



California Wild Sheep

Fall 2015



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Bob Keagy
California Bighorn
British Columbia
Ashnola Guides – Outfitters
broomed 7/8th's curl bighorn
with 14 inch+ bases



ULTIMA THULE LODGE

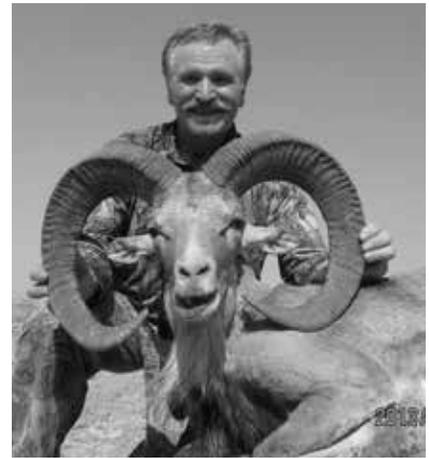
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From the Editor's Desk

Glorious Fall has arrived, the main hunting season. I always feel extra alive with the cooling air and the anticipation for my and my friend's hunting plans. This issue includes some great hunting stories, fun humor, a teaser about our 2016 Banquet and Fundraiser, interesting desert insights from Carlos, AND MORE!

Your feedback, ideas, articles & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: mike.borel@contextnet.com. Due date for input to the 4Q15 issue is November 20.



THE HYPNOTIST AT A SENIOR HOME

It was entertainment night at the senior citizens' center.

After the community sing along led by Alice at the piano, it was time for the star of the show – Claude the Hypnotist!

Claude explained that he was going to put the whole audience into a trance.

"Yes, each and every one of you and all at the same time," said Claude.

The excited chatter dropped to silence as Claude carefully withdrew from his waistcoat pocket a beautiful antique gold pocket watch and chain.

"I want you to keep your eyes on this watch" said Claude, holding the watch high for all to see.

"It is a very special and valuable watch that has been in my family for six generations" said Claude.

He began to swing the watch gently back and forth while quietly chanting "Watch the watch -- Watch the watch -- Watch the watch"

The audience became mesmerized as the watch swayed back and forth.

The lights were twinkling as they were reflected from its gleaming surfaces.

A hundred and fifty pairs of eyes followed the movements of the gently swaying watch.

They were hypnotized.

And then, suddenly, the chain broke!!!

The beautiful watch fell to the stage and burst apart on impact"

"SHIT" said Claude.

It took them three days to clean the Senior Citizens' Center and Claude was never invited there again.

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California Wild Sheep is published quarterly.

Please email all articles and photos to
mike.borel@contextnet.com

Photos should be high resolution and in color.
It is recommended that digital photos be sent by email.
Please include photo credits and captions.

Events

2015

November 20 Sheep Summit XII in Ontario

November 20 Due date for articles for
4Q2015 CAWSF Newsletter

2016

January 19-22, SHOT Show, Las Vegas

January 20-23 WSF Convention Reno,
Peppermill

January 21-24 ISE Show - Sacramento

January 23 Youth Wildlife Conservation
Experience, Reno Sparks
Convention Center/
Mt Rose Ballroom

January 27-30 GSCO Convention,
Las Vegas, Westgate Resort

February 3-6 SCI Convention, Las Vegas

February 10-14 WHCE - Salt Lake City

February 20 Due date for articles for
1Q2016 CAWSF Newsletter

March 18 Midwest Chapter WSF
Fundraiser, Minneapolis, MN

April 29 Sheep Summit XVIII in
Rancho Cordova

April 30 CA WSF Fundraiser/Banquet
in Rancho Cordova at Marriott

May 20 Due date for articles for
2Q2016 CAWSF Newsletter

August 22 Due date for articles for
3Q2016 CAWSF Newsletter

President's Letter

Dear CA Wild Sheep Members and Friends:

Despite the fires in my end of the state (and I guess elsewhere as well), the nights are getting noticeably cooler and the days shorter. My thoughts turn more and more to the upcoming hunting season, which in turn triggers some memories of hunts past, too. I am sure I am not alone as I both regret the passing of summer and look forward to the fall. This is the time of year when I try to cram in chasing some blacktail deer and fly fishing for steelhead, but still attempt to keep up with work and other responsibilities. I sometimes wish the six weeks between mid-September to the end of October were six months long.



I am very thankful I live in a fairly rural area with hunting and fishing opportunities nearby. But I am not without a streak of envy. For example, I came up empty in the hunt drawings for which I applied this year. Meanwhile, Board member Roger McCosker called me recently as he was packing to leave for a Stone sheep hunt in British Columbia to advise me he just found out he drew an Arizona Desert Bighorn tag in a prime unit for this year—an almost impossible task for a non-resident these days. He (and other lucky hunters) will owe us all some stories and pictures this year so we can share those adventures in future newsletters.

Rest assured that although the Board members of CA Wild Sheep probably all share the same passion and have the same time constraints, we are also finding time to work on behalf of California's wild sheep. We have been involved in many projects, including working with the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife to bring water to drought-stressed herds, encouraged the Department's aerial surveys of existing sheep hunting units, and are in the process of sponsoring additional surveys in areas that may have sheep populations adequate to support hunting but that have not been surveyed for years—sometimes decades—by the Department due to budget constraints. It may take several years to bear fruit, but we are committed to the future and planting those seeds by the wise expending of funds we have only because of support by people like you.

Looking towards the spring, we are also planning our annual meeting for the last Saturday in April, 2016 at the Marriott in Rancho Cordova (near Sacramento). Be sure to get that on your calendar. We already have some great tags, hunts and other items for auction and raffle in the works, and it will only get better. Stay tuned in for more details.

Best wishes for success in whatever you undertake this hunting season!!

Paul Brisso
President, CA Wild Sheep

A PAKISTAN JOURNEY

by Ben Gordon



During the Friday night banquet at the January 2015 WSF convention in Reno, Nevada, a hunt for Afghan Urial Sheep in Pakistan was on the list to be auctioned. After spirited bidding, I was the high bidder for the hunt and my planning began. The hunt was offered by Kaan Karakaya of Shikar Safaris, whom I had hunted with in Turkey and Tajikistan recently. After a conversation with Kaan, I added a Blanford Urial and Sindh Ibex to the hunt and I was informed that I could hunt Pakistan this year, so a very quick plan was put in place to secure a Pakistan visa and the other needed documents. This was not an easy task as my departure date was just six short weeks away. As you can imagine, taking a gun to a country such as Pakistan is a very difficult task unless handled by people who know the proper process. All necessary documents were secured exactly five days before my departure date, thanks to the diligent work of the girls at Esplanade Travel whom I've used for many years to sort out the details of trips such as this. The following is a diary of my hunting adventure experienced in this game-rich country.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26

Well, the trip starts at SFO airport; gun issues at the ticket counter were resolved by Kit at Esplanade Travel then we were able to check all bags through to Islamabad, Pakistan. Looked for a US Customs counter to get a form 4457 for my new rifle, but once again I cannot seem to find anyone. Frustrating! I have my form from the justice department that Brown Precision made out when the rifle was built, and that should work as it has before, but you would think finding a customs counter would never be a problem at SFO. But, it is!

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 28

Made it to Islamabad around 4:30 am, and was met by Farhad Maqpoon, who helped me through customs very quickly. Also was introduced to Ghulamshah ("Shah"), who will be my interpreter for the trip.

After another short flight, Shah and I arrived in Karachi at noon time and I have never seen such a diverse crowd of people as at this airport.

SUNDAY, MARCH 1

This morning we had a 2.5 hour drive to hunt for Blanford Urial sheep. We headed up the mountain, rounding many switch back turns on our way up. Reaching the top, we all unloaded and left the driver at the truck. Hiking over the first hill we immediately found sheep and discovered no good rams were among them. We hiked for about two hours seeing sheep continuously before we found the ram they wanted me to harvest. He was with seven other rams and had no idea we were there, and after an easy 176 yard shot I had my 32 inch Blanford Urial ram on the ground posing for pictures. These sheep are among the smallest in the world and appear to weight not more than 100 lbs. They are dark sandy brown with black and white throat bibs, or mane, and black hair on the front of their legs.

MONDAY, MARCH 2

This morning we headed to the Sindh Ibex area to hunt today. Ibex were spotted immediately and all eleven of us headed up the hill in a long line.

The ibex were constantly moving up and by noon time they, and us, were on top of the mountain. Every time we approached them the range was over 450 yards and I was uncomfortable shooting at such a small target at that distance. The locals had one particular billie they wanted me to harvest and he was very white in color with an attractive sweep to his horns that finished hooking sharply at the tips. He was very easy to pick out of the dozen plus billies that made up the group, but was difficult to see against the light background of the mountain. We chased the group till 4:00 pm when they separated, some going up and some going down. The big one went down, but hid from us in a deep, rocky draw and was the last to cross the opening below us at around 250 yards. When he presented a shot I was in a position contorted against a rock and was not nearly stable enough, but fired a shot any way. The shot went over his back and he stood still, looking around not really scared. I quickly moved into a better position when he started to quarter away from me and hit him hard in the right hip which carried thru to his vitals. At

that moment a large explosion went off just on the other side of the mountain from us in one of the marble quarries. This explained why the Ibex was not alarmed when I fired the first shot, as he was no doubt thinking it was the quarry, something he had heard all his life. When the first Pakistani reached the Billie he let out a big whoop, and yelled to all of us in Pakistani how big it was, the longest horn was 44 inches which makes him larger than most.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3

After a flight to Islamabad we arrived in Istanbul where we checked into the Marriott hotel. Security again is very evident. Plans for tomorrow's hunt may change since we still don't have security clearance to hunt in the Quetta area for Afghan Urial. This is an active Taliban area so Farhad has given me the option to hunt for Punjab Urial in an area two hours from Islamabad and says he can have a permit very quickly. It would be a 1-day hunt which he assured me is enough time, and will know more tomorrow when I meet with him. It is a much more peaceful area with very few uprisings.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 4

Farhad met me this morning and went over the Quetta clearance issue, and apparently they have closed the season for the Afghan Urial as of February 28th with no notice to anyone, resulting in a huge loss of revenue to the locals. The season normally goes till March 31th. Anyhow, I told him of my desire to change up and hunt the Punjab and he is getting my permit process completed this afternoon. I'll know this evening or tomorrow what the plan is for leaving for the hunt. I spent the day with several other hunters, also waiting for their hunts to take.

THURSDAY MARCH 5

Another day waiting to go on the next hunt. Official word from Farhad today was that the Afghan hunts were over for this year, but he had my Punjab permit in order and a car ready to take me. Now the problem is the weather, it's been raining hard here and the Pakistan guys don't hunt in the rain.

FRIDAY, SATURDAY, SUNDAY MARCH 6 - 8

Well, I can't hunt until Monday due to delays Farhad had in getting money in the bank. Shah and I would leave for the Punjab area sometime mid morning tomorrow.

MONDAY MARCH 9

Shah and a driver picked me up at the hotel about 10:30 am and we headed out of Islamabad south on the highway N5 towards Lahore. The freeway was its usual ridiculous and chaotic mess with many horse drawn carts and wagons pulled by mostly Arabians horses.



When we arrived I was served tea while the men unloaded our bags and waited for the Game official to arrive (Rayiz). Then the discussion turned to the report that a local herder had seen two rams about 45 minutes from the house. The decision was made to take a quick look and off we went. We headed to what appeared to be a remote area, but we were never out of site of the shepherds and herders. They were also good spotters as they pointed out sheep across the canyon about a half mile away but we could only see ewes and lambs. They assured us that two very large rams were with the herd so we took off into the canyon to find them.

