

# California Wild Sheep

## IN THIS ISSUE

From the Editor's Desk .....	3
President's Letter .....	5
A Divine ram .....	6
Old Desert Warriors .....	8
Sheep Summit XXXIV (34) Recap.....	10
Jim Shockey's Hand of Man Museum.....	11
CRANKER .....	12
2024 Annual banquet / Fundraiser Update.....	14
Aoudad/Barbary Sheep in Morocco .....	27
ibex Grand slam.....	28
Water Development Work in the Desert.....	29
Government Issues Update.....	30
The Way of Things.....	31
California Fish and Wildlife Update .....	32
The East Chocolate Mountains: A Brief History Of California's Fourth Bighorn Sheep Hunt Zone (Part II) .....	33
The Politics Of Conservation.....	36



**Tim Mercier**  
**Newberry/Ord/Rodman Mountains**  
**Hunting with Dry Creek Outfitters**  
**December 2023**  
**Read the story page 8**





ULTIMA THULE LODGE

CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921

A large banner for the Ultima Thule Lodge. It features a circular logo on the left with a mountain, a tree, and a sun. The background is a sunset over a lake with mountains in the distance and a small airplane flying in the sky. The text "ULTIMA THULE LODGE" is written in a stylized font, and the contact information "CONTACT: DONALD C. MARTIN 310-766-3921" is written in red text at the bottom.



# From the Editor's Desk

2024 is flying by! The green hills I love so much have lasted longer again this year, but are fading fast. Several state drawings are out. I hope you have a coveted sheep tag, or other premium tag, in your pocket (I don't, but continue to hold out hope). This issue includes your ballot for the Director election (please, please vote! We have an abundance of quality candidates, a sign of a thriving organization!), lots of pictures from our April fundraiser, great hunting stories, update on the recent CA Wild Sheep Summit, tasty & fun game recipes, fun humor, AND MUCH MORE!

Your feedback, ideas, articles & requests are always welcome. Best way to reach me is email: [mike.borel@contextnet.com](mailto:mike.borel@contextnet.com). Due date for input to the 3Q24 issue is August 20. Stay fit, healthy, safe and get your rifle practice in!



## Chili

from Tony Gigliotti

### Ingredients:

Meat (I often add left over smoked brisket or ribs. The meat should contain both ground and cubed though the ratio does not impact the process.)

1lb of ground venison or other red meat

1lb of rib eye or other well marbled beef

Other

64 oz beef stock

Spices

2 bay leaves

2 tbsp chili powder

2 tsp salt

2 tsp cumin

1/4 tsp red pepper

1/4 tsp paprika

3 whole cloves

1 stick of cinnamon

Veggies

1 habanero

2 jalapeños

2 serranos

2 anaheim chilis

2lb of fresh tomatoes

1 large onion

1 head of garlic

### Directions

1. Cube the rib eyes into 1x1" pieces. Salt and pepper both the steak and the ground beef

2. Dice the onions and garlic

3. In a large pot add the onions and garlic, saute for 2-5 mins before adding the meat to brown

4. While the meat is browning, chop the peppers and tomatoes

5. De-glaze the pot with the stock before adding the rest of the stock along with the spice mixture

6. Bring to a boil, then turn the heat down and simmer for 2-3 hours, reducing the liquid to the consistency you'd like

OPTIONAL - to reduce the heat either don't add the habanero or add beans



Mike Bore's new coffee cup -- rings so true! And says a lot about Mike's dedication to wild sheep, mountain hunting, and CA Wild Sheep Foundation!

PS: He really DOES listen to you!

## A CA WSF Haiku

Drinkers in desert

Wild sheep need water to live

Donate to GALAD

by John Ware



# Board of Directors

## Officers

### *President*

Donald C Martin (2025)

### *Northern California Vice President*

Ken Crother (2025)

### *Southern California Vice President*

Glen Pyne (2025)

### *Vice President, Operations*

Mike J. Borel (2024)

### *Secretary*

Scott Gibson (2024)

### *Treasurer*

Matt Burke (2025)

## Board of Directors

Jim Fitzgerald (2024)	Paul Schultheis (2024)
Ben Gordon (2024)	Tammy Scott (2024)
Robert Keagy (2025)	Brenton Scott (2024)
John Oldenkamp (2025)	Matt St. Martin (2025)
Don Priest (2024)	Mike Torres (2025)

**California Wild Sheep** is published quarterly.

Please email all articles and photos to

[mike.borel@contextnet.com](mailto: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.

Content editing by Zack Walton

Humorous outtakes provided by Tammy Scott

Published by Beverly Valdez, ORC-KF1 LLC

# Events

## 2024

June 13-16	WSF Chapter and Affiliates Meeting Canmore, AB, Canada
June 28	Your Election Ballot is due
August 20	Due date for articles for 3Q2024 CA WSF Newsletter
November 20	Due date for articles for 4Q2024 CA WSF Newsletter
December 3	Sheep Summit XXXV, "All Virtual" 2025
January 15-18	WSF International Sheep Show Reno
January 22-25	SCI International Hunters Convention Nashville, TN
January 25-26	GSCO Convention Nashville, TN
February 20	Due date for articles for 1Q2025 CA WSF Newsletter
April 25	Sheep Summit XXXVI In person, Sacramento DoubleTree
April 26	CA WSF Fundraiser Banquet, Sacramento DoubleTree
May 20	Due date for articles for 2Q2025 CA WSF Newsletter
June 1	June 1 Watch for your 2025 Board of Directors Election Ballot



---

# President's Letter

It's tag time! By the time you receive this newsletter, the California big game drawing should have already been held. At this time, I can only wish all of you the best of luck in this year's CA draw. The Nevada results recently came out and I already know of at least one of our life members that drew a desert bighorn tag. That's excellent news.

I want to personally thank everyone that attended our fundraising dinner this past April 27th in Sacramento. It was good to see all of you again and celebrate our continued dedication to "Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain." Please be sure to read the fundraiser recap in this issue for all the details regarding this year's event and exciting news about next year's event.

Our Board of Directors election is now in process. If we have your email, you were sent a slate and ballot via email on June 1. Every year, half of the Board of Directors is up for election for a 2-year term. There's lots of information packed into this issue regarding our incumbents and our new candidates. Please consider the candidates that are standing for reelection or running for their first time and please vote. Votes via email or postal mail are due to the office by June 28 as noted on the election form on page 25. Your participation is truly appreciated.

On a personal note, I'd like to say that, in the wake of our last few meetings with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, I have a renewed sense of hope in our efforts going forward with the Department. I believe we are going to see some very positive developments in Ca's sheep management program that are long overdue. Time will tell, but your Board has been dedicated to this effort for over 20 years and we can take pride in what has been accomplished. However, we must still stay vigilant, dedicated, and lead "by example."

Please keep your eye on your email as there are still some last-minute volunteer opportunities with our friends at the Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep before we get into the truly miserable hot days of the Southern California desert summer. Projects include both drinker system repairs or replacements and water hauls. There will also be projects starting this fall once temperatures start to come down so don't be afraid to volunteer and get involved.

Thanks to all of you for your continued support and have a great summer.

*Donald C. Martin*



## CA WSF COMMITTEE CHAIRS – EARLY JULY IS THE BEST TIME TO SHOW YOUR INTEREST

Each year, in July, the President of CA WSF appoints the Chair for each standing committee:

Membership	Fundraiser
Newsletter	Government and CDFW Affairs
GALAD and Water projects	Projects beyond Water

The Chairs of each committee then request members. The resulting committees continue for 1 year, and often are renewed.

We are a volunteer organization. Letting the CA WSF leaders know your interests and capabilities will help assure you are involved where you can help the most.



---

## A DIVINE RAM

By Paul Divine

***Even before I applied, I had a feeling that the 2023 California big game draw was going to be the one! Believe it or not, I actually posted on my work calendar “bighorn sheep hunt” before I submitted my application. I applied for the South Bristol Mountains solely because I thought I had better odds of drawing as a maximum preference point holder. And after applying for 25 plus years, I finally drew a tag!***

After the drawing, California Fish and Wildlife requires a hunter orientation, which I attended, and I got to meet the sheep biologists, a couple guides, and folks from the Wild Sheep Foundation and Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep.

I decided to hunt the first two weeks of the season (early December) with help from friends, Paco, his wife Sarah, and their neighbor Kelly. I did as much map and satellite imagery “scouting” as I could and talked to biologists and game wardens and made one trip down to lay my eyes on the mountains. Later in the year, Paco, Sarah, and Kelly did some scouting for me since they lived close to the hunt unit. I hunted for a full 15 days, on and off with Paco and Kelly. We saw several sheep and some nice rams at a distance but had a hard time relocating them to get in close. The weather was unseasonably warm with the desert greening up and the sheep were moving a lot. On the last day, Paco and I got in close to some sheep and during the last 30 minutes of



Paul Divine (R) with friends

shooting light, I ended up passing on a young ram at 300 yards.

Hunting trip No. 2 was planned for mid-January, hopefully with some cooler weather. I talked more with the sheep biologist and a couple guides to help decide my final plan. Luckily, Paco, Sarah, and Kelly would come back to help and this time my girlfriend Julia would come too. For the first three days of the 10 days I had to hunt, I decided to hire a guide to increase my odds. I hired Josh Schulgen of Sierra Crest Outfitters, who I had met at the orientation and spoken to on a couple occasions. I went with Josh because he was down to earth, encouraging, knowledgeable, and because of his willingness to work with me on short notice. Josh was bringing along a couple of friends as well, father and son, David and Jake.

We all got to camp Friday evening with the plan to hunt some of the same area as I had previously and to go into some new country where sheep were known to move into during the colder winter periods. With a larger number of us, we were able to spread out in all directions and cover more ground.

In the morning, we first glassed areas we had hunted before and then moved into the area to the north. Once we “cleared” an area, we moved in closer looking into as many hidey holes as we could. During the first half of the day, Paco and Kelly spotted a couple ewes and Josh ended up making it to one of the higher peaks to get a good vantage point. Josh spotted about 20 sheep, some of which David had spotted from his location. Jake, Julia, and I had not yet seen any sheep. Late that afternoon, Jake ran into Julia and I as he was heading north to another vantage point, so Julia and I joined him.







We stopped along the way, glassing from the side of one of the few roads. We could see a long distance, over many lower rolling hills and I spotted Josh atop a mountain about 4.5 miles away. It was then I saw my first sheep of the day, below Josh, feeding down the mountain. While Julia and I were glassing, Jake decided to move on to a higher vantage point with hopes of looking into some of the canyons and onto hilltops. Just as Jake left, Josh called me and said he spotted six sheep out in front of us a couple hours before, but the heat waves were too strong to tell what they all were. As I hung up, Julia says, "There they are!" To my frustration I couldn't find them quickly. Julia then pointed four of them out for me at over 1,000 yards away. I almost immediately saw that there are another two sheep coming into view—both rams—and one is a shooter!

By this time, there was probably an hour left in the day. We scrambled to meet up with Jake to make a plan, but before we got to him, Josh called back. "Don't shoot, don't shoot! I spotted two bigger rams!" Now I didn't know what to do! But once we met up with Jake, we made a plan with Josh to stalk the ram near us and then make a decision. The stalk was down through a wash and up and over a couple saddles to a rock outcropping that Jake marked as a good shooting location when he was glassing from his high point. As the three of us made our way on the stalk, we got another call from Josh and he said the two bigger rams are in a hard spot and there's a good chance we will not be able to find them tomorrow morning, but it's still my call.

We continued the stalk and as we neared the rock outcropping, we all slowed down and moved quietly to look over the edge. Before we reached it, we dropped our packs and Jake said that the sheep should be about 200-300 yards

across the canyon. We slowly crested the rocks to look with our binos, and me with my rifle, to see the sheep getting up from their beds. The two rams moved across the side of the hill following each other, while they fed and raked the brush with their horns. All the while, I am glassing the biggest one trying to make the decision if I should shoot or wait and try to go after a bigger one the next day. The wind was in our face, the sheep didn't know we were there, the distance was perfect, I had a solid rest, and Julia was with me. This was the perfect opportunity and a good-looking ram that I felt was just what I was looking for, I couldn't pass up this shot. I leveled my bipod as I laid prone and ranged the ram three times at 320 yards. I let Jake and Julia know I was taking the shot and slowly squeezed the trigger with the crosshairs just behind the shoulder as the ram was perfectly broadside. Looking through the scope during the shot, I saw the ram fall right in his tracks. "That just happened!" I said, almost in



disbelief.

After some hugs, high-fives, and congratulations, we grabbed our gear and took a 30-minute hike down the canyon of loose rock and up the other side, arriving at the ram in the dark. The rest of the evening was spent taking some photos and packing out the ram once Paco, Kelly and Josh made it to us. This was a fantastic hunt and experience. This was my first hunt using a guide and with Josh and Jake it was like hunting with friends. I sincerely thank Paco, Sarah, and Kelly for their generosity and helping me on this hunt, and Josh, Jake, and David for their part in making this hunt a success, and Julia for being there by my side.



