

California Wild Sheep

Spring 2021



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Ralph Adams
California Desert Bighorn
Cady Mountains
2020/21 Season



ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921



From the Editor's Desk

This is the first issue following the 2020-2021 DBH Season and the last one before our Annual Banquet and Fundraiser. It includes lots of CA DBH Pictures from the season just completed, great hunting stories from California and elsewhere, more on our 2021 Fundraiser (virtual again), fun humor, a recap of our December Sheep Summit, AND MUCH MORE!

Good luck in the various state tag draws and raffles for 2021. I hope you have a base plan for the year that doesn't rely on those draws (took me awhile to learn that!). I trust you participated in the WSF Sheep Week – it was incredibly well done, grew membership tremendously and managed to make major money for wild sheep. We all missed being together, but this virtual event was really well done!

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 2Q21 issue is May 20.



Duck Meatballs

Courtesy of GameandGarden.com.

Hint: Pancetta adds flavor and keeps the meatballs from drying out.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons of olive oil plus more for sautéing
- 1 medium yellow onion minced
- 1 pear peeled and finely chopped
- 2 teaspoons ginger minced
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 2 pounds duck meat cubed
- 1/2 pound pancetta
- 1/2 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/2 teaspoon cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1/4 cup parsley

Instructions

1. Heat olive oil in a 10 to 12 inch sauté pan. Add onions, pears, ginger, and garlic until completely caramelized and liquid has evaporated. Chill for about an hour.
2. In a medium bowl, combine duck and pancetta along with the remaining ingredients. Chill for an hour.
3. Mix all ingredients together. Feed ingredients through a meat grinder with the medium dye attachment.

4. Form 2 ounces ball from the meat mixture.

5. Heat 1-teaspoon olive oil in cast iron skillet until hot, but not smoking. Brown meatballs in batches. Cook until done all the way through, about 7 minutes.

6. Deglaze the pan with white wine. Season to taste and pour over meatballs.

7. Sprinkle parsley over the top of meatballs. Serve with wild rice, mashed potatoes, creamed spinach, pasta, or orzo. Honey or your favorite barbeque sauce complements it nicely.

You can find this in Stacy Lyn's cookbook Harvest.

**The secret of enjoying
a good wine:**

**1. Open the bottle to allow it to
breathe.**



**2. If it does not look like it's breathing,
give it mouth-to-mouth.**

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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.

Humorous outtakes provided by Tammy Scott

Published by Beverly Valdez, Gaiatec Services

Events

2021

April 17-19	Desert Bighorn Council, Alpine Tx
April TBD	Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council meeting
April 23	Sheep Summit XXVIII (Call)
April 24	CA WSF 19th Annual Fundraiser / 20th Anniversary (Virtual)
May 20	Due date for articles for 2Q2021 CAWSF Newsletter
June 1	Ballots for CA WSF Director Elections presented
June 28	Director Elections ballots due
August 20	Due date for articles for 3Q2021 CAWSF Newsletter
September TBD	Wild Sheep Foundation Fly-In then Walk on Capitol Hill (Washington DC)
November 20	Due date for articles for 4Q2021 CAWSF Newsletter
December 10	Sheep Summit XXIX Ontario, CA

2022

January 12-15	WSF Sheep Show, Reno
January 19-22	Safari Club Convention, Las Vegas
January 26-29	GSCO Convention, Las Vegas
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2022 CAWSF Newsletter

President's Letter

Application season is upon us once again and I want to be the first to wish all of you luck in this year's drawings. I sincerely hope some of our members will draw some of the coveted sheep tags in our Western States.

Many of you, like me, are perhaps guaranteed a tag of some kind here in California as we were forced to return our tags to the State due to fire closures. Let's hope for a far more benign fire season this year.

I was very pleased to see the success of the Wild sheep Foundation's Virtual National Convention, "The Experience." I want to thank each and every one of you that participated and helped to make it a huge success. All of us look forward to a time we can get together in person again and celebrate all things "wild sheep."



Speaking of getting together, please be sure to read my update on this year's Annual Fundraiser as we have recently been forced to plan another virtual event due to COVID-19 restrictions that remain in place for Sacramento County. I will outline some of the event and we hope to make it an even better virtual experience than last year.

In the meantime, progress is being made on the pandemic and we are slowly returning to normalcy. Sheep hunters are tough, and we need only "tough it out" for a little while longer. Though, we here in CA may have to "tough it out" longer than the rest of the country. A tragic set of circumstances that is the byproduct of being the world's sixth-largest economy run by the world's worst politicians. Never the less, don't lose hope. At least the wild turkey season is fast approaching and that will give many of us a reason to get back into the field.

Good luck in the draws! Good luck this turkey season! I look forward to seeing all of you soon!

Donald C. Martin

President, CAWSF

Our grand prize random drawing this year will be for a 14-day 1x1 Stone sheep hunt with **Scoop Lake Outfitters** for opening week August 1-14, 2022.

Tickets are on sale now at the CAWSF.org store (see also page 19 in this issue). You do not need to be present to win. There is a 25 ticket maximum purchase. Of the 600 tickets available, there are only 291 tickets available for purchase. These tickets will sell out, so don't wait. Buy your tickets now.

DESERT SHEEP HUNTING AT AGE 77

by Robert Highfill

I am a lifetime charter member and also life member #3 of CAWSF. At the age of 77, I did not think I would be sheep hunting again. I have been applying for desert sheep in California for about 33 years. When I found out that I drew the tag, I was exhilarated beyond belief. I contacted Terry Anderson of San Gorgonio Outfitters. We booked a hunt for Dec. 5, 2020.

Sheep Shape! After having gone on many sheep hunts over the years, I knew what it required to get in the best physical shape possible. At 77, I knew this would be more difficult to accomplish. I needed a full knee-replacement. Surgery was done on Aug. 11, 2020. I had four months to complete the physical therapy and continued walking daily to be ready for my sheep hunt!

I was concerned about the Covid-19 virus pandemic. After talking to Terry, he stated that his sheep camp was set up to accommodate the state requirements for the virus.

We saw a lot of rams but they were mostly young. In the South Bristol Mountains, there was very little water for the sheep. That particular area had been going through a severe drought during the last few years. It seemed like most of the sheep were way up high on the mountains, eating a small red cactus called "barrel cactus." Evidently, that's where the sheep get their moisture. It makes it very difficult at times to spot them, since they were so far away. On day four of my hunt, we located a very mature ram,



and after a good stalk, I had my California desert sheep. The ram turned out to be 10-years old!

I would like to thank San Gorgonio Outfitters, Terry Anderson, and his entire crew who made my hunt a most memorable one. I also want to thank Wild Sheep Foundation, California Wild Sheep Foundation, and California Fish and Wildlife. With the assistance of the above-named organizations, we can continue to keep putting sheep on the mountains!

Now it is pleasant to hunt something that you want very much over a long period of time, being outwitted, out-maneuvered and failing at the end of each day, but having the hunt and knowing every time you are out that, sooner or later, your luck will change and that you will get the chance that you are seeking. But it is not pleasant to have a time limit by which you must get your kudu or perhaps never get it, nor even see one.

It is not the way hunting should be.

*Ernest Hemingway
— Green Hills of Africa*



Are YOU a CA Wild Sheep Foundation Life Member? NOW is the time to join or upgrade!

SHOW YOUR TRUE COMMITMENT TO THE WILD SHEEP OF CALIFORNIA AND THE WORLD! JOIN OR UPGRADE YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY.

You will be joining a hard working, and hard hunting, group of CA WSF Distinguished Life members when you join or upgrade. Meet our Distinguished Life Members:

PEGGY BARNETT LEE	BEN GORDON	PATRICK OILAR	PAUL SCHULTHEIS
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Join as a Life Member (\$500)

Make a commitment now to continue PUTTING AND KEEPING WILD SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS of California! Join CA WSF as a Life Member and receive ONE chance to WIN the special Life Members hunt in 2020.

Upgrade your CA WSF Life Membership (\$1,000)

Upgrade your CA WSF Life Membership to DISTINGUISHED Life Membership (\$1,000) to receive THREE chances to WIN the special Life Members hunt in 2021.

You may also join at the Distinguished Life Member level for \$1,500.

All Distinguished Life Members receive a PELOTON 240 VEST from Kuiu emblazoned with the CA WSF logo.

WSF HUNT REPORT TIAN SHAN ARGALI AND MID ASIAN IBEX KYRGYZSTAN

by Mike Borel, CA WSF Distinguished Life Member, VP Operations

This is a hunt report from my 2018 hunt.

Sheep/Goat Species:

- 1) Tian Shen Argali Date Taken – November 6, 2018
- 2) Mid Asian Ibex Date Taken – November 5, 2018

Location Taken - Country - Kyrgyzstan, State/Province – Naryn Region

Outfitter / Booking Agent – [Links Wild Safaris](#) - Vladimir Treschov

Guide / Local Operator – Ruslon

Hunt Highlights:

- Remote location
- Tremendous numbers of argali and ibex
- Game was very spooky. At the sight or distant smell of us, they responded with distance.
- Be prepared to judge your own trophy quickly, and to shoot accurately at least 500 yards in wind.



The Story:

I arrived at Bishkek on November 3. I was met by Evgeny and Tatiana at the base of the plane steps and taken into a VIP lounge (worth it!). No problem with gun or baggage. We then drove 5 hours to Naryn, where we had lunch, met Ruslan, my guide for the hunt, and driver for the next 5 hours. It was decided to spend the night in Naryn and leave early morning for camp. We got going at 6:00 AM and soon ran out of paved road, then before long ran out of gravel road. It was a major four wheel drive experience. Ruslan was an impressive driver and the Toyota performed well (much better than the Russian jeeps of earlier years). It also had a functioning heater!!!

On the ride in we saw more than 500 Argali ewes and lambs, 11 rams, and 4 fox.

We arrived at camp (12,000 ft elev) late morning and were greeted by Vladimir and Dolat, the government guy. It was cold at -18 c.

The first afternoon we saw 40+ ibex in a group. We made a stalk but didn't decide and act fast enough for a shot.

Later we saw about 70 ibex billies, all together! It was incredible to see. Vladimir said he hadn't seen a group of billies that large for over 20 years. They were, however, not in position for a stalk.

We then found one lone argali ram, Vladimir said he was 50+. I lined up for a 600 yard, 20mph cross wind shot, but passed. The wind was simply too strong at that distance for me to be confident.

We then saw 15 rams on the run, which joined 30 ewes and gave us the slip. We also saw 50+ ewes.

The next day, Monday, it was even colder at -24c. We took the horses, rode four hours and found the 70 billies from yesterday. I took an awkward downslope shot at 350, but missed (I think we misjudged the distance). We then took a three hour ride to find the ibex from yesterday. We did, but distance and wind were too great. Ruslan thought we could get to 300 yards by descending a steep rocky chute so three of us made the descent. Ruslan's English is limited. It was a treacherous descent, but we made it. Ruslan was able to point out an excellent billy asleep. I waited a bit and shot him in his bed, I corrected a full MOA for wind. They told me I got him. Congrats all around, and as it was 3:00 and I was both thirsty and hungry, we took a break. The third person went up to the horses and Ruslan and I continued our treacherous descent. We rolled the billy down to the river where we could be picked up by the Toyota.





Skull from a wolf kill
(The spine was also there)

At last dusk we spotted four argali rams in the river. We did a stalk, which had to be in sight as there was no cover; so, of course, they spooked and ran. And then, of course, my headlamp batteries gave out... There wasn't enough fuel around to build a fire to survive overnight. We'd seen a yak herd in another area and I was wishing they had been in this area so we'd have dried dung to burn. At 7:30 which was full dark the truck arrived in the river bed. Yay. Relief. Home at 9:30 pm and very tired.

On Tuesday, the third hunting day, we made a late start, with breakfast at 8:15, and starting the hunt at 10:15am. We saw a lot of sheep, hundreds, mostly at 1000+ range.