The bottom was filled with small ridges paralleling the river bed which made for very good stalking. The terrain is very sandy with sandstone covering much of the bottom and made for a very quiet approach. We soon found the two rams feeding on the side of a ridge and studied them for a few minutes. The biggest was only 24 or 25 inches but with very heavy bases. As we studied them they caught site of us and blasted off like true wild sheep do. As it was now 6:00pm we called it quits and headed back to the house.

TUESDAY MARCH 10

After an early breakfast we took off to hunt a different area. After riding for two hours we found ourselves in a river bottom where no evidence of a road could be found. We had to cross the Jhelum River here as it flows into the much larger Chenab River a short distance from where we were. There would be no crossing that!

Once in the hunting area, a young herder signaled the sheep were sleeping on the far hill side. Peering over, we spotted two very fine rams, asleep about 200 yards away. After studying them for a moment it was determined the lower ram was the largest and I slid my backpack into position to shoot from. After a few minutes I told Shah that I could hit the animal while he slept as I had a very good view of him as well as a good rest. When I fired the ram jumped to his feet and ran behind a rock outcropping. The other ram



ran to the top of the hill and stood looking to where the load sound came from. I was stunned that the ram I aimed at was not dead, I had a great rest and squeezed the trigger for a very controlled shot. Then the bigger ram cleared the rocks and gave me another opportunity. Again, I had a good solid hold on the ram and squeezed off another shot but with the same effect. All I could think was WTF! When the rams ran over the hill Shah held his head in disappointment and pointed to the dirt a few feet in front of the gun muzzle. I was very angry seeing the groove in the soil and realized the bullets had hit dirt only inches from the gun barrel. Totally my fault as I NEVER allow this to happen and we had plenty of time to make sure it SHOULD NOT have happened. Very frustrating!

The local guide immediately told the younger herder to follow the animals and he took off to have a look over the next ridge. We scabbled to a small ridge top but the animals moved quickly around the next ridge into the brush. The hill sides are covered with small but very green mesquite trees and brush with very long thorns. This affords the sheep a degree of security when they penetrate the brush and the rams stopped as soon as they found some thick cover. We approached them from behind the very lowest point of the ridge, and I setup the backpack for another shot. The ram was only 65 yards away with a full broadside shot available. When I fired, the ram immediately fell to the ground having been hit high and destroying both shoulders. The guide slapped me on the back and yelled "very good, very good" again and again. My ram's horns measure 27 inches in length with 10 inch bases and was at least 10 years old. Any ram measuring over 26 inches is very good. These sheep are small, much like the Blanford and my ram measured 34 inches tall at the shoulder with a body length of 43 inches, but the game official said it was a large body for this species. The ram had a smaller black neck bib than the Blanford ram but coloration was similar with a shade lighter tan body. Harold, my taxidermist, has his work cut out for him on this cape!

Now all species I set out to take on this adventure have been harvested and my hunting is over.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 11

I relocated back to the Marriott, where all the staff remembered me – these are the friendliest people!

THURSDAY MARCH 12

Headed home. I've had a great trip with great people, made new friends and harvested three great animals that got me to my World Capra Slam and only one to go for my World Ovis Slam. But I'm ready to leave this dry and harsh land with its smelly but friendly people who ride donkeys and camels and use animal dung to cook over and live in three sided houses, tents and brush huts and trade up to the cleaner and more modern, fossil fuel burning, computer using, Obama-loving so and so's in California. Never more glad I'm a damn American!!!

Husband went to the sheriff's department to report that his wife was missing.

Husband: My wife is missing. She went shopping yesterday and has not come home....

Sergeant: What is her height?

Husband: Gee, I'm not sure. A little over five-feet tall.

Sergeant: Weight?

Husband: Don't know. Not slim, not really fat.

Sergeant: Color of eyes?

Husband: Sort of brown I think. Never really noticed.

Sergeant: Color of hair?

Husband: Changes a couple times a year. Maybe dark brown now. I can't remember.

Sergeant: What was she wearing?

Husband: Could have been pants, or maybe a skirt or shorts. I don't know exactly.

Sergeant: What kind of car did she go in?

Husband: She went in my truck.

Sergeant: What kind of truck was it?

Husband: A 2015 Ford F150 King Ranch 4X4 with eco-boost 5.0L V8 engine special ordered with manual transmission and climate controlled air conditioning. It has a custom matching white cover for the bed, which has a matching aftermarket bed liner. Custom leather 6-way seats and "Bubba" floor mats. Trailering package with gold hitch and special wiring hook-ups. DVD with full GPS navigation, satellite radio receiver, 21-channel CB radio, six cup holders, a USB port, and four power outlets. I added special alloy wheels and off-road Michelin's. It has custom running boards and indirect wheel well lighting. At this point the husband started choking up.

Sergeant: Don't worry buddy. We'll find your truck.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

by Bill Gaines

Gaines & Associates Government Relations

The last day of the 2015 Legislative Session will be September 11th. Here is an update on some of the issues we are following.

AB 395 (Gallagher)

This straightforward legislation by freshman Assembly Member James Gallagher (R/03-Yuba City) would repeal the requirement placed into law by the passage of AB 711 that non-lead ammunition be used for all hunting statewide.

AB 711, passed into law in 2013, mandates that the Fish and Game Commission adopt regulations which require the use of non-lead ammunition for all hunting statewide by July 1, 2019. The bill further requires that the Commission adopt a phase-in schedule for the non-lead requirement by July 1, 2015. Since the passage of the bill, Gaines & Associates has been actively working with DFW and the Commission to try to minimize the impact on hunters of the implementation of AB 711.

AB 395 would delete from state law all of the above provisions which require statewide use of non-lead ammunition. The bill would not, however, delete the requirement that non-lead ammunition be used for big game and coyotes in the California condor range.

Recognizing that the bill, as introduced, would almost certainly fail passage if heard in Committee, the author has been made AB 395 a “two-year” bill. Assembly Member Gallagher and his staff plan to use this time to work with Gaines & Associates and others on amendments to the measure that address some of our concerns, while improving the bill’s chance of passage.

AB 395 will be heard in Assembly Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee early next year.

Update on Potential Changes to Regulations for Setting Mammal Hunting Tag Quotas

DFW and the Commission would like to see annual mammal tag quotas removed from regulation and, instead, provided to the public in an annual public report, with appropriate opportunity for public review and comment. Originally, DFW had hoped to provide “notice” of this change to the Commission at this meeting. However, in order to develop the paperwork necessary to present these changes, DFW needs additional time to complete management plans and to update the related environmental documents. To do so, the formal “notice” hearing on this topic will be delayed until the August 2016 Commission meeting. This agenda item will simply serve as a quick opportunity for DFW to update the Commission and public on the status of these efforts.

SWAP Program: As you may have heard, the Department of Fish and Wildlife has recently released their draft 2015 update of California State Wildlife Action Plan, or SWAP. By way of background, in 2000, Congress enacted the State Wildlife Grants Program to support state programs that broadly benefit wildlife and habitats - but particularly³species of greatest conservation need.² As a requirement for receiving federal funding under this program, DFW and other state wildlife agencies were required to submit a Wildlife Action Plan (a comprehensive wildlife conservation strategy) to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service no later than October 2005. The Act also requires that state wildlife agencies update their plans every 10 years.

In accordance with that requirement, DFW is in the process of updating their 2005 SWAP and recently released their draft 2015 SWAP for a short 45 day public comment period that will close on July 2nd. With the SWAP giving priority to “species of greatest conservation need”, and intended to provide a roadmap for all conservation strategies and undertakings statewide for the next decade, it is very important that we take a good look at the impact that the draft document may have on game species and hunting and fishing opportunity. Upon review, you will note that the draft SWAP lists hunting and fishing as activities which are putting “pressure” on many “species of conservation need” in many areas of the state. As such, although the true intent of the SWAP may not be to be used as a tool to substantially reduce hunting or fishing opportunity, it certainly could be used that way. This fear has already been captured by at least one writer who has reviewed the draft (see <http://www.wideopenspaces.com/california-wildlife-plan-aims-reduce-hunting-fishing-no-real-explanation/>).

To view the draft SWAP and related materials, click <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/SWAP>

NEWS OF INTEREST

Much of the news during the last few months has been about a lion, a wolf pack, and an ammo change – here are some items you may have missed!

Montana Decides to Eliminate Chronically Diseased Bighorn Herd: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) announced earlier this week that it will be seeking to depopulate a chronically ill bighorn sheep herd in the Tendoy Mountains. The agency added that hunting will be the primary method of removal for the herd of 30 to 40 sheep, and it will later be restocked.
OutdoorHub, 6-19-15

Wildlife groups take aim at lethal control of predators: Federal trapper Chris Brennan is the go-to guy in Mendocino County when sheep or cattle are being threatened by predators, which, it is generally acknowledged, don't stand much of a chance when he is on the case.
San Francisco Chronicle, 5-31-15

CDFW Completes Deer Capture Project in Truckee Area: The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has successfully completed a deer capture project involving the Loyalton-Truckee mule deer herd.
CDFW News Release, 7-27-15

Photos show first wild California wolf pack in nearly a century. California's first gray wolf pack since wild wolves disappeared from the state nearly a century ago was spotted in the woods in the northern part of the state, wildlife officials said on Thursday.
Reuters <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/environment/article31632431.html>

California Drought: Marin tule elk have sufficient water supply, federal park says. Tule elk are being closely watched in the Point Reyes National Seashore this summer after the population fell off amid concerns of a dearth of water supplies.
Marin Independent Journal, 8-17-15

Government deliberately withheld condor blood report: No one wants to see the California condor slip into extinction like the dodo or passenger pigeon, and most people would like to see even more scientific data collection on the huge vulture to determine what problems it faces in its continued struggle to survive. Unfortunately, hunters using lead ammunition in and around the giant bird's traditional habitat have long been the blame for many condor deaths after they supposedly ingested lead isotopes into their fragile systems.
Bakersfield Californian, 6-4-15

Hunters Work To Repair Old Guzzlers In California: A San Diego hunting group is raising the old debate about hunters and whether or not they really care about the animals they hunt.
National Public Radio, 6-4-15 NOTE: This article could easily have had "Ca WSF and SCBS mentioned as another hunting group that is getting water to the wildlife!"

Nonlead Ammunition Requirement is Upon Us, No Lead Ammo on CDFW Lands Starting July 1: Nonlead Ammo Poster Starting July 1, 2015, nonlead ammunition will be required when hunting on all California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) lands and for all Nelson bighorn sheep hunts anywhere in the state.
CDFW News Release, 6-26-15

Are we Killing the Future of Hunting?: I recently walked into my office and noticed a copy of a magazine sitting on my desk. It was put out by the International Hunters Education Association....
Twisted Stave Blog, 7-5-15

Recovery of predators causes unexpected conservation challenges: For decades, many global conservation efforts have focused on protecting declining populations of large predators at the top of the food chain, and there are numerous successful stories of recovery.
Mongabay, 7-14-15

It's all about the lion –

Lionizing Cecil Makes The Public Feel Good, But a Trophy Hunting Ban Will Accelerate Slaughter: If you fly over parts of Tsavo today, and I challenge anyone to do so, if you have the eyes for it- you can see lines of snares set out in funnel traps that extend four or five miles. Tens of thousands of animals are being killed annually for the meat business. Carnivores are being decimated in the same snares and discarded. I am not a propagandist on this issue, but when my friends say we are very concerned that hunting will be reintroduced in Kenya, let me put it to you: hunting has never been stopped in Kenya, and there is more hunting in Kenya today than at any time since independence. (Thousands) of animals are being killed annually with no control. Snaring, poisoning, and shooting are common things. So when you have a fear of debate about hunting, please don't think there is no hunting. Think of a policy to

regulate it, so that we can make it sustainable. That is surely the issue, because an illegal crop, an illegal market is unsustainable in the long term, whatever it is. And the market in wildlife meat is unsustainable as currently practiced, and something needs to be done. *California Magazine, 8-3-15*

Another View: Responsible hunting helps save lions. While responsible hunters deplore the illegal killing of big game, it's unfortunate that animal rights extremists are exploiting the high-profile shooting of a lion to advance political and fundraising agendas by spreading misinformation and maligning local hunters (³Cecil the lion's awful death should end trophy hunting,² Viewpoints, Aug. 4).

