



# California Wild Sheep

Spring 2015



## IN THIS ISSUE

|   |    |
|---|----|
| From the Editor .....   | 3  |
| President's Message .....   | 5  |
| Wanderings of a Sheep & Goat<br>Hunter .....                            | 6  |
| Elk Hunting in California – What<br>a Wonderful Experience .....        | 13 |
| Dall's Sheep Hunt .....   | 19 |
| Photos from the Field .....   | 21 |
| All the Best .....  | 27 |
| Unexpected & Unprepared: A<br>Mountain Goat Story – Part 1 .            | 28 |
| Lightning Strikes Twice in Pacifica,<br>California for Father and Son . | 32 |

**Mike Carpinito**  
**Desert Bighorn Sheep**  
**Clipper Mountains**  
**Guided by San Gorgonio Outfitters**  
**2014**

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## A GOOD KILL GONE BAD

by Carlos Gallinger, [www.thewayofthings.org](http://www.thewayofthings.org)

*Sometimes a single image can convey a complete story*



We have a beautiful example of this in this petroglyph. It is an ancient story, told in an ancient way, by an ancient people. Yet this image, this story, transcends the time and culture that made it. It is a story that is still told around a few campfires today, perhaps not as often as it should be. It is the story of a good kill gone bad. A story that may have played out on this very spot. We can begin to understand this story by reading the various attributes in this glyph and understanding its placement in time and the environment.

To start with, this petroglyph is probably very old. If we look at the size and length of the projectile that killed this ram, it's most likely a spear or "dart" thrown with an atlatl rather than an arrow, indicating this happened before the invention of the bow and arrow. Then if we look at the placement of this projectile, it seems to indicate that this ram was above the hunter and facing him when he was hit. The placement of this glyph is next to a small water source at the bottom of a small rocky canyon. From the water source to the rim of the canyon is well within the range of these ancient weapons. The shot placement shown in the petroglyph, and the glyph placement itself, can be interpreted as evidence that this event took place at this site.

Now if we look at the artistic style of this petroglyph, it is a classic Coso range bighorn sheep, sometimes referred to as a boat sheep due to the shape of their bodies. There are two significant differences in this particular glyph. The first is that this ram is upside down. Then if we look at the back, it's curved outward. Most Coso sheep have a straight back. This would seem to indicate that not only is this sheep dead, but it's bloated as well. Another important artistic detail that would seem to indicate a bloated condition is that the artist not only drew a short tail, he also drew in what seems to be excrement squirting out of its body. This phenomena is common with dead bloated animals.

So what is the story here? How much imagination is required of us to connect the dots, and what can we learn from this ancient glyph? We can start with the fact that

desert bighorn sheep can go a month or two without drinking water in the winter months. They get all the moisture they need from the plants they eat if conditions are right. If this ram was at this glyph site to drink the water, it was most likely in the hot summer months. Large animals like this will bloat and rot very quickly in the summer heat, and this same process takes quite a bit longer in cold weather. So when there's water next to this glyph in the summer time, we are likely to have the bighorn sheep and the hunters as well.

Let's explore one scenario that fits the attributes of the glyph and its placement in the environment. We can start this story with three or four hunters coming to this small canyon and selecting a place to ambush the sheep. They would have selected a place based on their own preference and the pecking order within their tribal group. Having been at this site, it's my opinion that this glyph site would've been a preferred site. Using traditional tactics, these hunter probably entered under the cover of darkness and waited for the bighorn sheep to come to them.

As the hunter sat crouching by this water source, this bighorn ram literally stuck his neck out over the rim of this small canyon and our hunter immediately threw his spear and hit this ram in the chest. Though fatally wounded, the ram took off running. A hit like this will kill, but not immediately. This ram might have run a long way before it died. Normally the hunter would have gone in hot pursuit of his quarry and immediately butchered it. This would allow it to cool and began to dry rather than rot or bloat. It seems this did not happen in this case. One of many possible reasons for this is that other hunters saw the animal get shot and thought it would not go far. Or they may have been waiting for other animals to come in to get a drink of water, so they remained hidden. If this one hunter had broken cover and started to run after his ram, he would have scared off the whole herd. Instead of getting three or four sheep, they would have gotten only one. So they all stayed hidden for another three or four hours, waiting for more sheep to come to water. It seems that by the time the hunt was over or was given up, this one ram lay dead and bloated.

So why this story in stone? It's possible that one of the other hunters put this glyph in this man's favorite place in order to ridicule him and make him remember the time his impatience ruined the hunt for the other members of his tribe. Or perhaps this hunter put this glyph there himself as a way to remember something that he did wrong – the wasting of this magnificent animal – and to atone for it.

Of course this is just one of many possibilities based on the few facts we have, but it is an ancient story. It is one that is still worth telling around the campfire, especially to the young and impatient, because there are many ways that a good kill can go bad.

This glyph, this story, allows us to look deep into the past, and experience the way of things.

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# From the Editor's Desk

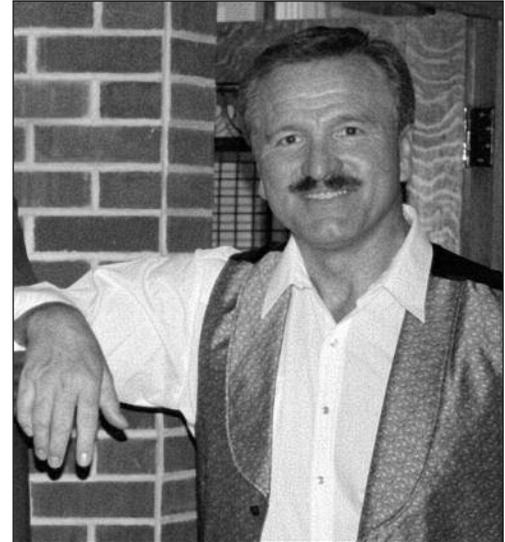
Greetings members and prospective members. We have a hunt and news-filled newsletter for you this quarter. Undoubtedly the overriding priority is our upcoming Banquet and Fundraiser on April 25. This is critically important AND seriously fun! Please, please, please make a strong effort to be there. We have several new features, in addition to our annual world class auction, sheep hunt drawing; guns and gear drawing; seminars; etc. The noted additions are:

- Special reception and recognition for the FNAWS® and Slam® holders
- Casino event after the banquet and auction

This event is our one fundraising event each year, and as a volunteer, 501c3 organization, this is where our funding comes from to enhance habitat and water availability, support scientific studies that benefit wild sheep, survey new areas, and much, much more.

So bottom line, our April 25 event is critically important AND seriously fun! I very much look forward to seeing you there.

Mike Borel  
Editor



**Rick Garzoli**  
**Bighorn Ram - Wyoming**  
**October 2014**  
**Taken with Meade Dominick 7D Ranch Outfitting**

In the 4Q14 issue Life Member Rick Garzoli's name was misspelled in the Photos from the Field Section. We've included the picture again, with the correct spelling and apologize for the mistake. Your Editor



**Renee Snider**  
**WSF Mountain Hunter Hall of Fame Award**  
**Reno, Nevada**  
**January 10, 1915**  
Renee was awarded the Oscar of the hunting world – the Weatherby – later the same month.

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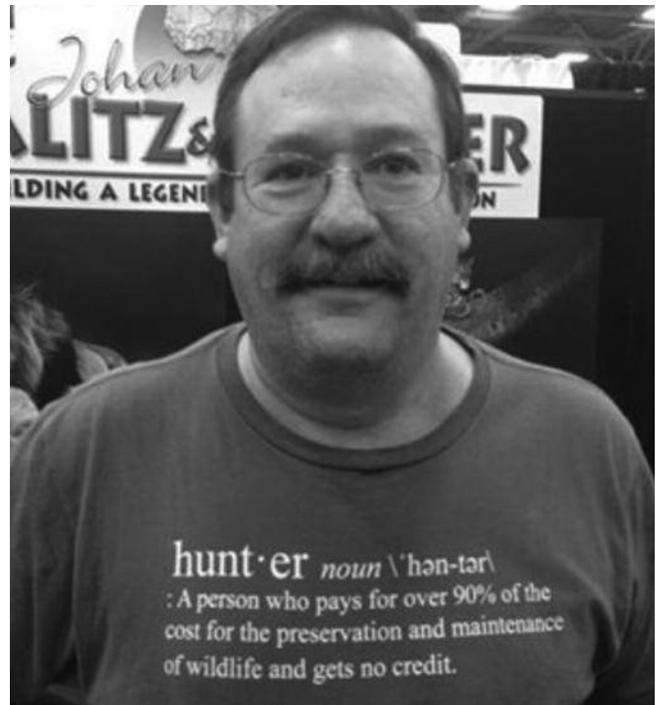
# Events

## 2015

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| April 17   | Desert Bighorn Council Meeting, Borrego Springs |
| April 24   | Sheep Summit XVII, Rancho Cordova               |
| April 25   | CA WSF Fundraiser, Rancho Cordova               |
| July 18-20 | Chapter & Affiliates Meeting, British Columbia  |
| October 24 | DBH Hunter Orientation, Sacramento              |
| November 7 | Sheep Summit XVIII, Ontario                     |

## 2016

|                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| January 19-22  | SHOT Show, Las Vegas       |
| January 20-23  | WSF Convention, Reno       |
| January 21-24  | ISE Show, Sacramento       |
| January 27-30  | GSCO Convention, Las Vegas |
| February 3-6   | SCI Convention, Las Vegas  |
| February 10-14 | WHCE, Salt Lake City       |



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# President's Letter

Dear CA WSF Members and Friends:

The California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation extends a warm welcome and invitation to its members, friends and guests to our annual fun and exciting dinner at the Marriott in Rancho Cordova (near Sacramento) on Saturday evening, April 25, 2015. Whether you share our passion for wild sheep and the magnificent country they call home, or just want to participate in a great evening of fun and fellowship while at the same time supporting one of California's most effective and constructive conservation organizations, it is an event not to be missed.

This year's event will include some new innovative features while maintaining the high quality of live auction and silent auction items and the coveted Dall's sheep hunt raffle participants have learned to expect and enjoy. When the last auction item has sold and the last winning raffle ticket has been drawn, the night's festivities will continue with a casino night for extended fun and fellowship.

The general raffle has been tuned up to feature Swarovski's innovative and desirable new STX 65 modular spotting scope (valued at over \$3,000), some items that should catch the interest of the ladies in the crowd, a Cabela's gift certificate for those who need some gear but want to shop for themselves, some items that should interest hunters who already have "too many guns" (if there really is such a thing!) and some items that should interest hunters and non-hunters alike. The general raffle will include high quality firearms to present a raffle lineup that we hope you find a bit different than the average conservation fundraiser.

In this issue you will find stories about the exciting and successful hunt of the winner of a previous Dall's sheep raffle (see page 19) and the tremendous tule elk taken by the high bidder of the guided hunt purchased in the live auction in 2014 (see page 13). You'll also find all you need to register for this year's festivities.

Once again, our friends at the Rancho Cordova Marriott are offering a great room rate for participants who want to spend the night before and/or after the event, and you will find the details for that as well.

Bring your friends and family, even if they are not sheep hunters or do not hunt at all. It will be a fun-filled evening for everyone. See you on April 25!!

Paul Brisso  
President, CA Wild Sheep



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# WANDERINGS OF A SHEEP & GOAT HUNTER

*by Ben Gordon*

As a youngster growing up in the Northern Sacramento Valley's rice-growing region, I was surrounded by wildlife. I had ducks, geese, pheasant, quail and blacktail deer out my back door, and all the fishing I could handle in the Sacramento River and our farm ponds. A thought never entered my mind I would ever wander from this wildlife paradise to pursue wild game. As I matured through my 20s and 30s my family hunted all the western states for deer, antelope and elk; again, never thinking of traveling any further than those states to pursue game. This all changed one day in July of 1999 when I received a Desert Bighorn Sheep tag in the mail from the State of Nevada. This was a proverbial game-changer, exposing me to a species I had never hunted; and since has taken me to places most people can't pronounce, and sane people would not risk their security to go. You see, sheep and goats live in these places, and if you wish to hunt them, you must go there.

## **SLOVENIA**

November 15, 2014 found my wife Tina and I on board a Lufthansa jet headed on our latest 30-day adventure, which would start in Slovenia. After landing in Lubijana we were met by our guide and host Joe Jakab, and transported to the lodge near the Austrian border, which would be our base camp. The lodge was located next to ruins of a concentration camp used for laborers that dug tunnels for the German Army, with a nearby restaurant and museum loaded with history about the camp. Our lodge host, Danielle, is considered a legend locally, as he and his father had guided the former Yugoslavian leader Tito on many occasions for stag, Alpine ibex and Alpine chamois. Our quarry was Alpine chamois, and the weather stunk with rain and fog with snow on the higher elevations.



Alpine Chamois  
Slovenia 2014

Needless to say, the hunting was tough, and we worked for three days until Joe and I were able to make a stalk on a very fine, and very large-bodied, male chamois. The animal appeared across the ravine from us, and presented a close shot of 150 yards, then collapsed on the perfect spot for very dramatic photographs to be taken.

## **MACEDONIA**

The next morning we departed for Macedonia, with a stop in Croatia for Joe to guide hunter John Shivel from Minnesota for Mouflon sheep. John harvested a great ram the first day, while Tina and I toured the island of Korcula, which was the birthplace of the great explorer Marco Polo. The next morning we loaded the vans and headed to Macedonia, enjoying some touring through Serbia and Bosnia along the way. After an overnight in Mostar, Bosnia, we headed to the capital city of Sarajevo, where 30,000 people were slaughtered in the early 1990s by the Croatians and Serbians. There is so much sad history here that we decided to take our time to see the town and learn more, but in doing so our arrival in Macedonia was at 3:00 a.m.

Three hours later I was awakened for breakfast, and was climbing a very steep mountain in the Jasen chamois Preserve in pursuit of Balkan chamois. My guide and I soon entered the fog zone on the mountain, and a waiting game began. As the fog began to lift, a flurry of shots rang out above us, and chamois ran everywhere. A few minutes later as the animals calmed down, a group approached our position and I took aim on the largest animal. After a 300-yard shot, the animal slid down the steep slope and stopped on a rocky ledge. Photos followed of the very fine specimen, with congratulations and smiles. Then the long hike off the steep mountain began.



