains, and range specialists say they hope the new vegetation will help renew the population of bighorn sheep.

"For the first time, we are beginning to gain ground" said Kelly Grissom, who heads the Bureau's burro removal program in the Kingman area. "It won't be long before the pressure is off. Then we will start seeing a diversity of wildlife and vegetation," he said.

Vegetation which the burros eat at the bighorn's expense has begun appearing this year in spots that until recently looked as if they had been bombed, Grissom said.

Since 1980, about 1,000 of an estimated 2,000 burros living in the Black Mountains, along the Colorado River on the Nevada border, have been roped or trapped and offered for adoption.

State specialists say the population of bighorn sheep in the Black MOuntains has declined by fifty percent from the estimated 600 that lived there in 1980. But that the trend is expected to reverse itself.

"Wildlife figures always are hard to come by. I can't say that removing 'x' number of burros will result in 'x' number more of bighorn sheep," said Dave Brown, big game supervisor for the Arizona Game and Fish Department .

"But bighorns never increase in areas where there are a lot of burros and they definetly increase in areas where burros have been eliminated or reduced. There is no question of that."

****

ARIZONA DROP-NET SHEEP CAPTURE WORKS AS PLANNED

At 7:04 the morning of July 31st, Department of Game and Fish personnel successfully captured 22 desert bighorn sheep in one drop of a 3,600-square foot drop net in a remote wash on Lake Mead's south shore. By 7:30 a.m. the sheep were taking a boat ride to that reservoir's Callville Bay Marina. And at about 2 p.m. they were being released at their new home in the Grand Wash Cliffs area of the Arizona Strip.

The project was a cooperative effort by the Department, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service and the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society , which is committed to pay up to $10,000 of the cost.

Sheep captures and transplants are not new to Arizona, but this was the first time that drop net method replaced helicopter and tranquilizer darts. The net has been used successfully in Colorado and Nevada, but this was the first test here, and it worked well.

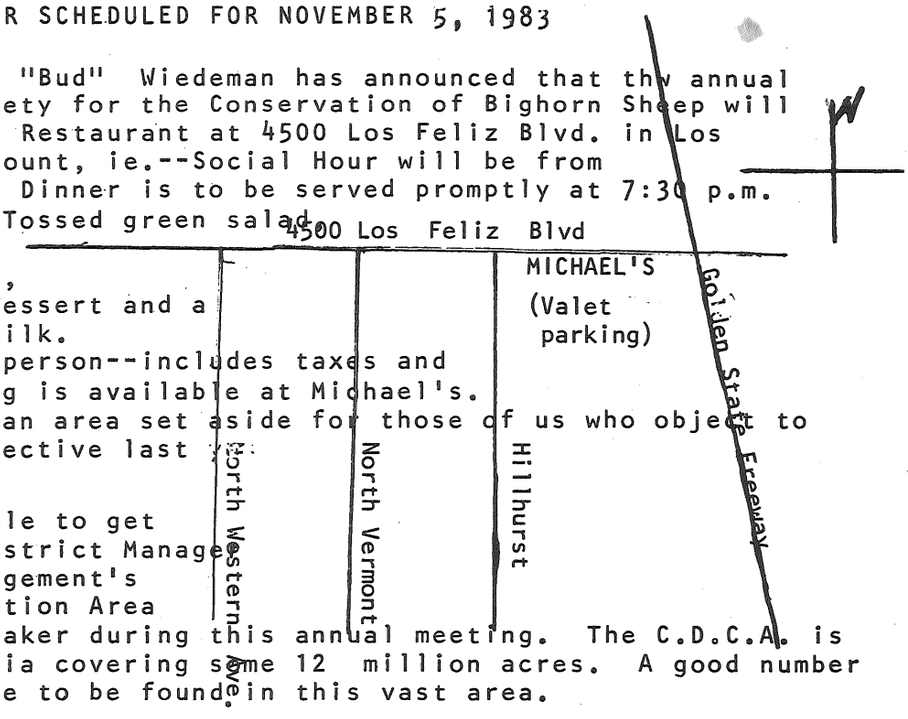
Big Game Supervisor Dabe Brown says that there were no serious injuries among the animals and that all were found to be in good condition except for one lamb with contagious exzea. Upon capture, each sheep was ear-tagged for future identification and given a blood test to check for disease. One of the seven or eight rams and three of the ewes were fitted with radio tracking collars.