Sacramento Bee, 8-19-15

I support hunting. So should you. The thought that a game animal, in this case an African lion named Cecil, may have been killed unethically is an affront to all law-abiding sportspersons. As a hunter myself, I know this: Given the information we have about Walter Palmer's activities in Zimbabwe, it seems he acted as a poacher, even if that's not what he intended.

The Boston Globe, 8-18-15

California Drought: Marin tule elk have sufficient water supply, federal park says. Tule elk are being closely watched in the Point Reyes National Seashore this summer after the population fell off amid concerns of a dearth of water supplies.

Marin Independent Journal, 8-17-15

STEVE MERLO: Government deliberately withheld condor blood report: No one wants to see the California condor slip into extinction like the dodo or passenger pigeon, and most people would like to see even more scientific data collection on the

huge vulture to determine what problems it faces in its continued struggle to survive. Unfortunately, hunters using lead ammunition in and around the giant bird's traditional habitat have long been the blame for many condor deaths after they supposedly ingested lead isotopes into their fragile systems.

Bakersfield Californian, 6-4-15

What inspires people to support conservation?

A new study by researchers at Cornell University provides one simple answer: bird watching and hunting. Both bird watchers and hunters were more likely than non-recreationists to enhance land for wildlife, donate to conservation organizations, and advocate for wildlife-all actions that significantly impact conservation success.

The contributions of individuals who identified as both bird watchers and hunters were even more pronounced. On average, this group was about eight times more likely than non-recreationists to engage in conservation.

"We set out to study two groups – bird watchers and hunters – and didn't anticipate the importance of those who do both, and wildlife managers probably didn't either," said Dr. Caren Cooper, the study's lead author, now at North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences. "We don't even have a proper name for these conservation superstars, other than hunter/bird watchers."

Federal Grazing Fee - \$1.69/AUM

Ever wonder why Rocky Mountain bighorns have not recovered like pronghorn, elk, mule deer? Subsidy grazing with disease from their domestic sheep. This grazing is welfare subsidy! This is a rip off. Five domestic sheep and their five lambs can graze our public lands during a month for \$1.69. That's about how much it costs to feed your pet for a day.

Humor

"One day an old German Shepherd starts chasing rabbits and before long, discovers that he's lost. Wandering about, he notices a panther heading rapidly in his direction with the intension of having lunch. The old German Shepherd thinks, 'Uh-oh! I'm in deep trouble now!' Noticing some bones on the ground close by he immediately settles down to chew on the bones with his back to the approaching panther. Just as the panther is about to leap, the old German Shepherd exclaims loudly, 'Boy that was one delicious panther! I wonder if there are any more around here.'

"Hearing this, the young panther halts his attack in mid-strike, a look of terror comes over him and he slinks away into the trees. 'Whew!' says the panther. "That was close! That old German Shepherd nearly had me!"

"Meanwhile, a squirrel who had been watching the whole scene from a nearby tree figures he can put this knowledge to good use and trade

it for protection from the panther. So off he goes. The squirrel soon catches up with the panther, spills the beans and strikes a deal for himself with the panther. The young panther is furious at being made a fool of and says, 'Here, squirrel, hop on my back and see what's going to happen to that conniving canine!'

"The old German Shepherd sees the panther coming with the squirrel on his back and thinks, "What am I going to do now?" But instead of running, the dog sits down with his back to his attackers, pretending he hasn't seen them yet, and just when they get close enough to hear, the old German Shepherd says, "Where's that damn squirrel? I sent him off an hour ago to bring me another panther!"

"Moral of this story: Don't mess with the old dogs. BS and brilliance only come with age an experience.

2014 DALL SHEEP HUNT

by Butch Kuflak



I was fortunate to hook up with the Lancasters in the North West Territories in July of 2014. I was lucky to meet Kelly Wiebe, who won the outstanding guide award at a past FNAWS convention. Nice person. As were all at the Lancaster Lodge. They stuck poor Jeff Baher with the guiding duties and did I strike gold! He was on his game from the airport and back to the airport, and everything in between. We climbed aboard the Robinson helicopter, and off we went. We landed atop a long flat mesa and set up camp. The 12 hour no-fly no-hunt rule was observed. As I lay in my bag, trying not to laugh out loud, I thought, "Isn't THIS great... We'll start hunting with fresh legs!" That doesn't happen often. The next morning, we enjoyed a nice breakfast until his watch struck 9am. That's it, here we go... Right from the start with fresh legs.

Then the wind changed. We turned around and started in the other direction. This went on a few hours...At one point, we just sat down waiting for it to make up its mind. Then we were off again.

We glassed the opposite hillsides for sheep, finding small groups here and there. Then we would crane our necks to look below us hoping to get lucky. Hours passed. Lots of glassing. I didn't mind as it was beautiful country. We approached yet another vantage point and Jeff pulled back smartly. Inching back to me he whispered, "there are about 25 sheep right below us at maybe 100 yards." As I had my smokepole, the yardage was perfect. Jeff crawled back to the edge and glassed some more. In the meantime I dropped my pack, found my primer, loaded up, and waited. He again crawled back, told me where the larger ram was located. NOW, I crawled up and as Jeff



promised, he was right there. It was now up to me. I settled in, pulled the hammer back, whispered to Jeff "plug your ears." Then there was smoke... As we waited for it to clear and watched in amazement, the ram just stood there. I asked Jeff about the shot and he said, "he just doesn't know it's over yet." Like the prophet that he is, the ram collapsed.

We unloaded our packs as it started to rain which made our descent dicey. It was even more dicey on the way back up.

All in all, it was a great adventure with a great support team. Everyone jumps in to help out. I can't wait til next time....

Learn more about Lancaster Family Hunting and their five unique hunting territories at
<http://www.lancasterfamilyhunting.com/>

UNEXPECTED AND UNPREPARED, A MOUNTAIN GOAT STORY

by John Ware (Continued from Spring 2015 issue)

Above the tree line the mountains look smooth like a very steep sand dunes but this was very deceptive, as I learned when we grew closer and the grains of sand turned into ankle-turning unstable sharp broken rocks from the size of a softball to the size of a wheelbarrow. Several times I stepped on a rock that looked firm and large only to feel it begin to shift under my feet. Once I was unable to recover and a large boulder careened down the side of the mountain. Not exactly stealthy stalking. Scott and I consulted in whispers and agreed to hope that the goats would just assume another goat was causing the rocks to shift, and continued up, up, up.

Eventually we arrived at the landmark where we had spotted the goat from across the valley. He had moved on, but Scott was pretty sure there was only one way to go, up. We were above tree line and within a few hundred yards of the ridge line, we just had to hope he hadn't gone up and over since it would be even more difficult to track him. It was reassuring to know that Scott knew what was on the other side of the ridge line, as he had been here many times before.

After another hour or so we had our quarry with in sight. Unfortunately, he had spotted us as well – it was something of a stare down with him at the top of an intermediate ridge facing us head-on, as if daring us to prove that we were a threat. In hushed tones Scott and I discussed our options. We were about 200 yards away. Due to the steep and unstable nature of the mountainside I was unable to get into a position where I could comfortably hold the scope on the goat for more than a minute or two before I began to slide downward. This made it impossible to utilize the preferred strategy, waiting indefinitely for the goat to turn broad-side.

I felt like I could be comfortable with the shot as the goat was facing us downhill, the bullet would continue to travel upward through the length of its body. After discussion and agreeing with this option, a decision was made. With a deep breath and careful squeeze I took the shot.

While I fought with my rifle—the bolt had jammed—the goat disappeared behind the ridge. We were pretty sure he was hit well. As we climb towards the ridge I didn't feel we needed to be in a rush and to be honest the climbing this far had taken a lot out of me. I fully expected that we would find him there expired.

It was not to be and instead we saw him making his way across the drainage and up the other side. He was clearly hit and not doing well with blood on one front leg and lower chest, but also showing

no signs of slowing down. If he made it over the mountain top and down the other side out of sight, even if he did die shortly we might never find him so we quickly set up for a follow-up shot. He was at about 400 yards. Given the rush and the continuing difficult terrain I found myself unable to simultaneously hold steady on the goat, keep myself from sliding down the mountain and line my body up correctly with the rifle. I picked the most important two out of three and was rewarded with a second confirmed hit on the goat, and a hit on me as the scope smashed back into my glasses. The “super-goat” continued a rapid escape.

By now I had blood streaming down my forehead, noticed one of the lenses on my glasses had popped out and fallen down a narrow crack between two sharp fractured boulders and I was again fighting my rifle, the bolt stuck again. By any fair measure the goat was winning this battle.

My arm was just long enough to squeeze down between the rocks and recover my glasses lens. After a few minutes of reassembly, we were back in pursuit. Over the course of another hour or so we continued to follow the goat taking increasingly unlikely shots in the hopes of putting him down for good. Scott warned that if we didn't drop him soon, he would get up into the “rough stuff”. I looked at him honestly confused. Seriously? “It gets rougher than this?”, I thought, but said nothing. Scott must have read the expression on my face, and he explained that in the next drainage there were steep cliffs, and it was quite possible the goat would bed-down in an area inaccessible, or fall off a cliff when he died. Neither were good outcomes for us.

Finally we watched as the goat come to rest and the end was near. He tried to keep his head up but eventually it fell to his chest for good. I was happy to see the end of his suffering. He was still a good 300 to 400 yards away across an active avalanche chute, and straight up another couple hundred yards.

In the final account I had taken seven shots, four connecting, the longest confirmed hit at 530 yards. This did not seem like an achievement but rather an embarrassment as the goat surely deserved a quicker and cleaner demise. The sun was setting, we had a light sprinkle of rain, and it was time for next steps.

I made the difficult decision to leave the final upward ascent and field-dressing to my guide Scott, who seemed as fresh as he was this morning. In a feat of superhuman strength John and Scott packed the entire goat carcass off of the mountain that night.

We met up at the tree line where I first laid hands on my goat, (our goat really) and learned that the

billy we had been pursuing was actually a nanny. There is good reason that goat tags are either sex as this one had two guides with many decades of experience fooled. I guess she did have a beard.

This turned out to be the best decision as the next day the mountains were completely covered with snow and the climb back up would have been even more treacherous. And it would be hard to find a white goat under a foot of snow.

By most accounts this hunt would be considered a success. We scouted and located mountain goats one day and on the next day we successfully climbed the mountain, killed a goat, and brought it home. But for some reason this hunt felt gray, not the usual black and white. Not the usual success or failure.

We arrived back at the ranch after midnight. The next day we went into Butte to check the goat in with the local wildlife authorities. The horns taped about 8 1/2 inches in length just as John had estimated through the spotting scope. She was age of 7 1/2 years

and we can only assume she had had several years of successful reproduction despite being without a kid this year.

For the next three days we were bear hunting (seeing several but not able to get a shot on one) while seeing lots of land with many, many elk. Sometimes it felt like we were actually scouting for elk – we saw so many and frequently spent time reviewing them in detail to see which ones would be good for the coming hunt season. The Cargill's main business is guiding for elk on this ranch, and I'd highly recommend it to anyone who wants a good chance at a 300"-360" in true free-range conditions.