Balkan Chamois  
Macedonia 2014

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## ROMANIA

The next morning we departed for Romania to hunt for Carpathian chamois, and another late arrival of 12:00 a.m. at Baile Olanesti, a resort town in the Carpathian Mountains. Up at 6:00 a.m. for breakfast, Joe and I were off with three forestry employees that were to be our guides. After glassing hillsides for 5 hours, the plan was for Joe and I, along with one forestry guide, to hike the ravines and hopefully find some animals. These ravines are full of history, with many WW II Nazi bunkers, and other evidence of the Second World War throughout. The hunting plan worked as we found six chamois feeding on a rock escarpment, but a clear shot was difficult. After finding a split tree for a rifle rest and a clear view of the animals, I took a shot that resulted in a miss. The steep angle played with me and I over-compensated, aiming too low and shot under the chamois. All hell broke loose with animals running across the face of the hill not sure where the shot came from. As they stopped, I took aim on the largest and squeezed off another shot, which spun the animal around and headed him down the rock face. Joe was sure I had missed, but after discussion it was realized he was watching another animal when I fired. The forestry guide had seen the chamois I shot disappear in an inaccessible spot of vegetation on the sheer rock face.

After a quick climb by the forestry guides, they were above the rock face, but were unable to enter the spot of vegetation, as it was 25 yards below them. After much time and consideration, we sadly had to abandon our efforts to retrieve the animal, as everyone agreed it was too dangerous. Romanian's are extremely poor in these mountain villages, and they have no access, nor training, in mountain climbing gear that would have been beneficial to retrieve the chamois. Only one day was scheduled for this species, so my Romanian hunt ended unsuccessfully.

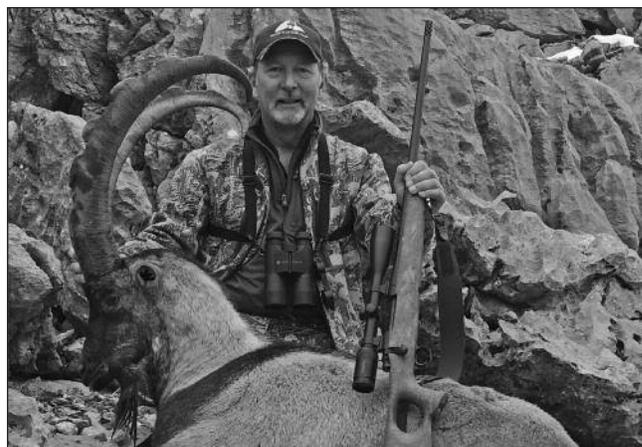
## TURKEY

Early the next morning, Joe took Tina and I to Bucharest, Romania, for a flight to Istanbul, Turkey. After arriving in Istanbul, Tina and I assumed we would do some touring of the city, but this was not to be. A greeter from Shikar Safaris met us at the airport and lead us through all the rifle registration and visa requirements. Then we were ticketed for an immediate flight to Antalya, where we were met by our interpreter, Annan. Our travels were not done for the day; we loaded the truck with our luggage and gear to head toward the resort town of Akseki where we picked up the local game warden that would accompany us during my hunt for Bezoar ibex. We then traveled to the small and very old village of Adalia where we arrived at our host's house. We were to stay with my guide Osen, his wife, and two young children in their home.

This area has a very large population of Bezoar, and we had no problem finding animals. The problem was getting within 300 yards for a shot. Two days in a row were spent observing one billy in particular with horns approaching 50 inches, waiting for a shot opportunity until dark each day. Both days the big billy passed by us at 300 yards, only to be blocked by nannies and kids,

with no clear shot available. On the third day we changed our approach, and were in position at dawn on top of the mountain in view of the ibex trail the animals traveled every day on their trip down to feed. When the billy came into view he was much further up the mountain than the others, and I was forced to take a 470-yard shot. The billy spun and separated from the others in the herd, and headed downhill while the others ran up. This was a sure sign of a hit, and after the proper wait time, Osen headed through the very tough and steep terrain to track the ibex. Two hours later Osen returned with the news of finding blood and tissue, but could not find the billy. A plan was made to return in the late afternoon from another angle on the hill to find the animal. Later that day after checking the blood trail, it was discovered the animal had quit bleeding and did not bleed like expected. There was no trail to follow. I had a difficult time walking away from the mountain that evening leaving an animal I had wounded, but Osen assured me the wound must have been superficial and the animal would live.

The next day we hunted right from Osen's house, and hiked into the most inhospitable and dangerous terrain I have ever had the displeasure to hunt. Ibex were immediately spotted and the planning began. The chosen billy was much smaller than the one we had spent the prior three days stalking, but with time restraints beginning to come into play the decision was made to take him. The billy was around 900 yards from our position, but it took two hours and probably a mile or more to cut the range to 165 yards. During the stalk we were fortunate to watch a very large Eurasian brown bear digging for grubs, and shockingly found three female ibex he had killed and cached in three separate pits on the hill we were sharing with him. We continued on, making sure to check our back trail frequently from that point forward! A good rest was found and the shot was successful, but the billy never fell and instead traveled another 1000 yards till he collapsed on a ledge up a sheer rock face. A second shot was needed, as the animal did not immediately succumb from the first shot.



Bezoar Ibex  
Turkey 2014

This shot was 300 yards, and when hit, the ibex launched himself out into thin air like rocket boosters were attached to his torso. The ibex landed in a small grove of short pine trees 50 yards below, which fortunately cushioned his final resting place. With 42" horns and a very beautiful coloring, I could not have been happier. Pictures, lunch and a long hike back to Osen's house followed, and we arrived home at dusk.

Dinner was served, followed by an announcement from Annan that we would leave immediately for Antalya to overnight in a hotel. Arriving at 10 p.m. we were met by Sendogen, Shikar's chief of operations, and were briefed about the next day's events. The next day we were taken to the airport for a flight back to Istanbul, and spent the day touring the town with Hakan, another Shikar employee. This was my wife Tina's last day. She was scheduled to fly home the next day, so a very fine dinner was enjoyed along with a good bottle of wine, after which I was taken to the airport for an overnight flight to Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

### TAJIKISTAN

At the airport I was met by Halit, my next Shikar escort; and four other hunters going to the same camp. Our destination was the famous Hot Springs camp in the very high Pamir Mountains of eastern Tajikistan, with Marco Polo Sheep and Mid-Asian ibex being our intent of pursuit. It was a rough beginning with the flight cancelled at 11:00 p.m., and Turkish Air taking all of the passengers to a hotel far from the airport to overnight. After a short 3-hour nap, we were back at the airport for an 8:00 a.m. departure for Dushanbe. Losing three hours during the five-hour flight through three time zones, we arrived at 4:30 p.m. and met our transport crew in the lobby. After two hours of clearance through customs for the rifles and getting all paper work in order, we loaded the three Land Cruisers and began our 14-hour road trip to Khoroug. Travel at night on this road is best if you don't care to see the sheer 500-foot drops off the road shoulder into the river below! Travel was slow on this dirt road because

of lack of maintenance since Tajikistan gained their independence from Russia over two decades ago. Our driver told us the Russians would grade the dirt portions once a year when they had control of the country, but many sections have now not been graded for five years. It should be noted that this road from Dushanbe to Murgab is part of the original silk trade route established before the beginning of written history, and is still used today by many different nations to transport goods to and from China. We followed the Afghanistan border for much of the trip, and arrived in Khoroug at 11:00 a.m. After breakfast/lunch we took a short nap and hit the road at 2:30 p.m. for the final seven-hour drive to camp, arriving at 9:30 p.m. in howling wind and blowing snow. Dinner was served to us immediately, and introductions were made to all the Murgab Hunting Group personnel who run the camp. Then we settled into our sleeping quarters for the night.

All the hunters slept lightly that night as the wind howled somewhere north of 50 mph outside, and we pondered what weather would greet us on our first day of hunting. Hot Springs Camp sits at an elevation of around 14,000 feet, and is situated on a large natural hot spring that is used to heat all the camp buildings, as well as bathing, boiling the trophy skulls, laundry and other things.

The next morning we were very pleased to have blue skies and calm winds, but the thermometer read -26 degrees. Guides were assigned to us after breakfast, and rifles sighted before leaving camp in the Russian version of the Toyota Land Cruiser. We each had a main guide, sub guide, driver and video person, so the small Land Cruiser was at full capacity. The terrain was very stark with little in the way of vegetation. Very high mountains surrounded the long and wide valleys.

After traveling for 15 minutes we crested a rise and had a commanding view of the next valley. What I saw shocked me, as over a hundred Marco Polo sheep ran from the valley floor to the surrounding hills. After quickly assessing the animals, the main guide was ready



Marco Polo Argali  
Tajikistan 2014



Mid-Asian Ibex  
Tajikistan 2014

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to move on. This was a normal occurrence throughout the day, seeing an estimated 800 sheep. No ram was spotted that would allow us a stalk in this desolate terrain, so we retired to the camp for the evening. At dinner I was told that two of the other hunters had scored with two good rams taken as well as two ibex.

The next morning we left camp in a different direction, and immediately saw large groups of sheep that included a few very nice rams. One ram in particular was very large, and an attempt was made to stalk him for a shot. Only able to get within 550 yards, the guides insisted I try a shot because the ram was very large. The steep angle and long distance was too much, and my shot missed by a foot hitting between the rams legs. Back in the Land Cruiser we crested the next divide and spotted another large ram. This one was sky-lined above us about 300 yards away and was a sight I will never forget! The ram spun and ran over the hill out of view, and my driver headed down the ravine in what appeared to be the opposite direction. I was confused until I saw two beautiful Marco Polo rams running beside us at an angle that would bring them across in front of us. How the Tajik guides knew the rams would come our direction and cross in front, I have no idea. The driver quickly stopped and I bailed out to find an area to shoot from. The rams stopped by a rock outcropping at 236 yards and presented a good broadside shot, which resulted in a solid lung hit. I had no idea these animals were so tough, but soon found out when the ram ran uphill following the other ram until at 469 yards he could go no more. A second shot and the big ram was down.

As I approached the ram I was overwhelmed with

the size and beauty of this animal. A deep curl and outward sweeping curve resulted in a measurement of 57" horn length, and 60" tip-to-tip spread! The sheep was everything I dreamed of in a Marco Polo trophy, and I was indeed a happy sheep hunter. After the customary pictures, we set out to find ibex. Now you may think that's a tall order to take a trophy Marco Polo sheep AND a Mid-Asian ibex in the same day, but this can be done in this high and barren land and was accomplished three hours later! Probably no more than five miles from the mountain where we harvested the sheep, we found a group of ibex and were able to approach within 236 yards for an easy shot which resulted in a very beautiful 38" Mid-Asian ibex. These animals have a very bright white patch on their back which is in stark contrast to the dark brown color of their body and will make a beautiful trophy mount.

After 30 days of hunting and Christmas just around the corner, I was finally ready to head home. The long ride back to Dushanbe started the next day, and with an overnight stop in Khoroug, we arrived at the Tajikistan Hotel in Dushanbe at 9:00 p.m. With a flight to Istanbul the next morning, then on to Munich and finally landing in San Francisco, my trip was complete. I was able to bring my trophies home with me in checked baggage, and they are currently at my taxidermists to be mounted. I am now focusing on my next trip, which is to Pakistan in a few weeks for Blanford urial, Afghan urial and Sindh ibex, but that's for a future story. You may ask, "Why would you go to Pakistan?" Because sheep and goats are there!

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## CA DFW ON TRACK FOR FALL AERIAL SURVEYS

*by Kyle M. Meintzer, CA WSF Founder and Liaison with DFW*

Due to the helicopter crash that took four lives during a mule deer survey in early 2010, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife has not done an aerial survey of desert bighorn sheep since the fall of 2009. Fortunately, that looks like it's about to change.

Late last year I met with Craig Stowers and Regina Abella from DFW to help put together a plan and a schedule to make sure helicopter surveys would again become an annual occurrence. These surveys are critical for managing California's wild sheep, as well as for gathering accurate data on populations that live in hunt zones. One of the main reasons tag numbers have dropped precipitously the past two years is because without accurate population data, issuing the same number of tags we'd been accustomed to might be challenged by anti-hunting groups and thereby jeopardize the entire hunt.

Most of the six-year hiatus was the result of the state's lawyers wanting to ensure the safety of future surveys and

at the same time protect the state from financial liability. That work was finished in late 2013 and we thought surveys would get going again last fall. Unfortunately, a couple of administrative roadblocks were encountered at the last minute and no surveys were done.

The good news is those roadblocks have now been removed, CA Air Services has signed off on a new protocol Craig and Regina put together and the DFW is putting the survey work out to bid as I write this! Once the bid process opens, I'll be contacting every possible helicopter company in the western US that we know meets the DFW standards for equipment, pilot experience and high elevation work to let them know bids are being accepted, what the basic criteria are and where to go online to see the details and submit bids

Getting "back in the air" is vital for the work that needs to be done on behalf of California's desert bighorn sheep. It now finally looks as though that's about to happen!



**We would love to meet you - here's our convention schedule for 2015:**

Wild Sheep Foundation "The Sheep Show" Reno, NV Jan 7-10, 2015  
 Dallas Safari Club "Traditions" Dallas, TX Jan 15-18, 2015  
 Grand Slam Club/OVIS, Reno, NV Jan 28-31, 2015  
 Safari Club International, Las Vegas, NV Feb 3-6, 2015



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2015 BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER LIVE AUCTION  
**8-DAY IBEX HUNT IN KYRGYZSTAN**

*by Bob Keagy*

Cavner and Julian of Alaska are seeking to offer some selected international hunts, and have donated an 8-day ibex hunt in Kyrgyzstan for one hunter in the fabled Tian Shan Mountains. The trophy fee for one ibex is included in this donation, as are all transportation, camp accommodations, food during the hunt, and trophy preparation. A second ibex can be taken for an additional \$3500.

This adventure begins at the pleasant city of Bishkek, the Capitol of Kyrgyzstan, with easy international air access (airfare and hotel before and after the hunt not included). A second hunter welcome at \$7750. Possible upgrade to include Marco Polo. This donation is available for open dates in the Fall of 2015 or 2016. A stunning value for a mountain hunter, and with the possibility of adding the great Marco Polo! Donor's value is \$8500.



Approximately 26-28 Marco Polo ewes and young rams. How many can you spot? (Hint: look to either side above main group--there are four or five partially hidden in the rocks).



Trophy ibex billies. I am not sure which one is the one I took, but I believe it was second from the right, in the back. Mid-Asian ibex get progressively whiter on their back as they get older, and my ibex is very close to 47", both which seem to point to that ibex.

– Bob Keagy



A young inquisitive Marco Polo ram. He'd better not stand, looking at hunters, much longer or he'll get a one-way ticket to the States.



Marco Polo, Mayanbek and Atobek, our local guides, Bob Keagy, and of course, Pam.

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## GLENN SUDMEIER

### 2015 OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD RECIPIENT



Glenn Sudmeier has done more than any other individual to make water available to desert bighorn in California – and the availability of water has enabled the population growth, the hunting season and enhanced future prospects! While his accomplishments and contributions are legendary in California, he has done it quietly and without fanfare.