We got a powerful lot of exercise with several blown stalks. By 4:00 pm I was asking to call it a day and start fresh in the morning. Ruslan was determined, however, so we made two more stalks and I managed to down my ram at 4:35 pm! Everyone was happy. Back at camp, I paid tips, and toasted with vodka, and some malbec.

CA WSF BOARD ELECTIONS COMING UP IN JUNE – NOMINEES SOUGHT

CA WSF has 16 Board positions and the term is two years. Each year half of the positions expire, which enables Board continuity from year to year. Following the election by members, the Board then elects officers for the next two years. Positions include: President, VP Operations, VP North, VP South, Secretary, and Treasurer.

We have 8 terms expiring this year. In June you will receive a ballot, with candidate information.

Board Members whose terms expire in June 2021 are Adam Casagrande, Ken Crother, Bob Keagy, George Kerr, Don Martin, Glen Pyne, Renee Snider and Mike Torres.

Board Members whose terms expire June 2022 are Mike Borel, Jim Fitzgerald, Ben Gordon, Don Priest, Paul Schulteis, Darryl Williams, Shawn Wood and Zack Walton.

We are now seeking Board candidates. Any member in good standing with two years (24 months) without lapse or interruption of membership may be considered for the Board of Directors. If you would be interested in committing some of your valuable time and talent to CA WSF please let President Don Martin or VP Operations and Newsletter Editor Mike Borel know!

We are also looking for Fundraiser and other Committee members. Committees are:

Fundraiser	Legislative and CDFW Affairs
Communications and Publicity	Membership
Water and GALAD Projects	Youth Outreach
Beyond Water Projects	Newsletter Editor

You do not need to be a Board member to serve on a committee and we have multiple committees. Committee chairpersons are appointed by the President each year, but he or she certainly appreciates volunteers!

Q&A WITH MEMBER BRAD PETERS

Mike Borel asks the important questions!

1. What does wild sheep hunting and conservation mean to you?

Animals to be conserved have to have an economic value. No value equals no conservation. A prime example are the Argalis. Before hunting, they were harvested for meat almost to the point of extinction. Today, because of their high value in the hunting world, there is an abundance. A perfect example of how the hunting community saves animals.

2. What is your story? Where are you from? What do you do? Who do you love?

I have lived in Bakersfield, CA. my entire life and have owned an oil-service company for more than 41 years. This has allowed me to travel all over the world hunting and fishing. I love my wife Elizabeth.



3. Tell us about your most memorable experience hunting an Ovis or Capra.

Probably my fist ram (which was not my first sheep hunt); a backpack hunt in the Chugach Range in Alaska for Dall Sheep. Very rewarding and very tough. Don't think I could do it today.

4. How do you describe "Sheep Fever"?

The same feeling people get from climbing mountains: the challenge.

5. What is the next hunt for you?

Ducks in Argentina.

6. Anything else you want to share?

I love to hunt sheep, but I also love to hunt just about every other kind of game animal. The great thing about hunting is that it allows you to see people and places in the world that most tourists never have the opportunity to see.

The luckiest draw is....

David Combs certainly qualifies to be on our list of the 'luckiest draw'! He's drawn rocky tags in Wyoming and Colorado and desert tags in Nevada and Arizona.

David says "I did not fill all of the tags because I did not see rams that were up to my goals. These tags were all for rams. In addition I have drawn ewe tags twice in Colorado. Success on one and returned the other one as too busy with other hunt commitments."

Count your blessings anytime you get a good draw!

THESE BOOTS ARE MADE FOR HUNTING

by Life Member Mike Torres

Several years ago on a sheep hunt in the Yukon, Jarret Deuling of Deuling Stone Outfitters, recommended to me custom boots by Lathrop and Sons. Jarret has experienced foot problems from professional hockey and a career of guiding mountain hunters, and said he had very good luck with the Mountain Hunter boots from Lathrop and Sons. I have bought several other brands of boots from Lathrop and Sons and was interested in their own custom boot system.

I have tried just about every brand of boot in the last 50 years as a hunter and in my career as a Wildland Firefighter and have always had trouble with the fit and function of my boots. My feet are very large, I have fallen arches, rheumatoid arthritis and plantar fasciitis. In short, my feet are a disaster and I needed professional help.

I bought a pair of Mountain Hunter boots from Lathrop and Sons with their custom-made Synergy foot beds and custom fitting. These are the most comfortable boots I have ever worn. Along with the exceptional comfort they have the most support I have ever seen in leather boots. The support in these Mountain Hunters is right up there with plastic mountaineering boots. This support is vital when trying to establish the edges of your boots when crossing a scree-slope sidehill. In fact, I ordered a second pair of Mountain Hunter boots so that I would never be without a pair. Life is too short to hunt in ill-fitting boots.



Stephen and James Lathrop have donated a pair of their Mountain Hunter or Mountain Hunter Elite boots for our next California Wild Sheep Foundation fundraiser.

You owe it to your feet to try a pair of these boots. When wearing these boots, I never even think about my feet no matter how rough the terrain is.

If you aren't able to win these boots at our CAWSF fundraiser, you can contact Stephen or James at www.lathropandsons.com or (618) 544-8782.

Two hunters hired a bush pilot to take them far into the Canadian wilderness for a caribou hunt. The two had hunted the same area the year before and been quite successful, with three bulls apiece. Their second trip was equally enjoyable, and when the pilot returned he found three bulls per man. As they began loading the plane, the pilot remarked, "I can only fit four of the racks in the plane after you and all your gear. You're going to have to pick two racks to leave behind."

"Nonsense!" the two hunters scoffed in unison. One explained: "We had the exact same amount of cargo last year, and that pilot let us take back three bulls each. We're going to take everything with us, all in this load." The pilot was concerned, but not wanting to be

outdone by a competing pilot, he shrugged and began pushing and pulling gear to make room for the excess racks. Soon the gear was loaded, barely, and the plane was making its way up and out of the backcountry. They hadn't made it far from the primitive runway when the plane began its nosedive. The pilot put the bird down as gently as he could, and though the plane and most of its cargo was destroyed, the three men were able to climb from the wreckage unscathed.

Looking around themselves in a daze, one hunter asked the other hunter if he knew where they were.

"I think so," the one responded. "I think we're close to where we crashed last year."

FAVORITE CRAFT BEERS – RECOMMENDATIONS FROM MEMBERS

Our members have great taste in hunting and wine — and now in BEER! These member recommendations are for craft beers, this time in particular Stout Ales.

Dark stout beers are the Malbec or Syrah of the beer world. They can be complex, interesting, and worth lingering over. A general note on drinking stouts—you are paying a premium price for a luxury beer, so for the love of all that is holy, pour it correctly in a glass and let a creamy head of 1/4-1/2" form at the top. The mouth feel and contrast of the head to the brew itself is part of the experience. Take your time. This isn't about getting a buzz, it's about getting lost. Stouts have the fortitude to stand up well with your more challenging cuts of wild game, and the roasted barley might just evoke a flashback to a campfire.



Diageo - Guinness - The dark Irish dry stout that started it all. Very smooth, no appreciable finish or after taste. The perfect creamy head. So appropriate for cooking that its often called for by name in recipes (Google "Guinness Brownies with Bailey's Cream Cheese Swirl", I dare you!) Fun Fact - Originated in the brewery of Arthur Guinness at St. James's Gate, Dublin, Ireland, in 1759. Here we are over 250 years later still drinking it!



Adroit Theory - Grimdark - Russian imperial stout. Cool red on black techno skull motif can, feels very matte/nice in the hand. Very dark stout, head has irregular bubbles, not creamy. The nose has a slight medicinal malodor (smells like a urinal cake). The front is unassuming / mild, but there is a long lingering acidic after taste that makes the overall experience less pleasant. Typical notes of black licorice/anis. Not sure about buying again.



Anderson Valley - Winter Solstice Seasonal Ale - Will buy this again. Pleasant nose with a fruity, floral essence laced with vanilla. Beautiful brown orange color. Pleasant mouth feel and a crisp finish that doesn't linger past its welcome.



Chapman Crafted - First Roast Coffee Porter - Will buy this again. Roasty, vibrant, beerista. Smooth, strong coffee flavor. No bitter or bad aftertaste. First coffee "flavored" beer I've ever tasted where the coffee flavor was dominant. Don't get me wrong, put away the milk frother, but do try this beer.



Klamath Basin Brewing Co. - Backroad Vanilla Porter - This beer failed to form a creamy, luxurious head. Bits of vanilla and maybe hints of chocolate on the palate, but a bit more bitterness than desired. It is nice to support a Southern Oregon brewery.

So when you are in the mood for something more, something luxurious, something that makes you feel special, don't shy away from the dark side.

Do you have a favorite craft beer? Send me your pick and why you like it! johncware@gmail.com.

2021 SHEEP WEEK®, THE EXPERIENCE

The Wild Sheep Foundation pulled out the stops for a virtual event and showed all other conservation organizations what is possible. It was truly a week-long affair—January 11-16 and all taped events and links to exhibitors continued until February 16.

The set up was a virtual floor with entry to exhibitors, seminars, meetings and raffles. Part was shown live, part taped and all interactive. We all missed the in-person experience, but the financials were very good. Well done Gray Thornton, WSF BOD and WSF Staff!

“In my 30 plus years of building, hosting, and attending hunting and outdoor expos, I’ve never seen anything like this,” Thornton explained. “Honestly, a week before making the platform live, we we’re just hoping for the best. Then it just blew up with exhibitors wanting to get their booths built and thousands of attendees registering as fast as we could process their information.”

Once logged into the platform, attendees are treated to five virtual exhibit halls with nearly 200 v-booths exhibiting everything from hunting adventures to sporting art, the latest gear and equipment, and opportunities to support other organizations’ conservation efforts. This included WSF chapters and affiliates and state, provincial, tribal, and territorial wildlife agencies, both in North America and internationally. Attendees could also live chat with each other in the Bighorn chat lounge, and until Feb.16, direct message with exhibitors.

“There were many ways to measure success,” Thornton concluded. “Money raised for wild sheep being the most important, and we’re crunching all those numbers now. Next to funding for me are the positive comments and conversations going on in the chat rooms. So many to choose from, but here are a few that hit home.”

“WSF is leading the way during this most difficult time. “The Experience” is legit.” Dan Catlin, The Wildlife Gallery.

CA WSF WANTS YOU – As a Member!



Please share this info with your friends.

Are you a Californian? A transplant to or from? Do you hunt wild sheep? Do you dream about hunting wild sheep, especially in California? Do you want to help assure that wild sheep thrive for future generations? Do you want to be part of a growing organization that is making a positive difference?

If you answered yes to one or more of those questions – please join CA WSF! If you are able, join or upgrade to Life Membership or to Distinguished Life Membership. The Desert Bighorn in California are doing well and CA WSF is making a real difference by raising funds, getting connected, working with

CDFW, and by collaborating with SCBS to add rainwater catchments to preserve and enhance Desert Bighorn populations in California.

Joining is very easy – www.cawsf.org or email Beverly Valdez at forthesheep@gmail.com.

Want to get even more involved? Email Don Martin, President, at don-martin@earthlink.net.

CA WSF is a proud Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation – you’ll want to be a member there too www.wildsheepfoundation.org.

2022 STONE SHEEP HUNT Special Drawing



ONLY 600 TICKETS AVAILABLE

\$100 PER TICKET

CA WSF Board Member
Shawn Wood with Stone
Sheep at Scoop Lake Outfitters



Scoop Lake Outfitters

Hunt Information

14 day 1x1 hunt with Scoop Lake Outfitters

Dates: August 1 - August 14, 2022

Location: central British Columbia, Canada

This is a full hunt including trophy fee, field prep, accommodations in tent or cabin, and air charter. Transportation during the hunt is mostly by horseback. Wolf may be added at no fee. Additional species including moose, goat, bear, and caribou may be added at regular fees. You will be responsible for license, tags, and Hunting Preservation Fund (approximately US\$1300) and gratuities.