The drop net used is 60 feet by 60 feet and is suspended on five poles over a baiting site. The net is released by electronically detonating blasting caps which cut the support ropes operated from a remote control point by an observer who waits until the desired number of sheep are under the net before activating the controls. The majority of the sheep captured by this method do not need to be drugged. Only the larger rams are drugged, and this only in an effort to prevent them from injuring themselves.

WILDLIFE NEWSLETTER---Arizona Game & Fish Department---August 5, 1983

ANNUAL DINNER SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 5, 1983

Society Director A.W. "Bud" Wiedeman has announced that thv annual dinner meeting of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep will again be held at Michael's Restaurant at 4500 Los Feliz Blvd. in Los Angeles. The Waterhole Count, ie.--Social Hour will be from 6:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Dinner is to be served promptly at 7:30 p.m. Dinner menu concists of: Tossed green salad with choice of dressing, Filet Mignon, Baked potato, vegetable, Cheese bread, dessert and a choice of coffee, tea or milk. Dinner cost is $15.00 per person--includes taxes and gratuities. Valet parking is available at Michael's. The dining area will have an area set aside for those of us who object to tobacco smoke. It was effective last year.



Doctor Lutz has been able to get Mr. Gerald Hillier, the District Manager of the Bureau of Land Management's California Desert Conservation Area to be the after-dinner speaker during this annual meeting. The C.D.C.A. is a huge section of California covering some 12 million acres. A good number of Nelson bighorn sheep are to be found in this vast area.

Bud Wiedeman would appreciate it very much if you would let him know if you plan to come to the dinner November 5th. It is very difficult to give Michael's a reasonable estimate of how many will be at the dinner. Please return the following form to A.W. "Bud" Wiedeman, 367 North Laurel Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90048 as soon as possible.

Dear Bud:

There will be _____ people in my party in attendance at the ANNUAL DINNER meeting of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep to be held at MICHAEL'S RESTAURANT, 4500 Los Feliz Blvd. in Los Angles November 5, 1983.

I will pay at the door upon entrance.

Signed:_____

Address:_____

_____

HUNTING HALL OF FAME DINNER MEETING

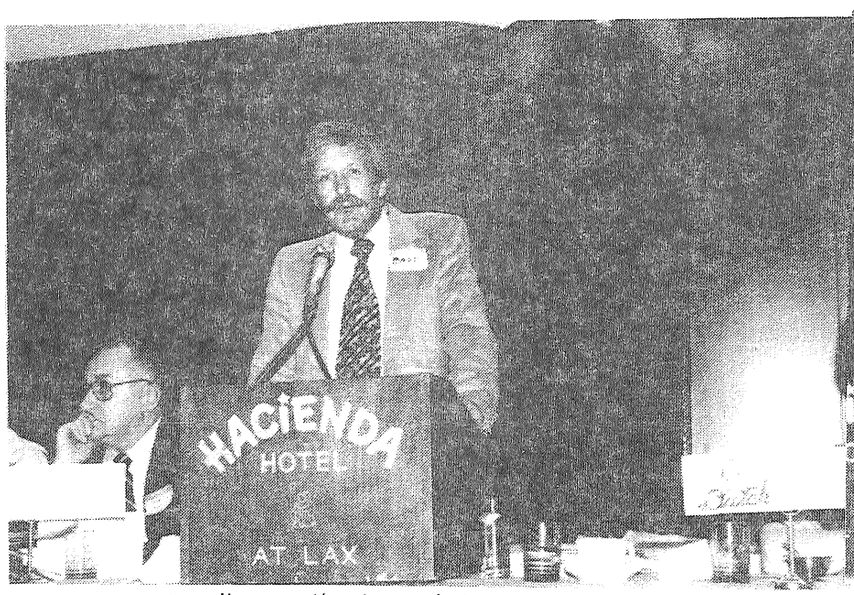
The Hunting Hall of Fame Dinner Meeting was jointly sponsored by the Southern Council of Conservation Clubs and The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep was held at the Hacienda in El Segundo the evening of June 25, 1983.