Contact John, Scott, and Sherry at:
Iron Wheel Guest Ranch
<http://www.ironwheel.com/>
Cargill@ironwheel.com
406.494.2960
406.491.2960

EMERGENCY WATER DELIVERY IN CLIPPER MOUNTAINS

From the Society for Conversation of Bighorn Sheep (SCBS)

Thanks again to Ca Wild Sheep Foundation for your ongoing and swift action to support the sheep. On June 28th, 2015, 4500 gallons of water was slung into two dry guzzlers in the Clipper Mountains. Sheep immediately came to water as soon as we got out of their way. In addition, thanks also to Guardian Helicopters for stepping up when there was so much going on with all the fires here in Southern California.

With great appreciation and thanks to all the volunteers that stepped up to get this done, again on short notice.

Terry Anderson
Tim Humphreville
Clint Humphreville
Zach Mullin
John Meany
Neal Ringlee and his trustee dog Jeff

Again, SCBS appreciates all the support you give us and look forward to our ongoing efforts to keep our sheep going.

–Terry Anderson



A HUNT OF A LIFETIME

by Russ Renner

It all began on a cold winter morning at a buddy's office here on the far Northwest coast of California. I have hunted deer all my life on a small family owned ranch, but never had I thought to put in for a draw tag for a hunt in California. Abe, a contractor friend was on his computer that morning and gave me his advice on what to put in for and how the point system works. I, myself, had no clue so I took his advice and entered in the drawings for everything he did. He told me "go ahead and enter for the desert big horn ram, you won't draw the tag, but you will still get the points." So I entered in for the hunt.

Low and behold, when the 2014 draw arrived, I drew a desert big horn sheep tag for the Clark Kingston Mountain Range. Since I had little knowledge in big horn sheep hunting, I called Abe for advice. Without hesitation his first call was to Cliff and Tim at Dry Creek Outfitters. They were more than excited to get the call and we were in contact with each other right away. I scheduled my hunt for the first part of January with the intention of bringing Abe.

On January 2nd we set out from Northern California to the Clark Kingston Mountain Range for the hunt of a lifetime. Since Abe could not make the trip, I decided to bring my buddy Van along for a great experience. After 14 hours of driving Van and I pulled into our camp at about two in the afternoon on January 3rd to find Cliff and Tim getting set up for our scheduled 14 day hunt. We were greeted by them with a big smile and we knew right then we were in for a hunt of a lifetime.

As we quickly began to unpack our truck and settle in, Van and I became curious of the terrain and the surrounding mountains and decided to set up our spotting scopes to see what was out there. From the desert floor to the high rocky mountains we were easily looking 2-3 miles. For us, this was like trying to find a needle in a haystack if we were to spot a ram! Cliff was very helpful and gave us some ideas as to what we were looking for.

As dusk came, the Dry Creek crew started to trickle into camp after a long day of searching for "The Big One". One by one we were introduced to a great group of guys who all had a story of a previous hunt or experience. Cliff's son, Matt, was the last guy into camp that evening, which was for a good reason. Matt told us that he had seen a ram a few miles out and put a really good sneak on him to get some video footage. After dinner Matt pulled out his camera as everyone gathered around to see if this ram was worth a second look at daylight. With a little twinkle in Cliff's eye, he turned to me and said, "This one is



worth a second look."

Morning came, Van and I geared up with the expectations of an exciting day and a memorable hunt. Man, were we in for a treat. As we set up our spotting scopes on the desert floor in freezing temperatures, we couldn't help but enjoy the incredible sunrise, shining on the high mountains about two and a half miles from where we sat.

As the minutes and hours ticked by, we patiently scoped out the mountains where Matt had seen the ram previously. Van and I had a hard time determining what was a rock or cactus, and what might be a ram. With Cliffs help, we finally spotted something worth closer inspection. At two and a half miles out, that ram looked tiny and almost unrecognizable. After a half an hour or so of locating the ram and making a game plan, the three of us set out to meet up with Matt to map out the best possible route to get close enough to get a better look, and maybe get a shot at him. From where we stood with Matt, there would be about a mile and a half of steep rocky terrain to hike through, over three different ridge tops and through multiple drainages.

The gear got heavier with every step. Stopping every 10-15 minutes to catch our breath, Matt would relay the coordinates of where the ram was bedded down. Each step got to be more crucial, not to step on a loose rock or stick to make a noise that might alert the ram. From about 800 -900 yards out, Matt stopped dead in his tracks and whispered "get down" to Van and I, who were about 5-6 feet behind him. Not knowing what he saw, we hit the ground, trying not to make a sound. As we lay there on our packs, Matt informed us that there were some wild burros about



200 yards to our right and we didn't want to spook them and alert the ram that we were close. Low and behold those damn burros spotted us and luckily blew out in the right direction, not stirring up the ram we had our sights on.

Slowly we climbed to our feet and began sneaking closer and closer to the far ridgeline where the ram was bedded down. As we closed in to the base of the ridgeline of where we would set up, Matt stopped Van and I to give us some last direction as to where to lie. There would be no more talking from here. Step by step and single file, the three of us quietly climbed up the last incline before we would get a good look at the ram. As we neared the top, Matt mentioned to Van and I to stay back while he peered over a large rock to spot the big boy. Soon he motioned back to me to crawl up and hand him my pack to make a rest to lean over with my rifle.

As I handed him my rifle and pack, the emotional thoughts entered my mind of my best friend and greatest dad ever. It was his rifle I was using, a 270 Winchester. I got it from him when he passed away a few years ago. Matt took the rifle and pack and set up a spot for me to take a good look at the ram. As I crawled up to take the spot, Matt motioned to Van to stay back. Matt didn't want too many heads poking out, so we wouldn't scare the ram. Not liking Matt's decision, Van sat back begrudgingly.

As I took rest over my bag, Matt explained quietly where the ram was bedded down. All I could see of him was his left horn as it poked out from behind a large rock. He was looking straight away and the horn looked massive. My breathing quickened as I scoped him out and Matt assured me that, yes, indeed he was a shooter, but it may be hours before he got out of his bed for me to get a decent shot, and to make it worse, he would only have to take three steps to the north and he would be out of sight for good. Time ticked by with the big boy laying behind the rock and a small little ram feeding close by and keeping a keen eye out for any danger.

Over an hour had gone by with Matt and I conversing very quietly hoping that he would stand up. A restless Van was sitting almost acting like a school kid, hoping that Matt would give him permission to come sit with us. At one point, I see

Van reading the directions to a new video camera that we had bought in route to the hunt. FINALLY, some movement, the ram stood up. Three hundred yards out and he looked massive, even being partially hidden by the rock. Excitement came over me as Matt cautioned me to stay calm, get a good look at him. In what seemed like a lifetime, he took those three awful steps, that we hoped he wouldn't, and disappeared. As we sat there quietly, hoping he would reappear, we watched the small ram mill around, keeping a close eye on his big friend. As hope started to fade, my attention was brought up the ridgeline about 30 yards, there he is, standing front and center, staring straight down on us. He looked enormous! At that instant, I set my sights right on his chest and whispered to Matt "I can take him" Matt, knowing that I had some experience hunting through my life, advised me that he would like to see him turn broadside before I shot, but if I felt confident, go ahead and shoot. It only took him the time of saying that one line before I blasted away with my first shot, and be damned if I did miss him. Shaking like a leaf, I cracked another bullet in the chamber and squeezed off another shot!

At this point, Matt exclaimed "Slow down, you're pulling to the right" So as I put another bullet in the chamber, I thought to myself, think about what dad taught you, and squeeze the trigger, don't pull it. Holding my sights just slightly to the left, I squeezed the trigger one last time knowing I wasn't going to get too many more chances, and in an instant Matt exclaimed "he's hit !, he's hit !"

I pulled my eye away from the scope to catch a glimpse of him lunging forward. It was then that I knew he was hit well and it was only a matter of time before he would succumb. With my knees rattling like they never had before, I stood alongside Matt to shake the hand of what I would say was the hunt of a lifetime.

On side note, Van did get that camera figured out and got some great footage of the ram and the shots it took to kill him. The ram was beautiful and scored a 172, which makes the Boone and Crocket book. All the boys from Dry Creek Outfitters made it to the kill site, and took tons of pictures.

Thank you Cliff, Tim, Matt, and the gang!!!

HOMEMADE PIZZA AND SINGLE MALT SCOTCH AT 4:00 AM

by Kyle Meintzer

I believe that as you get older, the things that are important to you on your hunts change. For me, while I certainly want to fill my tag, the adventure and the time I spend on the mountain in the middle of nowhere with a good guide or by myself has become more important than simply tagging out.

Such was the case last fall when I went to northern British Columbia on a grizzly bear and mountain goat hunt with Matt Leuenberger, owner of Iskut River Outfitters. I'd hunted the area before Matt bought it, so I knew it was full of good goats as well as good grizzlies and lots of both. Our plan was to alternate hunting goats one day, then grizzlies the next. Or even both the same day, depending on how things worked out.

On Day One, we started with mountain goats and while we saw several, none of them really stood out. That afternoon we went glassing for grizzlies and spotted quite a few. They were gorging themselves on blueberries on an old burn low on a mountain side a couple of miles away. So the next morning, off we went, working our way three miles through several nasty alder patches and a few bogs. We arrived on a small ridge not far from Blueberry Hill and spent the day glassing and warming ourselves around a fire to ward off the cold and a persistent drizzle. But while we saw several bears, none of them were special, so as daylight threatened to fade to darkness, back we went through the bogs and the alders.

Now, as those of you who've hunted in western British Columbia surely know, the alders in BC aren't your run-of-the-mill alders No way, no how! In BC, the alders clearly hate hikers, woodsmen, and especially hunters. Why else would they grow so close together, have multiple branches that grow out sideways very low to the ground before curving upwards, thereby making them almost impossible to traverse? So let me say two things about these #@*^<#* trees:

1. BC alders are not conducive to making good time, and;
2. The true source of more four letter words in the English language than you can count is the result of hunters trying to move through the alders in British Columbia.

The next few days were pretty much a repeat of Day One. We saw lots of goats and lots of grizzlies, but nothing we wanted to go after. One day we did spot a lone goat several miles away, way up a mountain. We assumed it was a good Billy, but he was too far away to tell for sure.

A couple of mornings later we saw the same goat



in the same place again, still all by himself. Experience told us he had to be a Billy and probably a good one, so we drove up to a new 'cut line' a power company had just built a little above the highway, and at 9:45 AM, we strapped on our packs and headed up. And up. And up!

Now, as you may know, for the last five years I've taught a 'Getting and Staying in Sheep Shape' seminar at 'The Sheep Show' in Reno. Yet no matter how well physically prepared you are for your high mountain hunts, sooner or later, you're going to encounter something you've not dealt with previously. In this case, for me it was the hundreds of deadfalls we had to climb over on our way up the mountain. These weren't the kind of deadfalls you can just step over. These were 'airborne' deadfalls you had to climb over, frequently placing one foot as high as you could possibly lift it onto the dead tree trunk, then lifting all of your weight, plus the weight of your pack and weapon up with one bent leg. Worse, because we were going uphill, the dead trees were even more of a challenge. As we neared the top of the climb, my quads were beginning to tell me they weren't too sure how many more times they were willing to lift my sixty-six year old body over three-foot high dead tree trunks. That was the first time in several decades I'd been even a little bit concerned as far as my fitness was concerned.

Thankfully, almost at that exact time, we cleared the timberline and were thankfully done with the deadfalls, at least for the uphill part of the trip. We still had a couple of hours to go to get to where I could get in range of the Billy, but other than one short stretch on a very steep side hill where the challenge was in not sliding a few hundred feet down the mountain, the rest of the trek up was not all that difficult.

By 4:15 we got as close to the Billy as Matt figured

we could get without being busted. So I took off my pack, chambered a Barnes .180 gr. VOR-TX TSX cartridge into my thirty year old Sako .300 Win. Mag., set it on my pack and got ready to take the shot.