Name

Address

City State Post Code

Day Phone

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Payment Methods

Check

Make check payable to:
CA Wild Sheep Foundation

MasterCard / Visa

Credit Card Number

Expire Date

CCV Code

Billing Postal Code

Signature

YOU DO NOT NEED TO BE PRESENT TO WIN

Mail order form to: CA Wild Sheep Foundation
1630 Williams Hwy #151
Grants Pass, OR 97527

ONLINE ORDERS:

www.cawsf.org/store

Orders must be received by April 10, 2021. Drawing held April 24, 2021.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: PEGGY LEE

Distinguished Life Member

Home: Modesto, CA

First Sheep: Year 2000 (Skunked !!!), back 2001 – Stones Sheep, Collingwood Bros.

How many sheep/goats: 14 Sheep, 15 Goats

Records/Awards: Utah State Record, 2001 (Desert Bighorn 174 2/8 net B&C); Ullmann Award (First Echelon); Outstanding Animal of the Year, British Columbia, 2008 (Mtn. Lion, 15 2/16 B&C); Utah Full Curl Hall of Fame (2014); Bukharan Markhor SCI World Record, 2019 (121 0/8)

WSF Membership: Summit Life Member (I think)

Special Memory: Jane's john – My first actual “hunt” arranged by my late husband to make sure I could really emotionally shoot an animal. The arranged hunt was in New Mexico (one of Ted Turner's ranches) for antelope. I was the only female and they only had a “men's” bathroom to use, so they let me use “Jane's john.” I felt very special!!!! Turns out Jane Fonda LOVED to bird hunt, thus why she had her own john to use on the ranch. I guess it's OK to kill birds, just not animals? Apparently she wouldn't even allow the ranch managers to shoot rattlesnakes, as she was opposed to “killing.” Go figure....



Peggy Lee with her new puppy in duck blind

THE TRUE SPORTSMAN

By Robert L. Doorkees

Editor's Note: This discussion of hunting sportsmanship was originally published in the 1898 edition of *Field and Stream* and recently republished by *Sporting Classics Daily*.

The Three Wise Men of Nimrodia had journeyed to a certain inn situated in the clean hills, an inn known to but few, an inn that seemed to typify the very spirit of the country of the Red Gods. The Cares of the City fell away from them like a mantle removed by the

hand of God. To them the great, full moon was still a miracle. They breathed deep of the keen, brisk air of fall, but its clean chill drove them shortly to seek the comfort of the old corner by the hearth, where a hickory fire welcomed them merrily. With softly glowing pipes they settled themselves in their chairs. It was the Hunter's Hour of relaxation. Tomorrow they would hunt.

In the peace and quiet of the hills a great contentment fell upon them. In the mind of each of

them formed the philosophy of the chase, to each as his nature was.

“No man,” said the Economist, as if speaking his thoughts aloud, “is a true lover of Nature and the chase unless every fiber of his being protests against the wanton destruction of game. They are God’s creatures and He loves them. They are our prey and we hunt them. That is only natural, because we are but human. Yet we should have progressed so far that our souls and our common sense cry out against needless slaughter and waste. It is but a sign of our civilization that we should conserve our game so that we have good shooting always. A man who does not protest vigorously against every outrage on our wildlife, who does not protest at unjust laws, who does not fight against merciless destruction of cover and cynical disregard of closed seasons, who does not put his entire strength into the fight for conservation, is not a sportsman. That is what he must be judged by.”

The Philosopher’s pipe had gone out as he listened. Now he sat back in his chair, lit it slowly, and pondered his reply to the vehement outbreak of his friend.

“I can’t agree with you entirely,” he replied. “I think conservation of our game should be entirely automatic. The great thing in hunting or fishing is enjoyment, isn’t it? It is,” he continued, without waiting for a reply, “it is — and to make true sportsmen we should educate them to true enjoyment. I do not know if I am a good sportsman or not. I cannot be the judge. I try to be. I have gone out to the woods or the brookside and I have found that mere hunting or fishing is not everything. I look at the hills and the trees and the clear water. I am at peace with the world. It is the contentment of Nature, freedom from all cares, the solitude that calms a mind, which has been grappling for a year with the anxious cares of life. I do not think I am needlessly wasteful. In fact,” he spoke whimsically, “my wife accuses me of never having furnished her with a game dinner. I think, if we could educate our people to a true enjoyment of Nature, that we would never need to worry about our game-covers and the wildlife that is in them.”

Pit your skill and experience and strength alone against your quarry. In a word, take no unfair advantage.

The Athlete, the youngest man of the three, had been listening with intense interest to the words of his older friends. Now he broke in impetuously.

“Maybe my ideas are all wrong,” he exclaimed, “but I think that they cover all the requirements of true sportsmanship.” The two older men smiled gently at his youthful enthusiasm, but he continued, unheeding. “I don’t want to say these ideas are all my own, for I was taught them from my cradle by my father and he was the best and truest sportsman that ever lived. He taught me only one thing, but there are many angles to it. And that thing is — ‘pit your skill and experience and strength alone against your

quarry.’ In a word, ‘take no unfair advantage.’ Isn’t it true? If you have a colt you want to break — how I hate that word — if you have a colt you want to train to your wishes, is it fair to use a heavy saddle and a cruel curbed bit to accomplish it? Isn’t it far better to pit your own wit against his instincts, to teach him that you are his friend, that you and he can have wonderful times together if only he will consent to be friendly? I tell you, if you use that method and train that colt to love you and consent to serve you through something else besides fear, you have won for yourself the greatest pleasure in life. I think, sirs, that it is true sportsmanship.

“When you go afield it is the same. There are those who go equipped for murder, who return loaded down with a great, selfish burden of game. It is kill, kill, kill, while God’s great sun looks down. Compare such work as that with a kindly, decent sportsman in the field. He does not return to be photographed with a grape arbor full of dead birds, but he has pleasant recollections, incidents to cherish in memory’s brain cells. It is the same way with old Izaak Walton’s disciples. Compare the angler who uses a four-ounce fly rod with his cousin, who uses a pole and a triple hook. Why, there is no comparison. The one is murder, the other is — true sportsmanship. I hope I have not bored you,” he concluded, embarrassed by his own impetuosity, “but I feel very strongly about it.”

As he leaned back in his chair and silence fell upon the little group, their host, a simple, old, American gentleman, who had lived his whole life amongst his kindly, wise, old hills and knew many of their seldom-whispered secrets, leaned forward and stirred up the dying fire to a red glow.

“If ye’ll pardon me,” he said slowly, as he leaned back once more, “I think ye’re all a bit wrong about it, tho ye are partways right, too. The man who cannot shoot too many birds or animals, the man who cannot use cruel guns and cruel hooks, the man who cannot take a wrong advantage of a dumb animal, be it horse or deer or hare or dog or partridge — is the true sportsman. Ye can find many such, gentlemen. I would place ye among them. Yes, it is the thing within that cannot that makes a true sportsman.” And rising, the old man knocked the dead ashes from his pipe and went his way to bed and peaceful slumber. Another silence fell upon the little group of friends. At length the Athlete stirred and sat up.

“Here’s to our host,” softly exclaimed the youngest of the three, “a true sportsman.”

And his companions silently nodded in assent.

From the professionals

Recently we had the opportunity to talk with two of the most well known and prolific outfitter / guides in California for wild sheep. They know their stuff! Each had a slightly different take on things as we asked them about the recent season and what they saw in the future.

CLIFF ST MARTIN, DRY CREEK OUTFITTERS



Cliff says that the Dry Creek Outfitters 2020-21 season was filled with people from 16 to 80 years old — most at that upper age range! This season he felt the quality of the sheep was down a bit due to the drought and some lion action. With the exception of the Newberries and the Clark/Kingstons he observed that lamb recruitment seems down, perhaps only 25% of the last few years. He is still seeing 160-170 class rams but not the high 170 or 180's seen previously.

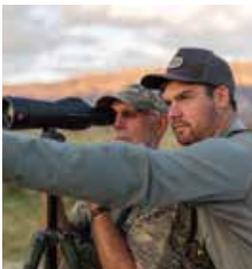
Cliff noted that water, particularly the drinkers, are very important. But he has noticed that there are times when it takes too much time to get the message through all of the various channels to let someone know when a drinker is broken or dry which results in problems for the sheep.

Turning to the future, Cliff would like to see more young people get involved. Other states are doing special programs for youth, handicapped, and wounded warriors. It would also be a benefit to be able to gift a tag, again something that other states are doing. Cliff would like to be able to take his grandchildren on a sheep hunt and with the way the system works right now, with age restrictions and preference points, that is probably not possible until they are in mid 30s or later.

Based on the ground he covers in a season of pre-scouting and hunting Cliff thinks California has more sheep than Nevada and we could have more tags if more units could be surveyed and opened.

Cliff remains optimistic for the future of sheep hunting in the state.

JAKE FRANKLIN, KIKA WORLDWIDE



Jake found that in the 2020-21 season the sheep were in weird places due to the drought. For example, while they would normally go to the high grounds he would find them in the valleys. This is particularly true of the rams. The ewes and lambs seemed to be following their normal patterns.

While water for this year was a major issue due to the drought Jake felt that the important aspect of water and installed drinkers is to help get sheep to migrate to new areas and develop additional herds.

Jake noted that Paige (CDFW biologist) is doing a good job in Region 6 in particular.

In terms of the future Jake's biggest concern is the political aspects of hunting. The science of management can keep the sheep herds going but at any given time the general population of the state can decide, based on emotion, to stop sheep hunting.

Jake is a father of a young girl so youth hunting is definitely important to him. But he says so many people are "kind of missing the boat on youth." We can't get them out hunting but we can get them interested in the conservation aspects. It's not much fun for a kid to be helping to build water projects (moving rocks and dirt) although it's a fine aspect of conservation that needs to be appreciated. But going out with bins to find sheep, counting sheep, watching helicopters bring in a sheep for collaring. Those activities bring youth into the life of the sheep and it will get them to be in love with the species regardless of hunting opportunities.

We hope to catch up with other guides and outfitters in the state in coming months and will let you know what they are thinking.

20TH ANNIVERSARY CA WSF FUNDRAISING BANQUET

by Co-Chairman Donald C Martin, CA WSF Board President, Distinguished Life Member

Once again it appears our best efforts to hold an “in-person” event has been stymied by California State Covid-19 restrictions. It will simply not be possible for us to hold an “in-person” event given the current restrictions of our venue in Sacramento County. With this in mind, the fundraising committee regrets to inform our members that our 2021 annual fundraiser on April 24 will be a virtual event.

We had a very successful virtual event last year and we are working to improve upon that. Please keep an eye on your email and our social media channels via Facebook and Instagram for updated information.

We have tickets available for the Stone sheep hunt random drawing and they can be purchased at any time on our website at: www.cawsf.org/store. Please keep in mind that there is a 25-ticket maximum purchase and only 600 will be sold. Do not wait! This drawing will sell out early. Also, please remember that this is for a 14-day, 1x1, opening week hunt starting on August 14, 2022 and COVID-19 will not be an issue by then. This is one of the best Stone sheep hunts in British Columbia and we sincerely thank Darwin and Wendy Cary for giving us an opportunity to give away this hunt. Also, special thanks to Director Shawn Wood for soliciting this hunt on our behalf. Thank you Shawn.

Once again, our life-member-only random drawing will be a 2022, up-to-10-day, 1x1 Dall sheep hunt with Paul and Donna Claus’s Ultima Thule Outfitters. This will be for the middle-hunt period with approximate hunt dates of Aug 23-Sept 3, 2022. Normally, this would be a “must be in the room” to win random drawing. Due to our event going virtual, we will conduct it the same as last year. Youth/Adult life members, and Distinguished life members must register for the drawing and there will be a \$100 donation required. It will substitute as a “virtual dinner ticket.” Youth/adult life members will receive 1 ticket in the drawing; Distinguished life members will receive 3. Give thought to becoming a life member or upgrading to distinguished life member to have an opportunity to win one of the best Dall sheep hunts on earth. Registration is now open for this drawing at the [CA WSF store](http://www.cawsf.org/store). Please note, youth life members must be at least 10 years of age to qualify for this hunt under Alaska law. This hunt is not transferable; if the life member chosen cannot attend the hunt, the alternate life member drawn will be awarded the hunt. CA WSF thanks Paul and Donna Claus for their continued support of our chapter.