---

# OLD DESERT WARRIORS

By Tim Mercier, CA WSF Member

*This story started a long time ago—37 years ago to be exact. That's when I started applying for desert sheep hunts in California. Several years later, I got invited to help on a sheep hunt in the Clark/Kingston hunt zone. The hunt was being guided and outfitted by legendary sheep hunter Floyd Krank of Aravaipa Outfitters. The hunter got a beautiful white ram, and I got a bad case of sheep fever.*

That fever still burns to this day. The next year I was invited back to work for Floyd as a guide in both Arizona and California. After several years of working for Floyd, I started my own outfitting company, Dry Creek Outfitters. I guided desert sheep hunts in California and desert and Rocky Mountain Bighorn sheep hunts in Arizona. I then got a chance to guide desert sheep hunts in Utah and southern New Mexico, as well as Rocky Mountain sheep hunts in northern New Mexico.

Carlos Gallinger was guiding a few sheep hunts on his own back then. Carlos and I became friends and worked together on a few hunts. Little did I know that decades later I would draw a sheep tag of my own and Carlos would be part of that team. He has since joined Dry Creek Outfitters.

Cliff St. Martin and I became friends after his wife drew a sheep tag in California. As a result of that hunt, Cliff also got a bad case of "sheep fever". The next year he joined Dry Creek Outfitters, and we started guiding sheep hunts as a team. For the next 30 years, we hunted sheep together in six different states and all five deserts in the United States. We helped hunters harvest "book" rams in all five of the deserts. We have looked at thousands of sheep over the years. But none of that cured our "sheep fever." It's been quite a ride.

Somewhere along the way, Cliff's son Matt St. Martin and our friend Shawn Lindey joined us and became part of the team. In recent years, Nate Lang, Jake DeValle, Clay DeValle, Cliff's grandsons Caden St. Martin and Jonston St. Martin, as well as guide Casey Nick, and other valuable crew members have joined the team. We now have three generations of sheep hunters on the same team.

Several years ago, I retired. Matt is now running Dry Creek Outfitters. And with the help of Cliff and the boys they have taken it to the next level. I *thought* that would be the end of my sheep hunting. Thinking that if I had not drawn a tag by now, I probably never would. Father time has caught up with me and I am now in my "golden years."



Tim Mercier and the Dry Creek Outfitters team

When the 2023 California draw results came out, I not only drew a sheep tag in the Newberry/Ord/Rodman unit, but I also drew a deer tag in the G3 Goodale unit. I'm not sure who was more excited, me or the guys on the team. A team that has been decades in the making.

Both hunts started on the same day. Dry Creek Outfitters had several other sheep hunters booked in Newberry's and another deer hunter in G3. So, Cliff and I and our friend Donnie Perrien went to G3 and harvested a nice buck. Matt and the boys guided two other sheep hunters in the Newberry's and helped them take a couple of very nice rams. Cliff went directly from deer camp to sheep camp. I went home and took care of my deer meat. It worked out that I arrived in camp right after the other two hunters successfully completed their hunts. Carlos, who had been attending a Sheep Summit meeting, arrived the same day. Now the other hunters were done, the whole team was in camp. Game on!

Beverly Valdez from the California Chapter Wild Sheep Foundation and her partner John Ware were in camp also. They had purchased a non-hunting fundraiser trip that Dry Creek Outfitters had donated. It was nice they were able to join us and experience a desert sheep hunt. But "sheep fever" is pretty contagious -- they got it!

We located eight different rams on the first day. One of them was a very nice ram that was down low on the mountain. He was in a spot where the "Old Guy" could get to. But it was late in the day and because we had spread out across the unit to find sheep, the entire team was not there. This was a team hunt, and it was important to me that everyone on the team to be there. I wanted everyone to see the ram and get their opinion before we went up the mountain. We decided to watch that ram until dark and then come back with the full crew at daylight and see what happened. Also, that ram had a collar, and I wasn't excited about shooting a ram with a collar, and certainly not on the first day.





Two "old guys" with "old Flat Top Ram" -- Tim Mercier (L) and Cliff St Martin (R)

The next morning at first light we glassed up six different rams. Four of the six had collars. One of them we all liked better than yesterday's ram. He was old, he had a big chip on top of his right horn, and he had "character." We called him the "Flat Top Ram." The rams were spread out across the lower part of the mountain. All of them were up feeding and we were hoping they would bed down soon. We didn't want to start across the mile of flat desert floor and up the mountain until they settled down. But instead, they all worked their way up to the top of the mountain. They were now out of reach for this old timer, maybe in my younger days, but not now.

We came up with a new plan. The team spread out across the flat where they could glass the mountain from different angles. Cliff and I worked our way up the mountain to a midway point on the rim of the main canyon. It was 1 p.m. and we had only been at that spot for about 20 minutes when all of a sudden, the old Flat Top Ram and two younger rams came off the top of the mountain at a run. They ran and trotted for at least a mile. They picked all the right ridges and dropped off the canyon rim and into the canyon directly across from us at 275 Yards. Divine Intervention, I will let you make that call, but for us that is exactly what it was. One of our goals as guides, has been to get our hunter within 300 yards or less from the animal, and here they are 275 yards. When they stopped, they were at the top of a steep talus slope. The two younger rams reared up and slammed heads a couple of times. The old Flat Top ram was standing broadside on the top of the slope. One of the younger rams, body slammed the old guy and sent him tumbling down the slope. He rolled four or five times over the rocks before coming to a stop. The younger rams then went down and joined him, and they all started feeding. It was hard to watch the younger rams do that to the old guy.

At that point I was still undecided about shooting a ram with two collars and two ear tags. I asked Cliff for his opinion. His answer, "you have to make that call, but I think he is a cool-looking ram. Look at him Cowboy; he looks just like us, an 'Old Desert Warrior.'" My reply, "Okay, let's take him."

We set up in a rock pile that was right in front of us on the rim of the canyon. I had a good rest but because it was such a steep angle down to the ram, I couldn't get the barrel down low enough. Something had to change, and it did. The young

ram sensed something wasn't right and ran back up the slope about 75 yards and stopped and looked our way. The second young ram then ran up about 50 yards and looked our way. The old ram then walked up the slope. Now I could get the scope on him. Cliff whispered, "Wait till he turns broadside." I whispered back "Cover your ears." He turned broadside and the .280 Ackley did its job. The ram ran a few yards across the rock face and fell onto the talus slope. He rolled about four or five times and ended up exactly where he landed when the younger ram knocked him off his feet.

It took us awhile to drop into the canyon and get up to the other side to where the ram was. The rest of the team was already there. Sitting in the rocks nearby, respectfully waiting for me to approach the ram first. After high fives and hugs we took a lot of pictures. It was now time to take care of the ram. As I was getting my knives out of my pack, Matt said, "no way, you old guys put your packs on and start off the mountain and hope you get to the vehicles before dark. It would be our honor to cape, quarter and pack this ram out for you." Cliff said, "Let them do it Cowboy. Put your pack on and let's go." So, Cliff, Carlos and I did just that. It was a hard thing to do, and I couldn't help thinking back to the young ram knocking the old ram down the mountain. We weren't at the vehicles for very long when we looked up to see the boys coming across the flat with the ram in their packs. They almost caught up to us.

If you are hoping to draw a sheep tag someday, don't give up. You can't draw if you don't apply. Do your homework and in your mind pick a team to help you. Keep the dream alive. Pleasant dreams!!!



Tim (R) shows that emotion we all hope to have some day!  
With Cliff (L)



---

# SHEEP SUMMIT XXXIV (34) RECAP

## APRIL 26, 2024 ALL IN-PERSON

*by Mike Borel, VP Operations, Distinguished Life Member*

CA WSF hosted Sheep Summit XXXIV (yes 34!) as an “all in-person” event. The purpose of these summits is “to accomplish more collectively for Bighorn sheep in California through sharing and collaboration, than the sum of what each organization can accomplish individually. Following is a summary.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: CDFW, USFS, USBLM, CAWSF, SCBS, key independents, and others). 26 persons participated.

Information reviewed:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. CDFW Big Picture Update  | Chad Dibble and Scott Gardner              |
| 2. CDFW Statewide Bighorn Update  | Paige Prentice                             |
| 3. CDFW Desert Bighorn Sheep Update from Region 6, including surveys and captures   | Rick Ianniello                             |
| 4. Status of the Management Plan and Unit Plans   | Jeff Villepique and Paige Prentice         |
| 5. US BLM - Update on the Big Picture, and the Programmatic EA  | Brian Novosak                              |
| 6. OSU Update on Research and Activities  | Christina Aiello, Clint Epps               |
| 7. Additional Information and Planned Research on Bighorn Sheep and Minerals  | Carlos Gallinger, Presented by Vern Bleich |
| 8. Update on Brightline and Overpasses for Mitigation with Cal Trans and other State Issues Impacting DBH   | Scott Gibson & Don Priest                  |
| 9. Preliminary genomic data for the Transverse Range populations  | Mike Buchalski                             |
| 10. How we could work more closely and advantageously with the Desert Bighorn Council   | Steve Torres                               |
| 11. Possibilities for reinstating a fundraising desert bighorn tag offered in a raffle-like/drawing format.   | Chad Dibble                                |
| 12. Potential new DBH Hunt zones  | Rick Ianniello                             |
| 13. Enabling harvest of old, double broomed or over broomed rams  | Rick Ianniello                             |
| 14. SCBS Guzzler (BGG) Repairs and New Drinkers (RWWS) Installations Update   | Steve Marschke                             |
| 15. GALAD (Give a Lamb a Drink) progress, funding   | Mike Borel                                 |
| 16. Report on Recent Activities that are of value and interest for CA wild sheep -- e.g. WAFWA, Wild Sheep & Goat Council, Desert Bighorn Council, Boone & Crockett Club, WHBAB, etc. | Vern Bleich                                |
| 17. Suggestions & Requests for Presentations at the Dec 6, 2024 Sheep Summit.   | All  |

Particularly notable sharing:

1. Comprehensive Sheep Plan expected out to the public December 2, and will include 1 area plan (that has strong potential for adding 2 new hunt units).
2. CDFW planning 2 new hunt zones for 2025-26!
3. Hunting opportunity is a priority for CDFW Region 6 (from Paige Prentice and Danielle Glass).
4. There is a possibility to enable harvest of old double broomed rams. Not in place yet.
5. Significantly more personnel in CDFW resulting in higher expectations for more work being accomplished.

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 XXXV is scheduled for December 6, 2024. It will be an “All Virtual” format.



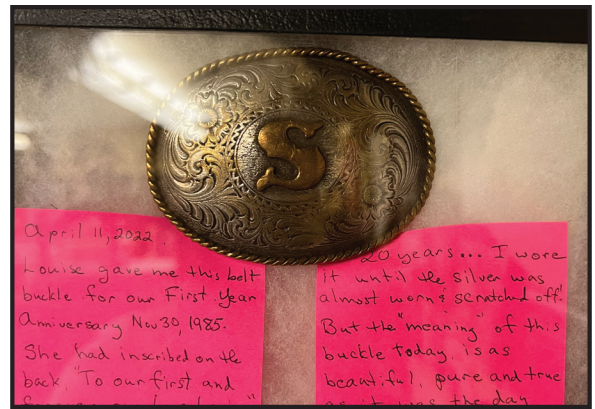
# JIM SHOCKEY'S HAND OF MAN MUSEUM, MAPLE GROVE, BC (VANCOUVER ISLAND)

*by Mike Borel, Distinguished Life Member*

This place is absolutely worth the trip. It is a simply amazing, super extensive, collection of artifacts, art, culture, natural history and hunting. It is designed to increase appreciation for hunting and hunters as conservationists. Even the layout, which starts with sea shells, moves to butterflies, and ultimately to hunted animals – is planned to progress the thinking of ultra-liberal persons (which this island is famous for, sound like CA?!). Entrance is free. Each person or couple is given an iPad to get more information, narrated by Jim, on any item or area.

The museum is located on Vancouver Island which if you are driving from the Vancouver airport, requires a ferry ride. You can also take a float plane from Vancouver to Maple Grove for \$80/person which takes you to within a mile of the museum.

It is simply not possible to describe how extensive this collection is. We hope you enjoy the pictures we've included and will add this trip to your "Let's do this" list.





---

# CRANKER

by Trevor Crowley, CA WSF Member

***The big ram came through the opening first and I slowly squeezed the trigger and nothing, in all the excitement, I had left the safety on. Now I am really excited...***

My introduction to Desert sheep hunting began in June when the California Big game draw results were posted. My buddy, Josh Piper who has all my drawing information asked if I had seen my draw results yet. I told him, no I haven't and to my surprise he said you drew a Bighorn sheep Tag! I told him to quit messing around and I immediately checked the CDFW website and in disbelief I did draw the once-in-a-lifetime tag. I applied for 32 years and had the max points of 22. I called friends and family to let them know I drew; they were elated and very excited for me. I told my wife Brittany I hit the lottery and she said how much did you win? I told her it was the hunting lottery; she was a bit disappointed but got over it quickly and was excited for me.

I drew Zone 3, the Clark and Kingston Mountains. It is the largest of the sheep zones in California and is vast in size and quite intimidating. I had several guides proposition me during the mandatory hunter orientation, all great people and very informative. For me hiring a guide was not in the cards and I would have to do it alone with some of my hunting buddies. I called Todd Cassaretto and Josh Estrada, they were more than happy to help and had everything we needed for the hunt. After a month of planning, we loaded our gear into the enclosed trailer with Todds side by side and jumped into his truck and we were on our way. We made one last stop to pick up Todd's college buddy and hunting partner, Gary Dooley. We arrived at our destination that evening and settled in for a good night's rest.