Glenn has been involved with bighorn sheep conservation since the early 1970s. Glenn has served as an SCBS Board member for over 30 years. (Author's note – and he still sets a challenging pace in the mountains.) Glenn is very knowledgeable on wildlife and biology and is very good at sharing his knowledge with others.

Glenn has been (and continues to be) instrumental in choosing the sites for every new water development that SCBS has built in the last 15 years.

Frustrated by the maintenance challenges of water developments (and their difficulty in blending into the environment), Glenn was instrumental in developing the integral drinker tank that SCBS is now using. After years of frustration doing field repairs on the older designs, Glenn turned his vision of a low profile, freeze-proof, leak-proof, no moving parts tank system into reality by designing the system himself. Glenn strongly encouraged SCBS to use

their Bob Campbell fund to construct a mold for the tank in 2010. Although the financial downturn had made nearly all of us risk averse, Glenn persisted and convinced all SCBS Board members to fund the tank mold project.

Since the mold was made, SCBS has installed more than 15. Additionally, more than 50 tanks have been supplied to other desert bighorn conservation organizations from California to Texas.

In November 2012, Glenn proposed that a solution to the issue of obtaining clearances for sites on which to locate water developments to benefit bighorn sheep might best be focused on lands owned by the State of California. Glenn spent untold hours reviewing land ownership maps, topographic maps, consulting with experts in the field, and visiting specific locations within those parcels.

In total, approximately 960 Townships were considered, which included about 1,900 parcels (set up for schools!) owned by the State of California and managed by the State Lands Commission. Glenn reviewed those 1,900 parcels for their potential value to bighorn sheep and narrowed the list to about 250. After then considering each of those further, he produced a list of 104 parcels that have the greatest potential to be of benefit to bighorn sheep with the addition of water developments.

Glenn approached this (1) as a businessman interested in leasing those parcels for the benefit of wildlife, realizing that the Commission is responsible for drawing income from those parcels; and (2) using his extensive knowledge of bighorn sheep distribution and ecology, with the net result that 104 parcels were deemed worthy of being leased. SCBS and CA WSF plan to construct more water developments on many of these parcels in the coming years.

Glenn has been instrumental in working with CA WSF, the CJ Berry Foundation, the Department of Defense, Mitsubishi, and other organizations to obtain funding for desert bighorn conservation field projects. To date he has arranged more than \$100,000 to flow to SCBS for fieldwork and water development. Plans are in place to dramatically increase the number of new systems in coming years.

**A tough old cattleman from Alberta counseled his granddaughter that if she wanted to live a long life, the secret was to sprinkle a pinch of gun powder on her oatmeal every morning.**

**The granddaughter did this religiously until the age of 103. When she died, she left behind**

**14 children, 30 grandchildren,  
45 great-grandchildren, 25 great-great-grandchildren  
and a 40-foot hole where the crematorium used to be.**

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# TULE ELK HUNTING IN CALIFORNIA – WHAT A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE

*by Perry Smith*

*This hunt was purchased at the CA WSF 2014 Fundraiser, and will again be auctioned in 2015.*



My tule elk opportunity came after I met Don Martin on a sheep/grizzly hunt in Alaska. Don told me he guided for tule elk and I asked him to get me lined up on a hunt if he could work out the details. The opportunity to hunt elk is always high on my list of things to do, and little did I know this would be a hunt that would rate at the top! Don got in touch with me about a year after our discussion and as the saying goes, “the hunt was on for tule elk.”

On October 16, Don graciously picked me up in Fresno and we headed for the ranch. The Jim Bardin Ranch is a beautiful property with all the varying landscape and terrain that comes with elk hunting. The beauty of the ranch is unsurpassed, and hunting elk with the backdrop being the Pacific Ocean is quite an experience! The neatest thing was we were seeing elk immediately after arriving on the ranch. Five nice bulls bedded on the skyline, so needless to say the excitement was very high! Bob Swanson, the owner of the ranch, is a gracious host and treats you to a hunt of a lifetime. Don Martin’s outdoor expertise and knowledge of the animals is outstanding! The history of the ranch and information Bob shares really adds to the hunt experience. The accommodations and food were excellent, with nice campfires morning and night!

I was raised in Central Kansas and learning about agriculture in other parts of the United States is always interesting, so the chats around the campfire were always appreciated! The camp setting is down in a neat ravine with nice cabins, butchering building and all the amenities. Don and Bob do a great job managing the elk resource and know a lot about the animals. Bob keeps a watchful eye during his daily ranch activities, so needless to say it doesn’t take long to be looking at lots of elk! Don had told me we were looking for three or four bulls that would be excellent trophies. The bulls we were looking for were animals that

had been trophy quality the year before but weren’t harvested, so another year’s growth was beneficial.

We saw approximately 100 elk on the hunt, with 31 of the elk being bulls. The hard part was deciding which bull to put my tag on. The second day of the hunt we were sitting in one spot looking at a band of six bulls, with one being exceptional along with another bull which was a mile from the group by himself. The big bull in the bunch and the lone bull were two of the elk on the hit list. Don looked at both with the spotting scope and recognized them from previous encounters. I decided I wanted to go after the bull that was by himself, but we decided to wait until the next morning to put our stalk on. Don said he thought the big bull in the band of bulls was bigger, but either one would be a keeper.

We got up early the next morning, and Bob took us up in the jeep so we could begin our stalk. The interesting thing was that we had to get past the band of elk to get to the lone bull. We made our stalk down a ridge, and as luck would have it, the band of bulls had moved up. We were going to need to wait and let the closer elk clear out before we could continue our stalk on to the bull we were after. The luckiest part was that the bull we were after had moved over and was now with the group of elk we saw the afternoon before! We were able to get the bull I wanted to shoot and the bull Don thought was bigger in the spotting scope at the same time. How lucky is that? Don was right. The big bull that was in the band was larger than the bull I picked out the day before. The elk began moving to cover, but we wanted to make sure before shooting and the elk moved into heavy cover before we got off the shot. We waited patiently on the ridge for the elk to get on their feet and begin feeding back up above timberline.

Several hours later, they came out to feed late in the afternoon and gave us plenty of time to evaluate the animals, put the stalk on ... and the rest is history. I harvested a beautiful, mature 8x7 tule elk, a “Trophy of a Lifetime!” The thing about the elk on the ranch is the quality! We saw several bulls on the ranch that are going to put a big smile on a future hunter’s face! I can’t say enough positive things about the hunt except, “WOW!!” The hunt was incredible from beginning to end! My thanks to both Don Martin and Bob Swanson for that incredible experience! The greatest thing about hunting is getting to be outdoors enjoying what the Good Lord created and making new friends along the way. Harvesting an animal is the bonus! This tule elk hunt IS OUTSTANDING IN EVERY WAY!

Good Hunting!

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2015 BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER LIVE AUCTION

# CA WSF 13TH ANNUAL BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER

**APRIL 25, 2015**

## MARRIOTT RANCHO CORDOVA

*by Ken Crother, Co-Chair of the 2015 Event*

The Board of the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation would like to welcome you to our Annual Banquet and Fundraiser April 25, 2015. Once again, our function is taking place at the Marriott in Rancho Cordova just southeast of Sacramento, California. Once a year our organization gathers to celebrate and raise funds through dinner, raffles, auctions, generous donations and this year will finish off with a casino to close the night. This event is our once-a-year fundraiser to raise funds for the sole purpose of conservation of our sheep populations.

Our event will start off in the afternoon and will feature a guest speaker by the name of Mark Jorgensen. Mark has written a book in conjunction with photographer Jeff Young about our California bighorn sheep. Mark has spent years in the field with these wonderful animals in the desert and I think you will find the talk as well as the book very interesting and insightful. Please come and enjoy listening to Mark and his stories to start off our event.

Early evening we will open our doors to a wonderful raffle and silent auction full of many items for everyone in attendance. This year we intend to have firearms, optics, electronics, various art items, wines, books and too many great items to list here. But know we will have quality products as always that is sure to interest the whole crowd.

As the evening progresses, we will all enjoy a wonderful dinner as always and move on into our live auction. This year's list of auction items has something for everyone as we have put together a list of hunts and trips that should find a spot for each of you in attendance. Two hunts in particular that you will read about in other parts of our newsletter are the special drawing for 2016 exclusive Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve 10-day guided hunt for Alaska Dall's sheep guided by Board member Don Martin and donated by Ultima Thule Outfitters. Next in our auction our same Don Martin along with Bob Swanson will be guiding a California tule elk hunt on the Jim Bardin Ranch in Monterey County. A desert sheep hunt is also being offered, donated by Nayo Balderama of Amigos Guide Service. Our live auction continues with offerings of various species hunts as well as trips that should interest

everyone: Kirgiz ibex, Spanish chamois, Argentinian red stag, Idaho northern whitetail, Tejon Ranch pig hunt, Northern California blacktail, waterfowl and fishing trip, photo safari, Namibian hunt, Wyoming antelope, condos in both Maui and Mexico, as well as numerous taxidermy donations and other hunts to come.

As you can see, it will be quite a lineup and we would love to have you, your hunting partners, your family or anyone you can think of in attendance to enjoy the night with us. Prospective bidders who are unable to personally attend the dinner on Saturday evening, April 25, 2015 are welcome to arrange to bid by telephone. Information on how to line up bidding by telephone can be found in the registration information elsewhere in this newsletter or by reviewing the California Wild Sheep website ([www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org)).

Following the live auction we'll continue the fun as we host the "Put One Back" Casino! This is going to be a great night of fun and camaraderie, all with the end result of helping keep sheep on the mountains in California.

Your efforts and support, makes it possible to have raised more than ONE MILLION DOLLARS for wild sheep in California over the past ten years.

Direct funding to California Department of Fish and Wildlife over the years has totaled over \$700,000. Additional funding for disease research and habitat enhancements have totaled over \$100,000. CA WSF also continues efforts to bring together agencies and interested parties with the twice annual Sheep Summits. Additional support for the California Sheep Hunter's Clinic, annual WSF Chapter and Affiliates meeting, and participation on The Bighorn Sheep Management Plan have all been continued for the coming year.

It takes vigilance and focus from all of us to put and keep sheep on the mountains of California.

Please set the date aside Saturday April 25, Marriott Rancho Cordova, CA WSF Annual Banquet and Fundraiser, and come join us and bring a friend for a great night celebrating our wild sheep and raising money to keep them on the mountain. Visit our website at [www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org) to register and buy your raffle tickets. We look forward to a great evening with you.

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## SLAM HOLDERS FROM CALIFORNIA

### GRAND SLAM®

Ralph Adams, Cottonwood  
Tony Aivazian, Woodland Hills  
Dennis Anderson, Anaheim Hills  
Stan Atwood, Monte Sereno  
Armen Avedissian,  
    La Canada Flintridge  
Steve Bacon, Rancho Cordova  
Al Baldwin, Newport Beach  
Howard Barnett, Modesto  
Kenneth Barr, Kelseyville  
Craig Boddington, Paso Robles  
Peter Bollinger, Sacramento  
Gary Bordessa, Valley Ford  
Mike Borel, Alamo  
John Brelsford, Fresno  
Gary Brown, Citrus Heights  
Jason Bruce, Wallace  
Mark Buchanan, San Diego  
Ken Buffalo, Sonora  
Leonard Butler, Jr., Camarillo  
Don Callahan, Alamo  
Jim Caraccioli, Salinas  
George Carnahan, Ripon  
John Cavin, Danville  
Hugh Chatham, Jr., San Rafael  
Kern Chew, Sacramento  
Jim Clark, Walnut Creek  
William Cloyd, Santa Clarita  
Jim Coffrini, El Dorado Hills  
David Colclough, Jr., Novato  
David Combs, Long Beach  
Nicholas Coussoulis, San Bernardino  
Frank Cox, Pleasanton  
Audie Crabtree, Citrus Heights  
Verne Crowell, Turlock  
Danny Danell, Hanford  
George Davis, Cloverdale  
Larry Day, Alamo  
John Drummond, Lodi  
Jim Egger, Ross  
Norman Etchison, Bakersfield  
David Fitzpatrick, Palo Cedro  
Aaron Florian, Pleasanton  
Gregory Fowler, Santa Barbara  
Ronald Gabriel, Los Angeles  
Rick Garzoli, Novato  
John Gebbia, Calabasas  
Don Giottonin, Jr., Stockton  
Ben Gordon, Princeton  
Roger Gregg, Turlock  
Tom Griffiths, Visalia  
Julian Gutierrez, Hollister  
David Hanna, Irvine  
Wesley Hansen, Hanford  
Douglas Hart, La Canada  
Chuck Hawkins, Hollister

Michael Heathman, Rancho Mirage  
Robert Highfill, Stockton  
Craig Holworthy, Lindsay  
Carl Jacobson, Novato  
Arnold Jardstrom, Fort Bragg  
James Johnson, Claremont  
Walter Kirby, Sacramento  
Butch Kufiak, Hermosa Beach  
Duane Lee, Nevada City  
Peggy Barnett Lee, Modesto  
Jimmy Low, Fairfield  
Gerald Malovos, Santa Barbara  
Victor Mancuso, Jr., Los Gatos  
Robert Manger, Santa Barbara  
Christoph Marx, Chico  
Jim McIsaac, Novato  
Mark Megazzi, Ferndale  
Carl Miller, Jr, Los Angeles  
Lou Misterly, Jr., Anaheim Hills  
Chip Mooneyham, Hughson  
R. P. Musselman, Redding  
Daymon Orr, Brentwood  
Mike Passaglia, Yuba City  
Sam Pattillo, Santa Barbara  
William Paulin, Lompoc  
Don Perrien, Hollister  
Ted Peters, Montague  
W. R. Pritchard, Davis  
Van Probst, Taylorsville  
Debi Ramsey-Casey, Mendocino  
Lonnie Ritchey, Moreno Valley  
Michael Rowe, San Jose  
Ernie Sanders, Middletown  
Gail Sanders, Ukiah  
Jim Sanderson, Davis  
C. D. Sharp, Santa Rosa  
William Sinclair, Sacramento  
Dennis Sites, Salinas  
Kevin Small, Bakersfield  
Renee Snider, Elk Grove  
Vin Somavia, Sonora  
Dean Sonnenberg, Camarillo  
Robert Stallone, Berkeley  
Frank Stathos, Sacramento  
F. M. Sullivan, Weed  
Randy Thomas, Woodbridge  
James Tonkin, Jr., Morgan Hill  
Mike Torres, Redding  
Don Turner, Santa Rosa  
Graham Weiss, San Diego  
Vint Varner, Bakersfield  
Stephen Walker, Palm Desert  
Kirk Warner, Clovis  
Stanley Weinrich, El Dorado Hills  
George Wilson, Klamath  
Jerry Wilson, Northridge  
Steve Yeager, Bishop  
Ronald Wade, Escondido