Don Martin will emcee the 2021 Banquet Fundraiser

Our live auction is coming together nicely and we are working hard to provide a variety of hunting, fishing, and travel opportunities and a few surprises. Currently we have two big State permits in hand at this time. Once again, the State of Alaska has entrusted us here in CA to auction the AK Governor’s permit for Bison. This permit is valid for the DI450 Chitina River Bison unit. There are only 2 permits awarded for this unit through the limited entry drawing and it is hands down one of the finest adventure hunts in North America. If free-ranging frontier bison is on your list, this is the hunt for you.

And also, once again, the State of California has awarded us a desert bighorn permit for the Cady Mountains unit. This is a highly desirable tag and has produced many Boone and Crockett rams over its history. This permit is often a “sleeper” and can be purchased for far less than other State desert bighorn permits. Make your plans to bid on this spectacular opportunity for trophy desert bighorn.

Our auction list continues to grow by the week and we will continue to keep you informed through email and social media. If you’re not following us on social media please do so on Facebook at:

<https://www.facebook.com/californiawildsheep> and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/GALAD.CAWSF>

On Instagram at: [@californiawildsheepfoundation](https://www.instagram.com/californiawildsheepfoundation) and [@donald.c.martin](https://www.instagram.com/donald.c.martin).

If you’d like to donate an item to our auction or know of a guide or outfitter willing to donate a hunting/fishing trip or family vacation, please reach out to me at don-martin@earthlink.net by April 1.

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Brice Young
Kika Worldwide, Clark/Kingston
177"



Doug Bleyenburt
Kika Worldwide, Clark/Kingston



Tim Haught
Kika Worldwide, Orocopias
174"



Tom Gordon
Dry Creek Outfitters, Cady Mtns

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Art Hibbits
Dry Creek Outfitters, Clark-Kingstons



Cha Cola
Dry Creek Outfitters, Cady Mtns



Dan Sozi Jr
Dry Creek Outfitters, Newberry/Rodman/Ords



Joe Angulo
Dry Creek Outfitters, Marble/Clippers

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Bill Tittle

Kika Worldwide, Tiburon

“WOW what an experience! I left a part of my spirit on Isla Tiburón. Can’t say thanks enough to Pancho, Lalo, Rafa, Johnny Nikirk, Brady Lough and Jake Franklin (not pictured here)”



Kevin Atkinson

San Gorgonio Wilderness Outfitters, Clark/Kingston



Pat O’Neill

Rowdy McBride, Davis Mountains (Texas)
American Mouflon



“The Boys Club”

Photo Courtesy of Cliff St Martin

CALIFORNIA WILD SHEEP SUMMIT XXVIII – DECEMBER 11, 2020

“VIRTUAL”

By Mike J. Borel

CA WSF hosted Sheep Summit XXVII as a “virtual” event. As this bi-annual meeting has proven to be a valuable interactive seminar, we did NOT want COVID-19 to create a hiccup. The purpose of these summits is “to accomplish more collectively for the Desert Bighorn in CA through sharing and collaboration, than the sum of what each organization can accomplish individually.” Following is a summary of Session XXVII.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: CDFW, USFS, USBLM, USNPS (MNP, DV and JT), CAWSF, SCBS, Twentynine Palms Marine Base, Oregon State University, WSF, CA mining interests and key independents (including Vern Bleich, John Wehausen, Ashley Evans, Ilima Segoviano & Will Glad). 57 persons in all (our largest group ever). CAWSF was represented by Mike Borel, Don Priest, Darryl Williams and Bev Valdez.

Information reviewed:

1. DFW Update - the Big Picture (Stafford Lehr & Scott Gardner)
2. Comprehensive Overarching Bighorn Sheep Plan - Status and Overview of Key Recommendations; Herd Unit Management Plans - Status and Overview of Key Recommendations; Discussion on “implementation” (Regina Vu)
3. Update on Fall capture activities across the Peninsular, Transverse, Mojave, and Sierra ranges (Jeff Villepique and Paige Prentice)
4. Desert Bighorn Sheep Update from the Regions - Surveys and Field Work including GPS collar data - summary of interesting observations, unexpected patterns, and/or mysteries (Paige Prentice)
5. BLM - the Big Picture (Amy Fesnock)
6. Latest Grazing Information in the CA Desert Conservation Area (Amy Fesnock/Jack Hamby)
7. Project Report on AI for sorting and interpreting waterhole pictures (Will Glad)
8. SCBS Update (Steve Marschke)
9. GALAD (Give a Lamb a Drink) State Lands status, progress [Steve Marschke (leases) & Mike Borel (funding)]
10. Report on Recent Activities in WAFWA, Wild Sheep & Goat Council, Desert Bighorn Council, Boone & Crockett Club, WHBAB, Rocky Crate Chair at WSU, etc. that are of value and interest for CA wild sheep (Vern Bleich)
11. 2020 Bighorn Sheep Captures and Collars for JTNP Status and Update; Wildlife Water Drinkers – Update on plans for maintenance (Michael Vamstad)
12. Issues CA WSF is currently working on (Don Priest)
13. DBH in Death Valley (and Burro removal) (Bill Sloan)
14. Successful removal of wild horses from Modoc National Forest (Ken Sandusky)
15. Three dozen burros dead after equine influenza outbreak in Riverside County - October 2020 (Group Discussion)

Our previously committed **COLLECTIVE VISION FOR WILD SHEEP IN CALIFORNIA:**

Ensure the persistence and restoration of healthy and sustainable metapopulations of bighorn sheep throughout their historical distribution in California.

Develop and use science as the basis for conservation and management.

Provide for recreational uses of bighorn sheep wherever appropriate.

Summit XXIX is scheduled for April 23, 2021 and will (alas) again be virtual.

Give a lamb a drink

Project to Double the Carrying Capacity for DBH in CA
Expanding desert bighorn sheep habitat in California



We are continuing our installations for new water systems, and at the same time repairs of older systems are constantly in the works.

During this past year we have progressed the state land leases, installed new Raincatcher systems, and continued repair and/or retrofitting older guzzlers. The latest installation was the Oro Belle in the Castle Mountains (read more about that on page 29). However, we did need to delay and cancel some installations due to COVID-19. We plan to make up for that this year!

As a member you will have received notifications of work teams that you and your friends can join — it is one of the great ways that you can do your part in helping California wild sheep thrive! Bring friends and family to help and make it a great experience for you all. Be sure we have your current email address by getting in touch with Beverly (forthesh sheep@gmail.com).

Announcements and requests for volunteers will continue coming to you via email so that you can help in one or more installations. We also post these to our Facebook page.

Do you know of a program or organization that may provide a grant to help us complete the project? If so, please get in touch with Mike Borel (mike.borel@contextnet.com) or Beverly.

BOBOTIE - GROUND GAME RECIPE FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Bobotie is a great recipe for ground venison, elk, or moose



Bobotie is a classic South African dish in which ground meat—often springbok or kudu—is laced with dried fruits and slivered almonds and fragrant curry then baked beneath a golden egg crust. Beguiling yet deeply comforting, it's a terrific vehicle for whitetail, elk, or moose. This recipe is adapted from renowned South African winemaker Adi Badenhorst; it's bobotie as his mother Judy cooks it—as good as it gets. One of Adi's wines, then, would be the ideal pairing. Both his 2018 Secateurs Red, a supple blend of syrah, cinsault, and grenache, or, for a bigger splurge, the 2018 Ramnasgras Cinsault, would be killer homegrown companions to this unforgettable meal. Round it out with hot steamed rice and some spoonfuls of chutney on the side.

Ingredients | Serves 6

1/4 cup raisins	2 Tbsp. curry powder
1/4 cup dried apricots, roughly chopped	2 Tbsp. apricot jam
2-3 slices high-quality white bread	1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
1 3/4 cup buttermilk (or whole milk)	1/4 cup slivered almonds
3 eggs	1 tsp. fresh ginger, grated
3 Tbsp. coconut oil (or olive oil)	2 Tbsp. lemon juice (from 1/2 a lemon)
2 onions, thinly sliced	1/2 tsp. turmeric
2 lbs. ground venison	4 bay leaves, fresh if possible
2 cloves garlic, minced	Kosher salt and freshly-ground pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Place the dried fruits in a small bowl and pour over boiling water to cover. In another bowl, tear the bread into pieces and combine with 1 1/4 cups buttermilk and one of the eggs. Stir and mash with a fork until the egg is incorporated and the mixture is pale and soggy.
2. Heat 2 Tbsp. of the oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add the onions and cook gently, stirring frequently, for about 8 minutes, or until soft and golden. Add the meat and the garlic and cook, stirring to break it up, for about 3 minutes, or just until no pink remains. Remove from heat. Drain the fruit and add it to the meat along with the curry, jam, Worcestershire, almonds, ginger, and lemon juice. Fold in the soaked bread mixture and season generously with salt and pepper.
3. Grease a 9x13-inch casserole with the remaining oil. Turn the meat mixture into the pan and place in the oven for 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, whisk the remaining 1/2 cup buttermilk with the remaining two eggs in a medium bowl. Whisk in the turmeric and salt and pepper.
5. After the bobotie has baked for 30 minutes, pour the buttermilk mixture over the top and nestle in the bay leaves. Return to the oven for another 30 minutes, or until the topping is firm and bronzed at the edges. Let rest for about 5 minutes before serving.

MAINTAINING MOMENTUM FOR CONSERVATION: SOME SUGGESTIONS FROM AN OLD GUY

by Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D.

Bighorn sheep have suffered many management setbacks; but, as a result, have been a beneficiary of aggressive conservation programs. Nevertheless, they continue to face many challenges to conservation and management, some of which are self-imposed by wildlife professionals. Among those challenges are: limited preparation of personnel, interagency competition, bureaucratic inertia, confounding legislation, presence or absence of public advocacy, political expediency, and interpersonal issues.

My purpose is to provide recommendations that, in my opinion, will enhance the probability of conservation successes. These ideas accumulated during my career in wildlife conservation, which has spanned nearly 50 years. The recommendations will be widely applicable regardless of the taxon or project of interest, but thoughts expressed here rely largely on my long-term experience working with bighorn sheep. Management and conservation of those iconic mountain ungulates — and all wildlife for that matter — are complicated by many factors and future successes are not assured. I hope that ideas presented herein will help to maintain existing momentum, not only for bighorn sheep, but for wildlife conservation in general. In this essay, I (1) briefly review what I perceive to be primary challenges to the conservation of wild sheep, and (2) provide recommendations that will be helpful in building on what historically has been a largely successful conservation program.

SOME OF THE CHALLENGES

The professional literature abounds with opinions on the preparation of professionals entering the field of wildlife management and an especially germane essay has advocated the importance of education extending beyond the classroom. Indeed, many have emphasized that faculty with broad experience outside of the classroom can add to the education of young professionals in meaningful ways, but I was both flabbergasted and flummoxed when that notion was summarily dismissed by two well-known university professors. I, and many others involved in wildlife conservation, believe knowledge gained through hands-on experience is an extremely important aspect of education. While I do not advocate that biologists with extensive agency experience be hired solely to teach wildlife students about the “world” they are about to enter, I do contend that greater attention to



the “real world of wildlife management” would have moderated the motivation to prepare this essay.