Three hunter-conservationists including Senator H.L "Bill" Richardson of Arcadia who successfully introduced and got passed a bill in 1968 that required the Department of Fish and Game to conduct a survey of the bighorn sheep of California and to determine what was their population and to find any limiting factors

Others honored during this meeting were sportsmen Frank A. Pachmayer and Fred Huntington of Orville, California. Pachmayer at 76 years of age has been a gunsmith since boyhood and has operated his gun works in Los Angeles for 50 years. Fred Huntington operated a gun store in Orville for many years. Eventually he built a large production plant to produce ammunition reloading systems and components. His business known as RCBS has become an international business.

The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep was honored for its work in preserving the wild sheep by protection from hunting, building and developement of more than 50 water storage projects in the Southland mountains and deserts since 1963. The Society also supports its own team of research biologists to investigate bighorn decline, disease causes, etc. The building of these water storage projects has been enthusiastically supported by the Southern Council of Conservation Clubs and its many individual members.

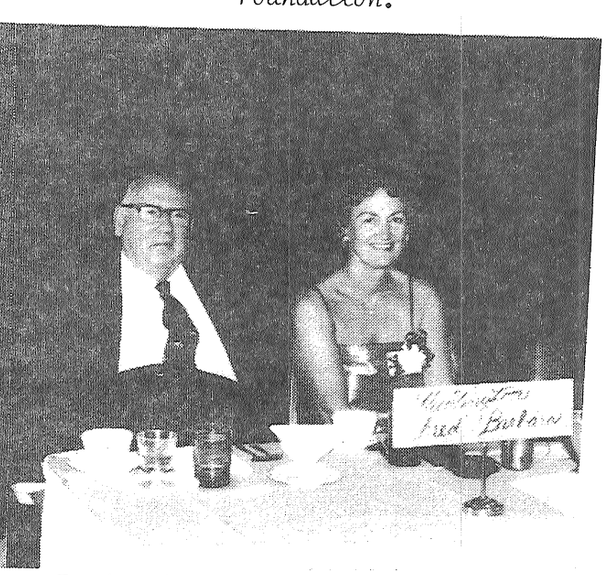
The Hunting Hall of Fame which originally had its headquarters in Hyde Park, N.Y. is now forming divisions in each state. The California Division, now in the process of organization, has over 90 members



Basil Bradbury--Master of Ceremonies, during dinner.

Dr. Kenneth Vaughn, Chairman of the Board of the Hunting Hall of Fame Foundation.

Fred Huntington receiving his membership in the Hunting Hall of Fame Foundation



Fred and Barbara

RAFFLE DRAWING WINNERS ANNOUNCED.

The joint raffle drawing of the Sheep Society and the Southern Council of Conservation Clubs the evening of June 25, 1983 were as follows:

First Prize the Five day salmon fishing trip donated by Bill Martin's Fish Alaska Inc. with airfare roundtrip donated by Western Airlines was won by Norman Brierce, 1520 East 63rd St., Long Beach, Calif.

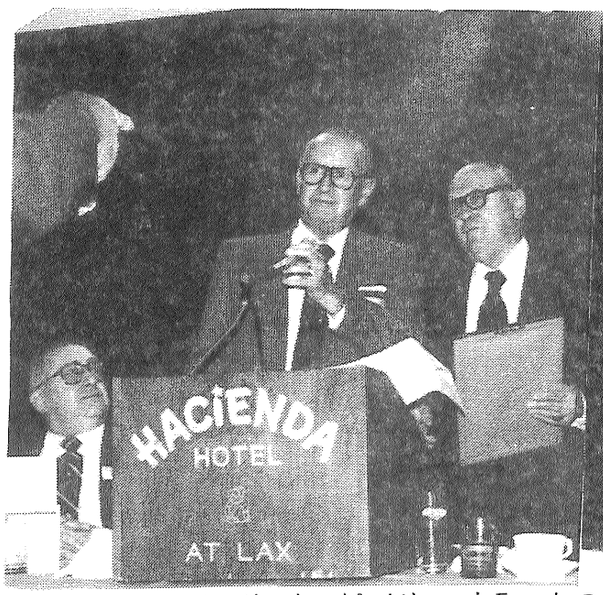
Second Prize -- a Rock Cod rod, reel, line, handle and railboard donated by Bunker's Tackle, Burbank, Calif. Won by Barbara Capps, 703 so. Griffith Park, Burbank, Calif.