Unfortunately, when your body is lying at a forty-five degree angle on wet, slippery grass on a steep mountain slope, your body wants to very slowly slide down the hill. That's not conducive to making a good shot!

So I moved back a few feet where I could anchor one foot against a tree, which helped a lot. Yet my upper body still wanted to slowly slide down the mountain because I was still lying at that forty-five degree angle on a steep slope. But there was nothing I could do about that.

Just as I was settling into place, Matt reminded me, "Wait until he stands up." As luck would have it, within a few seconds the Billy, which had been bedded for hours, did just that. We couldn't get a precise range on the Billy, so we ranged a rock outcropping in front of him and another one behind him, then made a 'best guess' of 560 yards. My first shot was a tad high, but seeing a small pyramid of rocks absolutely explode at some unknown distance behind the Billy was pretty cool. A small adjustment in my range estimation resulted in two good hits and the Billy walked slowly over a rise a few yards behind him and disappeared.

"You got him!" Matt said excitedly.

After another hour of hiking yet farther up the mountain, we found the Billy in a small, nasty, rocky little drainage, not far from where he'd been bedded.

It took an hour to take pictures, quarter him and strap him onto our packs. At 6:30, with just an hour of daylight remaining, we started the trek back down the mountain. What a trek that would prove to be!

The first hour was uneventful and we made great time. As dusk faded to darkness, we'd covered a couple of miles and were just above a little creek that would eventually pass not far from the truck. BIG mistake!

Rule #1 in mountain hiking: "If you can hear the creek, you're too danged low!" And boy, were we ever!

As a result, the next two hours were spent trying to negotiate our way through those blanket-blank BC alders on a wet, slippery, very steep side hill with fully loaded packs. In the dark! To get through the alders, more often than not we had to have one guy attempt to spread the branches apart wide enough so the other guy could, while totally horizontal to the sky and wearing a heavy, bulky pack, slide between the branches. Sometimes it worked. Other times, not so much. In those two hours, I doubt we covered more than one-quarter of a mile. I don't remember which we did the most during those two hours; laugh because of the stupidity of it all, or swear because of the difficulty.

When we finally cleared the alders, while the worst was over, the next hour wasn't much more fun. We then had to climb up the mountain to get

away from the danged creek. That required going up slippery, very steep slopes covered with more deadfalls, then just for fun, the climb up was infested with Devil's Club.

If you have never experienced the joys of Devil's Club, DON'T! This horrible plant is named after the Devil for a reason, but probably only because the person who gave it that name couldn't think of a worse name. Lucky for me, I'd experienced Devil's Club in the same area in 2004 and it was not pretty. So on this hunt, I'd learned from that experience and wore leather work gloves. That proved to be a great decision and as a result, I had no problems.

The rest of the trip down to the truck took 'only' four more hours. We had to negotiate all of the deadfalls, albeit going downhill, which made things easier. But at midnight, it started to rain, which just made it all that much more miserable. Because the forest was heavily canopied, no GPS signals were available, and as a result, when we FINALLY got to the cut line, we were over a mile from the truck, where we arrived at 2:00 AM. Although I started to get sleepy about an hour before we got back to the truck, despite over sixteen hours of almost continuous climbing and descending on the mountain, I never got even a little bit sore or tired. 'Sheep Shape' works!

During our descent, Matt realized we were going to get back to camp after midnight, so he called his wife back at camp to tell her we were going to be late; very late.

God bless her soul, she had made two pizzas for us, ready to put in the oven. So when we finally got back to camp, changed clothes and dried out, we had two hot, homemade pizzas for dinner at 4:00 AM, along with a couple of flasks of McCallan single malt scotch I'd been saving for precisely such an occasion.

This was truly an adventure of a lifetime, topped with pizza and single malt scotch at four o'clock in the morning. Does it get any better than that?

Not in my mind!

Notes:

1. The hike down the mountain could have been a disaster and a dangerous one. But thanks to great headlamps (mine was a Petzel), great raingear, and great trekking poles, we experienced no problems and arrived back at the truck safely and none the worse for wear.
2. Buy the best glass you can afford. When I decided to replace the old wood stock on my Sako with a synthetic one three years ago, I decided that rifle deserved a much better scope than the old Leopold I had on it. So I splurged and bought a Swarovski Z5. What a difference that made! With the old scope, there would have been no way I would have even thought about taking the shot. With the Swarovski, along with a fine old rifle, the task was far easier.

RESPONDING TO RESPIRATORY DISEASE

by Alexandra P. Few, PhD

Shortly after celebrating our nation's independence this July, about 25 biologists and veterinarians from the western states and provinces gathered in Fort Collins, Colorado to attend a 3 day workshop intended to standardize disease sampling across bighorn populations in the U.S. and Canada. Respiratory disease is widely recognized as one of the greatest threats to the persistence of bighorn sheep in North America. This training sponsored by the Wild Sheep Foundation provided instruction on protocols for herd health monitoring, sample collection for disease surveillance, clinical assessments, photographic documentation of mortalities, and hands on necropsy experience of animals with complex respiratory disease pathology. In attendance for California were myself and veterinarian Ben Gonzales. Also in attendance was veterinarian Jenny Powers of the National Park Service, who has been coordinating interagency efforts to respond to the respiratory disease outbreak in bighorn in the Mojave ecosystem.

The training received at this "Train the Trainer" workshop was immediately put to use. Upon returning to the Bishop office after the workshop, I instructed two Region 6 scientific aids headed to the Mojave for a week of field work on necropsy procedures and tissue sample collection using the teaching materials provided at the workshop. That week they put those skills into practice performing a necropsy on a recently dead ram in the North Bristols. Region 6 scientific aids recovered and necropsied 2 additional recently dead animals this summer, a collared ewe in the South Bristols and a lamb in the Marbles. An additional collared ewe died in the Newberry Mountains and was necropsied by Daniella Dekelaita, a graduate student at Oregon State University. Tissue samples have been sent to the California Animal Health and Food Safety Lab for analysis. In addition to providing instructional materials, this workshop resulted in an updated bighorn necropsy protocol prepared by Ben Gonzales and Jenny Powers for the California Animal Health

and Food Safety (CAHFS) Lab in San Bernardino.

Respiratory disease outbreaks across the west have provided many biologists opportunities to study the microbes contributing to pneumonic pathologies. The workshop in Fort Collins closed with attendees coming to a consensus that it is time to move beyond the microbes and focus on how we are going to conserve bighorn in the presence of respiratory disease. Despite a west-wide standardized protocol developed by the Forest Service to identify and reduce the risk of contact between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep and goats, outbreaks of pneumonia are not in decline. As bighorn populations grow and expand the risk of respiratory disease increases. How do we respond to respiratory disease outbreaks? Many strategies have been tried: administering antibiotics, culling visibly sick individuals, culling entire herds that are chronic poor performers, and identifying and culling individuals chronically shedding a pathogen. These responses vary in cost and effectiveness. Often the appropriate response is determined by the severity of the outbreak, the number of individuals affected, and the degree to which the outbreak is geographically isolated from other bighorn populations.

The Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep Recovery Program is creating a respiratory disease emergency response plan that considers the factors listed above. Numbers of Sierra bighorn continue to increase as does their distribution resulting in more opportunities for contact with domestic sheep and goats. This is particularly concerning for Sierra bighorn because immunological tests indicate that they have had no exposure to respiratory pathogens in the last several decades making them particularly vulnerable to respiratory disease. This plan will ensure all regulatory mechanisms have been addressed, and CDFW is able to respond quickly should disease or contact with domestics occur. We look forward to the day where there are west-wide standardized protocols for responding to disease outbreaks just as there are now west-wide standardized protocols for disease sampling.



2015 WSF CHAPTER & AFFILIATE SUMMIT REPORT

by Donald C. Martin

On June 17th through June 20th, the 8th Annual Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF) Chapter & Affiliate Summit was held in Kelowna, British Columbia. The event was hosted by the Wild Sheep Society of British Columbia (WSSBC) and was held at the Delta Grand Okanagan Hotel on the waterfront of beautiful Lake Okanagan.

The purpose of this annual meeting was to bring together state WSF chapter and affiliate delegates as well as other wild sheep advocates and wildlife conservation non-government organizations (NGO's) to further the mission of WSF to "put and keep sheep on the mountain." The meeting was also an excellent opportunity for State chapters and affiliates to network and form mutually beneficial working relationships to increase membership, develop more effective fundraising strategies, and increase public awareness regarding the challenges facing wild sheep.

The opening night reception was an entertaining affair with welcoming remarks by Gray Thornton, President and CEO of WSF, followed by a wildlife identification challenge put together by WSSBC. Teams of delegates were asked to identify the species of animals based on antlers, skulls, teeth, fur, and scat. I am proud to say the challenge was won by myself and the two delegates from the Washington Chapter, Glen Landrus and Bryan Bailey. The evening was capped off with the auction of a privately guided sheep viewing, to take place the following afternoon; funds will be used for a wild sheep/domestic sheep separation project.

First official day of the Summit started bright and early with a morning meeting, again with opening remarks by Gray Thornton reiterating the mission statement of WSF. The subject quickly turned to the annual "Sheep Show" and a recap of National's annual profit and loss report with the good news that overall net income was up 10% and dedicated restricted funds known as the "Ensuring the Future of Wild Sheep" fund (ETFOWS fund) was growing at a rate of 12%. All very good news for wild sheep. National headquarter's move from Cody, Wyoming to Bozeman, Montana was then discussed. Gray Thornton succinctly outlined the benefits of moving the WSF headquarters to Bozeman showing the cost analysis and benefits of the move versus staying in Cody.

WSF Director Jack Atcheson, Jr. then led a discussion regarding the proposed draft of the 15 page WSF "North American Conservation Strategy 2020." This all-inclusive action plan is intended to be a foundation for developing a conservation strategy based more on measurable metrics with a strategic goal of effectively managing, accessing, utilizing, and supporting North American Caprinae species and their habitat. Mr. Atcheson went on to suggest that it is more important to "take action than advocate that someone else take action."

The floor was then turned over to Joe Hosmer, President of the Safari Club Foundation. Joe was pleased to announce a new partnership with WSF and a six-figure donation to WSF for their thinhorn conservation plan to benefit dall and stone sheep in



The East shore of Lake Okanagan was recently transformed into ideal sheep habitat as a result of forest fire. The introduced CA bighorns have doubled in population since their translocation



Dr. Vern Bleich (left foreground) and others discuss challenges facing B.C.'s Vaseaux Lake California Bighorns with the provincial biologist (center).

British Columbia, the Yukon and Northwest Territories, and Alaska. Fifty percent (50%) of the donation, along with 3 to 1 matching Pittman-Robertson (PR) funds, has been earmarked for a new comprehensive Alaska dall sheep management plan. This was a nice segue into a discussion led by WSF Director, Kevin Hurley, as to whether or not all state wildlife agencies were fully utilizing PR matching funds for their state sheep projects being funded by NGO's.

WSF Director Jim Wilson then led a discussion regarding needed updates to WSF-National's website and opened the floor to a round-table discussion regarding online membership applications, a National schedule of WSF events, updateable blog, member's forum, and mobile-phone capability. Jim continued the discussion by encouraging expansion of communication of State chapters/affiliates with WSF-National and a more robust communication between the state chapters and their delegates.

Meeting was adjourned at noon and delegates were then transported by bus south to Vaseaux Lake, where they spent the afternoon observing California bighorn sheep and had an opportunity to discuss disease issues and other human/sheep conflicts with the local provincial sheep biologist.

Day two of the Summit began with a presentation by WSF Youth Coordinator, Dr. Ryan Brock. Dr. Brock outlined the explosive growth and success of WSF's youth program and went on to outline the positive impacts of the program. Dr. Brock's presentation was immediately followed by an open forum discussion regarding membership and state chapter annual fundraisers led by WSF Director Kyle Meintzer.