The next morning, we were up early and set a game plan for the days hunt. After hours and hours of glassing in multiple areas we finally spotted our first sheep a good mile and a half away. There were 2-3 ewes and one that was collared. We had about an hour to glass before dark, so we pulled our spotters out and picked the desert apart until we couldn't see anymore. The next 2 days were more of the same, covering a lot of country. Josh, Gary, and I made a good hike on the Southwest side of Clark Mountain while Todd took the side by side to meet us on the other side. Beautiful area but no sheep. It's very easy to get discouraged covering so much area and not seeing much. I was feeling a bit desperate. Todd suggested I call Cliff St. Martin of Dry Creek Outfitters. Todd's friend's buddy was successful with Dry Creek Outfitters a couple of weeks earlier in a different zone, he thought we might get valuable info or spots to concentrate on. With 2 weeks left, I finally called Dry Creek Outfitters and talked with Cliff St. Martin, an awesome guy who was willing to give quality info to find us a ram. After talking for a while we were



Trevor Crowley with friends and the Dry Creek Outfitters Team

able to do a modified hunt that would fit my budget. They helped me tremendously; they wanted me to be successful in my once-in-a-lifetime hunt. About 30 minutes after I spoke with Cliff, his son Matt St. Martin called, and we set a date for the last 5 days of the season. I can say that was the best decision I have ever made about hunting. During the week before I was to head back down to hunt, Matt had one of his guides in the area already scouting. Brandon Wynn, from New Mexico had picked up a nice ram 7 days before I got there and was on him all week, and from what I'm told, he said he watched the 49er playoff game while watching the ram. Matt was in contact with me throughout the week up to the day of my hunt and kept me updated on anything I needed to know.

Finally, it was time for our second trip to get it done. I still had Todd Cassaretto along with his other friends Guy Stueve, and Big Joe Casteel, they are just awesome guys who wanted be part of my hunt and I now call my friends. Once on the road, I called Matt to confirm where we were going to meet on Wednesday. After we arrived, we met up with Matt, and his crew consisting of his son Jonston and nephew Caden St. Martin, Brock Rowley from Nevada, Konner Morrill, Cole Marques, and Brandon Wynn. We exchanged pleasantries for a bit and Matt talked over a game plan. Todd, Guy, and Joe were going to cover the back side of mountain while Matt's crew were heading straight to where the rams were located 2 days earlier. Like clockwork we were on rams at 7:00. One small sickle horn, one good ram and one that was just bigger. They were a little over a mile away and it was difficult to see them. After about an hour and half we made our move. Matt, Jonston, and I walked up a wash to the base of the mountain which was nice and easy. Then came the harder stuff, for me anyway. I played Division 1 Basketball and with two replaced hips and two metal disks in my back, this was going to be a





challenge for me. As we got to the top, we peeked over, and the rams had just gotten up to feed and were moving away from us. By the time we got set up Matt ranged the rams at 525 yards. I was able to get my scope on the biggest ram and I told Matt, that ram looks big, but Matt didn't say much. With the wind blowing and how far he was away, we weren't going to risk taking that shot. As the rams fed over the next ravine and out of site, we had no choice but to go straight to the top of the mountain and get above them. Matt was confident that the rams would eventually turn and come back in the same direction. We also still had Todd, Guy, and Joe on other side of mountain just in case they gave us the slip. It wasn't long before Matt picked up the rams again, and he was right they were feeding back where they came from. He called for me to keep as low as possible, so not to get spotted. The wind was blowing toward us so that was a big plus. Once I got down to Matt, we set up on a big rock with his pack underneath my gun and he said, "get comfortable." That was difficult, with my legs cramping but finally I just relaxed and with the gun on my shoulder, I felt confident enough to shoot. Matt pointed downhill at about 150 yards to a small opening that they were going to come through. I was ready, or was I? The big ram came through the opening first and I squeezed the trigger and nothing. In all the excitement I left the safety on. Now I'm really excited. Matt calmed me down and said he's going to come out straight across from you. After a few minutes that's exactly what happened. The problem now was the smaller rams kept feeding in and out of the path of the big ram and I couldn't get a clean broadside shot. Once the ram was three-quarters way up the mountain

Matt asked how I felt about a quartering away shot, I said I felt good. He said we need to get one in him before he gets too high on the ridge. I said I'm good, let me know when you want me to shoot. With Jonston and Matt on their bino's and Broc filming a mile away Matt said let one go. I put the crosshairs on his right shoulder and squeezed one off. Matt said you hit him hard. The large ram bolted down the hill and reared up like a horse then turned and made two bunny hops off his hind legs then stopped. The other rams went downhill and began feeding. The big ram just stood there for 30 or 40 seconds. Matt said "be ready, he's hit hard but as soon as he turns broadside put another round in him and get him down." It seemed like forever, but he finally did turn, and I put it right where it counted, he folded up with all four legs up, my ram was down. That's when the emotions took over, with a big hug from Matt and congratulations from Jonston, I was fighting back the tears of joy. I couldn't help but think of my father who had passed a year earlier and my uncle Butch who also past, a few years back and how proud they would have been, they were the reason I was hunting. As I approached my ram, I saw Matt take off his hat and begin shaking his head. As I got closer, he said, "the reason I didn't say that the ram was big was because I didn't want you to get nervous." Matt, being a seasoned guide, knew he was a bruiser. He told me you shot a giant!! Me not knowing how big he really was until I got my hands on him, couldn't believe the size and length of his horns. He told me he's a "Cranker" which stuck in my head. We all just sat in disbelief. We took photos and waited for all the other guys to come up the mountain to check out my trophy. I'll never forget what Matt said to me. "You drew a once in a lifetime tag, but you harvested a once in a lifetime ram." I looked at my watch and it was 2:00 pm, I thought to myself how lucky I really was. To meet up with an awesome crew of guys on the first day and in 7 hours harvest the trophy ram of a lifetime.

Once the guides and crew arrived, we took pictures for what seemed like hours. After pictures, Matt's crew was quartering and skinning out the ram. We loaded up packs and were heading down the mountain as the darkness set in. Brock was a beast and headed down the mountain with a full pack and my gun, he even gave me his walking sticks to make it easier for me to get down the mountain. What a first-class crew.

Once we arrived at camp, Matt's crew skinned out the skull and did a measurement on the horns. His left horn was nearly 40" long and he measured just over 180". For me, the hunt, and the people I met was far greater than the size of ram I had taken. Don't get me wrong I'm elated at his size but like Matt said, "you drew a once in a lifetime tag, but you

"When you find your path, you must not be afraid. You need to have sufficient courage to make mistakes. Disappointment, defeat, and despair are the tools God uses to show us the way."

—Ask any mountain hunter with "Sheep Fever"!

---

# 2024 ANNUAL BANQUET / FUNDRAISER UPDATE

*by Donald C Martin, Banquet/Fundraising Committee Co-Chair*

## THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

After another great annual fundraiser banquet I want to thank everyone that turned out on April 27 at the Doubletree by Hilton in Sacramento. We had a great time and once again lived up to our pledge to "Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain."

I want to thank all our Board members that attended. There are a lot of moving parts to our event and more help is always appreciated. Many thanks to Beverly Valdez and John Ware for all of their hard work at the membership/pay table. Also special thanks to all of our great support team to make this possible including Mandi Costa and team from Mandi's Models, Audio/Video/ Livestream Tech Scott Jensen from Tudor Road Studios Alaska, Auctioneer Rohn Nelson also of Alaska, and Onlinehuntingauctions.com.

Special thanks to Vice President of Operations, Mike Borel. Mike was our keynote speaker Saturday afternoon and gave a great presentation on his development from "an Iowa farmboy to International Sheep/Capra hunter." It was very well received and highly applauded by those that attended. In addition, Mike gave a brief history of our chapter at the dinner Saturday night and reminded all of us of the progress we have made in the last 20+ years together. Thank you Mike.

We had a great youth turnout again this year and congratulations to all of our youth prize winners. Special thanks to Glen Pyne for coordinating with WSF's Youth Coordinator Dr. Ryan Brock to provide some in-room entertainment once again for our youth. Also special thanks to Jim and Susan Fitzgerald, Glen and Carol Pyne, Don and Katie Martin and Vince Bloom and Folsom Lake Dodge for their youth program donations. Thank you.

We had a deserving lineup of award winners this year. We recognized two special desert bighorns with RAM awards this year. The first, oldest ram taken by a member, was awarded to Brent Jay Mason for his 14-year-old ram taken out of the Newberry/Rodman/Ords with Dry Creek Outfitters. The second award, largest ram taken by a member, was awarded to Joel Scott Brown for his 181 1/8" + B&C giant taken out of the Clark/Kingstons, also with Dry Creek Outfitters. And finally, the 2024 California Wild Sheep Foundations "Above & Beyond" award was given to Board member Scott Gibson for his exemplary dedication to the conservation of California's bighorn sheep. His hard work on multiple water projects across the Southern California landscape the last few years has been inspiring. Thank you Scott!

We had lots of lucky winners that night but none luckier than Mak Kern who upgraded to Distinguished Life Member the night of the event and was randomly drawn for the life member grand prize for a Dall sheep hunt with our friend Harold Grinde of Gana River Outfitters. Congratulations Mak! We thank Harold and GRO for the generous support of California Wild Sheep Foundation.



Above and Beyond Award winner  
Scott Gibson

It's never too early to start planning and your Fundraiser committee is considering dramatic changes for 2025. We are looking at new venues. We would like to make our event more of a "weekend event" and not just a day trip. We're looking at expanding opportunities to give the whole family a reason to attend. Make sure you watch your email and read the Fall issue, because I want to have all of this locked down and work towards continuing to throw the best "wildlife conservation party" in California. I wish I could tell you more, but I can tell you this ...we are quietly working to provide our members another sheep hunting opportunity and I can only tell you...It's a stone sheep. Stay tuned for more information.

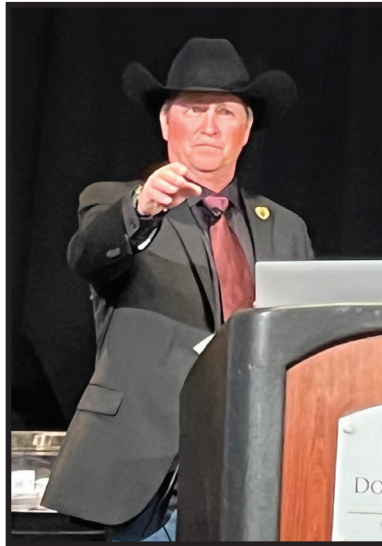
Thanks again for your support, I appreciate all feedback on our event, **please feel free to email me at: [don-martin@earthlink.net](mailto:don-martin@earthlink.net)**



# FUNDRAISER FUN!



Joel Scott Brown  
Largest Ram Taken by a Member  
181 1/8" Clark/Kingston Mtns



Don Martin  
Working the crowd!



Brent Jay Mason  
Oldest Ram Taken by a Member  
14 year old Newberry/Rodman/Ords



---

## A GREAT FATHER'S DAY GIFT

By Vince Bloom, Distinguished Life Member

*Father's Day 2023 I received a phone call from Epic Outdoors. I had just won the raffle for the Stone Sheep hunt in British Columbia! The hunt was only a short three months from the date of that call. Luckily, I had been training for this moment for the past six months! Yes, I had been training for a sheep hunt I hadn't drawn yet.*

The man from Epic asked if I was ready for this. I said, "Heck Yeah! I have been training for this!" "Training for a sheep hunt you didn't have yet?" He asked.

To which I answered, "Yeah man! Thoughts are things!" and I was headed to Canada.

I flew into Whitehorse Airport where Candace, one of the owners, was waiting to pick me up. I was excited and ready to go. I love Whitehorse, it's a jumping off point for all things adventurous and wild.

The fat tire plane out of Helen Lake was on time and I was ready to go. I landed at River Camp and met the crew. Their warm welcome fueled my drive. That night I bunked with Jimmy Walsh from Ohio. He was there for a Mountain Goat hunt. The next morning, he headed out by boat in search of a Goat. Justin Watson and I saddled up our horses and headed up to spike camp. Cook and horse wrangler Shelby followed us up and returned the horses to camp leaving us afoot.

Justin looked at me and said, "We are staying here until we kill a Stone sheep or run out of food." "Let's do it!" I shot back.

That first couple of days we saw some rams, none met our standards though. The third hunt day was bitterly cold, and I was tired after our climb to the top. We reached our first glassing point and saw nothing. Normally we would glass there for at least an hour, but Justin said we needed to keep moving, the rams weren't there. I was spent and really wanted to rest but hiked up to the second glassing point. Sometimes you just need to follow directions and leave the thinking to the experts.

I was soaked with sweat and the only dry shirt I had with me was short sleeved. I knew I would sweat so I skipped a jacket, put on my pack and hiked up the mountain. Reaching the second glassing point I knew I'd made a mistake. I was shivering and my body was shutting down. Then my second mistake hit me. I normally fast in the morning, clearly the wrong choice today. I put on all the clothes I could and ate nearly all my food for the day.

Justin looked at me and knew I was hurting. "I am going to



Vince Bloom with 2023 Stone Sheep

check out a spot just a little way from here," he said. "Come meet me in a few minutes."

By now I was shivering uncontrollably. Eating my food, I washed it down with water we'd stashed on the mountain. My core temperature dropping, the ice-cold water made it nearly impossible to warm up. Mistake number three. I began to wonder if I could even squeeze the trigger like this.