Third Prize---Explorer sleeping bag , donated by Slumber Jack--won by Bob Young, 16317 Vermont, Gardena, Calif.

Fourth Prize Garcia model 8700 Bluesky Graphite casting rod--donated by Fisherman's Hardware, Long Beach, Calif. Winner-- Mark Yelich, 1230 Medford Rd., Pasadena, Calif.

Fifth Prize : Sabre Series 1970 Live Bait Rod--donated by California Tackle--- winner: Mike Fiance, 13869 Stratton Ave., Sylmar, Calif.

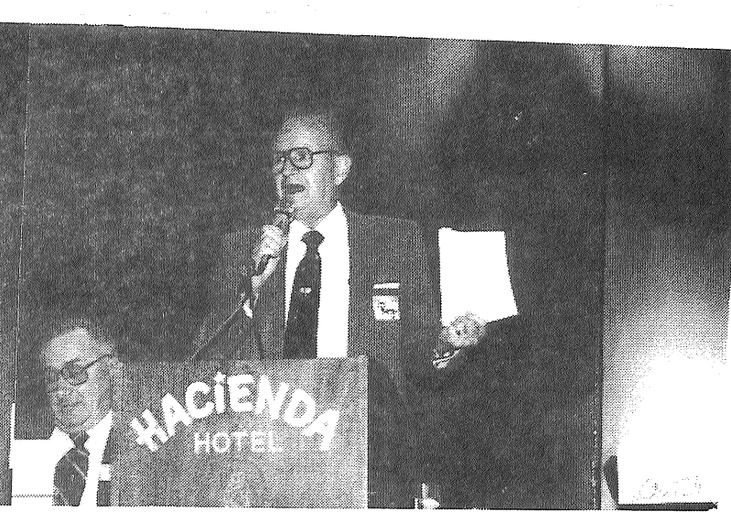
Sixth Prize: Alta Pack Sleeping bag---donated by Slumber Jack. Winner: Terry Grimm, 11033 Ocean Drive., Culver City, Calif.



Roy Weatherby (left) and Frank Pachmayr (right)

Doctor Loren Lutz -proudly displays the Bronze trophy awarded to the Society

Basil Bradbury (left) presents a plaque to Senator H.L "Bill" Richardson



Roy Weatherby who presented the awards to Fred Huntington and Frank Pachmayr.

SOCIETY MAKING TRANSPLANT PLANS

It has been noted in previous issues of The Sheepherder concerning the future transplanting of bighorn sheep from some of the overcrowded ranges into some of the historic but presently unoccupied ranges. Apparantly the time for these transplants is approaching. Doctor Lutz has informed this editor that there are to be transplants this coming December or during January of 1984. The sites for these transplants may be in the:

1. Piru-Sespe Gorge in the Los Padres National Forest -----This area has been written about in previous issues of T.S.

2. The Bighorn Mountains that lie near Big Bear Lake of San Bernardino County. The Society has agreed to funding an assessment of this range in the Bighorn Mountains by David Crowley a biologist who made the study prior to the transfer of nelson bighorn from the Old Dad Peak area to the Whipple Mountains recently.

3. Other areas which seem very likely to receive transplants of bighorn sheep are in other areas of Los Angeles County.

21 BIGHORN SHEEP RELOCATED IN WHIPPLES

Twenty-one bighorn sheep are roaming a 300-acre enclosure in the Whipple Mountains just west of Lake Havasu , as of August first, following their capture last week in two ranges of the mid-Mojave Desert.