### OVIS WORLD SLAM®

Dennis Anderson, Anaheim Hills  
Armen Avedissian,  
    La Canada Flintridge  
Kenneth Barr, Kelseyville  
Craig Boddington, Paso Robles  
Mike Borel, Alamo  
Jason Bruce, Wallace  
William Cloyd, Santa Clarita  
David Combs, Long Beach  
Roger Gregg, Turlock  
Arnold Jardstrom, Fort Bragg  
Butch Kufiak, Hermosa Beach  
Peggy Barnett Lee, Modesto  
Mark Megazzi, Ferndale  
Chip Mooneyham, Hughson  
William Paulin, Lompoc  
Renee Snider, Elk Grove

### CAPRA WORLD SLAM®

Dennis Anderson, Anaheim Hills  
Armen Avedissian,  
    La Canada Flintridge  
Kenneth Barr, Kelseyville  
Craig Boddington, Paso Robles  
Mike Borel, Alamo  
Roger Gregg, Turlock  
Arnold Jardstrom, Fort Bragg  
Bob Keagy, Lafayette  
Butch Kufiak, Hermosa Beach  
Peggy Barnett Lee, Modesto  
Victor Mancuso, Jr., Los Gatos  
Mark Megazzi, Ferndale  
William Paulin, Lompoc  
Renee Snider, Elk Grove

### TRIPLE SLAM®

Dennis Anderson, Anaheim Hills  
Armen Avedissian,  
    La Canada Flintridge  
Kenneth Barr, Kelseyville  
Craig Boddington, Paso Robles  
Mike Borel, Alamo  
Roger Gregg, Turlock  
Arnold Jardstrom, Fort Bragg  
Butch Kufiak, Hermosa Beach  
Peggy Barnett Lee, Modesto  
Mark Megazzi, Ferndale  
William Paulin, Lompoc  
Renee Snider, Elk Grove

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# WILD SHEEP POLICY STILL A WORK IN PROGRESS AS CONGRESS NEARS ADJOURNMENT

*Wild Sheep Foundation International Headquarters*

Cody, Wyoming, USA. December 16, 2014 – After weeks of partisan wrangling and a high-pressure deadline to fund the federal government, the U.S. Congress passed the FY 2015 Omnibus spending package and the high-priority National Defense Authorization Act, to which was added many public lands and environmental riders. For wild sheep advocates, several items in these massive new laws and in the behind-the-scenes negotiations demonstrate that WSF and its allies and partners are making progress toward better stewardship of bighorns, but there is more work to do.

Of most interest to the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) and its members, the FY 2015 Appropriations Bill contains language identical to last year's Appropriations Bill urging federal agencies to collaborate on bighorn sheep research, stating:

“The Forest Service is urged to collaborate with the Bureau of Land Management and the Agricultural Research Service on research involving the risk of disease transmission between domestic and bighorn sheep.”

“WSF and its members, Chapters, and Affiliates once again worked diligently to ensure the final appropriation language would not interfere with a science-based, clear, and inclusive process for reducing the risk of disease transmission from domestic sheep to bighorns,” stated WSF President & CEO Gray N. Thornton. “Our outreach to colleagues in the domestic sheep industry was very helpful, and we are on track for vital follow-up work.”

“The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management need a single definitive policy that includes state wildlife agencies and knowledgeable stakeholders in finding where the greatest risks are, which areas we will focus on, and how to separate domestic sheep to a safe distance from bighorns, with the least necessary disruption of sheep producers' business,” said Thornton. WSF relied on its 2011 policy on domestic sheep and goats and wild sheep in talks with the American Sheep Industry Association, Thornton added, saying these talks were productive and should continue.

WSF Conservation Director Kevin Hurley said, “We believe there is mutual interest in having the U.S. Forest Service efficiently conduct and complete their ongoing Risk-of-Contact assessments, transparently share their findings with involved stakeholders, and swiftly implement pro-active strategies to lessen the likelihood of contact and potential disease transmission, while minimizing the hurdles of displacing domestic sheep grazing permittees.”

Between the funding bill and the defense bill, several related items also passed. Congress has instructed federal agencies to “fully utilize” state fish and wildlife agency data as a “primary source” to inform federal decisions; this will be helpful to Risk-of-Contact assessments and decisions. Congress rejected a proposal from USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to close the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station and other facilities; WSF expects to remain engaged in USSES talks in the coming year. On grazing permits and trailing, several issues dealing with level and backlog of environmental review, and duration and timing of permit renewals remain of concern to WSF. Language in the bills also require challenges to grazing permits to go through all administrative review before a person or party may file a lawsuit. Other language urges the land agencies to make vacant grazing allotments available “to the greatest extent practicable” to holders of permits that become unusable because of drought or wildfire.

“As the new Congress is seated in early January 2015, much work remains to be done on these issues,” Thornton noted. “A focused, concerted effort involving our wild sheep supporters and members will be critical to having our voices heard in Washington; we invite all those interested in wild sheep conservation to join us,” stated Thornton. “During the 2015 WSF Sheep Show in Reno, Nevada, January 8-10th, additional discussions will occur among and between WSF and our Chapters and Affiliates, to help focus and prioritize our efforts during the coming year,” added Hurley.

The Wild Sheep Foundation, formerly the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS,) was founded in 1977 by wild sheep conservationists and enthusiasts. WSF is dedicated to enhancing wild sheep populations, promoting professional wildlife management, educating the public and youth on sustainable use and the conservation benefits of hunting while promoting the interests of the hunter and all stakeholders. With a membership of more than 5,600 worldwide and a Chapter and Affiliate network in North America and Europe, WSF is the premier advocate for wild sheep, other mountain wildlife, their habitat, and their conservation. Since forming in 1977, the Wild Sheep Foundation and its chapters and affiliates have raised and expended more than \$95 million on conservation, education and conservation advocacy programs in North America, Europe and Asia. These and other efforts have resulted in a three-fold increase in bighorn sheep populations in North America from their historic 1950-70s lows of ~25,000 to ~80,000 today.

**AUTHOR MARK JORGENSEN, GUEST SPEAKER**  
**for CA WSF Fundraiser**

MILLBRAE, CA — Author Mark Jorgensen confirmed as speaker for CA Wild Sheep Foundation Dinner on April 25 at Marriott Rancho Cordova.

Around 2007, a couple years before Mark Jorgensen retired as Superintendent of Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, photography buff Jeff Young walked into Jorgensen's office carrying a portfolio of images he'd taken of bighorn sheep deep in nearby Palm Canyon. Mark will make a presentation and be signing books from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m., April 25 at the Marriott Rancho Cordova.

"Somebody told me you might be able to tell me what's going on in some of these photos I have," Jorgensen remembers Young saying. "He laid that portfolio out on the front counter and I started looking at them. I was amazed at the quality and also of the interesting behavior shots that he got of wild bighorn sheep."

Two Bighorn sheep ewes with their two lambs in the fall of 2013 in the Valley of Fire State Park, Nevada, about 80 miles north of Las Vegas. Photo courtesy Jeff Young.

Jorgensen complimented Young and suggested he should do a book.

"He said, 'I'll do one if you write it,'" Jorgensen said. "We kind of laughed. Now here we are seven years later."

Their book, *Desert Bighorn Sheep: Wilderness Icon*, was published by Sunbelt Publications in 2014. The text was written by Jorgensen, 63, who has been studying bighorn sheep since the 1960s. Young, 69, a retired advertising salesman for *Fortune* magazine who lives in San Marcos, provided the photos taken all over the western U.S. and northern Mexico, but with a special emphasis on the Anza-Borrego Desert.

"The quality and the interesting behavior he got – the breeding behavior, the interaction between lambs and their mothers, between rams and other rams and rams and ewes – I was really taken by them." Jorgensen said.

Jorgensen said while doing research for the book he found that recent counts show there are about 31,000 bighorn sheep in the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. He said that's the most recorded in the region in more than a century.

Young said he's been taking photographs of wildlife for decades all over the world as a hobby, but really focused in on bighorn after retiring seven years ago. It requires a lot of hiking, a good camera with big lenses, and a lot of patience.



2015 BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER LIVE AUCTION

**10-DAY GUIDED HUNT FOR ALASKA DALL'S SHEEP**

Whether you love hunting Dall's sheep – or you need a Dall's sheep to complete your "FNAWS" (Four North American Wild Sheep) or Grand Slam® – don't miss your chance to participate in this random drawing for a 2016 exclusive Wrangell-St Elias National Preserve 10-day guided hunt for Alaska Dall's Sheep

Drawing will be held April 25, 2015. You do NOT need to be present to win. GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY! \$20 FOR 1 CHANCE; \$100 FOR 6 CHANCES.

This hunt is donated by Paul and Donna Claus of Ultima Thule Outfitters and will be personally guided by Alaskan Guide/Outfitter Donald C. Martin, a CA WSF Director.

Grand prize in this random drawing is a 1x1, fully guided 10-day hunt for Dall's sheep with Ultima Thule Outfitters (UTO). The hunt will take place on Ultima Thule's exclusive federal concession within Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve, bordered on one side by Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and on the other by world famous Kluane National Reserve in the Yukon. The hunt will take place opening weekend of the 2016 season.

Paul and Donna Claus have built a strong reputation based not only on success, but also on quality. Thanks

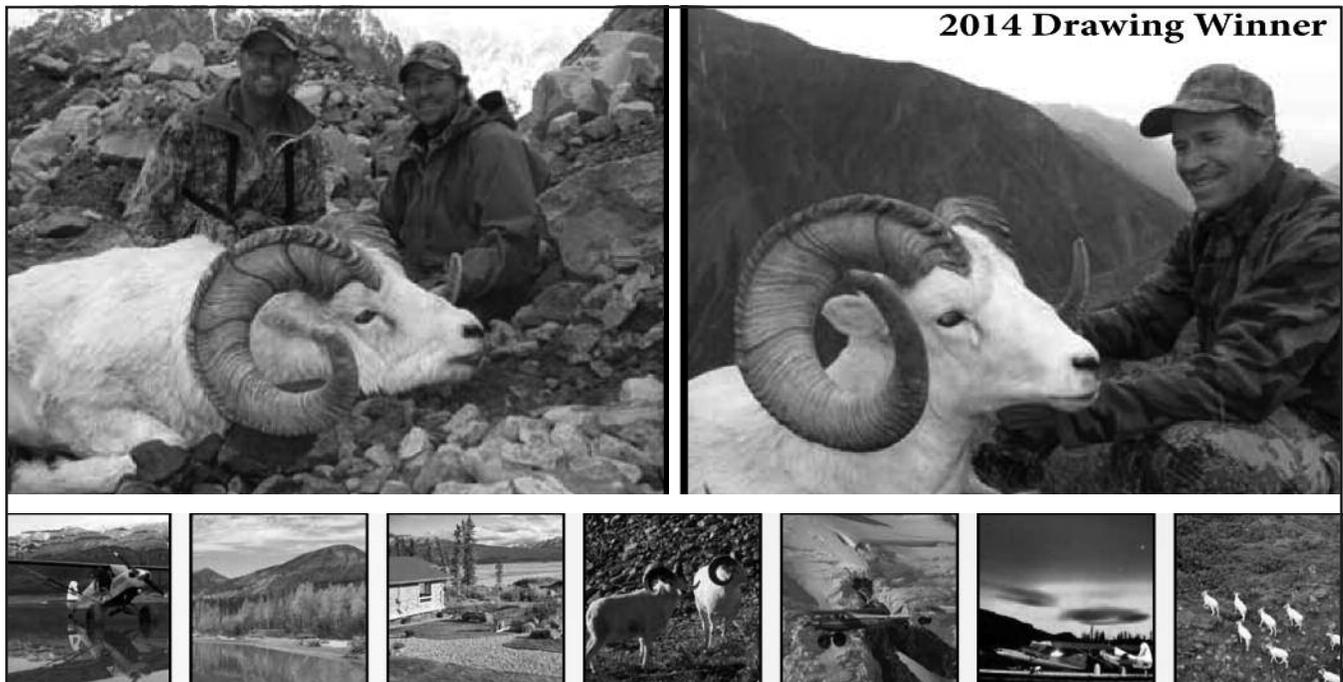
to strict management of the resource, the Dall's sheep of the Wrangells are allowed to reach their true trophy potential.

This hunt is an excellent opportunity to experience one of the most spectacular regions in Alaska while in pursuit of one of North America's most majestic big game animals – the Dall's sheep. Special thanks to Paul and Donna Claus for their continued support of wild sheep.

There is no limit to how many tickets you can buy! Proceeds will go to support CA WSF's outstanding work on behalf of California's Desert Bighorn Sheep as we continue PUTTING AND KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS.

GET YOUR TICKETS TODAY! \$20 FOR 1 CHANCE; \$100 FOR 6 CHANCES.

13th Annual Fundraiser and Banquet  
April 25, 2015  
3pm - 11pm  
Marriott Rancho Cordova  
11211 Point East Drive  
Rancho Cordova, CA 95742



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# DALL'S SHEEP HUNT

by Joel Franzoia

Winner of the 2013 Raffle at the CA WSF Banquet and Fundraiser



SCI Score: 157-5/8

I arrived in Anchorage, Alaska on August 7 excited about my upcoming hunt for a Dall's sheep with Ultima Thule Outfitters. The hunt was to take place in the Wrangell Mountains, in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve, just west of the Yukon Territory border of Canada.

Donald C. Martin was to be my guide. I had met Don at the CA WSF dinner in May 2013 after I won the random drawing for a Dall's sheep hunt. Don picked me up at the hotel early on August 8, along with three other sheep hunters at other hotels. From there we proceeded to Chitina, a three-hour drive east.

We stopped in Glenallen at the Alaska Fish and Game to pick up our sheep tags, and then continued on to our departure point just off the highway in the village of Chitina. Paul Claus, owner of Ultima Thule Outfitters, soon met us in a turbo prop Otter. We loaded our gear onto the plane and then were taken approximately 80 miles into the bush, all the while being given a history lesson of the area and Paul's recent bush-flying exploits in Greenland.

That afternoon, Don and I went over my hunting equipment, packing what was necessary and leaving what was not. I had a nice dinner at the lodge and turned in early in anticipation of flying out to the hunting area and setting up camp the next day, August 9. Opening day was August 10. I was to hunt a section of mountains that had a series of glaciers coursing through them. We set up our two-man tent on a stark, barren ridge with excellent views of the surrounding mountains.