As my mind wandered, a friend's words echoed in my head, "Sometimes you must do the work and push forward. No matter how miserable you are."

Just then Justin reappeared. "I found the rams! Come on Vince, let's get moving!"

I got my pack back on, stripping off my extra clothes. I left my rain jacket on to cut the icy wind.

A short 500 yd hike to the edge and we could see those rams! Adrenalin does wonders for the body. I felt warm, rested, and best of all I was staring at a legal ram! I'd thought this day might never come, yet here I was, 526 yards away from what would become my first Stone Sheep.

I lay prone, uncomfortable and cramped for 55 minutes, dry firing, waiting for him to stand. The ram finally stood walking straight to me, providing no shot. Justin coached, "just be patient, he will turn broadside." Sure enough, he did just that!

With one well-placed shot my Stone Sheep dreams came true!

Shooting my custom Jeff Pinatelli 300 PRC, with custom hand loads by Hutch, the 214 grain Hammer Hunter copper bullets put the big ram down. A multitude of emotions hit me! I had just killed one of the hardest sheep to acquire. I had bagged my Dall Sheep in 2021 and now my Stone Sheep in 2023. I was halfway through my Sheep Slam I couldn't contain my excitement!





Vince Bloom with 2023 BC Mountain Goat

A photo session followed just as the rain set in. The ram was broken down and skinned so we could load our packs for the damp hike back.

BC in the fall is stunning, but that didn't lessen the fact there was a one-mile hike, straight up, before we reached our cache of food, water and equipment. Justin informed me that this could be the hardest climb I'd ever done, but at least we'd get to our tents sometime that night!

After a 3 ½ mile hike my tent was in sight. I had pulled off my dream of killing a Stone Sheep on hunt day three! In my bedroll that night, I told myself, "I am a sheep hunter". Smiling, I drifted off to sleep.

Shelby showed up mid-morning and we packed up spike camp and began our hike back to camp.

We spent an easy day taking care of the animals, eating, and slapping each other on the back.

For the next part of the hunt, Jimmy from Ohio and I decided then to combine our efforts. Each morning with Justin Watson and Chad Fantham our guides we boarded the river boat glassing up and down the river for billy goats and moose.

I woke up that morning without a good night's sleep. I'd stayed up way too late talking and having fun. Chad and Justin glassed up a big billy about two miles out on the top of the mountain.

"He looks like a good one Vince! Do you want to go after him?" asked Justin.

My stomach dropped, I knew what was in store and it was gonna be brutal. Mountain Goats live in the most inhospitable terrain ever. Off we went, straight up the side of a trailless mountain.

Jimmy and our two guides were in incredible shape, doing daily hunts. I was in good shape, but I always seemed to be just a bit behind. I'm 58 and in good shape, but this was difficult.

Three hours later we were in position. Chad said, "grab your tripod!" and we quickly set up for the shot. It was a 560-yard shot across a canyon on a slope so steep I had to straddle a small tree just to keep from sliding down the mountain. Only two legs of my tripod were touching the ground, but I had a solid rest. Two billy goats stood together on the mountain. After determining which one was the biggest I pressed the trigger. It looked like a perfect shot in the shoulder.

However, the shot was high and hit him in the neck, just grazing the jugular. Myself and both guides were amazed as we watched the billy keep walking, even jumping once. Justin looked at me and said, "You're gonna have to put another one in him."

We watched as the big billy walked slowly towards some trees. We readjusted, sprinting up a 50-degree hill for 70 yards to get a clear view. I found a similar rest, seated with my Revic Tripod and my trekking pole as a rear rest. Justin said, "you need to shoot him before he reaches those trees, or we will never see him again!"

It was a 600-yard shot. I had a good view of his body and got my MOA from my Swarovski EL TA binoculars. I pressed the trigger, and the Billy went down. I was elated! The hike to him was straight down and straight up. The guides said, "We need to keep moving or we are going to run out of daylight. We need to hustle."

That hike was the hardest I've ever done. The guides literally flying straight up the mountain, while I felt like I was swimming through the willows.

When I walked up to the Billy I was filled with gratitude. I was struck by the beauty that surrounded me and this 9 inch billy goat. Keeping my composure, I thanked the men that had accompanied me.

The pack out took us straight down that mountain.

In the beginning I honestly thought my odds of getting a Stone sheep weren't high, so getting a Stone sheep and a mountain goat was beyond my wildest dreams!

Rugged, raw beauty and the company of great men. Most definitely what dreams are made of. Luke and Candace Vince of Full Curl Stone Outfitters run one of the most honorable, well organized and successful hunting camps in British Columbia. Talk about positive, they are it! I have already booked my next moose hunt with them and cannot wait to return for another amazing adventure.

---

# CALIFORNIA DREAMING

By Alan Fortune

*“...you got him?” whispered my guide Jonnie Kellogg. “on him...” was my hushed reply back as the crosshairs settle solidly on the big ram’s right shoulder. “...still holding at 325 yards...” I heard over my left shoulder from my hunting buddy Darryl Coe. “...watch out for the ewe...” said Jonnie. “Got her...”. “Ok, when you’re...” WHAM...the 6.5 PRC barked once, sending the Hornady .130 gr. CX bullet across the chasm in a blink of an eye, taking the ram slightly behind the point of the right shoulder. Reflexes and gravity took over as the ram lunged downhill, piling up about 25 yards on rocky shelf. The result of the lifelong quest for a tag and the dream hunt for a Desert Big Horn Ram was now solidly anchored in the Cady Mountains of California!*

Like all dream hunts, this story started long ago. Some 30 years ago when the State of California opened up a Bighorn Sheep season. Resident hunters like myself would check that box in hopes of drawing a tag. Back in those days, we were all skinny, had dark hair and we chased game not only in CA but any other state we could get tags and the time off to hunt. As the seasons rolled by, we would have discussions on which was the best area to put in for sheep based on the number of available tags, success quotas, rise and fall of the stock market, recent solar flares and anything else we thought might help us to be successful. However, the coveted ram tag eluded us... At some point, myself and my hunting buddy Darryl had to have the “reality check” question of where to put in versus our physical ability. Yep, we were getting old...damn it!! Too damn old to be putting in for areas like the White Mountains with their 12-14,000 foot peaks. Although it was still tempting as the Whites had the most tags available, we started putting in for areas in the lower desert that had less tags but, were far more “old guy friendly”.

When California implemented the Preference Point program, we were able to collect points based on the number of unsuccessful draws. Since we put in every year for sheep, all of us had max points including our guides on this hunt! You got to have perseverance and no quit attitude to be a sheep hunter!



Alan Fortune and Jonnie with Cady's ram

Time and life goes on with highs and lows, joys and sadness but, that box for a successful sheep tag never got checked. Fast forward to July of 2023. Having just returned home from a 15 day safari in Namibia with my brother Robert, I'm sitting in the waiting room of the veterinarian's office while my dog gets a checkup. As I'm scrolling through my emails trying to catch up, not much in the way of high speed service in the African bush, I see an email from Californian DFW. Not surprising as, that's an email I'm used to seeing informing me that I was unsuccessful in the draw and I've received another preference point. What was different with this email, was that there was a small word (reading glasses in my pocket) that was in a green font. That's odd I thought as I zoomed up the screen on my phone and the small green word said "Successful". Huh... successful what?? Ok, glasses now on, I read the email saying successful draw for a sheep tag. "Yeah right...successful putting in for the draw, now you got another point..." I say to myself out loud, getting lots of strange looks from other dog owners in the waiting room. I even go so far as to login into the Department of Fish and Wildlife website and look at my draw results. You got to be kidding me, right there on the site it says I drew the Cady Mountains Big Horn Sheep tag. Holy s---!!! Back to the letter and I read on that I must have confirmation docs filled out, payment submitted and funds cleared in the Sacramento office of CDFW no later than 5 pm ten days from today! Now in all fairness, while I was out of country, CDFW did send out a letter informing me of my success right after the draw in June. However, the letter was in the pile of mail I hadn't yet taken the time to go through. Note to self: when applying for a once in a life time tags while out of the country, check your mail as soon as you get back!!! Panic sets in, it's not 5 pm yet so I head outside and call the Sacramento office. "I just saw the email...I've been out of the country...I'll drive





Alan Fortune and friend Darryl Coe with ram

up there tomorrow if I have too..." I stammered. In a calm and reassuring voice, the office staff told me to relax and not worry, there was enough time to get things done and in fact, they were getting ready to try to contact me as it seems I was the only one who hadn't responded back to them yet. Not surprising, remember note to self next time! Anyway, with USPS Priority mail, credit card, several phone calls and a few sleepless nights, my filing and payment process was completed 2 days before deadline...Whew!!!

Now what?? I've got a tag and don't have a clue of who to hire to guide my hunt. There was no way I was going to take a chance with this tag by going to an unfamiliar area and attempt a self guided hunt...didn't think I could wait another 30+ years to draw another tag if things went sideways! I gave my buddy and guide who I used on my 2020 Tule Elk hunt, Chad Wiebe of Oak Stone Outfitters (oakstoneoutfitters.com) a call. Without hesitation, Chad referred me to Jonnie Kellogg of Kellogg Trophy Hunts (209) 352-5055. I got a hold of Jonnie to confirmed his availability. We had several phone calls in which I was able to pick his brain on what to expect with regards to success, camp arrangements, best times to schedule a hunt, etc. Then the all important question, "...OK Jonnie, everything sounds great but, I got to ask you, how old guy friendly is your operation?" A slight chuckle was my answer and Jonnie explained "...honestly, a large number of our clients are all around your age. The fact of the matter is, it takes so long for folks to draw a tag, that they're generally in an older age group when successful. I'll assure you, we'll not drag you up and down the mountains just because we can. Myself and my guys will do the heavy lifting as far as humping the mountains and scouting go. All I ask is that your legs give me one good hike and we'll take care of the rest". Bingo, that's exactly what I wanted to hear. I've managed to stay in reasonably good shape but, let's be honest, 30+ years of putting, I'm rapidly approaching my seventh decade on God's green earth and I don't run up and down the mountains quite like I used too! We finished up the conversation with a tentative hunting date in mid January 2024.

August rolled around and the mandatory 2023 Desert

Bighorn Sheep Hunter Orientation, at the Yolo Wildlife Area, was on. Myself and brother Robert Fortune attended. CDFW personnel Regina Vu and Danielle Glass as well as selected speakers and presenters; Scott Gibson, George Kerr and Mike Borel representing the Society for the Conservation of Big Horn Sheep, Wild Sheep Foundation and the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation gave a very informative and interesting orientation/presentation. Additionally, we were able to meet up with Brooks Stiltz who would be one of our guides on my upcoming hunt. Tags and information packets were then handed out to each successful applicant. A terrific BBQ lunch hosted by the California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation followed. It was a great opportunity to not only learn and become familiar with the in's and out's of wild sheep conservation but, also an opportunity to personally meet the folks that make it happen as well as other hunters and guides.

Mid January 2024 finally arrived! Myself and hunting buddy Darryl Coe rolled into Jonnie's Cady Mountain camp. We were impressed with the overall lay out of the camp as well as the location which was nestled at the base of small hill to provide some protection from the ever present wind. Everything was neat and orderly, with a well equipped 37' fifth wheel travel trailer we kiddingly nicknamed "Chateau D' Cady"...quite spacious, comfortable and well provisioned.

We wasted no time in getting out and glassing the same afternoon, spotting several ewes and lambs. Up and going the following days, well before daylight and returning after dark. Among Jonnie's many talents, gourmet chef needs to be added to the list. No matter what time or how tired we all were, at meal time he would fire up the grill and prepare the chow he had on the day's menu...yes, I said menu, the guy had every evening's meal preplanned, set out, then went about preparing it! Same with lunch, a tailgate affair in the field with a good selection of cold cuts, breads, chips, fruits, veggies, snacks and drinks. Even a cool dozen hard boiled eggs...funny story, Jonnie puts a dollop of mayo and mustard on an egg and pops into his mouth. This gets a raised eyebrow from Brooks as he says "...why don't you just make some deviled eggs??" Without missing a beat, Jonnie mumbles around a mouth full "...I just did!" Ha, actually that was a pretty tasty way to put them down, will have to remember that trick! Slim chance of losing weight on this hunt and if you went away hungry, it was your own fault!

We hunted hard for five days, sometimes seeing as many as 20-40 animals in various small groups of ewes, lambs and immature rams. The weather was intense, wind, rain, snow, sand storms, dust storms and did I mention the wind? It was windier there than at a joint session of Congress discussing the National Budget! On one of the rare, non-windy afternoons, we spotted a ram that gave us pause. He was definitely legal but after some discussion, it was decided to pass on him as we felt there were better, more representative rams in the area. Boy, did that come back to haunt my brain on those sleepless nights and long days that followed. The weather continuing to deteriorated, all the time with my second guessing whether or not I made the right decision...damn! Then on the afternoon of day 5, Jonnie

spotted a group of sheep up on the side of the mountain. I use the term "spotted" loosely as I don't know how in the hell his eyes could just glance over his shoulder, while heading down the road, talking about hunting and spot a group of sheep, standing in the shadows on the side of a mountain, roughly three quarters of a mile away...un-frigging-real! I'm thinking there must be some sort of wild sheep intuition or clairvoyance going on!!