Relocation of the sheep is part of a state Department of Fish and Game plan to reestablish the bighorn sheep in former ranges where populations have increased sizeably during recent wet years when forage has been plentiful.

Twelve of the sheep--eight ewes, two lambs and two rams - were taken from the Marble Mountains, and nine sheep -- five ewes, two lambs and two rams--were taken from the vicinity of Old Dad Peak, 35 miles to the north of the Marbles.

DFG biologist Vernon Bleich, who headed the capture effort, estimated the population in the Marbles at 100 and said he would not be surprised if there were as many as 200 animals at Old Dad Peak.

"We could expect to have some trouble after two fine years of forage production. If there was a forage failure, we could have a real disaster, " he said.

The Whipple Mountains, were the bighorns were relocated, is a former bighorn range that was taken over by burros. But the burro population has since been reduced by the U.S Bureau of Land Management.

Bleich said it is planned to hold the 21 bighorns in the enclosure until possibly spring and then release them into the Whipples. To keep track of the animals, some of the adults have neen fitted with radio collars and others with identification collars. The lambs were ear-tagged.

The enclosure is located near Copper Basin Reservoir on land owned by the Metropolitan Water District, which is cooperating in the program.

Dick Weaver, who is coordinator statewide of bighorn sheep rehabilitation efforts from the DFG's Sacramento headquarters, said the Whipple Mountain reintroduction program is the first of its kind in all the southwest.

Weaver said the Bureau of Land Management is cooperating with the DFG in a plan to re-introduce three groups of bighorns at three different locations in the Whipples over the next few years. He said the BLM has alrady constructed water developments at two locations and a third water development is in the offing.

Weaver said that by means of habitat management, such as in the Whipples, bighorn could be reintroduced into former ranges where dangerous buildups avoided in ranges where the bighorns are well established.

"Conceivably, we could wind up with more sheep than were historically present." Weaver said.

According to Weaver's calculations, there are now about 4,000 desert bighorn sheep in the state, divided into three races-- the Nelson, the California and the peninsular. The latter two are classified as rare by the state Fish and Game Commission.

Weaver said there were about 2,800 Nelson bighorns in the state, many of them in the Angeles National Forest. "We expect to relocate some of those in the future," he said.

He estimated the California bighorn population at close to 300, with the population generally confined to the Sierra and northern California. The 800 or so peninsular bighorns are mostly found in Riverside, San Diego and I mperial counties.

Bleich, who led the capture team in the Marbles and at Old Dad Peak the previous week, said the operation ran smoothly except for the loss of one adult ewe that fell from a helicopter sling transporting it to a base camp.

Bleich said the technique for rounding up the bighorns was to herd them up a canyon and into a net that collapsed and entangled them. Immediately, net attendants restrained the bighorns and they were injected with a tranquilizer, then transported by litter to the base camp at rhe foot of the mountains. There DFG veterinarians, led by David Jessup, gave the animals a medical examination and antibiotics prior to loading them into trucks for the trip to the Copper Basin enclosure.

"We were very fortunate with the weather," Bleich said. "During the three-day operation (Tuesday through Thursday--July 26-28th), the temperature was only in the high 90s." The capture effort began at dawn each day and ended before noon to avoid the afternoon heat.

It had been planned to begin the operation at Old Dad Peak, but because of the difficulty in baiting the bighorns in, it was decided to begin in the Marble Mountains, where trapping is much easier.

In two days of operations in the Marbles, 12 bighorns were captured and transported to Copper Basin. On the third and final day, July 28, the crew tried the Old Dad Peak area and took nine bighorns.

"It wasn't from the main group, however, " Bleich said. "It was from an outlying area."

Bleich said that because of the terrain it had been necessary to set out three nets so that the helicopter pilot, Don Landells of Desert Hot Springs, would have some options in herding the animals.

In addition to 21 DFG personnel, Bleich had four volunteersfrom the Bureau of Land Management and about half a dozen "interested conservationists" in his crew, representing the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the Sacramento Safari Club.