The floor was then turned over to Idaho chapter President, James Jeffress, who made an emergency call for funds to help retire the "Deadman" sheep grazing permit in Idaho. \$30,000 of the necessary \$33,000 had been raised and Mr. Jeffress asked for an additional \$3,000 to meet their final goal. Within seconds, the Midwest Chapter immediately pledged \$2,000 and Wyoming chapter pledged the remaining \$1,000 to retire the grazing permit.

Remainder of the meeting was led by WSF Director Doug Sayer who engaged the delegates in a discussion regarding state legislative affairs strategy. And much like Mr. Atcheson, Mr. Sayer suggested that state chapters work harder to define measurable progress as part of the "North American Conservation Strategy 2020." Mr. Sayer also encouraged state chapters to reach out to pertinent legislators and cultivate working relationships with elected officials who can positively impact sheep legislative issues.

After the meeting was adjourned, the delegates were again taken by bus south of Peachland, B.C., where they had an opportunity to discuss the reintroduction of California bighorn sheep to the East shore of Okanagan Lake. The provincial sheep biologist outlined the trap and translocation of sheep



A group of California bighorn sheep were observed near Vaseaux Lake, British Columbia.

to the East shore of Lake Okanagan in the wake of a huge forest fire that created an expanse of ideal sheep habitat where there had not previously been a wild sheep for over 100 years. The delegates then boarded a flotilla of boats, traveled across the lake, and viewed over 40 head of B.C.'s California bighorns. The evening concluded with a wonderful wild-game dinner overlooking the Okanagan wine country and a small auction that raised over \$24,000 for the WSSBC's sheep separation project.

Overall, the Chapter and Affiliate summit was considered a huge success. WSF Director Marc Hansen spoke to the success of previous Summits and was pleased to see the "North American Conservation Strategy" beginning to take shape. He simply remarked, "This is the best meeting we've had," and that was, in no small part, due to the hard work of our host, the Wild Sheep Society of British Columbia and specifically Rob Kopecky, Rodney Zeeman, Chris Barker, and Mari Wood.

The 9th Annual Chapter and Affiliate Summit will be held next summer in Nebraska and will be hosted by the Iowa Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Andrew Pontius
Mountain Caribou – NorthWest Territories
2015



Andrew Pontius
Dall Ram – NorthWest Territories
August 2015



John Dickerson
California Bighorn
(Biggest CA bighorn taken on Nevada
Governor's tag since 2008)



Ken Crother and Cody Brinkerhoff
Antelope – Nevada
2015
Ram Ridge Outfitters



Kyle Meintzer
Mountain Goat
2015



Mike Borel
Koryak Snow Sheep – Siberia
August 2015

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Bob Keagy
California Bighorn Sheep
August 2015
Ashnola Guides, British Columbia



Ralph Adams
Ram – NorthWest Territories
July 2015



Helen Schwantje
Rocky Mountain Goat with hairloss – SE British Columbia
2015



Hannah Crother
First Turkey



Hannah Crother
First Buck – Nevada
Fall 2014

QUARTERLY REPORT FOR CALIFORNIA DEPT. OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
MOJAVE DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP RESEARCH PROJECT
May – August 2015

Issued by: Daniella Dekelaita & Clinton W. Epps, Oregon State University

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Investigate population trends in several ecologically distinct ranges to evaluate apparent effects of disease and environment on herd response.
- 2) Examine seasonal distribution shifts and movement to identify changes in potential contact rates between groups and potential patterns of disease transmission.
- 3) Expand genetics work.

METHODS

- 1) Obtain demographic data from cameras at water features in 10 focal ranges from May through September. Record visual observations and visually monitor collared females to track lambing status over the summer.
- 2) Estimate ewe survival using VHF and GPS collar data as well as camera data.
- 3) Integrate collar and camera data to estimate lamb and ewe survival pre- and post-disease; use visual observations to verify estimates.
- 4) Analyze collar data to examine seasonal distribution shifts and movement patterns.
- 5) Analyze blood and fecal samples to update estimates of genetic structure, gene flow, current connectivity, and genetic diversity of neutral markers and immune system genes.

WORK TO DATE

May – September 2014

Fieldwork

Installed cameras and collected demographic data in the following ranges: Marble Mtms, Old Dad Peak, Clippers, Woods/Hackberries, S. Bristols.

Surveyed sheep on the ground and recorded visual observations in the following ranges: Marble Mtms, Old Dad Peak, Clippers, Woods/Hackberries, Cady Mtms, South Sodas, Providence Mtms.

Collected fecal samples for genetic analysis.

Necropsied dead animals and collected tissue samples for disease testing.

October – January 2015

Capture

Assisted with capture in Peninsular and Mojave Ranges; provided 10 ram collars for deployment in Marble Mountains and S. Bristols and collected blood and fecal samples from all captured animals.

Labwork

Analyzed samples and obtained new estimates of genetic structure, gene flow, and genetic diversity of immune system genes.

February – April 2015

Training

Demographic data analysis course, Oregon State University, (Jan-Mar 2015).

Presentations

Preliminary Estimation of Changes in Genetic Structure of a Desert Bighorn Sheep Metapopulation Over Two Generations.

Desert Bighorn Council Meeting, April 2015.

Desert Bighorn Sheep Immunity During a Mycoplasma

Ovipneumoniae Outbreak. Desert Bighorn Council Meeting, April 2015.

Integrating Radio-Collar and Camera Data to Assess Impacts of Pneumonia in the Mojave Desert; A Study Design (Poster).

Desert Bighorn Council Meeting, April 2015.

Desert Bighorn Sheep Disease Monitoring and Updates. Sheep Summit, April 2015.

May – July/August 2015

Fieldwork

Collected camera data in the following ranges: Marble Mtms, Old Dad Peak (ODP), Clippers, Woods/Hackberries, S. Bristols, N. Bristols, Piutes/Castle Mtms, S. Sodas, and Cady Mtms, Helped direct surveys and gather observation data in Marble Mtms, ODP, S. Bristols, N. Bristols, and S. Sodas to substantiate camera work.

Collected fecal samples for nitrogen analysis from February to June in Marble Mtms and ODP. Collected 269 fecal samples for genetic analysis in all ranges included in camera study, as well as Providence Mtms, Marl Mtms, Indian/Kane Spring (Club Peak area), and Newberry Mtms.

Assembled new mortality kits and assisted with necropsies/ tissue sampling for disease testing. A total of 4 animals were recovered in the Newberries, Marbles, N. Bristols, and S. Bristols.

Developed capture plan for fall 2015 capture.

Labwork

Initiated extraction of 2015 DNA samples, approximately 50% of extractions complete by Aug 1 2015.

PROPOSED WORK FOR NEXT QUARTER

September – November 2015

Capture

Assist with capture in Mojave Ranges; will provide 17 ram collars for deployment in Marble Mountains, S. Bristols, ODP, and Clippers. Collect blood and fecal samples from all captured animals.

Labwork

Analyze samples from capture to obtain new estimates of genetic structure, gene flow, and genetic diversity of immune system genes.

Analyze fecal nitrogen samples from 2014-2015.

Data Analysis

Synthesize and vet camera, collar, and count data; begin demographic analysis and generate preliminary estimates of lamb survival and lamb/ewe ratios from 2015 field season.

2016 BANQUET AND FUNDRAISER

Rancho Cordova, California

As late summer and fall are here most of us are done worrying about draws and have moved onto to our respective hunts in other counties, states and, for some, other countries. Already the stories and pictures are starting to arrive on my email and pictures on my phone. I enjoy them all. For some of us we were lucky to draw our tags and for some of us we are blessed with the ability to go on hunts in faraway places. For some of us, we were fortunate enough to attend last years banquet and fundraiser and find one of the many hunts in our auction.

With that in mind I would like to take this opportunity to remind our members and our affiliates to remind and invite their friends to our 2016 banquet and fundraiser in Rancho Cordova, California on Saturday April 30th.

This year's event was a success not because of us, it was a success because of you: the members, our affiliates, and our friends who took the time to attend and enjoy a great evening of food, drink, raffle, auction as well as our "PUT ONE BACK CASINO." You have helped us raise money that has most recently

been spent on actions such as water hauling and future survey flights of some of our desert sheep zones. Most critical are the surveys that are going to take place – those should hopefully help in getting our tag numbers back up.

I would like to go out on a limb and say next years' event will be better than the last with new items on our auction list such as an Alaska Copper River Bison tag as well as a Nunivak Island Muskox. We are also working on a Nevada Antelope landowner tag including guiding and many more. We hope to have many returning items that were successful as well as add as many exciting hunts and trips as we can to keep it interesting. Most of all, we are crossing our fingers that our California Desert surveys go well enough that we might be blessed to once again offer another sheep tag again. Wouldn't that be cool.

Please take the time to mark your calendars early, call your friends and invite them early, as we will fill the hall this year and hope that each and every one of you will be there to help raise money to "PUT AND KEEP SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN".

CAWSF BOARD ELECTIONS UPDATE

Each July the membership elects the Board members; the Board then elects it's officers. We've just completed both and the results are as follows:

We have one new Board member – Craig Van Arsdale is from Concord and is 29 years old. He will bring a younger person's perspective. Welcome Craig.

The Board elected the following officers:

President – Paul Brisso
VP Operations – Mike Borel
VP Northern CA – Aaron Armstrong
VP Southern CA – George Kerr
Secretary – Ken Crother
Treasurer – Adam Casagrande

Other Board members are: Ken Fish, Ben Gordon, Robert Keagy, Victor Mancuso, Jr, Donald C. Martin, Roger McCosker, Don Priest, and Cliff St. Martin

You may contact any Board member with your ideas for helping wild sheep in California or concerns you may have.



THE CUSHENBURY BIGHORN SHEEP POPULATION: MIGHT DEER BE THE SOURCE OF THE MITES?

by Vernon C. Bleich, PhD

As many readers are aware, the population of bighorn sheep occupying Cushenbury Canyon on the north slope of the San Bernardino Mountains is one of the smallest—and likely one of the most vulnerable—populations of that species in California. The most recent published information regarding the number of bighorn sheep resident in and near Cushenbury Canyon indicates that population numbers fewer than 25 individuals (and likely is even smaller than that). When bighorn sheep are seen on the Mitsubishi Mine, located just west of Cushenbury Canyon and that is used extensively by those animals, the staff reports those observations to the environmental office at the mine. Each observation is accompanied with additional information including the observer's name, the date, the group composition as determined by the observer, and the location where the sheep was (or were) seen. Dr. Jeff Villepique, an environmental scientist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife is arguably among the most knowledgeable bighorn sheep biologists in that agency and works closely with mine officials to help conserve that small population. In fact, Dr. Villepique is actively working with the Mitsubishi Corporation to establish an endowment that will fund conservation efforts for bighorn sheep on and near the mine well into the future.

Bighorn sheep occupying the San Bernardino Mountains are infested with a mite (*Psoroptes* sp.), that could play a role in the health of Cushenbury population. As part of a long-term investigation that began in 2000, biologists have sampled the population on numerous occasions to examine herd health and simultaneously fit bighorn sheep with radio collars. The origin of the mites occurring among those bighorn sheep has been of some interest, and although the incidence of mite infestation in California is wider than previously suspected, numerous opportunities to sample bighorn sheep in a single location in which bighorn sheep were sympatric with (i.e., occurred in the same location as) mule deer provided the opportunity to test the hypothesis that the mites were transmitted to bighorn sheep from deer.

In earlier work by Randy Singer and his colleagues (Singer et al. 1997) that was conducted near Cushenbury Canyon, no evidence of mite infestation was detected among the 15 mule deer examined (nor did they detect any mites among the cattle they examined). Subsequent efforts to capture and examine

mule deer near Cushenbury Canyon by Jim Davis, a now-retired California Department of Fish and Game wildlife biologist, and his colleagues yielded additional information on the presence of mites in that species: no evidence was detected among the 34 deer that were examined during those investigations.