It also has been my experience that “interagency competition” and “bureaucratic inertia” most often lead to inefficiency rather than meaningful progress — although there are occasional exceptions. Additionally, confounding or misleading legislation has, in some cases, produced untenable situations with respect to wildlife conservation and which will require future legislation to repair. Moreover, uninformed members of the public, often influenced by political chicanery, and politicians that pander to special advocacy groups, have impacted conservation activities throughout the United States. Although the probability is slim, there is a pressing need for lawmakers to recognize effects of their actions on conservation and to correct those benighted policies. Finally, I believe that attitude, frequently expressed in the context of interpersonal competition, sometimes has a negative effect on progress and can even be detrimental to overall objectives intended to facilitate wildlife conservation.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

I list below some recommendations for building on existing momentum dedicated to the conservation of bighorn sheep. I hope readers will consider these thoughts and further identify or develop ways to enhance the efficacy of our collective efforts to enhance the conservation and management all wildlife.

Non-governmental organizations. Early in my career I became acutely aware of the role of the private sector in wildlife conservation. Since then, I have emphasized the value of a public-private working relationship, which has been of paramount importance in the conservation of desert bighorn sheep. The value of that relationship has been confirmed by thousands of interested individuals and numerous organizations founded primarily by the sporting public. Many accomplishments involving non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been undertaken for the benefit of bighorn sheep and numerous other species. In large part, conservation successes continue because of those grass-roots efforts. As was emphasized frequently by Dick Weaver, “It is not government that makes things happen; it is those outside of agencies that get things done.”

Since my earliest exposure to the men and women that for so long have advocated for bighorn sheep, I have followed Weaver’s advice and sought opportunities to enhance relationships with NGOs. North American wild sheep have benefited from the interest and actions of a multitude of organizations, and I have had the privilege of working with 13 local or national NGOs on behalf of bighorn sheep conservation. Become involved with local and national groups that have an interest in bighorn sheep and take advantage of opportunities they present to build momentum for conservation. Indeed, “conservation through conversation” can produce meaningful results and I believe the contributions of interested individuals and organizations will become increasingly important. Non-governmental organizations can get things done when government cannot; do not hesitate to build relationships with those groups.

I also offer a word of caution: agency biologists and academic personnel often view NGOs primarily as a source of funds, rather than as partners in conservation. Ironically, the reverse also is true with some organizations viewing agencies primarily as “cash cows.” Nevertheless, NGOs generally are aware that the conservation of wild sheep is well-funded by most agencies, and lack of agency funding has been identified by wild sheep biologists as unimportant relative to disease, habitat quality, predation, or competition. NGOs are quick to catch on and when it becomes obvious that they are viewed primarily as sources of funds rather than as cooperators in conservation, productive relationships can be harmed. I believe it is more productive to seek needed funds from within one’s agency rather than simply seeking alternatives elsewhere, even though the latter may be “less complicated.”

The media. During my career I spent many hundreds of hours responding to queries from the press and the public, and a willingness to interact with individuals

and organizations is of paramount importance in meeting conservation challenges. The public and the press can be an ally or an enemy; never miss an opportunity, however, to speak to a civic group, a reporter, a school group, or a conservation organization. And, always return phone calls; much of the public believes no government employee works so hard that they do not have the time to do so. Every interaction with the public, whether through the media or individual contacts, presents an opportunity to educate others and further build the case for conservation.

Private enterprise. Opportunities to build relationships with private enterprise should not be overlooked. Indeed, purveyors of equipment or service-providers, often will respond positively to special requests if a long-term and positive relationship has been established. For example, a strong and professional working relationship with pilots is especially desirable; when individuals understand exactly why you are asking them to do something and fully realize that a special effort has a meaningful consequence for success, they will be even more supportive of meeting conservation objectives.

Collaboration with “sister” agencies. Working closely, even if not always in agreement, with other resource management agencies is a necessity. I believe biologists in federal agencies are largely sympathetic to the frustrations that state wildlife biologists feel with respect to the often illogical, ecologically unsound, or frustrating constraints associated with some federal legislation, and grievances can be shared. Moreover, access to decision makers willing to make calls in the best interest of bighorn sheep, rather than fretting about potential lawsuits that could arise as a result of their decisions, may present itself. Indeed, such relationships historically have led to successful programs of which all involved can be proud.

Academia and agencies can be friends. The management of wildlife resources is far more than the mere application of previous research, and its complexity requires original thinking. Cooperation between universities and government agencies is desirable and I strongly encourage agency personnel to be receptive to working with those in academic institutions; I also urge academic personnel to be receptive to working with those in agencies. Benefits of such relationships are becoming more evident, but levels of cooperation vary substantially among agencies and universities. Professors, research scientists, undergraduate students, and graduate students are important resources and agency personnel have provided innumerable opportunities for students and their academic advisors to become involved directly with conservation.

Collaboration with ‘non-wildlife’ agencies. I have attempted to follow Dick Weaver’s leadership with respect to agencies whose primary missions are other than wildlife conservation. Such organizations often have the resources, and the authority for land management, to facilitate management programs on behalf of bighorn sheep. In California, these organizations have been, and continue to be meaningful partners in the conservation of bighorn sheep. For example, close collaboration with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California led to the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Whipple Mountains, a range from which they had been extirpated several decades previously. A close relationship with the Department of Defense led to translocations of bighorn sheep to the Eagle Crags and the Argus Range, both on the China Lake Naval Weapons Center, and to the reintroduction of bighorn sheep to the Bullion Mountains at the Marine Corps Air and Gunnery Range (MCAGR). Ongoing work at MCAGR has resulted in construction of 7 wildlife water developments, the substantial westward expansion of bighorn sheep in the Bullion Mountains and, ultimately, restoration of gene flow across >100 km. Unless managers recognize the value of working with such organizations, bighorn sheep conservation could be shortchanged.

Privately owned lands. In most jurisdictions, wild sheep occur primarily on lands owned and managed by federal agencies. Nevertheless, the potential value of some private lands to conservation is indisputable, and good working relationships with private landowners, and others conducting permitted activities such as grazing, mineral extraction, or energy production on federal lands, are essential in order to meet many conservation objectives. Even in states where public land is abundant, owners of large private holdings have cooperated with government agencies to facilitate translocations or habitat enhancement projects, and landowners further have the potential to benefit bighorn sheep through their good will and cooperation in managing domestic livestock. Good working relationships with landowners and those permitted to operate on public lands are essential to building, and especially to maintaining, momentum for the conservation of wild sheep, but biologists have to get out of their trucks and initiate the needed conversations.

Co-workers. Take advantage of skills or talents possessed by co-workers, and give credit as appropriate. Some of them will be academically oriented, others will be service-oriented, and most of them will have skills that will be of benefit to wild sheep or their habitat. For example, a colleague or officemate that works on bats may have ideas that are equally applicable to a pervasive issue with

which assistance is needed. In other examples, I have had employees or co-workers that would qualify as journeyman welders, electricians, or plumbers if employed in the private sector. Some of them could not distinguish between a chi-squared test and a t-test, but when I needed a welder to repair a broken trailer, or a plumber to fix a broken pipeline, I did not consult a statistician.

The bottom line is that employees and co-workers have individual talents, and it is appropriate to realize those differences and take advantage of their skills. Over the years I’ve had several employees that were not self-starters, and others that were very opinionated; one seemingly viewed arguing to be on par with an Olympic event. Nevertheless, each of them completed tasks assigned to them effectively, efficiently, and completely. Treating your co-workers, and especially your employees, with respect has the potential to pay big dividends, not only for working relationships and efficiency, but for building and maintaining momentum for conservation.

Technology. It is important for wildlife biologists to remain on the cutting edge of technology, but application of Maslow’s hammer (i.e., everything looks like a nail) and what I perceive to be a tendency to fall in love with potential solutions is becoming increasingly evident. For example, an attraction to the bright, shiny object—technology in this case—and its application to wildlife science seemingly has become the rage, but sometimes at the expense of failing to consider its necessity, added costs, or biological significance. Improved computational and analytical capabilities and the availability of remote data gathering technologies have allowed science to advance, but frequently with a near absence of field work, and the absence of which has resulted in (1) an apparent fascination with the tools and not the problem (see above), and (2) increased isolation of biologists from the natural world. These issues are compounded further by a de-emphasis on natural history courses at many universities. That, in turn, has resulted in a further decline in passion for and curiosity about the natural world, traits that are of paramount importance to achieving conservation objectives. Further, a sometimes absence of critical forethought (often referred to as problem analysis) or planning all too often has resulted in technology being employed simply because it was available, rather than being necessary, to meet an objective. The unnecessary application of technology to explore poorly thought-out questions, putting technology before biology, or re-inventing previously successful programs can lead to a perception of incompetence or arrogance, both of which are inexcusable and counter-productive in terms of conservation and management.

Attitude. Above all, an attitude that reflects a commitment to conservation is most meaningful, and humility is a highly desirable personal trait. Moreover, hearing what others have to offer before making a decision or starting anew can prevent much in the way of frustration and enhance conservation successes. Learning from others has many advantages, and not taking advantage of such opportunities stymies success and can result in total failures, even within long-standing, successful programs. Arrogance or incompetence, or perceptions thereof, will buy nothing but grief with the press, the public, administrators, employees, academics, other agencies, landowners,

contractors or, perhaps most importantly, the NGOs that historically have played, and continue to play, a pivotal role in conserving bighorn sheep.

—*Dr. Vern Bleich worked for the California Department of Fish and Game for 34 years, primarily with bighorn sheep and several other large mammals occupying the deserts of southeastern California. The thoughts expressed in this essay are based largely on personal experiences over a career in wildlife conservation that has spanned nearly 50 years, and were first shared at the 55th Meeting of the Desert Bighorn Council, and subsequently published in The Wildlife Society Bulletin. Interested parties can contact Dr. Bleich and request a copy of that paper (vcbleich@gmail.com).*

CA WSF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

All annual memberships expire July 31

Have you been enjoying this newsletter? If you are an annual member this will be your last one! It's time to renew your membership now. You may renew in any one of the following ways:

1. Return the completed membership form on page 39 with a check for \$40 by mail to the address on the form.
2. Return the same completed membership form with your charge card info by mail, email, or fax. All information is on the form.
3. Log onto the CAWSF web site at <http://www.cawsf.org/> and complete using a charge card or PayPal account.
4. Use the STORE menu button on your the CA WSF Facebook page and use your credit card.

Note: If you joined after January 1, 2021, your membership is active until July 31, 2022.

If you can, please consider upgrading to a Life Membership for a one-time \$500 dues payment or, if you are already a Life Member, upgrade to Distinguished Life Membership for a one time \$1000 dues payment. With either of these special commitments to wild sheep you'll be adding to the CA WSF Life Member Endowment.

CA WSF has an enviable record of positive impact on California wild sheep, you can continue to help us build momentum and to multiply the difference we make by renewing and encouraging friends to join! Learn more about what your membership dollars help to do by visiting the web site at: <http://www.cawsf.org/>

ORO BELLE GUZZLER NOW PROVIDING “LIQUID GOLD” TO WILDLIFE

*by Debbie Miller Marschke
Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep*



On October 24, 2020 SCBS installed a brand-new East Mojave big game guzzler in the Castle Mountains. This was achieved by and through a partnership with an active mining company, Castle Mountain Ventures/Equinox Gold, upon an area that had been already disturbed by mining work with funding for equipment provided by CA WSF.

The area was located within the operation zone of the currently active mining property within the Castle Mountains Monument, upon Bureau of Land Management property. This was a monumental accomplishment in light of the Covid-19 restrictions that have thwarted activities in most other wildlife conservation organizations (including government agencies), and SCBS followed through with a safe and successful result.

The Castle Mountains range runs south and east of the New York Mountains, southwest of Searchlight, Nevada. The range crosses into Nevada but most of it is in California. The nearest Bighorn Sheep Hunt zones are Zone 2 Kelso Peak/Old Dad to the east and Zone 3 Clark Kingston to the north. Hart Peak is the highest point boasting an elevation of 5,543 feet and can receive snow occasionally. The Castle Mountains include a historical mining district that has been active for more than 100 years. In 1991, Viceroy Gold Corporation quarried the historic claim, “Oro Belle”, creating an extensive pit until 2001. Castle Mountain Ventures/Equinox Gold acquired the active claims in

2012; its stock is actively traded on the stock exchange (NYSE: EQX).