*August 10:* Rose early, around 4:30 a.m., had coffee, and headed out. We hiked, glassed, hiked, and glassed some more. The face of the ridge we were on bore plenty of sheep sign, but no sheep. Looking across the valley I

noticed sheep side-hilling a mountain face above a creek. I told Don and we closely monitored them, keeping track of where they were going. It turned out that one of the sheep in the band appeared to be legal size, but close inspection was necessary to be sure. As we watched, the largest ram climbed so high as to be unapproachable. We were also at least one mile away, if not more, so we watched and waited. Later that day, the same band of sheep moved lower on the mountain, some disappearing behind crags. The biggest ram stayed up in his lofty perch. We scouted the surrounding area, glassing across the glacier, spotting several other small bands of sheep, as well as a few mountain goats. Some of the sheep were so distant that the horns appeared as shadows on their heads. Eventually our attention returned to the initial band of sheep and we then determined him to be a full curl ram.

It was getting late in the day, and the younger rams tried to cross the creek to get to the other mountain. Due to the warmer weather, the stream flow had increased as the day went on, and they were unable to cross. After trying for an hour at different spots, they gave up and climbed back up the bank and bedded down. Don and I figured that they'd be there till the next morning, so we went back to camp, had a freeze dried dinner, and sacked out.

*August 11:* We woke again about 4:30 a.m., thanks to Don's wristwatch alarm. We had coffee, then climbed to a vantage point to check the location of the sheep bedded down near the creek bank. The sheep were on the move, finally crossing the creek under the leadership of the most experienced in the group, the full curl ram. We watched them scurry across, wasting no time to get to the safety of the higher slopes.

We decided to thoroughly investigate the area where we stood to determine that no sheep had slipped past us, before we went after these sheep. We followed the ridge line, carefully peering over the edge from time to time to see if we could spot any rams. Following the ridge down toward the glacial moraine, we spotted three rams in between the spires of the cliff face. Trying to get a better look, we spooked one of the sheep. To our relief, it was not a legal ram. We were able to glass the other two rams, and determined neither were shooters. So we found a perch on the ridge and continued to glass, when the two rams we had last seen suddenly appeared in front of us at no more than 30 yards. They milled about, feeding, oblivious to our presence. They then climbed a rocky outcrop and bedded down. It was an exceptional moment. Some photos were taken, and then we slowly rose, so as not to alarm them. They looked at us as if they had no idea what we were, and then gradually moved away, disappearing over the cliff's edge.

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We decided to break camp, climb down the mountain, cross the creek, and situate ourselves into the drainage where the band containing the big ram had moved. It took the better part of a day to do this. Once across the creek, paralleling the mountain, we spotted a lone sheep atop the ridge. Careful glassing revealed that this was the same ram that we were after. The sheep had side-hilled across the face of the mountain from the upper reaches, essentially coming to us. What a break! We set up camp in the creek bed and planned for an early climb in the morning.

*August 12:* We woke with the goal of getting close to the rams before they moved to higher ground. We started climbing, and within two hours Don said, "Get down. Sheep!" They were not exactly where we thought they would be, so it was a surprise. We climbed down, out of view, took off our packs, and then belly crawled back up. When we saw them again, two or three of them must have spotted us, because they were looking intently in our direction. We slowly backed down and went around a knoll and continued up from another angle until we could see them again. This time we were not detected, but we could not see the ram we were after. There were sheep to our right that were feeding and passing from view, and then others would appear. This band apparently had met up with another band the day before and now there were 10 rams in the group. One ram, a year or two shy of being legal, was the largest ram we could see.

Lying in the wet grass for what seemed a long time, the Dall's sheep ram with the full curl finally appeared. It still had its lamb tips with a pronounced flare. The two largest rams started butting heads. They would rear up on their hind legs and go at it, then switch positions and do it again. This activity kept unwanted attention away from us. I was 110 yards away, lying prone, and I settled my scope's reticle behind his left shoulder as he quartered away. Don told me, "Take your time and shoot when you're ready." I told him I was going to squeeze off, and did, hitting the ram hard with my 300 win mag. He stood there, reeling for a few seconds before falling and tumbling a short distance. I was just elated, thrilled! Don was high-fiving me and yelling happily. At that moment, being calm was not an option. Retrieving our packs, we made our way to the trophy, and many pictures were taken before it was time to care for the animal. Leaving with heavy packs, it was a welcome load and a fine way to end the hunt. We only had to climb off the mountain.

I was very grateful to have had the opportunity and to be guided by a very knowledgeable, professional, and fine person in Donald C. Martin. I would like to thank Ultima Thule Outfitters for presenting this opportunity to hunt a majestic animal in such awesome surroundings, and for having a first class operation. I would also like to thank CA WSF and Donald C. Martin for their collaboration in offering a hunt of this magnitude to enthusiastic supporters of hunting and conservation.

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## THE SHEEP SHOW DOES IT AGAIN!

*by Kyle M. Meintzer, WSF Director and CA WSF Founder*

Once again, the annual convention of the Wild Sheep Foundation set a new record for the number of dollars raised for conservation, topping even the amazing result WSF achieved at the 2014 convention.

By almost every metric, the convention was a smashing success. The number of exhibitors was at an all-time high, records for fundraising tags were being smashed on a regular basis and the overall enthusiasm and spirit of the show was infectious.

One particular highlight was the Life Member Breakfast, where Tom Foss, the featured speaker, had the crowd sitting on his every word, not knowing if he was going to move them with his wonderful stories of friends and family, or make them fall off their chairs laughing at his wonderful self-deprecating sense of humor.

As so often happens at The Sheep Show, the Saturday night banquet once again proved to all attendees that the Wild Sheep Foundation community is a family and

a family that takes care of its own. The Dalziel Award for the Outstanding Guide of the year was given posthumously to Tanner Sinclair who died tragically last summer, leaving a pregnant wife and a two-year old child behind. Yukon outfitter Dean Sandulak of Trophy Stone Outfitting had donated a thirty day stone sheep hunt to the auction with 100% of the proceeds going to Tanner's family. The hunt sold for \$52,500! The audience rose to its feet in applause and before they sat back down another outfitter donated another sheep hunt with the proceeds to also go to Tanner's family. It sold for \$50,000! Then, totally unsolicited, people started coming forward and handing checks to the family.

Only at The Sheep Show have I seen things like this happen. Only at The Sheep Show!

Mark your calendars for the 2016 Sheep Show, to again be held in Reno, NV, January 21-23. Don't miss it!

# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



**Brian Peters**  
Rocky Mountain Bighorn - Colorado  
2014



**Brian Valentine**  
Marco Polo Argali - Tajikistan  
2014  
Guided by Caprinae, 64" Horn Length



**Dennis Murray**  
Desert Bighorn - Nevada, Unit 268  
2014  
Guided by G&J Outdoors



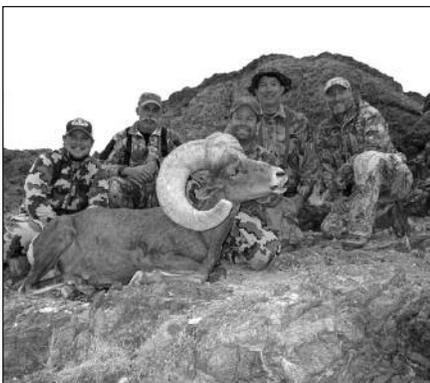
**John Hill**  
Desert Bighorn - Nevada, Unit 268  
2014  
Guided by G&J Outdoors, 166 4/8



**Yvonne Mori**  
Desert Bighorn - Nevada, Unit 268  
2014  
- Guided by G&J Outdoors, 167 2/8



**Jason Schillinger**  
Desert Bighorn - California  
2014  
Self-Guided 182 5/8



**Parks Shackelford**  
Desert Bighorn - Nevada, Unit 268  
2014  
Guided by G&J Outdoors, 184 5/8



**Kyle Meintzer**  
Mountain Goat - British Columbia  
2014



**California Bighorn**  
Photo from Vista Boulevard  
Sparks, Nevada  
January 2015

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# INFORMATIVE AND USEFUL NEWS CLIPS FROM CDFW

*Thanks to Clark Blanchard, CDFW*

## **Condors or Lead Ammunition? We Can't Have Both:**

The recent death of Ventana the condor in Los Angeles zoo illustrates a simple truth, writes Dawn Starin: wild condors cannot survive so long as the dead animals they eat are riddled with lead from spent ammunition. With lead poisoning to blame for 60% of condor deaths, it's time to ban lead ammunition across their entire range - and beyond.

*The Ecologist, 1-21-15*

## **State, Monterey County Face Wild Pig Quandary:**

A morning breeze carries the sounds of gentle grunts and subdued squeals across a shallow valley bathed in rosy light. Behind scrubby oaks, a hunting guide and two clients inhale the earthy, maple musk wafting from more than two dozen wild pigs tearing the hillside apart in search of food after a long night of foraging. One hunter aims his rifle, exhales and squeezes the trigger before – POP – the panicked pack scatters. The hunters can only watch.

*Monterey County Herald, 1-15-15*

## **Wyoming Grazing Dispute Threatens Bighorn Sheep:**

Rancher's domestic sheep may pass fatal disease to major bighorn herd – Well before Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy started a new range war for refusing to pay his federal grazing fees, Frank Robbins was protesting his revoked cattle grazing permits in Wyoming. He wanted to draw attention to what he saw as unfair treatment from the BLM after he denied the agency's request for an easement across the ranch he bought in 1994, he told Livestock Weekly. So he spent the frigid February of 2000 riding his mule Buford around the outside of the Bureau of Land Management office in Worland, Wyoming.

*High Country News, 1-9-14*

## **New to Hunting, or Do You Know Someone Who Is?:**

There are several great apprentice pheasant hunts coming up in San Luis Obispo County. The junior hunt will be the weekend of Feb. 7-8, and the women's apprentice hunt will be Feb. 21. The deadlines to sign up are fast approaching. To find out more, click on the link below. From the drop-down menus, choose "Apprentice Hunts," "Pheasant" and "All Available." CDFW Special Hunts – View Available Hunts

*CDFW Facebook Post, 1-12-15*

## **CDFW Completes Drought Related Restoration Project at Lindsey Slough, Solano County:**

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) recently completed an important watershed project for the benefit of fish and wildlife impacted by the state's historic drought. The Lindsey Slough Restoration Project in Solano County was completed at Calhoun Cut Ecological Reserve in November.

*CDFW News Release, 12-19-14*

## **Lead Ammunition Ban Expected to be Fully Implemented by 2019:**

A state-approved lead ammunition ban is expected to initially be phased-in by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife starting in July 2015, and be completely implemented by 2019, but local outdoor enthusiasts aren't completely happy with the decision to do so, said a local business owner.

*Ukiah Daily Journal, 12-3-14*

## **Funds Environmental Improvement and Acquisition Projects:**

At its November 20 quarterly meeting, the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved approximately \$26 million in grants to help restore and protect fish and wildlife habitat throughout California. Some of the 16 funded projects will provide benefits to fish and wildlife – including some endangered species – while others will provide the public with access to important natural resources. Several projects will also demonstrate the importance of protecting working landscapes that integrate economic, social and environmental stewardship practices beneficial to the environment, land owners and the local community. The funds for all these projects come from bond initiatives approved by voters to help preserve and protect California's natural resources.

*CDFW News Release, 11-20-14*

## **A New Way to Protect America's Birthright:**

Conservation in the West — particularly efforts to protect key parcels of public lands — is trapped in the partisan gridlock that grips Washington. But the package of lands bills that passed Congress in mid-December may offer a new and better way forward when it comes to protecting America's birthright.

*Denver Post, 1-9-15*

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## THE DESERT AT NIGHT

by Carlos Gallinger, [www.thewayofthings.org](http://www.thewayofthings.org)

When walking the desert in the summertime heat, one finds there is a stillness on the land. The stark blue sky without any clouds is motionless, and all the animals are deep in their burrows or hiding in what little shade they can find. In contrast to this, the night offers cooler temperatures and the moon and the stars give motion and beauty to the night sky, and the desert comes to life in the darkness of the night. It is here in the darkness that the drama of predator and prey is played out.



This series of pictures was taken in July using infrared technology, so these animals are unaware of the camera. There is no flash. To the right of the ram you can see the two glowing eyes of a bobcat.



In this scene the ram, which is primarily a daylight creature, is not only willing to come to the spring to drink his fill of water at night, but he is also willing to run off the bobcat that has been following him for days. This would be a very different story with a mountain lion.



Having run the bobcat off, the ram can drink his water in peace. And here we see this big ram has the confidence to turn his back on that pesky bobcat.



Now having run the bobcat off and gotten a good drink of water, the ram walks back out into the vast darkness of the desert.

This camera has recorded this ram and bobcat going through a similar routine three or four times at this spring. I don't think that this bobcat was seriously hunting this ram. I think this bobcat was using this ram's presence as a distraction. The other animals would be aware of the ram and not the stealthy bobcat. For some animals this could be a deadly mistake. Only a few large rams were willing to use this spring at night. The rest of the desert bighorn sheep would come during the daylight hours.

These photos are part of the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep photo survey, which now has approximately a half million photos in its archives.

## UNIQUE CALIFORNIA HUNTS HIGHLIGHT AUCTION

by Paul Brisso

Tule elk and blacktail deer are two of California's prime big game animals. Participants at the California Wild Sheep annual dinner will have an opportunity to bid on hunts for each.

Tule elk are unique to California. The range of blacktail deer extends further in the Pacific Northwest, but Northwestern California is the heart of blacktail country. Both of these California hunts that will be offered at the auction are high quality hunts that will appeal to very diverse hunters.

The tule elk hunt will no doubt spark the interest of serious trophy hunters. The hunt's auction last year brought some of the night's most spirited and highest bidding. Tule elk tags are difficult at best to draw in the California general hunting tag drawings, and tags for bull tule elk are virtually impossible to draw. Private landowner tags are few and far between, very expensive when available, yet competition for such tags is still very fierce. The tag and guided hunt available through the CA WSF annual fundraiser is one of the very best.

The blacktail deer hunt in the auction lineup will attract a very different type of hunter and will provide a great opportunity for the winning bidder. The blacktail deer tag and guided hunt is also a private land hunt, but is for a "management buck" for a youth or first time hunter. Don't let the "management buck" designation mislead you. This "management buck" is a mature deer the quality of which is rarely seen by public land hunters and would be considered a "trophy buck" by a great majority of blacktail enthusiasts.

A private 8,000 acre ranch in Monterey County is the setting for the six-day, 1x1 guided elk hunt, November 29 through December 5, 2015. Veteran guide Don Martin, who also serves on the Board of Directors of CA WSF, will personally guide the hunt. The ranch, owned by Bob Swanson, receives only two tags for tule elk through the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's "Private Land Management Program and past hunts have been 100 percent successful for high quality trophy bulls. Swanson has once again very generously donated one of his two tags to California Wild Sheep. (An article about the hunt

by last year's auction winner appears elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Accommodations and meals are included at the historic deer camp in the heart of the ranch. The accommodations are rustic but comfortable and meals are cooked over an open fire for a truly memorable hunting experience both in the field and in the camp.