My collaborators and I worked with Jim and combined the data he collected with information reported by Singer et al. (1997) and determined that, in all probability, mule deer were not the source of the mites infesting bighorn sheep on the north and east end of the San Bernardino Mountains. In fact, we calculated that there is an extremely high probability ($P=0.9945$) that the infestation rate among mule deer in the areas examined is no more than 10% (Bleich et al. 2014). It is not possible to state with certainty that no deer are infested with mites without examining every mule deer occupying that mountain range, but the evidence at hand makes it highly unlikely that the mites are transmitted from deer to the sheep in the area of interest.

Some of you may say to yourselves, "So what?" The implications of these results are, however, important. *Psoroptes* mites are known to cause hearing loss in bighorn sheep when they clog the ear canal, and there has been speculation by other investigators that such hearing loss increases the susceptibility of bighorn sheep to predation. Although perhaps only coincidental, predation has been the leading cause of mortality among bighorn sheep occupying Cushenbury Canyon and proximate areas. That deer are an unlikely source of the mites infesting bighorn sheep has meaningful implications for the possibility of treating mite infestation in that small population and, potentially, for mortality due to predation. The results of experimental treatment efforts are soon to be published in a professional journal, and will be a subject of a future article in *California Wild Sheep*.

Literature Cited

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- Singer, R. S., D. A. Jessup, I. A. Gardner, and W. M. Boyce. 1997. Pathogen exposure patterns among sympatric populations of bighorn sheep, mule deer, and cattle. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 33:377-382.
- Dr. Vern Bleich is an independent biologist that was employed by the California Department of Fish and Game for 34 years, the organization from which he retired as a Senior Environmental Scientist in 2008. He remains active in wildlife conservation activities and research, particularly with respect to bighorn sheep and other large mammals inhabiting arid environments, and is a regular contributor to *California Wild Sheep*. Readers interested in obtaining copies of the papers cited above can contact Vern at: vcbleich@gmail.com

TRACKING BIGHORN SHEEP SURVIVAL FOLLOWING A PNEUMONIA OUTBREAK IN THE MOJAVE DESERT

by Daniella Dekelaita

In the summer of 2014 I began working with Dr. Clinton Epps and Dr. John Wehausen to track bighorn sheep survival in the Mojave Desert after a pneumonia die-off the previous year. Sick and dying sheep were observed at Old Dad Peak (Kelso Mountains, Mojave National Preserve) in 2013 during a die-off event that first signaled the pneumonia outbreak. Since that time, pneumonia-infected sheep have been observed throughout the Mojave system, and lamb survival appears to be suffering the greatest impact.

In response to the die-off, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) collared 116 sheep in mountain ranges throughout the Mojave Desert in 2013 and 2014, to test for disease and track adult survival. The Department found pneumonia-inducing pathogens present in all but 2 ranges, suggesting that the disease may have spread through the system from 1 or multiple sources, and has either not yet reached all populations or has encountered a barrier. Sample sizes, however, may have also been too small to detect the presence of disease in the 2 ranges. The collaring effort will continue through this year to increase sample sizes and extend work into other ranges as well.

What we know so far about this outbreak is that multiple pathogens may be contributing to the disease, but one pathogen in particular, *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae*, seems to be the common denominator in most cases. The pathogen was likely introduced by contact between bighorn sheep and domestic sheep, possibly entering the system from a single point source and transmitted subsequently by individual bighorn moving across the landscape. While there were no other adult die-offs detected after the initial episode at Old Dad Peak, sick lambs have been observed in several ranges and lamb mortality appears to have increased significantly in most ranges.

Interestingly, testing of archived blood serum has revealed that the disease was present in 3 ranges south of Interstate 40 as early as 2001, and sick adult bighorn sheep were also observed in 1 of those ranges that same year. During the most recent outbreak there were no adult die-offs observed in southerly populations, which begs the question of whether bighorn sheep previously exposed to pneumonia may develop some kind of resistance to the disease. We can only speculate that adults in previously-exposed populations may be better able to survive future exposure to specific pneumonia-causing pathogens, but lambs clearly remain susceptible and their

survival has become a grave concern.

I am currently working on a PhD research project with Oregon State University (OSU), the National Park Service (NPS), CDFW, and Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) to study the impacts of epizootic pneumonia on desert bighorn sheep in the Mojave Desert over the next 2 years. As part of this project, I will be collecting and analyzing camera data from sheep at water sources in several ranges in California and Nevada to track lambing success of collared ewes from May to September, and estimate current rates of recruitment and lamb survival. Adult survival estimates will be derived from collar data as well as ground and aerial surveys. I will also examine the effects of disease by analyzing adult and lamb survival with respect to environmental and other important variables pre- and post-outbreak, and incorporate information from historic camera and survey data to help characterize these demographics. Finally, I will compare estimates across ranges to further assess how survival may be affected by differences in habitat.

In addition, I will use GPS collar location data to study animal movement and examine the potential for disease transmission in this system, which will complement the genetic connectivity and disease immunology research currently being conducted by Drs. Clinton Epps and Anna Jolles at OSU. Dr. Epps and Dr. Jolles are research professors that have been investigating the implications of gene flow and disease expression in desert bighorn for the past several years. Our combined goal is ultimately to better understand disease dynamics and identify risk factors to improve management of bighorn sheep populations in the Mojave Desert.

This research project would not be possible without the help of multiple individuals and partners. I would like to thank all collaborators from CDFW, NPS, NDOW, OSU, United States Geologic Survey, the Society for Conservation of Wild Sheep, and the California Wild Sheep Foundation for their contributions and continued support. And, I extend an extra thank you to Terry Anderson for his field guidance and dedication to bighorn conservation, and to Dr. John Wehausen and my advisor Dr. Clinton Epps for their ideas, ongoing commitment, and contribution of current and historic data.

DFW UPDATE

by Kyle Meintzer

While there's not a lot of news to report this quarter, what little there is, is very, very positive!

First, the helicopter contract for aerial surveys has now been signed by the Department! Air Shasta Rotor & Wing will begin aerial sheep surveys in all current Hunt Zones later this year. This will be the first aerial survey for sheep in California since 2009, so this is a very big deal!

In addition, thanks to CA WSF, Air Shasta will also be surveying five mountain ranges that are not currently hunt zones. We hope to document a huntable population of desert bighorn sheep in the combined Newberry, Ord and Rodman mountain ranges. If the survey does so, another survey of those ranges will be conducted again in 2016 to verify the results. If a huntable population is again documented, we expect a new Hunt Zone to follow! In addition to these three ranges, the Old Woman and Chemhuevi ranges will also be surveyed. We know there are sheep there, and we know there are quite a few sheep there. Only no one knows how many sheep are there. We intend to find out!

A grant for funding this second survey was approved by the Big Game Advisory Committee and approved by the Department. In June, the Department suggested they could attach our grant money to their contract with Shasta Air, Rotor and Wing, to which we were happy to agree. By doing so, CA WSF will not have to have our own contract, we will not have to supply the observers, and best of all, we will not have to worry about DFW accepting our numbers, as DFW personnel will be the observers.

Second, we have made major progress with the Department on the issue of using unmanned aerial vehicles for surveying big game.

Back in June, CA WSF Director Adam Cassagrande asked me if I was familiar with a company in Reno called DroneAmerica. I was not, so I set up a meeting with them at their facility so I might learn more about their capabilities.

I was very impressed with not only their technology, but with what they were doing with wildlife surveys as well. As a result, I set up a meeting with DroneAmerica and five key people from DFW.

That meeting was held in Sacramento on the morning of August 12. To say the least, the meeting was a huge success!

In attendance for DFW were Craig Stowers and Regina Abella, along with the leaders of DFW's elk, deer and bear management teams. Three people from DroneAmerica attended.

The DroneAmerica team started out by asking the DFW folks what their past experience with drones

had been. As I'd known, it was laughably horrible, to put it kindly. And the DFW team also knew that, so was very skeptical of using drones for surveying big game animals.

Then the DroneAmerica guys started demonstrating the capabilities of drones, using videos to show their deliverables.

You should have seen the expressions on the DFW peoples' faces once they saw and learned what 'real' drones can and are doing. They couldn't have been more interested and excited by what they were hearing and seeing.

In the end, both sides agreed to:

1. Draft a non-binding MOU on how they can work together. DFW will provide the asks and wants and DroneAmerica will respond with the deliverables.
2. A demonstration project will be undertaken and Desert Bighorn Sheep will be the target/focus!

Starting with sheep makes the most sense for a lot of reasons, the biggest one being sheep are almost entirely on BLM and US military land. That takes the private-land drone regulations and prohibitions out of the equation.

The advantages of using drones instead of helicopters for aerial surveys are many, but include:

1. They are a LOT cheaper! A survey for sheep using helicopters would cost at least twice as much as a similar survey that used drones. That frees up a lot of money that can then be used for other wildlife projects.
2. Drones are really nothing more than a vehicle for carrying cameras. Numerous very high tech cameras, infrared cameras and telescopic cameras are used on all flights. This will produce much better video, stills, and, documented results than would be the case using the current way to survey wildlife.
3. Best of all, no one will die if a drone crashes!

A HUGE "Thank You" to Adam for sending me some information on this company a few months back so I could check them out and determine if their technology might be helpful for us.

VISION QUEST

by Carlos Gallinger, *thewayofthings.org*



All hunter gatherer cultures throughout the world past or present inculturated a tradition of a vision quest in one form or another. They usually culminated in a dream or vision that was interpreted as a message from the spirit world. These dreams and visions derive much of their power and influence from the animal imagery and symbolism they contained. So influential are these dreams and visions that people would often identify themselves with these images seen during their vision quest. This led to such names as Sitting bull and Crazy horse. While these vision quests are rich in culture and mysticism the foundation is vision itself. So in order to understand the vision quest regardless of its culture or motivation one must understand the process of vision in depth.

What we see and how we see it is an amazing process that starts with a cosmic origin that is photons of light leaving the sun. When they reach the earth they bounce off something, perhaps a deer. Then these photons go through the lens of the eyes and onto the retina where they form an image which is translated into pulses of electrons that are sent down the optic nerve and then deep into the brain.

So we know this chain reaction of photons images and electrons reaches the brain, does that mean they reach the mind? Sometimes they don't, they fall off into an abyss that is neither the brain nor the mind, a place where vast amounts of potential information just disappears. To survive and become part of the conscious mind, to become a memory there must be a mechanism to receive and understand them, and properly file them away. This mechanism and the philosophy that goes with it affects everything we perceive and do.

In order to understand vision as it relates to

the vision quest one must have a multifaceted understanding of the animal imagery. To do this will go through a scenario that many of us are familiar with, and perhaps played various parts in this classic scenario. We can start with a group of people casually walking through the woods on a beautiful sunny morning. One of them is a seasoned hunter. He is walking through a landscape that he knows and understands. As he walks along he sees squirrels birds and other wildlife that the other people just don't seem to see. Finally they come to a deer and he points it out. The other people simply don't see it, though they want to. So the hunter give some directions that goes something like this. Look at that big tree. The deer is to the right of it and a little closer to us". With this instruction the people still don't see the deer, even though it's visible with average eyesight and in their field of view. Then because of their talking and staring at it, the deer begins to move. Then like magic everybody sees the deer. After this the group just keeps on walking and talking, never to ponder the deep lessons that were there to learn.