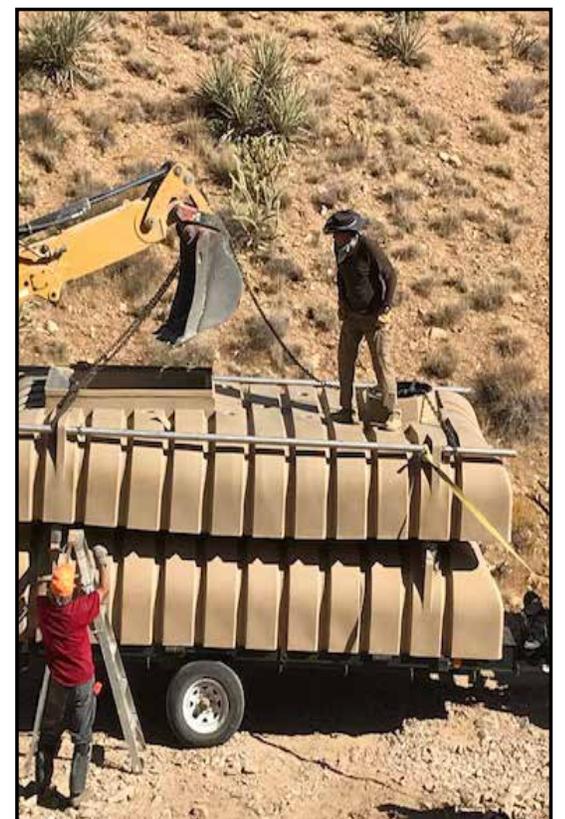
Reliable water sources in the Castle Mountains have been an ongoing challenge. In the early 1900s, the historic gold mining town of Hart needed to freight water in by the barrel from the nearest railroad stop until a pipeline was connected six miles north to Malpais Springs. The National Park Service inventoried the Castle Mountain Monument’s water resources during a study in 2016, documenting the known natural springs or water sources available; none were flowing. Despite the unreliable water, Bighorn Sheep have been using this range. In past years SCBS, with the permission of Viceroy Gold, installed a Boss Tank style guzzler in the center of their active mining operations which has been supplying the local bighorn sheep population with a reliable water source. It has been observed that Bighorn Sheep appear to tolerate the activities of an active mining operation very well and enjoy living upon the graded steps of quarries. Other mining operations, such as Specialty Minerals and Mitsubishi in Hesperia, California, and OMYA near Amboy, California, have had dump truck drivers regularly document the presence of bighorn sheep within the active mining zones. After the Boss tank was installed, the workers at the mine regularly observed bighorn sheep during the course of their workday. Equinox became aware that the Boss tank may be affected by expansion plans at the mine and may need to be relocated. Proactively, the future of the wildlife drinker was discussed in advance of the mine expansion.

SCBS and Equinox forged a partnership and discussed placement of a new guzzler system to be located on the exterior perimeter of the active operation zone. The groundwork was handled by SCBS Board Member Gary Thomas, and the project had been in the development stages for several years. Initially, SCBS planned on installing the new system in spring of 2020. The onset of Covid-19 brought a temporary shut down of the mining operations and consequently the project was placed on an indefinite hold. I took over as Project Coordinator sometime around May of 2020, poised for the next opportunity to resume work on the project. Discussions with our contact at the mine, Aren Hall (Environmental Manager), began to gain traction during the summertime. On September 11, 2020, Glenn Sudmeier, Steve Marschke, and I met with Aren Hall at the mine and project site. The area was surveyed; an abundance and variety of vegetation was noted along the slopes of the surrounding landscape. Originally, a two-tank system had been planned. The presence of suitable browse and favorable escape terrain suggested that we upgrade our plan to three tanks to accommodate future positive recruitment in the herd. Glenn and Steve re-engineered the footprint plan for the new guzzler. We also scouted potential group campsites for the project. During our visit we spotted five bighorn sheep in the rocks above us.

The main challenges for the installation of this guzzler was the rocky nature of the proposed site and the location on a side slope. Normally, SCBS guzzlers do not require extensive excavation for the placement of the Raincatcher system; the “Oro Belle” guzzler was obviously a system that commanded more than hand tools and sweat equity from the volunteers. The use of Equinox’s excavating equipment was discussed with Aren. It was agreed that the Mine would take care of the pre-excitation in advance. During the following weeks, Aren and I communicated by phone and email while the area was prepared with heavy machinery. Steve and I returned to the project site on October 9, 2020 to monitor progress of the project. We saw three enormous class 4 rams in the vicinity of the new guzzler resting in the shade of a grove of Joshua Trees.

The installation schedule began on Thursday October 22, 2020. John Voght traveled to the designated group camp site and placed SCBS project signs on the turnoff point of the paved road. Equinox Gold had arranged the placement of two porta-potties at the group campsite for our convenience. Our extraordinary Project Cook, Rodger Lopez, arrived at camp on Friday afternoon and began setting up. Rodger erected a large canopy, which boasted lights powered by a generator, and several banquet tables. Rodger provided the volunteer crew with breakfast and dinners during the project, complete with “touchless” serving protocols and masked/ gloved food preparation to comply with Covid safety measures. He was assisted by his son Steven VandarGriff and Steven’s fiancée Arianna Cerventes. Our wholehearted “thanks” goes to our cooks for providing us with delicious meals and for the extra measures taken to keep us all safe.

Project volunteers began to roll in and set up their camps during the latter part of Friday, October 23. Jeff Crouse and Jenny Hinojosa, driving the SCBS Big Red truck, arrived with the SCBS tools and a trailer with two Raincatcher tanks. Frank Rorabaugh arrived with a second trailer with the additional Raincatcher tank. On Saturday morning, mine representatives Aren Hall and Ralph McCullers arrived at the SCBS group campsite to give us a mine safety briefing. Topics of discussion included the wearing of face coverings, working around active excavation equipment, general safety, and the need for escorts while traveling within the mine property. After having our





temperatures taken at the front gate, the volunteers were allowed to caravan with an escort through the active mine to the project location.

Saturday's weather was perfect for a guzzler installation. This was a relief because just one week prior, temperatures were very hot and uncomfortable. Upon our arrival, the work site exploded with activity and the volunteers split into two work teams. The largest group headed uphill to work on the rain mat. The Mine had rough graded the area with heavy machinery, and the SCBS crew handled the finish work. The surface was raked of rocks, and an outer perimeter of sand bags was constructed to create a lip. The Hypalon mat was unfurled and stretched across the site, overlapping the sand bag edges

"like the crust of a homemade pie" (quoting Glenn Sudmeier). Then the crew scattered, returning with sizable rocks which were placed on the rain mat and covering the edges. Due to the fact that this work site was fairly rocky, the volunteers did not need to venture far from the rain mat to find what was needed. Meanwhile, the Raincatcher tank crew prepared for the placement of the tanks. Ralph McCullers, an Equinox employee, operated a backhoe to assist in fine tuning the area while SCBS volunteers used hand tools to manipulate the edges of the hole until it was deemed satisfactory. The floor surface was painstakingly leveled, using measurement tools and a 2 x 4 wooden stud as a guide. Next the trailers with the Raincatcher tanks were staged next to the hole, and Ralph used the backhoe to lift them off the trailers. The crew used ropes to assist in guiding the tanks into place, and Ralph skillfully set the tanks into place. Three 2300-gallon Raincatcher tanks were placed in a row "like babies in a nursery" (quoting Sudmeier again).

A really tasty deli style box lunch was provided to everyone by Equinox, which was welcomed by all. There were several sandwich selections to suit any taste, with chips and soft batch cookies. The work on the rain mat had been completed, so after lunch we focused on burying the tanks and completing the plumbing. Zach Thomas and Frank Rorabaugh had made great progress on the plumbing. There was much back filling to be done, and the crew did not finish the task on Saturday. All of the work that was achieved on Saturday was captured on film and documented by SCBS member volunteer David Hawxhurst. David edited and produced a wonderful video for us, which is recommended viewing for all SCBS volunteers and fans. You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B11x3mlvjTo>. SCBS member Monte Hammer also made a video, which is a complementary companion to Hawxhurst's work: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Dvf3FtvrLA> (or search Oro Belle guzzler on You Tube). The crew returned to camp, where Rodger had dinner waiting for us. Everyone received a door prize as a thank you for participating. Special thanks to project participant Mignon Slentz, who provided her own handcrafted artwork which was included in the disbursed door prizes.

The crew returned to the project site on Sunday to finish burying the tanks and placement of the artificial rock shade covers over the drinker openings. I applied my artist abilities, spray painting the shade covers with camouflaging using natural colors observed in the surrounding landscape. Much backfilling was needed between the excavated hillside and the tanks that the crew could not completely cover the tanks, leaving a small percentage uncovered. This was inconsequential because within a few days of the project, Equinox used their machinery to complete the job to our specifications perfectly. SCBS departed from the site of the newest guzzler, the "Oro Belle", with the system in working order and ready for water. There was possible rain in the forecast for the following Monday, but the storm did not bless the guzzler with precipitation. Equinox took the initiative to haul water to Oro Belle before Thanksgiving, and the guzzler was ready for sheep. On January 11, 2021 Equinox reported that the sheep have found the guzzler, spotting 10 bighorn in the vicinity and telltale hoof prints all around the drinker!

SCBS would like to recognize all the folks that participated in this successful endeavor: Danny Antillon, Peter Beas, Chris Bowers, Ariana Cervantez, Joseph Cimarusti, Tony Cimarusti, Jeff Crouse, Ken Eltrich, Greg Flewin, Jessica Gonzales, Juan Gonzales, Bob & Sandy Greer, Monte Hammer, David Hawxhurst, David Hess, Jenny Hinojosa, Bill Kulungian, Norm Lopez, Rodger Lopez, John Maley, Steve Marschke, Alejandro Meza, Debbie Miller Marschke, Ariocho M'greene, David M'greene, Mike Morgan, Don Moore, Don's son Travis Martin, Joe Preiss, Caleb Rod, Malcomb Roode, Frank Rorhbach, John & Linda Roy, Mignon Slentz, Glen Sudmeier, Lauren Thomas, Gary Thomas, Zach Thomas, Steven VandarGriff, and John Voght.

The Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation for funding the purchase of construction materials and project costs. By and through these generous donations, the SCBS organization continues to be the boots-on-the-ground workforce in keeping sheep on the mountain.



THE DAY THEY TOOK MY GUNS AWAY

*By Gene Hill (1928-1997)
Reprint from Sporting Classics*

My dear grandchildren,

Today is the day they come to take my guns. I thought I'd write something about the way I feel about it, because, being my grandchildren, you might otherwise never get a chance to know how much so many of us cared about our guns and how deeply they represented a precious part of our lives.

Of course, the hunting has long since disappeared. It wasn't too long after the so-called "humane societies" had seen to the end of gunning seasons that there were no more birds or animals to speak of. The white-tailed deer were about the first to almost disappear from a combination of overcrowding, disease and starvation. After Ducks Unlimited was forced to close down, the breeding grounds were no longer cared for, and except for a few mallard crossbreeds and the odd farm-raised Canada goose, the skies were empty.

It seemed that once they got the hunting stopped that was all they cared about, and when the money that the hunters had contributed every year dried up so did the animals, and that was virtually the end of it. A lot of us had predicted what would happen—but we were voted out, and that was that. It was like the end of a crusade. Once the thing was over the people who felt they were righteous all forgot what the point of it was.

It seemed, as so many of us tried to say to the politicians, that the Brothers of Bambi and all the rest didn't really care about the animals themselves; all they wanted was the end of what they thought was cruel. Now they know what cruel is—or should.