Although the winning bidder is welcome to drive to the ranch and the ranch is within comfortable driving distance from most of California, hunters have the option of ground transportation from and to the Monterey, California airport as part of the hunt package.

Prospective bidders who are unable to personally attend the CA WSF annual dinner on Saturday evening, April 25, 2015 at the Marriott in Rancho Cordova (near Sacramento) are welcome to arrange to bid by telephone. Information on how to line up bidding by telephone can be found in the registration information elsewhere in this newsletter or by reviewing the CA WSF website ([www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org)).

The blacktail deer hunt is also a Private Land Management program hunt on the Stewart Ranch in the southwest corner of Trinity County. The management buck hunt for a youth (under 18 years of age) or first time hunter is donated and conducted by Jim and TinaMarie Schaafsma of Arrow Five Outfitters. A non-hunting companion is included as part of the package with no additional charge.

Arrow Five defines "management buck" as a buck that has at least one antler with two points (a fork). However, this area of Northwest California is noted for the "Pacific Fork," a blacktail population where mature bucks often develop only two points on one or both sides. Arrow Five has one of the oldest and best blacktail management programs but the fork gene persists in the population. An Arrow Five "management buck" is one that most blacktail hunters would classify as a true "trophy."

A long-term management program including a reduction of the doe population, management buck harvests, predator control and food plots has resulted in a strong deer population with a very high buck to doe ratio.

Outfitter Jim Schaafsma was born and raised in Northwestern California and has been hunting blacktails



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all his life. Arrow Five's trophy buck hunts are booked many years in advance by a combination of long-time clients and serious trophy hunters looking for a high quality blacktail to add to their collection. In hunting circles such as Safari Club International, Arrow Five is considered to be "THE" outfit for a trophy blacktail.

Hunters will no doubt see some magnificent trophy bucks while searching for a suitable management buck in some of the most beautiful prime deer habitat in California. The novice hunter will have the opportunity to absorb a wealth of general hunting knowledge and information specific to blacktails earned by decades of

experience while spending time in the field with Jim and TinaMarie, who are truly some of the nicest people in the hunting industry.

Arrow Five's camp is approximately 5-6 hours drive from the Sacramento area or the San Francisco Bay Area. The accommodations are on the ranch and are very comfortable. Meals are included in the hunt package. Photographs and more information concerning Arrow Five can be accessed at the outfitter's website ([www.arrowfiveoutfitters.com](http://www.arrowfiveoutfitters.com)). The winning bidder should contact Arrow Five as soon as practical after the auction purchase to arrange mutually convenient hunt dates.

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## THOUGHTS ON THE 50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE WILDERNESS ACT

*by Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D., CDFW Retired*

In an editorial that appeared in a recent issue of *The Wildlife Professional*, James Kurth praised the Wilderness Act, and concluded that the 50-year-old Act has been nothing but positive for wildlife conservation. Further, it was his opinion that the Act, "... may be even more important today [than it was at the time]." I want to emphasize that wild lands, but not necessarily legislated wilderness, are important to conserving wildlife and, in particular, large mammals that often range over vast areas. Still, despite good intentions and as emphasized by numerous scientists, wilderness classification—or classification as otherwise protected areas—does not alone guarantee viable populations of wildlife in the long term. In the absence of resources necessary to carry out their annual life cycles, large mammals cannot depend exclusively on resources solely within the majority of wilderness areas, a point that has been emphasized repeatedly in the past. Further, generalizing about the benefits of wilderness to wildlife is hazardous, because benefits to one species can simultaneously be detrimental to another.

The editorial also noted that wilderness classification currently, "...protects nearly 110 million acres of the wildest corners of our land, from the Everglades to the Arctic." While that may be true, it is evident that many, if not the majority of, wilderness areas have been delineated by special interest groups and then approved by Congress for what I perceive to be primarily political expediency. Further, the home ranges of many different species include lands that are under widely different management goals, ranging from full protection to intensive agriculture and minerals extraction and, as a result, to assume that wilderness designation is the solution to persistence of many species is not only wishful, but misleading.

Defenders of wilderness have emphasized "naturalness" or "solitude" as primary attributes of such areas. Conservation is listed, nevertheless, as one of the six objectives for which wilderness is established. Proponents of

wilderness also contend that "wilderness is good for wildlife" because it prevents habitat destruction, but conservation of wilderness and conservation of wildlife are not necessarily compatible objectives. Indeed, wilderness advocates have repeatedly challenged the appropriateness of habitat enhancements, surveys, research, translocations to restore native species, and other wildlife conservation activities within wilderness areas, often to the detriment of conservation.

The subtitle of the editorial was "Wilderness helps sustain wildlife." I concur that is correct, in the sense that some wildlife habitat is seemingly protected by that classification. Nevertheless, protecting some areas at the expense of others is unlikely to be a productive strategy, particularly when no ecological consideration is included in the delineation of wilderness areas, conservation objectives fall far short of their potential. My position, which I have advocated for decades, is not for less wilderness but, rather, is for recognition that in many cases management intervention in legislated wilderness is in the best interest of wildlife conservation, a point that I hope Congress eventually will come to realize. As one of the foundations of wilderness, conservation warrants more than lip-service, and intervention is sometimes necessary to restore or maintain ecosystem function, even in legislated wilderness.

*Dr. Vern Bleich is an independent wildlife biologist who retired from the California Department of Fish and Game after 34 years with that organization, during which he worked primarily throughout the desert regions of southeastern California.*

*Dr. Bleich currently serves as an advisor to the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep and the Texas Bighorn Society, and is co-chair of the Conservation Grants Subcommittee of the Boone and Crockett Club, chair of the Grants Committee for the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation, and is chair of the Professional Resource Advisory Board of the Wild Sheep Foundation.*

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# EXCERPTS FROM GAINES & ASSOCIATES SPECIAL REPORT

## California Fish and Game Commission Wildlife Resources Committee Update

February 12, 2015

*by Bill Gaines*

Agenda Item 23 – Wildlife Resources Committee

(A) Meeting Summary

I. Receive Recommendations

Full detail of the discussion and action taken at the January 14th meeting of the WRC is provided above.

Agenda Item 27 – Discussion of Proposed Regulations Regarding Authorized Methods of Take for Wildlife Using Lead Ammunition – Phasing Out the Use of Lead Ammunition

This agenda item will allow for more discussion and public testimony on the Department's proposed implementation of the non-lead ammunition requirement for hunting in California mandated by the passage of AB 711 in 2013. The legislation requires that lead ammunition be fully prohibited for all hunting throughout California by July 1, 2019, but passes the details of how the mandate will be scheduled for implementation off to the Commission. Further, the bill requires that the Commission adopt the detailed implementation schedule by July 1, 2015. Commission final adoption of the implementation schedule of the non-lead requirement is scheduled for their April meeting.

To view DFW's current proposed non-lead ammunition phase-in schedule, click [DFW Proposed Non-Lead Ammo Implementation](#)

To view a copy of DFW's Notice of Proposed Changes in Regulations pertaining to the new non-lead ammunition requirement, click [DFW Notice of Proposed Changes - Non-Lead Ammo](#)

To view a copy of DFW's proposed regulatory language, click [Proposed Regulatory Language - Non-Lead Ammo](#)

To view a copy of DFW's Notice of Preparation, Environmental Checklist and Project Description pertaining to the new non-lead ammunition requirement, click [DFW NOP, Checklist and Project Description - Non-Lead Ammo](#)

To view the DFW Draft Environmental Document on the Non-Lead Ammunition requirement, click [DFW Draft Document - Non-Lead Ammo](#)

For a list of ammunition currently certified as non-lead in California, click [CA - Certified Non-Lead Ammo List](#)  
Agenda Item 28 – Discussion of Proposed Changes to Mammal Hunting Regulations

Note that this agenda item will deal only with the relatively uncontroversial traditional annual determination of tag allocations for various big game species in the various zones. With DFW mammal survey data still being gathered, and proposed 2015 mammal hunting tag allocations still not yet available, this agenda item will serve only as an opportunity for DFW to update the Commission and the public on their efforts, and to provide for additional Commission discussion and public testimony. The Commission's final adoption of 2015 mammal hunting regulations and tag allocations is slated for the April Commission meeting.

Expect the Department to note their serious concerns regarding the health of desert big horn sheep due to the recent large disease die-off, as well as the impact of fires and drought on all big game species. DFW will likely also note that long awaited updated deer and elk management plans will be available for public review in early 2015. The DFW is also sure to again highlight the most controversial piece of their pending 2015 mammal regulatory proposal – their recommendation that unsuccessful deer hunters be required to report back to DFW. Currently, DFW does not require unsuccessful deer hunters to report. At this time, DFW is considering proposing that unsuccessful deer hunters who do not report be charged an additional \$20 fee when they apply for a deer tag the following year.

Gaines & Associates has testified several times regarding our concern that, in the past, proposed tag allocations were finalized so late that there was no opportunity for public review prior to the Commission's adoption hearing – leaving no time for concerned stakeholders to have any impact on the final decision. In response to Gaines & Associates concerns, DFW staff has agreed to provide the proposed tag allocations prior to April's adoption hearing to allow time for us to meet with them to discuss any concerns we may have. Gaines & Associates expects final tag numbers to be available for review in late March.

To view a copy of the Department's preliminary 2015 tag allocation ranges, click [DFW Preliminary Proposal - 2015 Big Game Regulations](#)

To view a copy of the draft Economic Impact Assessment on big game hunting, click [Economic Impact Assessment - Big Game Hunting](#)  
To view a copy of the draft Economic Impact Assessment on big game tags, deer reporting and fees, click [Economic Impact Assessment - Big Game Tags, Deer Reporting and Fees](#)

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# ALL THE BEST DESERT BIGHORN FROM SAN GORGONIOS

## Hunter: Sean Thomas

*by Jake Franklin, Kika Outfitters*



A brief phone call with Sean Thomas was all I needed to confirm that he really was an exceptional hunter. Sean has dedicated his life to pursuing game all over the west, but desert bighorn sheep was one animal he only ever dreamed of. Unbelievably, Sean drew a tag for the highly coveted San Gorgonio unit; a unit known for producing some of the biggest rams in the state.

After a long season of guiding elk hunters, Sean headed out to pursue an animal for himself. He understood the significance of his tag and he decided to dedicate the entire season with his weapon of choice, a bow. He planned to live with the sheep and give it his all for a full two months.

He soon learned that sheep hunting didn't just hold the standard challenges of any other game he pursued, but also held a psychological battle. Sean had pushed his mind and body to the brink for weeks, and during the second week he got within archery range of a good ram.

Sean's body and mind were fatigued, added stress and excitement paid their toll and Sean's arrow flew high. Clean miss.

I caught wind of Sean and his dedication to his sheep hunt and was instantly intrigued. Someone with such abilities and heart could really do something special in a unit like San Gorgonio. I called Sean and explained to him who I was and how I could help him. We instantly had a bond and we headed for the mountains.

My passion goes beyond hunting. Even without a hunter, I find myself spending multiple days a week watching and following the different ram and ewe groups. After acquiring Sean as a hunter I immediately took him to one of the mature ram groups I had previously located. Sean brought his good friend Nate along, and with them we were a true glassing team ... seeing every sheep in the country and sorting through archery stalkable sheep.

We had been sifting through hundreds of sheep, and then I saw him. He was flaring out both sides with mass that could stop your heart. We understood the challenges that we held, archery stalking a ram of such a caliber, but we knew our team was up for it. Hours of hiking and sweat pouring off our chins, we were on top and he was feeding up. Everything was right as we slipped off our boots for a final silent approach. Sean went ahead of me and held up. The ram fed up and up till he was only 40 yards away. As Sean was working into position, the ram heard something and was off like lightning.

Sean instinctively knew where the ram was headed. He side-hilled over to a large saddle where the ram would pass through. Waiting, breathing heavy, Sean was ready. The ram, moving with caution, crested the saddle only 20 yards from Sean. Their eyes met instantly and the ram knew the gig was up. Down he ran to nearly 75 yards, where he stopped to look at his next move. This time Sean was ready and at full draw. The arrow released and it flew perfect, finding its way through the ram's heart and lungs. Sean had just made the shot of his life on the most majestic animal he has ever pursued. The high-fives and yells could be heard for miles. Nate and I only imagined what thrills Sean felt at accomplishing his "Lifetime Hunt."

Sean's incredible ram green scored at 176 7/8 and has potential to be top five in the world, all time. Just another success story from the beautiful, often misunderstood, State of California.

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# UNEXPECTED AND UNPREPARED: A MOUNTAIN GOAT STORY

## Part 1

by John Ware



One day in late June 2014 I got home from work, grabbed my mail, and settled into read and separate shredding from recycling – never imagining there would be anything worth keeping or reading. I noticed an 8x10 envelope from Montana, thinking *hmm...that is unexpected*. I tore it open and found a letter inside. I had to re-read it repeatedly. It certainly looked like I had drawn a Montana mountain goat tag. I had never drawn premium tag before, so I wasn't sure if that's what I was looking at. Thoughts flashed through my mind, too afraid to be excited or celebratory. I'm not ready. Mountain goat tags are supposed to come after dozens of years applying. I had just started applying a few years ago. I need years to get into shape for this hunt, and now suddenly I have months.

I had to verify the letter, showing it to my hunting partner Beverly and my friend Dave. Does this really say what I think it says.

That night I spent two hours web searching about the Tobacco Root zone in Montana, and asking Beverly about references. A few outfitters located in Montana had donated to our SCI SF Bay chapter – they would be the first for me to call. I started doing squats that very night. I knew success or failure would be determined by my legs.

Within a few days I had sent emails to two outfitters. Even though I had applied to the Tobacco Root zone in part because it was listed as “accessible” by Huntin’ Fool, I couldn’t imagine not having a guide’s assistance to make sure this tag didn’t go to waste.

I decided within a few weeks to hunt with John Cargill and his son Scott, of Iron Wheel Guest Ranch. The Cargill's have donated to our SCI chapter in the past, so I was happy to give them my business. John seemed confident we would see goats everyday, and have an opportunity on a 8-9" goat, where a 9" goat would be very good for the

zone and an 8" goat would be average. We agreed on a week of hunting at “just the right time” where he was confident the goats would be “haired up” for the winter. But if we were lucky, there wouldn’t be much snow. John was very encouraging, and consistently promised that the only requirement for success was a good attitude.