Quickly, the Swarovski "Big Eye" confirms that there is a nice, representative ram in the group. A stalking plan is put together as we make the decision to hump it up the mountain to a little saddle that will put us within shooting range. We grab our packs, gear, rifle and start the uphill trek. Feeling my heart thumping in my chest, while gulping in lungs full of air, I remember the conversation all those long months ago "...all I ask is that your legs give me one good hike..." OK, this is it, don't blow it! When I climb and claw my way up to the saddle, Darryl and Jonnie are quietly glassing and assessing the ram. A word about that, Jonnie and Brooks, OK I get it, they're young, in shape and run up and down these mountains every day for a living. Darryl on the other hand is older than me for God sakes! In the darn near 40 years of working together as wildland firefighters and hunting buddies, he's always been the first to get to the top of the mountain!! I swear, I don't know why the guy wears boots, I just know he's got hooves instead of feet...but I digress!

Anyway, I catch my breath, get settled in and make the shot as I described in my opening. Many congratulations, handshakes and picture taking follow. In all the pictures, you'll notice that we're either sitting or kneeling. If you tried to stand up, the wind gusts would blow you off the mountain and you would end up taking the tumbleweed express to Vegas! The wind grew so intense that dressing and skinning the ram on the side of the mountain was out of the question and we had to secure the tag with several wraps of tape! Brooks hustled up the mountain to assist with the pack out. We all slipped, slid and stumbled our way down the mountain in the dark, with Jonnie packing the ram out whole. He hoisted the ram up like a backpack and gingerly



picked his way downhill...showoff! The rest of us packed out the gear and lit up the way with flashlights and head lamps. Once we got back to the trucks, what should have been a 45 minute drive back to camp turned into a 2 ½ hour drive due to the blowing sand and dust. More than once, we came to a complete stop and waited as visibility ended at the windshield wipers!

Back in camp, Brooks and Darryl were able to just field dress the ram. Skinning the cape for a life size mount, was out of the question due to the wind and blowing sand. In fact, it was so windy, that it was the first night of the hunt where dinner wasn't grilled outside...no way the grill would ever stay lit and if it did, chances are it'd start a brush fire in Barstow! So, the chef cooks up breakfast for dinner in the "Chateau D' Cady"...it doesn't get any better than that!

The next morning, thankfully calm, was spent skinning and scoring the ram, taking more pictures and packing up for the trip home. Farewells were bade as Darryl and I headed out. I made the obligatory call to Sacramento to notify CDFW personnel of my harvest and get the contact information for the validation process. I was able to get in contact with a local CDFW Biologist, Rudy Mena and we agreed to meet the next morning. The validation process was quite interesting as Darryl and I watched while peppering Rudy with questions. Rudy was a wealth of information as he talked about the rams he had already validated, areas, densities, value of collected information and the State's wild sheep program in general. Rudy is also an avid hunter with a passion towards fair chase, game management and stability for generations to come. If we could only download his brain into onX Hunt®...hmm? When all the measuring, swabbing, teeth/tissue collection, drilling and plugging were done, our camp scores and his were within a few eighths of each other.

Well done, the circle complete and the ram forever memorialized with my name and tag number. My heartfelt thanks to all the many folks who made this happen for me, for this was truly the Dream Hunt of a Lifetime!!



---

# CA WSF DIRECTOR CANDIDATE BIOGRAPHIES FOR THE 2024 ELECTION SLATE

*Listing is Alphabetical by Last Name*

## **BRADLEY ABOLTIN — Tehachapi, CA**



I was born and raised in California; I started hunting at the age of 12 and ever since that young age have been interested in one day hunting sheep. I have been fortunate enough to hunt all over the United States, including Alaska for my very own Dall sheep in 2022 and hope to have more opportunities throughout my life to hunt what I consider the pinnacle of hunting. Living only two to three hours from all the California Desert Bighorn sheep ranges has provided me the opportunity to be able to put boots on the ground and see the herds firsthand. Additionally, being a guide for the past four years for San Geronio Wilderness Outfitters has given me experience and knowledge of the landscape of the desert sheep and situations presented to these animals, as well as having my hand in water haul projects, repair projects and observation projects alongside Terry Anderson (board member of S.C.B.S and lifetime member of CA WSF).

I am a life member of Wild Sheep Foundation as well as a life member of the California Wild Sheep Foundation. Being 34, I hope to bring a young perspective and vision to CA WSF with a hopeful mindset of having a helping hand in the growth of the sheep herd and future opportunities! I have a 7 year old son and am hopeful to do my part in conservation and management of wild sheep to afford him the opportunities and experiences I have been blessed with and to share my passion with him..

### **MEMBERSHIP – Life Member**

## **VINCE BLOOM — Galt, CA**



I have been on three sheep hunts, and have taken a Dall sheep in the Wrangles AK. and a Stone sheep in British Columbia in 2023.

I met my wife at a Sacramento Safari Club Banquet and my entire family supports hunting and conservation.

Being a businessman and marketer, I would like to tune up the website with some keywords and google analytics so we can raise money year round and maybe do a campaign for a drinker. Doubling the amount of Desert Bighorn Sheep in California is a worthy ideal I'd like to be a part of!

In addition to my CA WSF membership, I am a Life Member of WSF, RMEF, GSCO, SCI, Arizona Antelope Foundation, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Idaho WSF, Montana WSF, Wyoming WSF, Oregon WSF, Eastern WSF.

Thank you for your consideration

### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**

## **MIKE BOREL — Alamo, CA**



Founding Member, Current VP, Magazine Editor and Organizer-Facilitator of the CA Sheep Summits (#35 is scheduled for December). He is a Past President, Secretary & Fundraiser Chair. Mike is a Partner in Context Network, a full-service consultancy assisting agricultural businesses with strategy, management, and insights. Mike has lived across the USA, in France and Australia.

A hunter his whole life, Mike is an active supporter of wildlife conservation, hunting rights and the Second Amendment. He's been a Director of WSF, a Director and VP of SCI, and an officer and board member in three SCI Chapters - in addition to CA WSF. He believes political action is necessary to preserve our hunting heritage and 2nd Amendment rights, and is an active campaigner, phone caller and letter writer.

He confesses to being severely afflicted with "Sheep Fever" and has taken 59 of the world's Ovis and Capra species. Mike invites your text, call (925-330-0463) or email (mike.borel@contextnet.com) with any questions you might have..

### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



#### **JIM FITZGERALD — Orange Cove, CA**

Jim Fitzgerald is an avid hunter, outdoorsman, and strong conservationist.

Jim has organized, supported, and led various conservation organizations including; National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, and California Foundation for North American Wild Sheep for a cumulative 35 plus years experience. He is a Distinguished Life member of CA WSF, a Life member of the National Rifle Association, Chadwick Ram Society member Wild Sheep Foundation, Patriot Life Member-NRA, Life Member SCBS, and is currently serving as a CA WSF board member, a banquet committee member and silent auction chair. He has been supporting CA WSF since its inception.

Jim is a retired Battalion Chief from the Ca. Department of Forestry. He has extensive knowledge in the use of prescribed fire for wildlife habitat improvement.

Jim has been married to his wife Susan for 33 years and they have two adult children. They have a small ranch in Central California at the base of the Sierras and raise horses and mules for packing into the high country.

Jim would like to again serve on the CA WSF board to help provide the hunting and outdoor experiences that he has enjoyed for future generations.

#### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



#### **TONY GIGLIOTTI — Davis, CA**

Tony has worked in land rights, environmental permitting, and is currently a project manager for hydroelectric facilities ensuring projects have beneficial use for a variety of environmental and recreation stakeholders. Tony is a life member with California Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF), Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF), Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, National Rifle Association, California Rifle and Pistol Association, Muley Fanatic Foundation, and California Waterfowl Association.

Tony grew up hunting waterfowl alongside his father and grandfather who each instilled a love of the outdoors, and appreciation for wildlife in him at an early age. With many fond memories of enjoying, not just the hunt, but also the time spent outdoors with friends and family, he would like to volunteer to be a CA WSF board member. As a strong proponent of wildlife conservation, he recognizes the importance of the CA WSF organization in supporting the success of the

sheep population in California. He looks forward to serving on the board and ensuring opportunities for the next generation of outdoorsmen and hunters.

#### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



#### **SCOTT GIBSON — Joshua Tree, CA**

In high school, I began hunting and developed a love for the outdoors with my best friend and his family. In 1986, at age 16, my buddy and I became "Area Co-Captains" for two SCBS guzzlers in the Sacramento Mountains near Needles, CA. Later, my buddy's father, would become President of SCBS. Three days after HS graduation, I shipped off to begin my enlistment in the Marine Corps. After returning from the first Gulf War, I began my career in construction and continued to serve in the Reserves until 1999.

Currently, I work for the County of Riverside, where I use my 31 years of construction experience to manage and deliver transportation construction projects. In my spare time, I volunteer and lead water projects with SCBS. Currently I serve as the Area Captain Coordinator for the Society and interface between CDFW and our volunteers for guzzler inspections and maintenance.

Recently, I started cooking for our volunteers in the field, I look forward to being camp cook

again. I belong to and volunteer with several other conservation organizations including Desert Wildlife Unlimited and Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. With my congressional representative, I am working towards the restoration of hunting to the Castle Mountains National Monument. With my military ties, I will continue working with the DoD to find and install guzzler locations on military installations. With all the sheep we are putting on military installations, I believe we will eventually have special sheep tags for hunting on military installations. Someday I hope to draw a sheep tag, but I am content seeing the sheep populations thrive because of the hard work groups like ours perform.

#### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**





### **BEN GORDON, Princeton, CA**

Ben is a fifth generation Northern California rancher currently involved in commercial rice production and wildlife habitat management. His operation also includes a commercial duck hunting club managing hunting opportunities for 70 plus hunters each year and managing pasture land for cattle with upland habitat for pheasant, turkey and blacktail deer. He currently serves as director on two different mutual water company boards and has served on several committees involving farm cooperatives, banking, and county fish and game commissions.

Ben is a lifetime member of WSF, Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn, SCI, and also holds memberships in RMEF, NBU, Calif. Deer Assn., MDF, NWTF, and NRA. Married with two grown children, he and his family hunt many western states each year and he has completed his collection of the four species of North American wild sheep (FNAWS).

### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



### **CASEY NICK — Atascadero, CA**

My name is Casey Nick and I am hoping to become a board member for the California Wild Sheep Association.

I am 28 years old and live on the central coast of California where I was raised on my families cattle ranch. I have been an outdoor and hunting enthusiast all my life. From my first turkey at 8 years old I have always been passionate about hunting and the outdoors.

I took my hunting passion and turned it into a career as of 2018 when I started my business, Lost Valley Outfitters. I guide pig, turkey, blacktail deer and tule elk hunts throughout the central coast on over 30,000 acres of private ranches that I have leased.

I have had the opportunity to guide for Matt and Cliff St. Martin of Dry Creek Outfitters starting in 2020 and have become addicted to desert bighorn sheep and the places they call home. I have gained a lot of knowledge on our sheep herds throughout the state and hope this experience

can help if I am elected as a board member. I am a proud member of CA WSF and I hope to help the organization with my in the field knowledge to help keep sheep on the mountain as well as increase populations throughout the state. I also hope to help in adding units for hunting management in mountain ranges that have healthy and thriving herds.

### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



### **DON PRIEST — Cave Creek, AZ.**

Don is a fifth generation born and raised Californian. Don is an Actuary and member of all three US actuarial societies, with a BS in Applied Mathematics and Masters in Statistics. He has his own Underwriting/Actuarial Consulting business, consulting to reinsurance Syndicates at Lloyds of London. Don is a Distinguished Life Member of CA Wild Sheep Foundation, Summit Life Member of Wild Sheep Foundation (Gold Benefactor-Chadwick Ram Society), members of SCI, Boone & Crockett, NAHVDA, DU and Trout Unlimited (Lifetime). He is currently CA WSF's Committee Chair of the Governmental Affairs Committee and Projects Other than Water, and former Secretary and Fundraiser's Live Auction Chair. Presently a Wild Sheep Foundation's Legislative Affairs Committee Member and Wild Sheep Legacy Foundation Board Trustee.

Don has harvested four North America sheep and two Mountain Goats, and harvesting more than twenty sheep/goat/ibex in Asia/Europe. Also hunting a number of species in North America

and Africa. He would appreciate your support to continue his participation as a Board Member of CA WSF to help 'Put and Keep Sheep on the Mountain'.

### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



### **BRENTON SCOTT — Littleton, CO**

Brenton seeks to again serve our organization to both continue and expand his service to the membership and the wild sheep of California. Brenton is a founding life member of our organization, served on the board for a number of years from its inception and has continued to serve on our Projects Committee(s) since their creation. His roots in conservation, and specifically the wild sheep of California, goes back to the 1980's when he started his long-standing relationships with many key personnel of the CA DFG during his terms of service to the Golden Gate Chapter (and later his co-founding of the San Francisco Bay Area Chapter) of Safari Club International. Brenton would bring a plethora of non-profit conservation organization experience to our board as he has served on multiple other boards and committees for, but not limited to, Midwest WSF, Mzuri Wildlife Foundation, Rocky Mountain Bighorn Society, etc..

Brenton is a member of many conservation organizations as a life membership including Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Eastern Chapter WSF, Idaho WSF, Iowa FNAWS, WSF

Midwest Chapter, Montana WSF, Nevada Bighorns Unlimited, Society for the Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, Washington WSF, Wild Sheep Foundation, WSF Alberta, Wild Sheep Society of British Columbia, and Wyoming WSF among many others..

### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



### **GREG TOOLEY — Vista, CA**

My name is Greg Tooley, 44 years old, and I was raised in Southern Wisconsin. When I turned eighteen I joined the U.S. Marine Corps and was stationed on Camp Pendleton, CA. After the Marines I pursued a career in the fire service and have been working for a Southern California fire department for almost twenty years. Since 2016 I have also managed a non-profit, The OATH Foundation (Outdoor Adventures To Heroes), which is dedicated to providing outdoor opportunities to veterans, active military, firefighters, police officers, and first responders.

At the age of twelve I completed my hunter safety certification and began hunting as much as I could. I chased whitetails, turkeys, waterfowl, and small game throughout the dairy land. In my mind I had always had dreams of pursuing mountain species in the back country. After my time in the service I began those back country pursuits. I have hunted, or assisted on hunts, in most of the western states and internationally chasing mule deer, elk, mountain goat, bighorn sheep,

Dall's sheep, antelope, bear, mountain lion, and tahr.

As my hunting experiences progressed I really began to appreciate the need for individuals and organizations to give back to the conservation of our precious resources. I am a member of the RMEF, a WSF Life Member, Life Member SCBS, and most recently upgraded to a CA WSF Distinguished Life Member..

I would be honored to serve as a Director for the CA WSF to continue the strong commitment to putting and keeping wild sheep across our California landscape.

### **MEMBERSHIP – Distinguished Life Member**



### **STEVE TORRES — Granite Bay, CA.**

Steve Torres has been involved with desert bighorn sheep conservation since 1981, starting by spending 3 years tracking and monitoring bighorn sheep in southwestern Arizona. He earned master's degrees in Wildlife Ecology at University of Arizona and Biostatistics at UCLA. In 1992 Steve became statewide coordinator of bighorn sheep conservation for the California Department of Fish and Game.

In 1992 California's bighorn sheep hunting program had only 2 hunt zones. During Steve's tenure, he collaborated with others on research efforts that resulted in adding seven additional hunt zones in the Clark/Kingston, East Chocolate, Orocopa, Sheephole, Cady and Bristol mountains, and in the San Geronio Wilderness. During this time, he also started two bighorn sheep recovery programs: one in the Sierras and one in the Peninsular Ranges.

Steve retired from CDFW in 2018, but he remains very active in desert bighorn sheep conservation. In 2023 Steve was elected to the Desert Bighorn Council's Technical Committee. Steve is an advocate for rigorous science as the basis for species management and has a deep understanding and respect for the role of hunting as an integral part of bighorn sheep management. He is an avid big game hunter (when he can get drawn!)

### **MEMBERSHIP – Life Member**



---

## CA WSF 2024-2025 DIRECTORS BALLOT

The California Wild Sheep Foundation Nominating Committee is pleased to present ten candidates for Board of Director positions. These positions are for two-year terms beginning July 1, 2023. We believe the candidate biographies on the prior pages will provide you with the input needed to vote; however, should you have additional questions feel free to contact me. You may also contact Beverly at the office (forthesheep@gmail.com or 650-409-6005 phone) and she will forward information.

***Matt Burke***

***Nominating Committee Chair 2024***

***matthew.burke124@gmail.com***

***Putting and Keeping Sheep on the Mountains***

### **Voting Form**

This is the voting form in the newsletter (you will also receive this via email; please vote only by email or by using this form). You may vote for a total of eight candidates, including write-in votes.

### **How to submit your vote**

Your ballot must be received no later than 5 p.m. on June 30, 2024.

You may mail your ballot to the CA WSF office at:

CA WILD SHEEP FOUNDATION

1620 Williams Hwy #151

Grants Pass, OR 97527

You may also fax to 650-409-6005. Or reply to the email sent to you to place your vote.

**Remember: Vote no more than ONCE for each candidate (no cumulative voting). Vote for up to EIGHT candidates. Vote must be received no later than 5 p.m. on June 30, 2024.**

### **CANDIDATES (Listed randomly)**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Mike Borel
- \_\_\_\_\_ Steve Torres
- \_\_\_\_\_ Scott Gibson
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tony Gigliotti
- \_\_\_\_\_ Don Priest
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brad Aboltin
- \_\_\_\_\_ Greg Tooley
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ben Gordon
- \_\_\_\_\_ Casey Nick
- \_\_\_\_\_ Vince Bloom
- \_\_\_\_\_ Jim Fitzgerald
- \_\_\_\_\_ Brenton Scott
- \_\_\_\_\_ Your Write-in Candidate

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **optional**  
**Email or Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **required**

CA FNAWS dba Ca Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) is a not-for-profit organization with the goal of KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN through conservation, education, and promotion of professional management to ensure generations to come are able to experience the phenomenal beauty of wild sheep. CA WSF tax identification number is 68-0481140.

---

# PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Zack Walton  
2024 Southwestern Ibex  
Mojacar, Spain



Claude Howard  
Cypress hills Saskatchewan Plains Bison  
Number 15 of Super 25

A person in a dark, hooded jacket is sitting on a rocky outcrop, looking down. The background is a mountainous landscape. Overlaid text includes:

**COMFORT DURABILITY**  
**PERFORMANCE**

**LATHROP & SONS**  
BOOT CO.

**MOUNTAIN HUNTER ELITE**

- TEC-TAB Ball Bearing Lacing System
- Breathable Synthetic/Leather Upper
- L&S PU Rocker Cam Midsole

[WWW.LATHROPANDSONS.COM](http://WWW.LATHROPANDSONS.COM)



---

# AOUDAD/BARBARY SHEEP IN MOROCCO – MARCH 2024

*by Mike Borel, Sheep Addicted Distinguished Life Member*

Species – Aoudad/Barbary Sheep Date Taken – March 3, 2024

Location Taken - Country – Morocco Area – High Atlas Mountains, Tichka Plateau

Outfitter / Booking Agent – Point Blank Hunts (Joe Jakab)

Guide / Local Operator – Renaud Desgres du lou

Hunt Highlights –

The story: All the normal preliminaries took the first day and a half – rifle clearance, ammunition verification and counting, travel from Marrakech to the hunting area. The next day started very strong. Lots of hiking. In the morning we saw rams and nanny groups, but none we wanted to pursue. The afternoon plan was to climb to the high pass, cross over and hunt. Renaud thinks we did 10 km, I'm convinced it was more! My iPhone says it was 14,401 steps, half of which were UP. Coming down is the toughest and slowest for me. We covered a lot of ground, switch backing all the way up and down. At 4:00 we spotted 6 rams, with 3 very good ones. It was over 400 yards. Renaud thought we could easily get closer. We slid down far enough to be at 360. It was cross canyon and only slightly downhill. I swapped legs on my bipod for longer (seated) ones. I had to boost the height with a pack under each leg. I shot but didn't anchor him. Renaud identified him as now the lowest of the group, I shot again and heard the solid whack. He was still not down, so one more to the neck finished the job and he rolled lower. It was 4:45, it took till 5:30 to get to him.

We took pictures and the crew came to help get him out. It took 2 ½ hours to get to the bottom for a celebratory wine and cheese, before driving to our hotel.

We enjoyed the sites and experiences of Morocco the rest of the week. Thanks to Renaud, Alex, Joe, and a great crew. They were all very friendly and professional.



“If I’ve learned one thing in 40 years of seeking the majestic wild ram, it is that hunting him is not a privilege to be taken lightly.”

—Jack O’Connor, *Sheep Hunting is an Art*, February 1971



---

# IBEX GRAND SLAM

*by Claude Howard, Life Member*



Gredos



Beceite



South Eastern



Ronda

We hunted with Iber Hunting, it was a first class trip. Antonio and Mercedes did a great job. We hunted March 12th for Gredos in the snowy mountains of Losar de La Vera where I shot an ibex at 330 yards and prayed over the ibex thanking God for new found friends and ibex.

Next trip was the Beceite ibex at Villarroja da Los Pinares. We had coffee with locals and off we went hunting, walking mountains, and seeing ibex. We went to lunch with locals and came back and scouted for ibex. We located one and off we went, started stalking up to 160 yards and I squeezed a trigger boom. Number 2 was down and I prayed over the ibex thanking God.

Southeastern ibex, number 3, was located at Carboneras. We started out at a nearby coffee shop with locals and off we went to the mountains by the Mediterranean Sea. We saw

some at 350 yards a shooter. And shoot him we did. Then we ran down a ways and shot again at 200 yards. Number 3 down and I prayed over the ibex thanking God.

Number 4 Ronda was at Alcaucin where we started out at a local coffee shop and then we rode half way up the mountain and got out and there at close to top of mountain was a monster ibex! We started off by foot climbing to top where we set up a couple of different times trying to get a shot I had a shot at 350 yards with ibex laying down and took it. Ibex number 4 down!

It was the finale of my Grand slam boom. It was tough but awesome. Antonio was a great host and guide and Rangers at each region did a great job. The locals were very nice and Spain is awesome place to visit, I would recommend Iber Hunting Adventure — it was a Ten! The trip of a life time!!



---

# WATER DEVELOPMENT WORK IN THE DESERT

by Debbie Miller Marschke, SCBS

***Water Development in the Desert is not as easy as it used to be. When SCBS was founded in 1964, guzzler builds were about as simple as finding a suitable location, choosing a build date, and then getting the job done. The Department of Fish and Game had a very impactful dedicated field crew maximizing the available SCBS volunteers and together that team constructed over 70 wildlife water systems.***

However, the changing political climate has been about as challenging to navigate as the actual climate changes by Nature itself. In 1970, then-Governor Ronald Reagan endorsed the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which was intended to protect the environment. As a recent Daily Breeze editorial stated, “CEQA, like any law, can have damaging, often unintended, consequences. It is an expensive and lengthy process that can add years to project timeframes. It can have little relationship to environmental protection. It’s strong bias toward the status quo means that it can be used to block projects that would help improve the environment.” Presently, SCBS is faced with a myriad of roadblocks like CEQA which frustrate plans for additional water systems. Meanwhile, the CDFW efforts are distracted by battling interagency “friendly fire” and conflicting agendas. Sadly, funding earmarked for conservation is actually spent on attorneys. California’s Little Hoover Commission studied the current language of CEQA and concluded in March 2023 that the law needed reform. Although the potential reformation of CEQA could be good news for groups like SCBS, it is likely to take many years of hearings with no guarantees of direct benefits to those working on drought mitigation; California’s legislators finally woke up to the law’s overreaching bureaucracy when it began to severely impact its housing goals and push for “affordable” housing. The bad news being that the declared need for CEQA reform does not appear to focus on projects benefiting wildlife. We can only hope that the changes are positive.

Recently, California’s Department of Fish and Wildlife staff is making the effort to engage CEQA and the Desert Protection Act head on by developing a “Programmatic Environmental Assessment” program. It’s an effort to “work smarter, not harder” when it comes to repairing the existing guzzler systems. Instead of slogging through the bureaucracy for a permit on every single repair, it is sought to produce a documented policy which will serve as an



Sheep at a drinker 2024 (Rick Halter Photo)

umbrella covering the existing systems and to eliminate the interagency problems between the CDFW and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) every time there is a project. This would open the door for SCBS to upgrade the much older guzzler systems, which are susceptible to freeze breaks and essentially reaching the end of their lifespan, to the more self-contained and low profile Raincatcher systems.

The State Lands parcel lease project is progressing through the final steps approaching the installation of our first State Lands guzzler, so SCBS is anticipating building our first guzzler this fall. This April, a team of biologists visited the chosen parcels to survey for sensitive plant species which is required according to the terms of the lease. On May 18, 2024 the selected parcels were surveyed by a trained professional archaeologist to identify any cultural assets/artifacts that would impact the projects. So far, the initial surveys have not resulted in any data to suggest that the planned project locations would need alteration.

SCBS has already ordered the Raincatcher tanks and supplies in anticipation for our first projects. A special shout out to SCBS volunteer and WSF supporter Jef Bugni; he has stepped up to make things easier by hauling the new Raincatcher tanks from Madera, CA to his property near Pumpkin Center. By moving these tanks and holding them temporarily, Jef has cut the travel time in half for the SCBS drivers delivering the tanks to Barstow. Formerly, that roundtrip delivery was an all day slog and really exhausting. It’s really great to have folks step up like this!

Finally, SCBS would appreciate your consideration in your future estate planning. Funds that are gifted will continue to make a lasting impact for generations to come. Remember that SCBS life member Bob Campbell bequeathed a six figure sum to SCBS; this legacy resulted in the design and manufacture of the SCBS Raincatcher tanks. These Raincatcher tanks resolved many design flaws plaguing the old systems, and they are now sourced as the “go-to” specialized bighorn sheep water systems by many other states besides California. SCBS has chosen not to mark up those sales to other states, forgoing profit because those fraternal organizations share the same mission: to keep sheep on the mountain.!

---

# GOVERNMENT ISSUES UPDATE

*by Don Priest, Distinguished Life Member, Board Member*

## CASTLE MOUNTAINS MOVE TO THE MOJAVE NATIONAL PRESERVE

Senator Alex Padilla has introduced that Mojave National Preserve Boundary Adjustment Act (S.4222) on May 1, 2024, which will move the Castle Mountains into the Mojave National Preserve, thus concluding their current National Monument status. The Castle Mountains are an important conservation area, with many species including chukar, quail, mule deer and, of course, desert bighorn sheep. This bill will re-establish access for sportsman that had been available prior to the enactment of the National Monument in 2016. CA WSF released a public statement thanking Senator Padilla for introducing the bill.