Bleich siad the Sacramento Safari Club provided the funds for the helicopter rental and the radio collars. In all, the club has provided $15,000 to the department over the past two years for work with bighorn sheep, and it has committeed itself to providing $7,500 a year for the next three years, Weaver said.

NEWS RELEASE--California Department of Fish and Game, Long Beach---August 1, 1983.

The Joint Raffle drawing held between the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep was held after dinner at the campground following the construction of the Nopah Mountain Project of April 23rd. The winners were: the Harry Lawson, No. 5, .270 cal. Winchester rifle --won by W.G. Stroeker of Alaska.

Second Prize : Grand Slam Edition Set of Buck Knives--won by Roy R. Pittman;

Third prize - Remington Model 700 rifle, Cal. .270 won by Dick Wood;
Ruger model 77 rifle, cal. 7mm. Magnum --won by Mike Wood was the Fourth prize;

Fifth prize - Swanson Art print, Won by Doug Wood;

Sixth prize --a Swanson art print - won by John Doll

Seventh prize--Art print by Bob Kuhn - Won by Ray Follosco

Eigth prize --Bob Kuhn art prinq won by Tom Blankenship;

Ninth prize --Carlson art print - won by Kaia Feuerstack; and

Tenth prize --Carlson art print - won by Jerry Suk, Jr.

Total receipts of this raffle drawing was $17,160.00 Of this some $14,000. was used to defray the costs of the two water storage projects----the one in Arizona and the one in the Nopah Mountains of eastern California.

SHEEP MANAGEMENT BILL STILL IN LIMBO

Early in 1983 Assemblyman Frnk Hill (R) -Los Angeles introduced Assembly Bill 1548, which if enabled would require the Department of Fish and Game to make an in-depth study of the bighorn sheep of California and to make management recommendations for each herd and management unit of California's bighorn sheep. Also, AB-1548 would have re-classified the desert bighorn sheep O. c Nelsoni from a completley protected species to that of a specially protected species. The stated objectives of AB-1548 as stated in section 4900 are: "The Legislature declares that bighorn sheep are an important wildlife resource of the state and should be managed and maintained at optimum levels to ensure their continued existence. It is, therefore the policy of the Legislature to encourage the preservation, restoration, and management of California's bighorn sheep population. The management shall be in accordance with the policies set forth in Section 1801, as modified by Sections 4700, 4901, and 4903." Section 4903 states: "If the department determines than an adjustment in the size of a Nelson bighorn herd shall benefit the status of the herd, it may submit the findings to the commission together with an appropriate herd adjustment plan. Any such plan shall assure continued maintenance of the herd in a healthy, viable condition and prescribe the methods to be used in the adjustment program and the safeguards to be taken to prevent any undesireable impact of the program on the herd. The Commission, after receiving the adjustment plan and holding a public hearing, may adopt the plan and regulation pertaining to the utilization of this resource." end Quote from AB-1548.

AB-1548 passed the Assembly in good style. One negative vote being by Assemblyman Bruce Bronzan of Fresno. The bill was to have been heard in the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife on ugust 12th. However, Senator David Roberti (D) Hollywood, the President pro Tempore of the Senate and an ardent Animal Rights preservationist wrote personal letters to each member of the Committee on Natural Resources and Wildlife, saying in part: " I am strongly opposed to removing any bighorn sheep from the fully protected mammal category and allowing hunters to take them. It is difficult to imagine any hunter of good conscience wanting one of these heads hanging on his wall -- knowing that the species is in a state of decline. I urge you to oppose this bill when it appears before you." (signed) David Roberti.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

Obviously no Democratic Party legislator hoping for a future in party politics would vote in opposition to such a directive from the Legislatures party boss.

On learning this Assemblyman Hill (R) Los Angeles withdrew the bill from committee consideration at that time. This automatically made AB1548 a two-year bill and may be heard in Committee in January 1984.