There is much to learn in this scenario, and on many levels. This knowledge is truly esoteric in nature and those that possess it, can use it, to consciously utilize these kinds of situations as they happen. To do this one also needs to know some technical information that can be used as building blocks to build a structured form of knowledge that is beautiful and useful by design. For instance rays of light "information" bounced back and forth from one mind to another in our scenario. Predator and prey, each with its own type of vision and perception. One person saw the deer right away and the others could not, until it was pointed out and it moved. They could not perceive its presence even though it was in their field of view. That is to say it was all physically there, the rays of light, the image on the retina the electrical signal to the brain, yet the pattern was not recognized. So their subconscious and conscious mind were not aware of the physical reality of the deer's presence.

So what was the difference between the mind of the old hunter and the other people? In the old hunter's mind there are many images of deer, facing him, facing to the left facing to the right, in good light and bad light and so on. All this is in his memory, this gives his subconscious something to work with. Patterns that can be matched up to the constant stream images in the form of pulses of electrons entering the brain and the mystery of mind. One of the ways that this old hunter collected

so many images in his mind is with the use of modern optics.

One of the first things we have to understand about optical equipment such as binoculars and spotting scopes is that magnification is just part of the total advantage they give you. We all start collecting images of deer, bighorn sheep, and other wildlife when we accidentally run across them. The eye that we see them with essentially has one power of magnification and about a 5 mm Aperture or opening, so numerically speaking the eye is 1x5. If you are viewing an animal at a distance with a pair of binoculars that are 10 x 50 you are essentially 10 times as close. This means you can find an animal 10 times as far away than with the eye alone. This in itself means you will see perhaps as many as 10 times the amount of animals with these optics. But one must remember these are 10 x 50 and this 50 has a significance all its own, that should be understood. It is a measure of the diameter of the objective or front lens. When calculated as surface area, it collects roughly 100 times more light than the 5 mm eye alone. This relates to the quality of the image in the form of detail, color and brightness. So with all this we can see that the old hunter has literally seen many more animals, and with a very high image quality. It is these images in the form of memories that are in his mind and available to the subconscious to work with, to identify the elements of the outside world.

There are other advantages that the use of optics provides that are somewhat unknown and rarely discussed and thereby part of this esoteric knowledge. This is their ability to focus the conscious mind and direct the subconscious. This aspect of using optics such as binoculars and spotting scopes is every bit as important and powerful as their magnification and light gathering ability. So this process is worth examining and understanding.

When somebody brings up a pair of binoculars to their eyes the first things that happens is it literally removes any and all peripheral distractions from the eye and thereby to the conscious mind. This "focuses" all this attention somewhere on a distant hillside, where the conscious mind can pick through the boulders and cactus to look for a distant ram or deer. Every time the conscious mind does this it learns more about the visual process as well as how to concentrate and direct its motivation, this prolonged and refined state of desire to see a ram or a deer. This strengthens the communication process between the conscious and subconscious mind. So at the end of all this the subconscious mind has clear and decisive directions to follow, with a wide range of strong and precise images to work with. This all starts when we pull the binoculars out of their case or put the strap around our neck. This is a ritual with real meaning in the real world, because it tells the conscious



and subconscious what is expected of them. This has psychological power similar to putting on a uniform or camouflage clothing and there is more power in these small rituals if we understand them consciously. Another important difference in the old hunter's mind is that he has stalked and killed these animals. These are deliberate and emotional experiences which put willpower and drama in to these primal animal images in his mind, the likes of which there is no other way to acquire. So it is, these concepts and experiences affect what we see what we remember and what we do. If we sum this all up we find that equates to a large part of our identity, and to understand this, is self-knowledge.

This understanding of light perception and consciousness is part of the identity of all animals. Whether predator or prey, they manipulate light with their conscious and subconscious mind to orchestrate the properties of perception and deception to their advantage. We can see this in the design and coloration of many animals. Many have a color scheme that is played out worldwide. If you're looking head on or from the side they are camouflaged. And if you're behind them you'll see the bright white rump patch that stands out. These physical attributes are part of their identity, and sometimes it's how we identified these animals with names such as the cottontail rabbit and the white tailed deer.

So let's look at the design of the white tailed deer to examine this phenomena a little further. When we look at the white rump patch of white tailed deer one of the first thing we will notice is that it is not static. The deer can move his tail with his conscious or subconscious mind. We can understand this as a deliberate variation in reflecting the photons that are bouncing off of it. This is the animate using the inanimate to produce a signal to change the thought processes of other conscious entities. This in turn affects the thought processes of the deer itself and thereby its behavior, but to what extent? It does so in a deep internal way, this part of the body that is

the white rump patch and the tail are connected to the brain and thereby the mind. They are connected to the brain and the mind to protect them, keep them alive, this is their purpose. Of course the brain and the mind are connected to this part of the body to protect them, to keep them alive, this is their purpose. This, of course, is a feedback loop. Every reverberation exists within the individual animal and thus has effect on its behavior and thereby its survival. This helps to ensure and direct the regeneration of the species. Which means every generation is another level of perfection in the deer's fit to the environment of light and consciousness.

So let's look further into the design and function of these animals that are camouflaged on one end and bright white on the other. In this study we will use the desert bighorn sheep. The reason for this is that the desert bighorn sheep is very typical in its design. It survives in an extreme visual environment, that is the wide open spaces of the desert. It is for this reason that the desert bighorn sheep has mastered the skill of hiding in plain sight. It is tuned in mind and body to be able to do this. A good example of this was in our opening scenario with the deer and people. The color of the deer's body matched its background and its mind told it's body to hold perfectly still so it did not contrast to the motionless background until it felt threatened enough to move. This demonstrated that all that is illuminated is not seen.

So in the pursuit of this knowledge let's run through a scenario where we encounter some desert bighorn sheep. This is not a product of aimless wandering, this kind of experience can be viewed as a vision quest in its own right.

Our scenario starts as we were walking over the top of a small hill, very carefully looking through our 10 x 50 binoculars every step or two till we get over the hill, to where we are no longer skylined. There we sit down and mount our 10 x 50 binoculars on a tripod and carefully scan the terrain ahead of us. Mounting binoculars like this on a tripod doubles or perhaps quadruples their effectiveness. Perhaps a more effective way to understand this is in relation to time. The number of animals that you see in two



days using the binoculars and tripod will take you four to eight days if you don't have the tripod. There are two reasons for this. The first is that the tripod holds the binoculars very still. This allows you to see a lot more detail than when holding them with your hands. This aids your conscious and subconscious mind to find the patterns they are looking for. Then you will find it much easier to concentrate on what you're looking for when you don't have to use part of your mental concentration to hold these binoculars with your hands and hold your body still. Now that you sitting down and your 10 x 50 binoculars are on a tripod, you see something that you missed when you were holding these binoculars in your hands. In the distance you can see a large ram, so you take the binoculars off the tripod and mount your spotting scope to get a better look. Now looking through your spotting scope at 45 power you can see that it's nothing more than a rock. This is sometimes call a "ram rock", it's the manifestation of a very interesting phenomena that one should experience and understand. If you experienced this from time to time it tells you that your conscious and subconscious mind are working together and are really looking to find a large ram. And if you're not seeing ram rocks your mind may not be trying hard enough and you're probably not seeing, or that is, perceiving animals that are there, even though they are in your field of view. Now having seen this ram rock and understood it one can see it as something amusing but not discouraging.

So you decide to continue scanning the hillside with the spotting scope in the hopes that it might reveal something that you missed with the binoculars. There are four aspects of going from the binoculars to the spotting scope that we must understand. The first is the increase in magnification this of course is a positive. The second is the reduced field-of-view and this can work for you and against you. A reduced field-of-view is just that, you can't see as big an area on the hillside. So if an animal starts moving, remember this makes it easier to see, you might not see it at all because it's not within the field-of-view of that particular instrument. Third and more philosophical the smaller field-of-view concentrates your attention on to a very small piece of ground and it is this aspect that often reveals what you're looking for. Fourth the combination of a small field-of-view and focus concentration means it will take you longer to sweep through a hillside than with the 10x50 binoculars. For this reason a 20 x 80 binocular is a good instrument to have with you. To orchestrate these instruments, to know where to be, and when to be there, is an art form. Those who have mastered this art, know that they've achieved a level of environmental awareness the likes of which numbers such as 10 x 50 or how many days in the field this or that is worth, doesn't really apply. The

advantage to the pursuer of this art is cerebral and serene, one achieves a oneness with nature through the very essence of reality, light and consciousness.

So let's continue on our desert bighorn scenario. We're scanning through an 80 mm spotting scope now set on 20 power. Looking at a distant hillside, working our way through the rocks and crags of the desert landscape. Then we see something white in the distance, that could be the white rump patch of a bighorn sheep facing away from us. The shape is very distinctive. At a distance it looks like two white circles very close together with a little white line going down from both of them. At this distance this shape and color can be visually misinterpreted as bird droppings on a boulder or just a light-colored rock. So we zoom up to about 40 power and can see clearly that it's a group of desert bighorn sheep. Here we can see that the coloration and design of the desert bighorn sheep maximizes its white rear end. The coloration on and near its tail forms a black stripe that separate the rump patch into two halves. Then, the back legs have a white stripe down the full-length of the backside of each leg. We can see here the difference between the white tailed deer and the desert bighorn sheep. The white tailed deer uses its tail to vary its signal from bright to not so bright. Desert bighorn sheep on the other hand maximize it signal behind them all the time, because they live in a visually extreme environment. If we look closely at the desert bighorn sheep we will see a white patch on their nose or muzzle, that on desert bighorn looks similar in design to their rump patch. More or less the black stripe down the middle of their rump patch is mimicked by their black noses. Deer also have this but they tend to have a white patch across the top of their neck perhaps this is so they can vary the intensity the signal by moving their head up and down. And again this is something that bighorn sheep cannot do. It is interesting to note here that both the male of the desert bighorn sheep and the deer tend to have a stronger visual signal on the front end than the females. In any case this signal was meant to be seen but not from as far away as their rump patch. Here in our scenario we've just experienced the danger that is inherent to this strategy, that is, being easily spotted by a potential predator. We did this by using superhuman powers, that is the 80 mm spotting scope. This allowed us to overpower the limits and the design of this animal's strategy. Yet if we take the time to watch these animals through our 80 mm spotting scope for 3 or 4 hours we will see this strategy play out, in the way that is advantageous to the sheep.

In this scenario we find our sheep just as there coming up out of a small ravine and spreading out across the hillside. In time some of them are 4 or 5 hundred yards apart with other sheep in between and facing in various directions. Now what we have



before us is a structure design to maximize their awareness in the form of an Internet like system based on the transmission of light, using their white rear ends. This is how the system works. Each and every individual is looking out for his own safety using vision, hearing, and his sense of smell. So in our scenario let's say sheep 'A' catch's wind of the mountain lion. The first thing he's going to do is start moving quickly up hill and into better escape terrain or to the center of mass of the herd. Sheep 'B' sees this and begins to behave in a similar fashion because it knows that 'A' is being driven by fear of something. Now sheep 'C' begins to do likewise even though it cannot see sheep 'A' due to distance or visual obstruction but it can see sheep 'B' so we have a chain reaction throughout the herd. Here we have a situation where the sensory perception of each individual is an outpost for the collective. The awareness of danger or safety as perceived by the individual is transmitted through the herd on this Internet like system, based on the transmission of light. With this system the possibilities are infinite and sometimes to a predators advantage. Yet the balance almost always favors the individuals that are connected to the system.

Now as we return to our scenario, the sun is beginning to set, and with it goes the power of these signals, and distance they can reach. So in proportion to the setting sun, the sheep begin to coalesce, to come together, and prepare for the absence of light. Yet in this darkness there is a form of light. That resides in the depths of the minds, of both predator and prey alike. For all that has been perceived, is now in the form of memories and dreams, and this is the way we perceive, all that is consciousness, and light.



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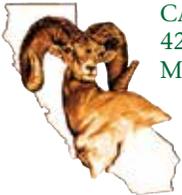
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