The bill is currently in, and had hearings within, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on National Parks. CA WSF has joined a coalition letter of many organizations to the Chairman, Senator Joe Manchin, and Ranking Member, Senator John Barrasso, of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources urging their passage of this bill out of the Committee and onto the full Senate. Time is short in this Congress so fingers crossed that this bill can be pushed across the finish line prior to year-end.

Many people have been working on making this move a reality since the time President Obama declared the Castle Mountains National Monument via Presidential Proclamation. CA WSF would like to thank Board Member Scott Gibson, Member and BHA Conservation Manager Devin O'Dea, and Greg Schildwachter and Charlie Booher of Watershed Results in Washington, DC for all their work and patience through the years to make this move, and frankly this correction, a reality.



## CHUCKWALLA NATIONAL MONUMENT

Both Senator Alex Padilla and Rep. Raul Ruiz have introduced an identical bill, the Chuckwalla National Monument Establishment and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act of 2024 on April 16th, S.4132 and H.R.8031. CA WSF, through our partners at Watersheds Results and other organizations, reviewed the language regards access and the development of guzzlers and continued sportsman activities. We are currently satisfied that the language does not appear to add any obvious additional impediments regards guzzlers. And the bill will not change the jurisdiction of wildlife management by CDFW, nor disrupt sportsman access within this new National Monument.

Though changing and raising the status of lands can increase the complexity regards wildlife management activities, the setting aside of these lands will benefit our desert species. With the number of solar farm developments along I-10, this National Monument will set aside a large swath of the lands south of the highway, keeping it from these development activities (see map). And, though these lands will have this elevated status as a National Monument, the federal agency that will administer these lands will not change, continuing with the Bureau of Land Management.

Though the bill has been introduced to both Congressional chambers, it is anticipated that the Chuckwalla National Monument will be established via Proclamation by President Biden. Of course, this raises concerns of another 'Castle Mountains' that may require a future 'fix'. Given our Washington partners contacts with the Executive Office's Council on Environmental Quality, and a united front by the various promoters and stakeholders in the National Monument, we expect that any such Proclamation will be identical to the current bills.

Public Map of Chuckwalla National Monument and Joshua Tree National Park Expansion





---

## I-8 WILDLIFE OVERCROSSINGS PROJECT

The I-8 corridor through the Jacumba Mountains (east of San Diego) has been detrimental to desert bighorn sheep, with a number of sheep deaths from vehicle collisions. A coalition has been working on bringing wildlife overcrossing(s) to these mountains over I-8. With CDFW now having the full movement data collected from sheep collars within the Jacumba herd, analysis of this data will lead to recommended site selections for these overcrossing(s).

This is great news for this important Peninsular Desert Bighorn Sheep herd. The downside is that we are looking at more than five years before ground can be broken. A number of steps are required in the development of the crossings, including a Process Document, Environmental Assessments and Final Design Plans, with each of those steps taking a year to two. Then the Project is released for public bid on the

crossing(s) construction. CA WSF will continue to support and assist where possible to make these overcrossings a reality.

## BRIGHTLINE WEST HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT – WILDLIFE OVERCROSSINGS UPDATE

CA WSF understands Caltrans and Brightline West are finishing up their selection of the three I-15 wildlife overcrossings bridge types and working through the technical details. Caltrans is also working through the permitting for the completion of these crossings. CA WSF anticipates that CDFW will soon be hosting another stakeholders meeting to update the various state agencies and the public on the overcrossings details and future construction timeframe.



## THE WAY OF THINGS

*by Carlos Gallinger*



The desert bighorn sheep will often use one spring and almost never another. The spring in this picture has been favored by the desert bighorn sheep for as long as I have known of it. I think it's because the water runs through this white rock which appears to be a volcanic ash and picks up useful minerals that the sheep can detect. It's just a theory of mine but someday perhaps will know.



The placement of the desert bighorn sheep's eyes are such that it takes some concentration for them to look forward.

Does this mean they aren't usually looking at YOU?

---

# CALIFORNIA FISH AND WILDLIFE UPDATE

by Danielle Glass, CDFW  
Desert Bighorn Biologist Region 6

## ***California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Desert Bighorn Program has started its spring fieldwork.***

In March, the program conducted 3 days of helicopter surveys of the White Mountains with Air Shasta Rotor & Wing. The collaring of 25 bighorn in the White Mountains last fall allowed for a rigorous population estimate. 154 desert bighorn, including 41 adult rams, were observed from the helicopter. A mark-resight model estimated ~103 adult ewes and ~59 adult rams in the population. This finding does suggest a significant decrease in the White Mountain population size from 2020, when a mark-resight model estimated ~260 adult ewes and ~126 adult rams. Based on negative disease results and the mortality patterns of this last winter, we hypothesize that this decrease was related to the severe winter in 2022-2023. Though this population decrease resulted in a more difficult hunt, these survey results indicate mature rams were available for harvest during the 2023 hunt season. We suspect that due to the historic winter precipitation and monsoon rains accompanying hurricane Hilary, many rams were enjoying forage on the west side of the range where access is extremely difficult.

In March, the Desert Bighorn Program made recommendations for 2024–25 hunt tag quotas based on last year's population estimates. For the White Mountains, we recommended reducing the number of hunt tags to 4 because population modeling suggested the reduced ewe population is insufficient to sustain 6 harvests each year. More positively, we recommended re-opening the Sheep Hole hunt zone with 1 tag. We have also started deploying trail cameras to conduct this year's population estimates. We have already finished placing trail cameras in the Grapevine, Panamint, Kingston, and Nopah ranges. We also will deploy cameras in the Old Dad, Marble, Orocopia, Sheephole, South Bristol, Wood Hackberry, and Providence ranges. An abundance of timed collar drop-offs has also led to some very nice hikes. Ground surveys of the Marble and Soda populations are also planned for June.

Other big news for the Desert Bighorn Program is the hiring of Paige Prentice as our new Statewide Bighorn Coordinator! Paige has been associated with the Desert Bighorn Program since 2015 and is excited to step into this new role. She hopes to increase communication between the regional bighorn programs and CDFW's Sacramento headquarters, and is already working on hunting regulations and the desert bighorn management plan. Welcome back Paige!



Danielle Glass)





---

# THE EAST CHOCOLATE MOUNTAINS: A BRIEF HISTORY OF CALIFORNIA'S FOURTH BIGHORN SHEEP HUNT ZONE (PART II)

by Nancy G. Andrew, Steven G. Torres, and Vernon C. Bleich

Part one of this description of the opening of bighorn sheep hunting in the East Chocolate Mountains Hunt Zone (ECMHZ) appeared in the Spring 2024 issue of *California Wild Sheep*.

In part II, we describe some of the habitat improvements that were developed, alleviation of concerns about habitat enhancements impacting the federally endangered desert tortoise, the impacts of feral donkeys on bighorn sheep, and the acquisition of the demographic information that led to the opening of this hunt zone. We will also describe the reason that the ECMHZ currently is not open to the harvest of bighorn sheep, and what will be involved if the zone is to be reopened.

As noted in Part I, information leading to the opening of the ECMHZ was the result of intense field work performed by the authors, but especially by Nancy Andrew. Part of that effort involved creation of a habitat selection model specifically for California's Sonoran Desert—which was one of the earliest applications of Geographic Information System technology by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)—and described differences in habitat selection between male and female bighorn sheep, as well as periods of sexual segregation and aggregation, identified birthing areas and season of births, and described vegetative composition of the area (Andrew et al. 1999); all of these findings proved essential to the establishing the new hunt zone. Nonetheless, these accomplishments alone would not have been adequate to justify the harvest of bighorn sheep in the East Chocolate Mountains (ECM). Below, we describe some of the additional investigations or actions that led to that successful proposal.

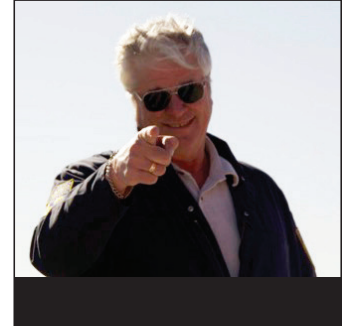
Additional work accomplished prior to the proposal to open the ECM to the harvest of bighorn sheep included an intensive investigation of the effects of man-made water developments (i.e., guzzlers) on other species. That effort was undertaken specifically to correct misinformation

regarding the potential for those critically important installations to entrap desert tortoises, which at the time were listed as threatened by the federal government and the California Fish and Game

commission (Andrew et al. 2001). Although not formally published until after the ECMHZ was opened, that work paved the way for additional water developments to be installed for bighorn sheep and desert mule deer.

Simultaneously, members of Desert Wildlife Unlimited—a very active conservation organization in Imperial County—were expressing concerns about the increasing numbers of feral donkeys ranging further westward from the Julian Wash Herd Management Area near the Colorado River, and into habitat important to desert mule deer and desert bighorn sheep. Those concerns led to the development of an inexpensive and efficacious method of preventing access to water sources by the donkeys but, again, formal publication of the technique did not occur until after the hunt zone was established. Efforts to install barriers based on the design of Andrew et al. (1997a) continue to the extent that land management agencies grant approval, and often has been a contentious issue in federal 'wilderness' areas.

An important spin-off of concerns related to the expansion of feral donkeys away from the Herd Management Area was the initiation and completion of work conducted by Jason Marshal and his colleagues, who investigated the potential for competition between feral donkeys and desert mule deer (Marshal et al. 2012) and feral



donkeys and bighorn sheep (Marshall et al. 2008). Again, the impetus for those investigations was in response to concerns expressed by local conservationists representing Desert Wildlife Unlimited. Although the work by Marshall and his coauthors occurred following the opening and the subsequent closure of bighorn sheep hunting in the ECM, it was carried out in large part because of the earlier work conducted in that range and was strongly supported by Desert Wildlife Unlimited.

The most compelling work that was completed, and upon which the proposal to open the ECM to hunting of bighorn sheep was the demographic work conducted initially by CDFG personnel, and later by Andrew et al. (1997b). Again, this work was not published prior to opening of the hunt zone, but the existing data were summarized and, when combined with original and recent data (Andrew 1994), information fundamental to support the proposal to open the ECM to bighorn sheep hunting was available.



Steve Torres, Vern Bleich, and Nancy Andrew with a mature ram captured for Nancy's field work, which led to the opening of two of the first five bighorn sheep zones—the East Chocolate Mountains featured here, and the Orocopia Mountains that will be featured in an article later this fall. At the time, Nancy was a graduate student at the University of Rhode Island, Steve was the California Department of Fish and Game Coordinator in Sacramento, and Vern was the Eastern Units Supervisor, with responsibility for the five wildlife biologists serving as Unit Managers in Mono, Inyo, San Bernardino, Riverside, and Imperial counties.

Prior estimates of the number of bighorn sheep occupying the ECM ranged from 25 to 53 individuals (Weaver and Mensch 1969; J. R. Thompson and V. C. Bleich, unpublished data; CDFG 1989). Prior to the demographic work described herein, the population was estimated to contain between 25 and 40 individuals (CDFG 1989). Following the detailed and intensive surveys conducted during the summer of 1993 (Andrew 1994; Andrew et al. 1997b) the total population of bighorn sheep  $\geq 1$ -year-of-age was estimated to be 160 (95% CI=138–203), and was comprised of 97 total females (95% CI=80–135) distributed among two demes (sometimes referred to as subpopulations), and 49 total males (95% CI = 28–118) that moved among those demes. The northern and southern demes were estimated to contain 61 (95% CI = 59–73) and 36 (95% CI = 13–84) female sheep  $\geq 1$ -year-of-age, respectively. The substantial differences in the spread of the confidence intervals among the various estimates are a function of the number of marked animals available, a factor that strongly influences the precision of such estimates.

These demographic data were incorporated into the management plan required by the enabling legislation (Bleich et al. 1993), but that information was based largely on results that later appeared in professional publications, as cited herein. Following preparation of the management plan preparation of the requisite environmental document ensued and public comments were received and addressed, the East Chocolate Mountains were proposed by the California Department of Fish and Game to be opened to the harvest of bighorn sheep in 1994 (Torres et al. 1994), and the California Fish and Game Commission concurred with that recommendation.

Three permits were allocated for the ECMHZ in 1994, 6 permits in 1995, and 3 permits in 1996; hunter success was 100% during each of those three years (California Department of Fish and Game 1994, 1995, 1996). Among those drawing permits during these three seasons were Wild Sheep Foundation and California Wild Sheep



Foundation members Don Callahan and Roger McCosker, and well known natural history photographer and author, Gary Kramer.

Following the onset of a severe drought in the early 1990s and a clear decrease in measures of population abundance thereafter, CDFG biologists recommended a temporary halt to hunting in that recently established zone. The Fish and Game Commission concurred with that recommendation, and the East Chocolate Mountains were closed to the harvest of bighorn sheep beginning in 1997 (Epps et al.2003). As originally proposed, the closure was intended to be temporary, but that was not to be. In part III of this essay, we will explain further how the closure transpired, how the probability of such happening in the future has been addressed, and what will be involved in reopening the East Chocolate Mountains Hunt Zone. Stay tuned.