I also requested a list of people who had previously hunted the region from Huntin’ Fool. Over the course of the next few months I tried to call one every week. I was also calling some of the Cargill’s references. Since there was only one out-of-state tag for the zone most years, I ended up talking to people who had hunted as long as 10 years ago in the region for mountain goat, and some elk hunters who had hunted with the Cargill’s in the last few years. The Cargill’s references were great; everyone was sure we’d have a good time. Many of the mountain goat hunters hunted without a guide (several of them were guides in their home states), some taking 10-15 days, but all eventually successful. I heard stories about hiking through waist-high snow, camping solo on ridge lines at 9,000 feet, and spending days with a spotting scope searching for sight of a single goat.

Since I knew I had to get in the best shape possible, I started running stairs in the parking garage at work, repeatedly. By the week before the hunt, I was up to 1,000 stairs with a 40-pound pack, and a lot of huffing and puffing. It was work, but doable. I hoped it would be enough. Of course, this was all at sea level. In order to account for the lungs as best I could, I discovered a product called O2 Unleashed, basically 100% oxygen compressed in a can. I ordered a few, and added them to the growing packing list.

During conversations with John Cargill, the idea of a bear came up. He suggested that just in case we saw one it would be a shame not to have a tag. Of course I agreed. Montana requires an online class to learn how to identify black bears and grizzly bears as apparently they think hunters might see both, and they need to be sure which to shoot. Grizzlies are still endangered in the Lower 48, so penalties for shooting one by accident are stiff.

The class was not onerous and I did learn a few things. Soon a bear tag was on its way.

I decided fairly early to hunt with a Remington Model 700 SPS chambered in 300 win mag that I had won at a fundraiser drawing the previous year. I had a scope already fitted – Nikon BDC 3-9x50mm – which would do nicely for the expected medium to long range shot I expected. A 185-grain bullet would do a decent job of reducing wind-drift, and one thing my research had revealed was that mountain goats were known to be pretty tough critters for their size, so it wasn’t over-gunning.

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The first time I took the rifle to the range I discovered that ejecting the shell was a major effort. After every shot the bolt was stuck and required extreme force (even to the point of using a hammer) to get the shell to eject. Imbert & Smithers was kind enough to expedite shipping the gun off to the manufacturer for repair under warranty. I knew I needed a gun I could rely on, but I also needed the practice at the range with the gun. I was sorry to have it gone for the weeks it took round trip and at the factory.

When the gun arrived back from the factory, I stopped in to pick it up, and Blaine at I&S noticed that the gun had a faulty trigger that was under a manufacturer recall. It was disappointing that this wasn't noticed at the factory while they had it. By now I didn't have time to send it back again, so agreed to a trigger upgrade that could get done in a week – Timney to the rescue.

By the time I picked up the gun again and got to the range, I was extremely disappointed to discover that it still jammed on occasion but not after every round. And the safety wouldn't function properly. Back to Imbert & Smithers for some tweaking to the trigger.

I was running out of time, needed the gun for range time, and felt I had to settle with the occasional jamming for the hunt. That came back to haunt me at several crucial moments. Suffice it to say that firearm will never go with me to the field again.

In the time remaining, I was also trying to get good zero on the gun. I was very happy with the Nikon BDC reticle scope that I had had mounted on the gun. It had great light-gathering and could be used as a spotting scope. But I was having trouble holding a tight group even out of a bench vice. I tried ammo from four manufacturers before finding something that was at least acceptable. I thought back to Buck Buchanan's instruction at my hunter safety class, and remembered I had a paper-plate size area to hit, which gave me a little comfort.

Finally the day to leave town arrived. The truck was loaded to the gills using the "bring everything, so you don't forget something" philosophy of packing, and we were off. We arrived in Montana at the Cargill's place around noon two days later, October 9. We unloaded essentials, got a brief tour, went through the rifle-zeroing ritual, had some lunch, and then we decided to do some scouting that very evening.

Before I knew it, we were headed into the field to scout for mountain goats!

It took a couple of hours to get to the hunting area. The trickiest part was navigating the last three or four miles across numerous private properties to get to the public land we would be hunting. John assured me that the landowners were required to provide passage for any who wanted to access the land beyond. Despite that, I have a hard time imagining someone who wasn't a local being willing to pass the numerous gates and "no hunting – no trespassing" signs that we had to make our way beyond. I was extremely happy to have a local guide.

Once we got to the public land we shifted into hunting mode. The drive was another few hours on the two-track when we arrived at Lower Dry Creek Lake. From there we began to glass, and I began to truly appreciate the magnitude of the mountains that we would be climbing starting tomorrow. We spotted one billy almost immediately and put the spotting scope on him. To me he was little more than a white spot on a sea of brown-gray rocks, but John assured me he was a "good goat."

A little while later Beverly spotted what the guides initially identified as a white rock. However, after watching the "rock" in the spotting scope for ten minutes or more, it turned it's head to the side and it became clear that it was the rear end of a bedded goat. Beverly has eagle eyes and anyone would be lucky to have her along on a hunt as a spotter.

I was amazed and excited. I had several deer hunts, including one just weeks before, that had involved going days without seeing my quarry, but on this most difficult goat hunt we were seeing legitimate targets within a few hours of starting to scout. As darkness approached we agreed to come back the next morning and make a move on one of the goats, hoping that they might be a bit lower.

The plan for the next morning was simple: up at 5:00 a.m., breakfast at 5:30 a.m., out of the lodge by 6:00 a.m., and into the public land drainage we'd be hunting by 7:00 a.m. I was as excited as a kid at Christmas – the next morning couldn't come soon enough.

After a couple of pre-dawn hours driving into the public land area again, and eventually stopping where a tree had blown over blocking the two-track, and deciding to hike the rest of the way in to Upper Dry Creek Lake, soon enough we were on the goats (at least with a spotting scope). We had located what we believed to be the same two billies we'd seen the day before. One of them was down a little from the crest of the mountain, making it a more realistic target. After a few hours of spotting, comparing, discussing size, and seeing if any other goats moved into the bowl, the choice was up to me. John estimated the goat at 8 1/2 inches. Definitely an above average, good trophy for the area, but not a monster. I decided that if I'd shoot him on the last day, I should shoot him on the first day. So we devised a plan of attack.

Scott and I would hike across the valley, through the trees until we got above tree line, locate the goat, and shoot him. Simple.

Heading up the mountain I was full of optimism. We had a goat in our sights and no place to go but up.

One hour and several hits of the 02 Unleashed can later, we were making good progress up the mountain. Scott was encouraging, and I only heard, "Just up to that next rock and we'll be able to see him." about six times. As the trees gradually thinned, I realized as we stopped to discuss our route for the next bit of ascent, that my head was pretty much at the level of his feet and he wasn't that far away. This mountain had gotten steep!

*Look for the rest of the story in the next issue.*

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# PROTECTING DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP MIGRATION CORRIDORS IN MOJAVE DESERT: GUEST COMMENTARY

*by John D. Wehausen, Ph.D. and Clinton W. Epps, Ph.D.*

Humans have been captivated by bighorn sheep in the desert region at least since Native Americans began etching their forms on remote desert canyon walls thousands of years ago. Our joint fascination with this iconic species began decades ago, with research ranging from the alpine of California's Sierra Nevada and White Mountains to the rocky slopes of a multitude of desert ranges in the south-eastern corner of our state. We have devoted our careers to learning about the physical and ecological needs of these magnificent animals to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to see them in the wild.

The freeways across our deserts have fragmented what was once a continuous network of interconnected bighorn sheep populations. Bechtel's proposed Soda Mountain Solar Project along Interstate 15 would likely add another nail in the coffin of these sheep by precluding the re-establishment of a critical migration corridor across Interstate 15 that could reconnect bighorn sheep populations on either side.

Desert bighorn have amazing adaptations for living in the arid, harsh environments of California's desert region. During summer they typically go several days without water and often drink no water outside of the hot season, instead obtaining all the water they need from plants they consume. They can run 30 miles per hour on level ground and hit speeds up to 15 miles per hour running up steep slopes, where they can climb faster than a helicopter. Desert bighorn are an integral part of the California desert and our heritage, and therefore deserve efforts for their conservation.

While we recognize the importance of investing in a renewable energy future that buffers us from the worst impacts of climate change and enhances our nation's energy independence, we strongly believe that this can be done in a manner that does not jeopardize the ecological integrity of our national parks, wilderness areas and wildlife.

The proposed Soda Mountain Solar Project would straddle Interstate 15 and cover areas between the north and south Soda Mountains on the northwestern edge of the Mojave National Preserve, pinching off the best location to re-establish important bighorn sheep movements that have been severed by I-15. The proposed development, which would include solar arrays, infrastructure and roads, would likely prevent bighorn from moving through the project area.

Because major highways, canals and urbanization have fragmented bighorn habitat in Southern California, re-establishing wildlife corridors such as the north-south connection at the Soda Mountains is a key strategy for the long-term conservation of this species in the California desert.

Small populations of bighorn sheep reside in numerous desert mountain ranges that are separated by expanses of relatively flat desert, making these populations vulnerable to loss of genetic diversity and local extinctions. Bighorn sheep movements along key migration corridors between mountain ranges maintains the genetic diversity of otherwise isolated populations, permits natural re-colonization after local extinctions, and is therefore an essential aspect of the biology of this species.

Our research finds that the Soda Mountains connection is a particularly important restorable corridor in the southeastern desert region of California, where a wildlife overpass would re-establish migration affecting numerous bighorn sheep populations on either side of I-15.

Such freeway crossings for wildlife have been successfully constructed elsewhere in the Western U.S. and Canada, including for bighorn sheep in Arizona south of Lake Mead. Movement across the Soda Mountains connection would restore gene flow between bighorn sheep populations in the central Mojave Desert, including the Mojave National Preserve, and populations as far north as Death Valley National Park.

With the final environmental impact report expected to be released in the near future, we urge BLM Director Neil Kornze, California State BLM Director Jim Kenna, and other BLM staff to work with Bechtel and other governmental agencies and nonprofit organizations that have expressed concern about this project to relocate it to an area with less harmful resource impacts. What is needed now is a broad-based effort to analyze and identify lands appropriate for renewable energy projects that will not jeopardize the ecological integrity of public lands, including iconic wildlife like the desert bighorn sheep.

John D. Wehausen, Ph.D., is an applied population ecologist who has studied bighorn sheep populations in California since 1974. Clinton W. Epps, Ph.D., is an associate professor at Oregon State University who specializes in mammal conservation.

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# WSF'S 2014 THINHORN SHEEP SUMMER ACTION PLAN UPDATE

## The Kevin & Janine Rinke Thinhorn Initiative

### January Update

*Prepared by Jeremy Ayotte (and Kevin Hurley)*

"NO CONTACT IN THE NORTH"  
Legislation is part of the solution

#### **Recent Actions/Strategies:**

- Developed pitch for series of presentation in Yukon planned for April 2015. Submitted a program summary and objectives for distribution to YK government through YK point of contacts, to prepare for series of presentations in Whitehorse and Dawson City, Yukon in April 2015.
- Follow up with First Nations leadership in NWT Dehcho region to find advocates for the development of Dehcho First Nations resolution statement.
- Maintain engaged working group from all thinhorn sheep jurisdictions through monthly update (AK, BC, NWT, YT)

#### **Jurisdictional Updates:**

- NWT: Continued discussions with Dehcho First Nations leadership involving members from 2 different bands.
- YK: A series of presentations by Jeremy Ayotte are planned in the Yukon this spring (April-May 2015). Presentations in Dawson City will be given to the Renewable Resource Council during their AGM April 30-May 2. According to Dan Reynolds (RRC Chair), the Council is behind this 100%. Two talks are planned for Whitehorse (one government, one public).
- YK: A potential Yukon Chapter WSF is still in formative stages, but progress is being made.
- AK: Information has been coordinated to support Kevin Kehoe and the recently-chartered Alaska Chapter WSF and others in their effort to develop a Brief to support introduction of a new Bill in Alaska, for the 2016 Legislative session.

#### **Actions to Implement:**

- (NWT): Contact Heather Sayine-Crawford and Brett Elkin to discuss opportunities to address Sahtu Co-Management Board. Emphasize opportunity for this

program to provide support for legislation to protect wild sheep within the Sahtu. Also look for opportunities to catalyze effort across boundaries (Dehcho-Sahtu, Yukon- NWT).

- (NWT): Nic Larter has provided names of 2 First Nations leaders that are very supportive of this initiative to develop a Dehcho position statement or resolution to exclude domestic sheep and goats from thinhorn sheep range across the Dehcho region.
- (YK): Continue to work with Troy Hegel and Dan Reynolds to confirm agenda for April-May presentations.
- (AK): Continue to work with Kevin Kehoe/Wayne Heimer to develop Brief to support introduction of new Bill to 2016 Alaska Legislature.
- (All): Coordinate conference call with Thinhorn Initiative working group to update everyone and emphasize strength of multi-jurisdictional approach.
- (All): Continue to compile information on each jurisdictional context:
  - o public land management (are there concerns with public land grazing of domestic sheep/goats near wild sheep range? can we prohibit the use of sheep/goat/llama as pack animals? are there permitting processes we can use?)
  - o private land regulations and politics (are private farms the key concerns? are there agricultural acts/regulations protecting farm practices?)
  - o wildlife management (what is our lobby strength? what is the role of First Nations?)
  - o regional protocols for confirmed contact (can this be developed within each region? such a protocol demonstrates critical importance of issue)
  - o information management (is there a regional database with accurate thinhorn herd range polygons? are the locations of domestic sheep farms known being tracked?)

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# LIGHTNING STRIKES TWICE IN PACIFICA, CALIFORNIA FOR FATHER & SON

by John McGannon



John McGannon



Taylor McGannon

It was June 18, 2014 and my week-long logging into the California Department of Fish and Game website was on. For hunters in California this is the time of year you see if you've won the hunting lottery. For the past four years I've increased my excitement by also checking on my two sons' applications, which have proven to be very fruitful – two youth antelope tags and a late season Tehama Wilderness Youth Deer tag.

In 2009 I was graced with the frustration of being the first alternate for a coveted California desert bighorn sheep in California. This is the hardest tag to draw in all of North America, and being SO close was almost unbearable. In June 2010 I went through the same ritual, and knowing that sometimes Fish and Game release the results a little ahead of the posted schedule keep me going back to the website repeatedly. It was about 8.30 a.m. when I punched my name into the results and the first line I read was "Hunt Code 505: Desert Sheep San Gorgonio Unit - Successful!" Of course I had to keep reading it over and over as I was completely in disbelief.

The rest of that summer was spent training on our backyard coastal mountain and getting ready for this hunt of a lifetime. In January of 2011 I was able to experience the magical euphoria you can only get while sheep hunting down in the Southern California desert by successfully harvesting a magnificent 10-year-old full curl ram named Pops, with Terry Anderson of San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters (you might have read that article). At this point I thought I had hit the pinnacle of hunting. And everything else that I'd experience would be second fiddle to this.