Senator Roberti has as part of his constituency the motion picture actors colony of the Beverly Hills- Hollywood section. A large part of this group are avoud members of the so-called Animal Rights organizations. They had mottoes such as "Hunt the Hunters", and "Kill the hunters." They raise millions of dollars annualy for preservationist groups such as Fund for Animals, Friends of Animals, Greenpeace, Animal Protection Institute and Respect our Animal Rights. Funds derived by these groups have never been used to actually benefit any species of wildlife by improving in any manner its habitat or in preserving the habitat. Instead the promotors of these groups use the funds for aid to political candidates sympathetic to their preservationist views; to purchase expensive homes for the heads of these groups; the granting of extremely high salaries and unlimited expense accounts to them. None of the funds ever trickles down to actual benefits to wildlife species. These protecionists have shown time-and-again that they would prefer that entire populations of wildlife should disappear than to take a chance that some time in a future there might be a legal harvest of a few members of an overpopulated herd. There is no record anywhere of any species of wildlife being endangered by any hunting under management of any fish and game department and fish and game commission.

Senator Robert by his action abrogates the responsibility of the California Legislature accepted by them in 1873 when the Legislature removed all managemnt responsibilities from the Department of Fish and Game and the Fish and Game Commission by declaring the bighorn sheep of California to be a completely protected species. The Legislature appropriates no money to the Fish and Game Department for benefits to bighorn sheep species of California

November 5, 1983 Annual Dinner Meeting of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep is to be held at Michael's, 4500 Los Feliz Blvd., in Los Angeles----See page three this issue.

February 22 - 25, 1984-----The Annual Convention of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep will be held in San Diego. The convention will begin Wednesday p.m. February 22 and continue through Saturday February 25th. Keynote speaker Saturday evening is Secretary of Interior James Watt.

Let us remember that the F.N.A.W.S. funded the water hole project in the Nopah Mountains April23rd.

SHEEP COUNT --ANZA BORREGO DESERT STATE PARK

Mark C. Jorgensen, Naturalist for the Anza-Borrego Desert State Park in his report concerning the annual waterhole counts of wildlife in the park reports that : "The annual bighorns census came off successfully! Though the count is below average for a July count, abundant water throughout the range has the sheep widely scattered.

Many folks ask what we do with the count data year after year. We compile thousands of sightings over the years and this helps us to manage one of the park's most fragile resources. In studying sheep we have several options: First we could leave them alone and know little of their range or status; we could approach sheep by helicopter and dart them, attaching telemetry to a sample of the population to keep tabs on their movements; we could do an annual helicopter survey using two biologists, a helicopter @ $350/hr., and flying into each canyon or we can monitor waterholes using volunteers. We have opted for what we feel is the low impact waterhole survey. Thanks to the many hours served by the volunteer sheep counters we are armed with data which has been collected on waterhole surveys. We have successfu lly accomplished many important projects thanks to the data that have been gathered over the last thirteen years, such as:

1) Detected low lambing success in the south end of Borrego. This led to the elimination of off-road vehicles within sheep range near McCain Valley,
2) Identified conflicts between off-road vehicles and sheep in Coyote Canyon. A detailed study followed and now Coyote Canyon is closed during the summer to preserve the watering rights of bighorn sheep,
3) We have identified critical bighorn waterholes throughout the park,
4) Information on importance of sheep habitat helped park designate 386,000 acres of State Wilderness within the park,
5) Have population data which precludes our having to use higher impact means of research ie. helicopters, telemetry, and darting. We have lamb and yearling data which is important in determining general vigor of the bighorn population. In the nearby Northern Santa Rosa Mountains lamb production recently has been very low and has received national attention,
6) Have one of the longest running consecutive annual counts, providing data for varying weather conditions and increasing human use of the range.
7) In our thirteen years we have used 1,000 volunteers. These people are knowledgeable and spread the word of the need to preserve sheep habitat. Our data is used in dozens of park programs each season and the word of the desert bighorn cause is spreading throughout the country."

Jorgensen completes his report by expressing his appreciation for the continued support by the volunteers and the many hours that they have spent in the desert sun and with his hopes of seeing them again during the next summer of 1984.

****