### Literature Cited

- Andrew, N. G. 1994. Demography and habitat use by desert dwelling mountain sheep in the East Chocolate Mountains, Imperial County, California. M.S. Thesis. University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island, USA.
- Andrew, N. G., V. C. Bleich, P. V. August, and S. G. Torres. 1997b. Demography of mountain sheep in the East Chocolate Mountains, California. *California Fish and Game* 83:68–77.
- Andrew, N. G., L. M. Lesicka, and V. C. Bleich. 1997a. An improved fence design to protect water sources for native ungulates. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 25:823–825.
- Andrew, N. G., V. C. Bleich, and P. V. August. 1999. Habitat selection by mountain sheep in the Sonoran Desert: implications for conservation in the United States and Mexico. *California Wildlife Conservation Bulletin* 12:1–30.
- Andrew, N. G., V. C. Bleich, A. D. Morrison, L. M. Lesicka, and P. Cooley. 2001. Wildlife mortalities associated with artificial water sources in the Sonoran Desert. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 29:275–280.
- Bleich, V. C., N. G. Andrew, and G. P. Mulcahy. 1993. Mountain sheep management plan: East Chocolate Mountains. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- CDFG (California Department of Fish and Game). 1989. Bighorn sheep investigations from July 1, 1988 to June 30, 1989. Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Project Job Progress Report W-65-R-6, Study I, Job 4. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- CDFG. 1994. 1994 big game hunting. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- CDFG. 1995. 1995 big game hunting. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- CDFG. 1996. 1996 big game hunting. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- Epps, C. W., V. C. Bleich, J. D. Wehausen, and S. G. Torres. 2003. Status of bighorn sheep in California. *Desert Bighorn Council Transactions* 47:20–35.
- Marshal, J. P., V. C. Bleich, and N. G. Andrew. 2008. Evidence for interspecific competition between feral ass and mountain sheep in a desert environment. *Wildlife Biology* 14:228–236.
- Marshal, J. P., V. C. Bleich, P. R. Krausman, A. Neibergs, M. L. Reed, and N. G. Andrew. 2012. Habitat use and diets of mule deer and feral ass in the Sonoran Desert. *Southwestern Naturalist* 57:16–25.
- Torres, S. G., V. C. Bleich, and J. D. Wehausen. 1994. Status of bighorn sheep in California, 1993. *Desert Bighorn Council Transactions* 38:17–28.
- Weaver, R. A., and J. L. Mensch. 1969. A report on desert bighorn sheep in eastern Imperial County, California. Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Report W-51-R-14. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California, USA.
- The late 1980s and early 1990s were periods of substantial expansion in hunting opportunities for bighorn sheep in California. During that period Nancy Andrew was first a graduate student that Bleich hired to work on habitat and demographic investigations in the East Chocolate Mountains, after which she was employed as the Southern Colorado River Unit Manager for many years prior to retirement; Steve Torres, with more than 30 years of service with the Department, was California's bighorn sheep coordinator and was closely involved with the demographic aspects of this effort; Vern Bleich, who worked 34 years for the California Department of Fish and Game, was Nancy's immediate supervisor, and served as Eastern Units Supervisor for the Department's Region 5. The authors especially thank, the late, Leon Lesicka and members of Desert Wildlife and the Imperial County Fish and Game Commission for their support of this effort, and and CDFG Regional Manager Fred Worthley, Assistant Chief, Assistant Chief of the Wildlife Management Branch Terry Mansfield, and Wildlife Chief Red Hunt for their encouragement, endorsement, and approval of the work and recommendations that emanated during this period. This article is part of an effort to ensure an accurate account of past management accomplishments on behalf of bighorn sheep in California does not fall victim to 'generational amnesia', and will be available in the future. Individuals with questions can contact Vern Bleich directly at [vcbleich@gmail.com](mailto:vcbleich@gmail.com)

---

# THE POLITICS OF CONSERVATION

## KEEPING SHEEP ON THE MOUNTAIN AND YOU IN THE FIELD

*By Bill Gaines, Gaines and Associates*

### 2024 STATE LEGISLATIVE SESSION AT FULL TILT!

As we approach the end of May – with the deadline to move bills out of their house of origin just days away, and the mid-June deadline to pass a difficult FY 2024/25 State Budget inching closer – activity at our State Capitol is banging on all cylinders. Below is the status of just some of the legislation a terribly busy California Chapter of the Wild Sheep Foundation (CA WSF) is working on behalf of our members in 2024.

Bills are listed below in numerical order, not in order of priority or interest.

#### **AB 1889 (FRIEDMAN) – GENERAL PLAN: WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY ELEMENT**

As reported in our Spring 2024 Issue of California Wild Sheep, AB 1889 by Assembly Member Laura Friedman (D-Burbank) would require general plans adopted by cities or counties to include an element that considers the impact of development on wildlife habitat connectivity. The bill would require local jurisdictions to identify habitat connectivity issues and to take all possible steps to address the concerns upon the next update of their general plan on or after January 1, 2026.

Double-referred, AB 1189 passed through two Assembly policy committees in April and out of Assembly fiscal committee in early May. Currently on the Assembly Floor, AB 1189 must be heard and passed out of the Assembly and to the Senate by May 24th to meet legislative deadline.

#### **AB 2320 (IRWIN) – WILDLIFE CONNECTIVITY AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION ACT OF 2024: WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

AB 2320 by Assembly Member Jacqui Irwin (D-Thousand Oaks) would require the State to identify key wildlife corridors and set goals for wildlife corridor protection in the next 5 years. Further, the bill would make it a policy of the state to promote wildlife habitats by acquiring and restoring the large blocks of land and the infrastructure necessary to provide for connectivity of those habitats.

Like AB 1889, AB 2320 was double-referred and passed through two Assembly policy committees in April and then out of Assembly fiscal committee in mid-May. Now on the Assembly Floor, AB 2320 must be heard and passed to the Senate by May 24th to meet the legislative deadline.

#### **AB 3067 (GIPSON) – RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY INSURANCE: FIREARMS**

As also covered in our Spring 2024 Issue, AB 3067 by Assembly Member Mike A. Gipson (D-Gardena) would have required an insurer of residential property to include questions on their application for homeowner's or renter's insurance regarding the presence and storage of any firearms kept in the household, in accessory structures, or in vehicles



kept on the property that are subject to any applicable insurance policy. AB 3067 would have gone into effect on January 1, 2026, and required an insurer to annually report this information to the Department of Insurance and the Legislature beginning on January 1, 2027.

AB 3067 was set to be heard in the Assembly policy committee in mid-April but was pulled from consideration by the author. Gaines and Associates contacted the author's office shortly after the hearing and was told that it was unlikely that the author would try to move AB 3067, as introduced, forward. True to his word, AB 3067 was gutted and amended in late-April to deal with different subject matter.

#### **SB 1160 (PORTANTINO) – FIREARMS: ANNUAL REGISTRATION OF FIREARMS**

SB 1160 by Senator Anthony J. Portantino (D/25-Glendale) would have required firearms to be annually registered with the Department of Justice (DOJ). The bill would also have required registrants to annually pay a "to be determined" registration fee to fund DOJ's administration and enforcement of the firearm registry. The bill would have required DOJ to establish and maintain a system for the annual registration of firearms and create the Registered Firearm File. SB 1160 would have required that all guns be registered as of July 1, 2025.

With our letter of strong opposition to SB 1160 on file, the bill was slated to be heard in the Senate policy committee in early April. At that hearing, as we readied to testify in opposition, the bill's author suddenly announced that he was pulling SB 1160 from consideration. Days later, SB 1160 was gutted and amended to deal with open carry of handguns.

#### **SB 1163 (DAHLE) – WILDLIFE-VEHICLE COLLISIONS: WILDLIFE SALVAGE PERMITS**

As reported in our Spring 2024 Issue, CA WSF is working to pass SB 1163 by Senator Brian Dahle (R-Redding) – legislation which would improve public safety and help protect wild sheep and other wildlife resources by reducing the frequency



of vehicle-wildlife collisions on California's roadways.

California has finally begun to take steps to improve public safety and promote wildlife health by funding programs intended to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and reestablish habitat connectivity and migration corridors via the placement of roadway wildlife crossings. Identifying the most efficient locations for these crossings is critical to the health of California's wildlife and the safety of our public. Yet, California does not currently have an effective means of gathering the extensive data necessary to ensure the proper placement of these multi-million-dollar structures.

Sponsored by the wildlife conservation community, SB 1163 would address this concern by significantly improving the collection of necessary data by authorizing the Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) to produce a smartphone app that would allow motorists to report the location of vehicle-wildlife collisions easily and in real-time. To further encourage reporting, SB 1163 would also authorize the Fish and Game Commission to establish a pilot program for the issuance of wildlife salvage permits that authorize motorists to salvage edible portions of deer, elk, antelope, and/or wild pig killed on our roadways. Armed with more robust data, DFW, California Highway Patrol, Caltrans, and other state agencies could better predict road-kill hotspots, measure contributing factors, and evaluate the placement of wildlife road crossings and other actions to reduce future vehicle-wildlife collisions. Similar laws and policies have passed and are already successfully in place in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho, and Montana.

SB 1163 would "sunset" on January 1, 2034, to allow DFW, other relevant agencies, and the Commission to evaluate the results and consider next steps.

SB 1163 passed out of Senate policy committee in mid-April, with the next stop being Senate fiscal committee. But with the Legislature trying to tackle a revenue shortfall of as much as \$70 billion in FY 2024/2025, and the Senate fiscal committee analysis stating the cost of implementing SB 1163 likely to be "significant", we knew we had our work cut out for us. Under that difficult backdrop, to pass SB 1163 out of Senate fiscal committee we had to agree to amend the bill to require a special appropriation by the Legislature to implement the proposed pilot program.

SB 1163, as originally written, did not require a special appropriation to implement the bill's provisions. Said differently, SB 1163, as introduced, would have placed an "unfunded mandate" on DFW to do so. It was worth a try. But it was in knowing that the 2024/2025 fiscal year would be a tough budget year, and passing legislation which would implement a new program (i.e., add a new expense) would be difficult, we asked Senator Brian Dahle to author the bill.

Senator Dahle sits on the Senate Budget Committee, and also on the Senate Budget Committee subcommittee which has oversight over DFW's budget. As such, he is positioned to try to earmark new funding for the effort in the 2024/2025 State Budget deliberations – which are now taking center-stage at the Capitol. Having the Senator positioned as such certainly increases our chances of securing funding, but in no way guarantees it.

The 2024/2025 Budget must be passed by midnight, June 15th. Over the coming weeks we will be working with Senator Dahle in the hope of securing the special appropriation for implementation of SB 1163 in that budget.

Now on the Senate Floor, SB 1163 must be voted on and passed over to the Assembly by May 24th to meet legislative deadline.

### SB 1253 (GONZALEZ) – FIREARMS SAFETY CERTIFICATES

Existing law requires any person who purchases or receives a firearm to possess a firearm safety certificate. Further, current law requires an applicant to pass the written test to obtain or renew a firearm safety certificate and the payment of a \$25 fee. Current law also provides that a firearm safety certificate shall expire 5 years after the date of issuance. Current law does not, however, require a valid firearm safety certificate for the mere possession of a firearm.

As introduced, SB 1253 by Senator Lena A. Gonzalez (D/33-Huntington Park) would have, commencing on January 1, 2026, prohibited a person from possessing any firearm, except an antique firearm, without a valid, unexpired firearm safety certificate. Further, SB 1253 would have required any person moving into California with a firearm to obtain a firearm safety certificate within 120 days after arriving in the state. The bill would have allowed a person with an expired certificate a 60-day grace period in which to renew the certificate, and required DOJ to notify certificate holders in a timely manner when their certificates are expiring.

Due to unknown costs to implement and mounting opposition, SB 1253 was amended last week to strip out the language that would have required a person to have a valid firearm safety certificate to possess any firearm. As amended May 16th, SB 1253 now only would require any person moving into California with a firearm to obtain a firearm safety certificate within 120 days after arriving.

SB 1253 passed out of Senate policy committee in early April, and then out of Senate fiscal committee after being amended in mid-May. Now on the Senate Floor, SB 1253 must be heard and passed to the Senate by May 24th to meet legislative deadline.

### What people think hunting is:



- Killing animals for pleasure

### What hunting actually is:



- Adventure & quality time with friends & family
- Quotas & age based harvest = sustainability
- Giving back to and empowering communities
- Conservation of species & entire ecosystems
- Spending time outdoors
- Field to fork, appreciating and respecting your food.







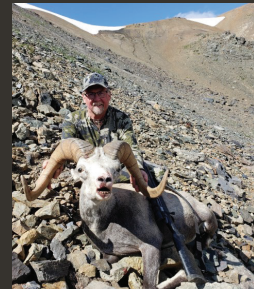
Explore AND **HUNT**  
NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA



[www.goldenbearoutfitting.com](http://www.goldenbearoutfitting.com) + 250-794-8350



STONE SHEEP  
MOUNTAIN GOAT  
CANADIAN MOOSE  
MOUNTAIN CARIBOU  
WOLVES  
BLACK BEAR





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

[www.cawsf.org](http://www.cawsf.org)

---

Join or  
renew  
today!



*WWW.CAWSF.ORG*  
*CAWSF@CAWSF.ORG*