Some of the gun clubs continued for a while, and a few of us stayed on to shoot a little trap and skeet, but somehow it wasn't the same. Crowds would come around and wave signs and carry on against us, and the simple pleasure of smelling a little powder and breaking a few clay targets was nationally shouted down as something akin to criminal.

Looking back on it, I can see how it all happened—I think. A lot still believe it was the growing criminal lobby that was at the bottom of it. And it turned out that it would be easier to stop the hunting seasons first and then make a play for the guns than the other way around—which they had tried first.

There was even a time, long before they closed down the hunting, that we used to hang our guns on the wall the way you would a painting.

I know you'll read about it in school, but I wanted you to hear the other side of it at least one time. You might get some idea when you see the pictures of me and your grandmother and friends with our bird dogs and retrievers.

We had some marvelous times together, especially down along the Eastern Shore. Back in the 1970s there were nearly a million geese there, and early in the season, fine flights of pintails, which were our favorites. (You ought to look up the pintail in one of your books to see what a beautiful bird it was.) And there were always the old standbys—the green-headed mallard.

Somewhere in my stuff you'll find a couple of duck calls—you ought to save them. I suspect they'll be collectors' items before too long. The one that makes sort of a quack is the mallard call, which we used most—the others are goose calls, and I think I saved a couple of pintail whistles.

I don't suppose you can imagine a day with the dawn storming out of the northeast and all of us dressed in six layers of old clothes, the retrievers whining softly with excitement and us crouched down in the blind making soft clucks on the calls whenever a flock of birds seemed interested in our decoys.

We'd play a little game a lot—we'd talk about having roast duck or goose for supper, and we'd take turns picking something to go along with it. Your grandmother liked things like turnips and squash—she was a Yankee—and I liked things like greens and collards (you might have to look those up!). I guess that maybe all the fooling with guns and dogs and calls and decoys and the silly arguments over how to cook a duck or goose and was beach-plum jelly as good as cranberry don't amount to much—but things were simpler then, and we and our friends looked forward to those days as much as anything I can remember.

Well, I started to tell you about the guns. Mostly I had shotguns. But I had a few rifles that I loved and had carried many a mile from Alaska to Africa—and over quite a little country in between.

Some of my shotguns I thought were lovely—to me they were a form of art, and I liked to look at them almost as much as I liked to use them. Some were Italian, some English, some German, but most were made right here

in the United States. Back when I did most of my bird hunting, we had any number of ducks and geese, as I said before, but also, right here in the East, if you can imagine it, we would go out after ruffed grouse and woodcock, English pheasant and quail.

Most of the best quail hunting was down South, and we'd go there whenever we had a chance, and we always hoped to spend some time gunning doves. We'd argue about how to cook doves and quail, too, but no need to go into all that since I don't think you'd really understand how deeply this was a part of our lives.

Our bird dogs were named Jag and Little Ben and Tippy and Judy Pup and Daisy and even one called George, because he looked like a friend who gave him to us. I know that doesn't mean much now either, but I just wanted you to know—for no particular reason except it's kind of important to me just to put their names on paper.

All the songs and stories I like to remember best have come from the times spent with my friends in some gun club or hunting camp.

They used to tease me a lot about how much I loved the shotguns. I guess I had more than enough, since I had one (some said two) for about every kind of hunting. You didn't really need them all—but as I said, I liked them for a lot of reasons. There was even a time, long before they closed down the hunting, that we used to hang them on the wall the way you would a painting.

I guess there's no great sense of going into all that now since it doesn't mean much—just an old man meandering about something that he once loved very much, and that a part of his life went along with them on the day they took them away. I guess, to be honest, that all the songs and stories I like to remember best have come from the times spent with my friends in some gun club or hunting camp. But even to me all that is beginning to seem so very long ago.

The police are the ones that are coming to get the guns. I know they don't like that job much either, but since there are so many funny laws now, I guess they just have to go ahead and do what they have to do.

I must let you in on a secret, unlawful thing I did. I took the guns I liked best and buried them in the field behind the barn where I used to run the dogs on quail and woodcock and pheasant every now and then. I just couldn't stand the thought of having them melted down or thrown off a boat into the ocean. I saved a few to turn in, and I hope that does the trick. It seems that you can get away with a lot of pretty bad crimes, but if they catch an honest man with a gun that he hid away, out of sentiment, it goes pretty hard with him.

Well, they're all gone now. The young fellow that came for them was a state trooper I used to shoot trap with every now and then. He looked through the stuff I handed over and didn't see my old favorite trap gun. It wasn't much to look at anyway—the checkering was smooth and the bluing pretty much worn away. And I think he took note that a few others weren't there either, but he didn't say a word. He's a nice young man, and as I say, just doing his duty. I suspect he saw the fresh dirt on my boots, and I suspect I saw a small tear or two when he put my little collection in his car. I'm not sure I did, but I hope so.

With all my wishes that things may someday change,
Your loving grandfather,

Gene

GET READY!
19TH ANNUAL FUNDRAISER AND
20TH ANNIVERSARY
(VIRTUAL)
APRIL 24, 2021

UPDATE FROM CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE

Jeff Villepique, Ph.D., CDFW Senior Wildlife Biologist, Supervisor, IDR-South

Following a successful October–November capture and collaring of more than 100 desert bighorn sheep, and another 100 combined Sierra Nevada and Peninsular Ranges bighorn, CDFW continues intensive monitoring and collaborative research to understand and mitigate impacts of respiratory disease in bighorn sheep across the Mojave Desert, Peninsular and Sierra Nevada Ranges, and in the San Gorgonio population. There are hopeful signs that the worst of the winter 2018–2019 respiratory disease outbreak at San Gorgonio is over. Most ewes—including eight collared in November—have lambs at-heel, and all animals collared in January and in November are still around and appear healthy. Biologists with CDFW will continue monitoring throughout the spring, as disease often affects lambs at 3–4 months of age.

Intensive fieldwork is currently underway in the Mojave Desert in coordination with Oregon State University (OSU) and collaborators. Dr. Clint Epps and his colleagues at OSU secured a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for a multi-year research project investigating how impacts of respiratory disease vary across bighorn sheep populations—currently a puzzling phenomenon. The NSF-funded study will look at how nutrition and the individual bighorn’s microbiome and genetics interact to influence the severity of disease, which will help us understand how some populations are heavily impacted by disease, while others seem to escape relatively unscathed. Each collared bighorn will be located, visually monitored, then have fecal samples collected this winter. It’s a major undertaking which also helps the monitoring efforts of CDFW’s Desert Bighorn Sheep Management Program.



Above: Nicholas Shirkey, CDFW, lead author of study on disease history in Mojave bighorn sheep

Biologists and veterinarians with CDFW’s Wildlife Investigations Lab (WIL), Inland Desert’s Region, and Headquarters, in collaboration with OSU and others, recently added another piece towards solving the disease puzzle. Shirkey and collaborators published a study that gives reason for hope regarding the disease outbreak which spread through Mojave Desert bighorn populations



Jeff Villepique

since its May 2013 discovery. The California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation helped fund the study. Lead author Nicholas Shirkey, an Environmental Scientist at CDFW’s WIL, surveyed WIL-archived samples and found that antibodies to *Mycoplasma ovipneumonia* (*M. ovi.* for short) were present in animals captured as early as 1986, years before the 2013 disease outbreak. In one population, antibodies were detected, then absent in later years, suggesting the population had cleared the disease.

“The findings in the paper show the importance of a sustained effort to collect data from these desert bighorn sheep,” Epps said. “The data really help us understand what is happening with these populations so that we can make sure they survive.” He continued, “I wouldn’t let my guard down, but I have been heartened to see that the bighorns are hanging on.”

It’s not known what strain of *M. ovi.* produced the antibodies detected in earlier capture efforts, because antibody testing does not allow strain-typing. (In a related podcast: Mike Cox of Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) provides a fascinating comparison of respiratory diseases in bighorn sheep and human COVID-19 (hint: we’ve been using the same swabs with parallel PCR and antibody tests).

Journal Reference:

*Shirkey, N., A. Roug, T. Besser; V.C. Bleich, N. Darby, D. Dekelaita, N.L. Galloway, B. Gonzale, D. Hughson, L. Konde, R. Monello, P.R. Prentice, R. Vu, J. Wehausen, B. Munk, J. Powers, C.W. Epps. 2021. Previously unrecognized exposure of desert bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis nelsoni*) to *Mycoplasma ovipneumoniae* in the California Mojave Desert. *Journal of Wildlife Diseases* 52. DOI: [10.7589/JWDD-20-00098](https://doi.org/10.7589/JWDD-20-00098).*

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS UPDATE

by Don Priest

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) released the Bighorn Sheep Conservation and Management Plan (Plan) for peer review this past December 2020. **This is big deal.** CDFW has been working on this Plan for a number of years, with unfortunate delays. CA WSF was excited to hear of its release and look forward to reviewing the Plan when it becomes available for public review.

CDFW are in the final stages of this peer review process, currently receiving their comments. CDFW will then gather these observations and make any appropriate edits to the Plan from any recommended changes. The next step is to release the Plan for public review; CDFW anticipates that release to be approximately April 1, 2021. CA WSF will be diligently reviewing the Plan at that time. If you would like to review the Plan yourself please look to the following Bighorn Sheep Program web page: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Mammals/Bighorn-Sheep> for its release. CDFW has indicated that the Plan will be available for public comment for 45 days. The final version of the Plan is expected to be finalized by July 1, so we are just months away from its long-awaited completion.

This is very exciting, though has been a very long road to get here. But we are happy CDFW has been able to complete the Plan after putting so much hard work by many within the Bighorn Sheep Program in Sacramento and the pertinent Wildlife Branches, so hats off and thanks to them all.

An attempt to further attack hunting in California, the Bear Bill!

Soon after the 2021 Legislative Sessions began a bill (Senate Bill 252) was introduced by Senator Scott Wiener (San Francisco-11) to ban the hunting of bears in the state. This would follow up from the hunting ban of bobcats that began January 1, 2020, as well as mountain lions for many years. However, the bear population within California has increased dramatically in the past twenty years, threatening deer populations in certain parts of the state as bears are a predator species. And should this bill succeed, what species would then be next to ban the hunting of?

A big thanks must be given to Gaines & Associates and others whom immediately jumped on this bad, non-management science based bill to see it either to defeat or repeal. For more on this see Bill Gaines of Gaines & Associates article in this magazine to find out the results of these quick efforts.

XpressWest High Speed Rail Line

The XpressWest High Speed Rail Project (Project) from



Victorville to Las Vegas is still on track! Though there have been some delays due to financing arrangements by the use of bond sales by the California Infrastructure Bank (iBank), the project still anticipates breaking ground sometime this spring of 2021.

Our efforts and those of our coalition partners is to continue our focus on the California Treasurer's office and the Directors of the Department of Fish & Wildlife and the Department of Transportation. These three agencies have a direct effect on the financing and/or permitting of the project at the state level. Thus we feel that any mitigation for wildlife crossings to help rectify the wildlife connectivity interference this Project builds must come from these agencies. The Treasurer and the Directors are well aware of our concerns and are cooperating with the coalition to find solutions to this problem created by the Project. Stay tuned for further updates.

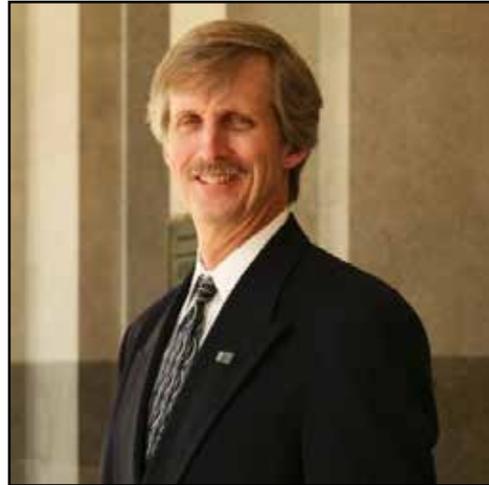


Why we work hard to PUT AND KEEP SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAINS. Photo courtesy of Member Brook Stiltz.