Flash forward to June of 2014. Both of my boys, Ryan (18) and Taylor (20), were now in the regular draw (no more youth tags). I did my research and utilized my established connections with Terry and the rest of the sheep community to get a read on the state of our desert bighorn population, even though Ryan had 2 points and Taylor 4 with very little chance of getting drawn, and I was ineligible. This was more of a ritual, as I had mentioned. The spring/summer of 2014 would prove to be very costly to our sheep herds, with a

major breakout of pneumonia that had caused the closure of two units and threatened to shut down the sheep hunt all together. Through the dedication of many volunteers with help from CA WSF and direct involvement from Fish and Game they were able to save the hunt, but had concluded that the numbers of tags would be greatly reduced. The previous year there were 23 tags statewide. This year that number was reduced to 13. There were only two units that offered a random draw and one of them was the Marble Clipper unit that kept all four of their tags, the same as the previous year. So this unit would provide at least a chance, albeit like getting hit by lightning twice.

So around the June 18, once again the annual ritual was on! My son Taylor's application was the first one I pulled up. The first line on his results tab read "501 Desert Sheep - Successful!" I almost fell off my chair. At that time Taylor was driving up to Lake Shasta with his girlfriend for a camping trip. I immediately snapped a picture of his results and texted him. He had to pull over as he nearly drove off Interstate 5. There's no way we could have drawn two desert bighorn tags in four years at the same address! But we did.

The sheep hunter community is easily the tightest collection of passionate people in the hunting spectrum. When you find yourself up on that landscape and seeing and feeling everything that goes into this experience, it's easy to figure out why. With today's social media, word travels fast ... very fast. It took about 5 minutes before my phone was ringing off the hook. One of those calls was from Terry Anderson, who was in complete disbelief. Another was from Regina Abella from CAF&G, asking if I would be available to speak and share my experience at the mandatory orientation meeting, and if you know me, you have been repeatedly tortured by the repeated recollection of my sheep hunt! The amount of pure excitement in that room was nuclear, and I was going to be able to experience this again, with my son!

To say he was a little jacked up was an underscore of mammoth proportions. It's a good thing you have almost six months before you go hunting because you need that

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much time just to calm down. Taylor and I made several trips to various shooting ranges sighting in his .300 mag for the typical 300-400 yard shot in windy conditions. He also stepped up his conditioning by filling a large backpack with 45 lbs. of weights. He would climb up and down our mountain, which only goes to 1000 feet, but at a pretty steep grade. I was on my way back from my cheffing duties up at the Bohemian Grove when I got a phone call from him telling me that he thought he needed to go to the emergency room. I asked, "What happened?" Well, after doing his hill climb he thought doing some pull ups in the garage would be a good idea, except he decided to do those with his 45 lbs. backpack on. Additionally, he used a pull up bar that clips over the framework around the door. The problem was the garage door had a very thin 3/4-inch molding, not the 4 inch that is upstairs. After doing two pull ups, the frame exploded sending him crashing down on the concrete, landing on both knees. I told you, this experience causes a lot of adrenalin. After a quick repair at the hospital and a week of rest, he was back at it.

Taylor is a second year college student pursuing an engineering degree which keeps him very busy, so the only real time he could get away was when they were on Christmas break. So the day after Christmas, Taylor, our buddy Tony and I were heading back down to the desert with a sheep tag in hand. Tony had also accompanied me on my hunt. Tony had to work until 8:00 p.m. on the 26th, so we picked him up. Taylor slept in the back seat and I drove through the night. We arrived at Terry's camp at 4:00 a.m. down in the Marbles. We unhooked the trailer, unloaded the truck, and at 5:00 a.m. Terry said we weren't going out until 6:00 a.m., so why not take a nap.

One hour later we were heading to our spotting location. They had seen a band of about eight rams with two or three potential shooters the previous couple of days. We set up about 2 1/2 miles from the mountain and just scoped and scoped. Finally, we spotted a lone ram that appeared to be heavy and full, but he had quickly disappeared into an unknown drainage. We ran to the far end of the range to see if we could get a better glimpse of him, and just before last light we spotted him bedded down on a steep slope. He now had the company of a ewe, so he wasn't going to be going anywhere. We backed out of there so we wouldn't disturb them. After returning to camp and a hearty meal it wasn't very hard to fall asleep, which I am sure was good for Taylor. He was too tired to have his mind racing about what he was about to experience. Soon it was 5:00 a.m. and by 6:00 a.m. we were back at our spotting location. It only took a couple of minutes to locate him, and he was within 100 yards of where we left him. His girlfriend was also with him, so for the next four hours we watched them move, eat, move, eat, lay down, etc. Finally he crested the ridgeline, giving us the chance to hike the 2 1/2 miles to him. As we hiked in single file toward his last known location, the ewe came crashing over the ridge and was running *down toward us*. *We all looked at each other, thinking Did we blow her out of there? Did she see us? Did the ram see or hear that commotion?* She went out of sight and we keep moving on. As we approached the ridgeline where we last saw him, Taylor looked to our right

and he pointed as the ewe went off away from where we thought the ram would be. If she ran the other way, he definitely would have blown out of there.

There were about four or five ridges that were coming off the main ridge, and we weren't sure where he was. So we slowly crested the ridgetops, peeking over and then glassing the terrain below. This was tedious and slow moving, as he could have been tucked into a fold in the landscape. Andrew and Tim were guiding us. They were in front, then Taylor and I were holding up the rear. I was manning a video camera, a GoPro (on my head), a still camera, my iPhone and a walking stick. As we were climbing from one ridge to another we came across several recent beds and sign. After the forth ridge proved empty, there was only one other place he could have been. With the camera rolling I saw Tim and Andrew wave back to Taylor to get up there, NOW! His backpack came flying off, he laid down on Tim's pack and sighted the ram as he was running down the canyon to the other side. The ram came running up to a flat spot across the canyon (about 175 yards). He almost came to a stop. As I saw this I told Taylor, "Shoot," which he did instantly. At first it appeared that he didn't connect. The ram took four or five more steps and then made that famous backwards step. At that point I knew Taylor had hit him. As he stood there, I again said, "Shoot." He did, dropping the ram in his tracks. A prouder moment I have never had. With the pressure of this opportunity in his hands, he preformed flawlessly.

After the high-fives and hugs, we regained our composure and loaded up our scattered gear. As we crested the ridge we found that we had stalked to within 22 yards of where this royal monarch was bedded. I don't think Taylor's feet ever touched the ground as we hiked down to the bottom and back up to where we would meet his part of California history. As we approached the 12 1/2-year-old icon, the look on Taylor's face will forever be etched in my mind. Upon further investigation we confirmed that Taylor in fact hit the ram with a fatal shot with the first shot and then anchored him with the second, saving us all additional miles for the pack out.

This ram was definitely in the waning moments of his life. He only had four teeth left in his mouth, one ankle was swollen to twice the size of the other and his scarred roman nose spoke of many unsuccessful battles at the hands of the younger rams. He also had sinusitis that created the big chunk missing from his right horn. That horn was one head butt away from breaking off completely. This was the PERFECT ram to be removed from this high desert mountain. The numbers game, with four years of serious drought, doesn't do justice to the magnificence of this animal or the experience that will forever be a part of OUR lives.

One thing for sure, WE have been truly blessed to be allowed to partake in such a rare privilege. After speaking with several members of CAF&G we've been told that Taylor and I are the only father and son to have ever harvested a California desert bighorn sheep in the state's history.

So the next time you're stuck in a thunderstorm, know for sure that lightning does strike twice! And if you ask Taylor's brother Ryan, maybe even three times.

At that point, it may be time to move to Arkansas.

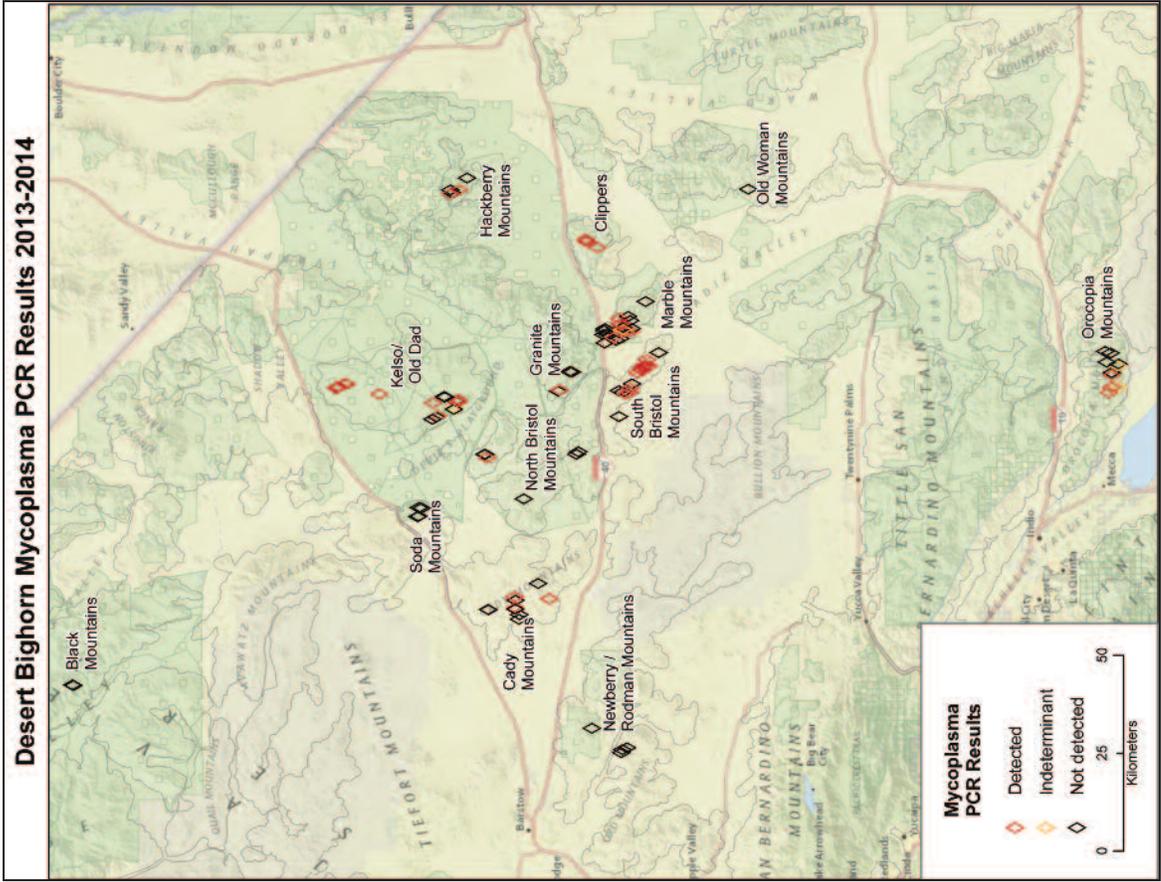
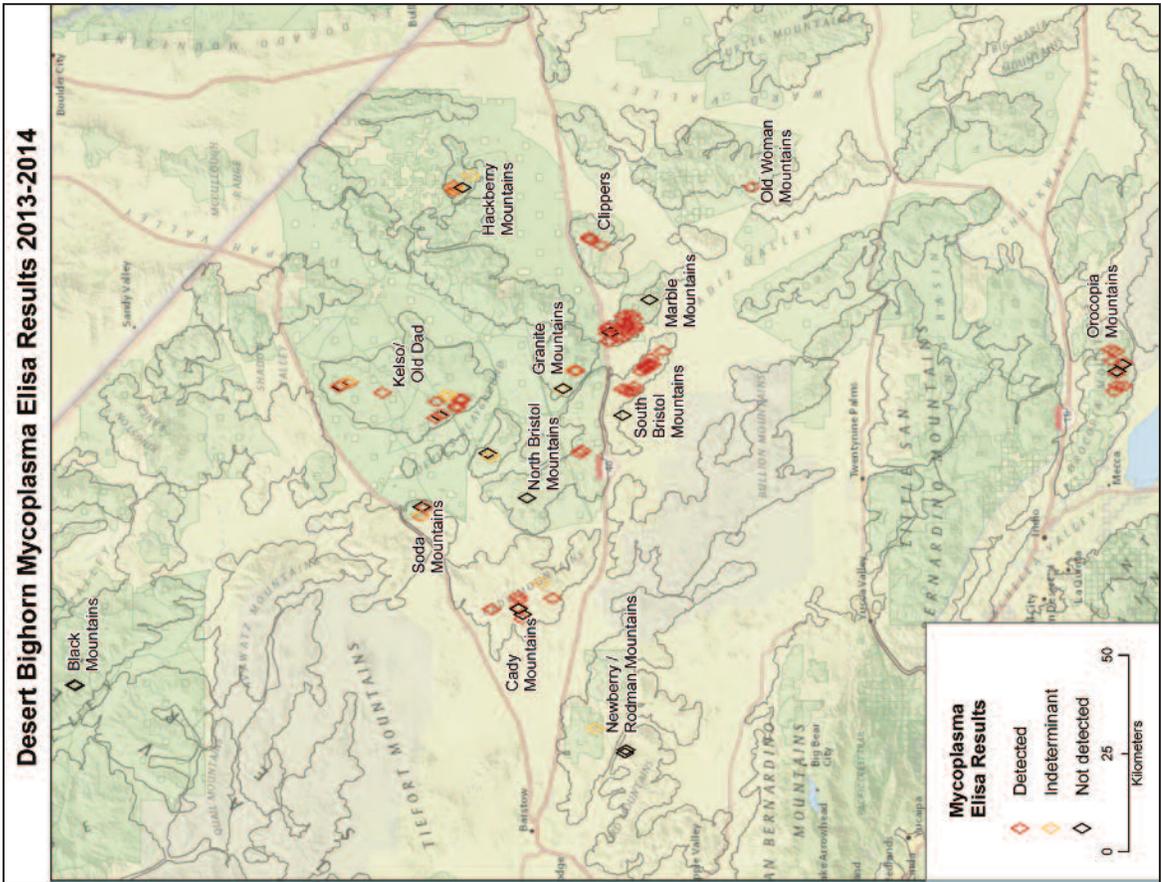


# ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921 OR [DON-MARTIN@EARTHLINK.NET](mailto:DON-MARTIN@EARTHLINK.NET)



# DESERT BIGHORN DISEASE MONITORING IN CALIFORNIA



# Putting and Keeping sheep on the Mountains in California *2015 Banquet and Fundraiser Registration Inside!*

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April 25, 2015

## COME EARLY

Mark Jorgenson, co-author of the award-winning "*Desert Bighorn Sheep: Wilderness Icon*" published in 2014 will make a presentation followed by a book signing from 3 to 4 PM.

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