CA WSF — WORKING BOTH SIDES OF THE BALL TO KEEP YOU IN THE FIELD

*by Bill Gaines
Gaines and Associates*

On Monday, January 11, the California State Legislature convened for the 2021 Legislative Session – the first year of the two-year 2021/2022 Session. Typically, the first few weeks of a new Session are relatively quiet with Legislators getting settled in and busy sorting through stacks of possible proposals to determine which bills they will bring forward. Not this year. In January – with the formal bill introduction deadline of February 19 still nearly a month away – the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) was already on the field playing both the defense and offense necessary to keep sheep on the mountain and you in the field.



FIRST... ON DEFENSE

With the increasing urban tilt of our State Legislature, we knew that 2021 would bring us many challenges – but perhaps not so quickly, nor so drastic. With the new 2021 Session only days old, and the bill introduction deadline seemingly light years away, Senator Scott D. Wiener (D/11-San Francisco) introduced arguably the greatest direct attack on hunting and science-based wildlife management ever proposed in our state: Senate Bill (SB) 252 – legislation which proposed a flat-out ban on the hunting of bears in California.

To those who wonder why a ban on hunting bears in our state could be argued as the “greatest attack ever” when we have already lost the ability to hunt mountain lions and bobcats, consider this....

Like nearly all anti-hunting legislation, SB 252 is void of any science and based solely on emotional considerations. But what separates SB 252 from the pack is the fact that the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) currently conservatively estimates bear populations in our state to be roughly 40,000 – the highest bear populations ever on record and nearly quadruple the number we had less than four decades ago. An apex predator whose populations are rapidly growing, while their habitats and prey base continue to decline, bears are the poster child for wildlife species that must be managed.

With limited take via depredation permit as the only other alternative, DFW depends upon annual legal hunter harvest to control bear numbers in our state. That being said, the annual harvest of bears in California is not regulated by the number of tags issued for a certain hunt zone like most other big game species, rather it is uniquely managed via a statewide total annual harvest “quota”.

A California bear tag is good for anywhere in the state that is open to bear hunting. Current regulations do not limit the total number of bear tags sold, but do limit hunters to only one bear tag per hunting license year and cap the statewide annual harvest at 1,700 bears. To keep close track of take, regulations require that only DFW employees may validate a bear tag, and successful hunters must immediately report their tag either in person, via mail or online. If it appears that the harvest quota will be reached before the close of the bear season in any given year, DFW reaches out to all those who bought a tag, but have not yet reported, to inform them that they must stop hunting.

Prior to the passage of legislation in 2012 which prohibited the use of dogs to pursue bears for sport-hunting purposes, the quota of 1,700 bears was easily hit nearly every year. But even with annual harvest at its regulated maximum, California’s bear populations continued to expand – putting greater pressure on already declining deer herds and other prey, increasingly impacting ranchers, timber, and other interests, and dangerously

pushing into suburban areas. Aware, concerned, and armed with ample science, DFW went to the California Fish and Game Commission multiple times with a recommendation that the annual quota of 1,700 bears be increased. But with animal-rights' interests jamming the room and a relatively "unfriendly" Commission at the time, DFW was repeatedly denied. Making matters worse, since the prohibition on the use of dogs to pursue bears went into effect in 2013, California has not come close to reaching the annual quota of 1,700 bears, further accelerating our state's burgeoning bear populations and the serious problems they bring with them.

Given that bears are a supreme case study for science-based wildlife management, should SB 252 pass through our Legislature it not only would lay the foundation for future emotion-based proposals targeting a ban on the hunting of wild sheep or other game species, it could but put the entire existence of the California Fish and Game Commission and their authority to regulate the take of wildlife, in partnership with DFW and based on science, in jeopardy.

Always on the lookout for potential threats to science-based wildlife management and hunting opportunity, CA WSF got early word that SB 252 was coming and was ready. Knowing that the bill would threaten far more than just the hunting of bears, CA WSF sprang into action even before SB 252 came out in print late on the evening of Monday, January 25th. First teaming with several partner wildlife conservation organizations, we then worked to increase the breadth of our coalition by reaching out to timber, livestock, beekeepers, and other interests who had a stake in the legislation.

To our benefit was the fact that SB 252 was introduced nearly four weeks before the February 19th bill introduction deadline, and roughly six weeks before the bill could possibly be heard in committee. We quickly packaged up a plethora of valid arguments against the bill – including the overabundance of bears, their increasing threat to public safety, their prey, livestock and other interests, the critical role of hunting as a management tool, the loss of annual bear tag revenues to DFW and their big game efforts, and the logic of spending time and money debating a bill on bears when our state was battling a pandemic, economic hardship, and numerous other problems. With time on our side, rather than gearing up to try to kill the bill in committee, we targeted our initial efforts on pressuring Senator Wiener to pull the bill from consideration before it was heard.

With the help of a massive social media campaign, a tremendous grassroots response from our membership, the hunting greater community, and many other interests, Senator Wiener pulled

SB 252 from consideration on February 1st – seven short, but terribly busy days after its introduction.

THEN... ON OFFENSE

With the successful defense of the first big challenge of 2021 thankfully behind us, it was time for the CA WSF offense to take the field.

In 2010, CA WSF worked in partnership with several other conservation organizations to co-sponsor and successfully pass SB 1058 – legislation that required that all revenue generated via the purchase of antelope, elk, deer, wild pig, bear, and bighorn sheep hunting tags be consolidated and deposited into a Big Game Management Account (BGMA) and used by DFW solely for land acquisition, projects and programs that benefit big game species, and related public hunting opportunities and outreach.

Prior to the passage of SB 1058, Fish and Game Code (FGC) required that revenues from the sale of big game hunting tags be split into several separate small "dedicated" accounts, with their respective expenditure by DFW highly restricted to use on those specific species. Not only did this situation create an accounting nightmare, the relatively small amount of revenue in each dedicated account precluded DFW from implementing many of the projects and programs needed to adequately address the needs of wild sheep and other big game.

The intent of SB 1058 was to amend the FGC to facilitate DFW's ability to promote and enhance the health of all our big game species by requiring all big game tag revenues be consolidated into a single account and authorized for use on projects and programs which benefit the big game species in greatest need. To further advance the ability of DFW to make the most effective use of these revenues, SB 1058 broke new ground by expressly allowing DFW to also make grants to or enter into contracts or other agreements with CA WSF and other nonprofits to carry out their big game program.

For the past decade, as fully intended by SB 1058, DFW has partnered with CA WSF, other non-profits, and for-profit and private entities in the use of BGMA funds to successfully implement programs and projects that benefit California's big game species and expand their public hunting opportunity. However, an audit of the BGMA performed by DFW's Audits Branch in 2020 determined that entering into contracts or agreements with for-profit or private entities for the use of BGMA funds may be in noncompliance with the FGC and, as such, unlawful. Not only is this situation not what was intended by SB 1058, the authority of DFW to also contract with for-

profit and/or private entities is essential to the management and health of California's wild sheep and other big game species. As just a few examples, these critical projects and programs include helicopter surveys and captures of wild sheep and other big game; research and analyses performed by universities which are not non-profits; and laboratory tooth analyses necessary to determine the age structures and health of big game populations.

To address this serious concern, CA WSF has joined with the California Deer Association in co-sponsoring SB 370. This legislation, introduced by Senator Bill Dodd (D/3-Napa) on February 10th, would correct this serious problem by expressly clarifying that, in addition to partnering with non-profits, DFW also has the authority to enter

into agreements with public and private entities and federally recognized Indian tribes to deliver important programs and projects that promote the health of California's big game species and their public hunting opportunity – as was fully intended by SB 1058. SB 370 has yet to be set but will be first heard in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee later this spring.

With the bill introduction deadline of February 19th having just passed, other bills of interest dropped at the last minute could surface in the coming days. Either way, whatever challenges we may face in Sacramento this year, CA WSF is ready and equipped to ensure policy decisions which promote healthy sheep on the mountain and keep you not only in the field but on the field.

GOT AN EGO?

Reprint from Wilderness Athlete

Wilderness Athletes,

I was recently reading a chapter in a book I've recommended before called *Ego is the Enemy*, by Ryan Holiday. I was struck by a particular concept in this book that he titled "The effort is enough." The idea is that instead of being so focused on the outcomes of our effort, we must stay focused on the effort itself.

This applies to so many parts of our lives. Our work, our relationships, our fitness plans, our personal growth, etc. If all we're working towards is the reward, the applause, the appreciation, or the scale to move, we will lose our motivation the minute we don't get the reward we expected.

Let's take losing weight as an example. If you start a new plan, a good plan, and after one week the scale doesn't move at all, do you give up? Or do you look at the plan, make sure you followed it and stick with it for another week? How long will you stick with it? If you know what you are doing is the right thing to do, how long are you willing to wait for the reward?

We can apply this concept to work also. You do your job, you do it well, you make the right choices and you help your company grow and succeed. But you get passed up for a promotion. Do you stop doing the right thing? Does your work suffer because you weren't recognized for your effort in the way that you believe you deserved? Or do you continue to take pride in the work that you do? Do you continue to do your best work, because that's what drives you to wake up and take on another day?

I can tell you that I've struggled personally with this before. Our companies grew this year and we met all of our goals. But when we met those goals, something about it felt emptier than I thought it would. I realized after taking time off during the holidays that I was just really excited to get back to work. Yeah, we have goals for 2021, but I'm more excited about the work that it's going to take to get there than I am about meeting the goal itself. I love waking up and working on this company, because I believe in our mission, our people and our customers. If we meet our goals, that will be awesome. But if we don't, I know that "the effort is enough", because we will do our best work, no matter what.

What parts of your life could use this lesson? For a lot of us, it's fitness and weight loss. Depending on where you are in your journey, results may take days to notice or they may take months. How long are you willing to keep working for that reward? If we're too focused on instant gratification and results, we will fail. In that way, your ego truly is your enemy.

So set your ego aside and get to work.

Stay Wild,

Courtney & the WA Team





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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

Name: _____

Phone: Primary: _____ Alternate: _____ Fax: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____

Preferred method of communication (check one): Phone eMail Fax

Yes, I would like to volunteer to help the California Chapter with its' events and/or projects! Please contact me about volunteer opportunities! (check here)

Yes, I am already a member of Wild Sheep Foundation! My member number is: _____

Do you have a FNAWS (Four North American Wild Sheep)? Yes No

Do you have GSCO Slam®: 1/2 Slam 3/4 Slam Grand Slam

Have you hunted Sheep? Yes No

Do you hunt with a: Rifle: Bow: Muzzleloader: Handgun: Don't Hunt:

Which sheep have you harvested? (Please list and note year) _____

CA WSF Membership:

Annual Membership (\$40) = \$ _____
 Life Membership (\$500) = \$ _____
 Distinguished Life Membership (\$1,500) = \$ _____
 Distinguished Life Membership (\$1,000) (Life upgrade) = \$ _____
 Youth Annual Membership (\$25) = \$ _____
 Youth Life Membership (\$400) = \$ _____

Wild Sheep Foundation Membership:

Annual (\$45) = \$ _____
 3-Year (\$120) = \$ _____
 Family (\$80) = \$ _____
 Life Membership Under age 59 - \$1,000 = \$ _____
 Age 59-64 - \$750 = \$ _____
 Age 65+ - \$500 = \$ _____

Payment Type (check one): Credit/Debit Card Check Enclosed (payable to: "CA WSF")

Credit Card Type: Visa MasterCard Discover AMEX

Cardholder Name: _____ CCV: _____

Credit Card #: _____ Exp. Date: ____/____/____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Please mail this form to CA WSF, 1630 Williams Hwy #151, Grants Pass, OR 97527 or fax to 650-649-1958.

Don't forget to share this form to your hunting friends and relatives!



CA Wild Sheep Foundation
1630 Williams Hwy #151
Grants Pass, OR 97527

www.cawsf.org

CALIFORNIA CHAPTER WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

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