

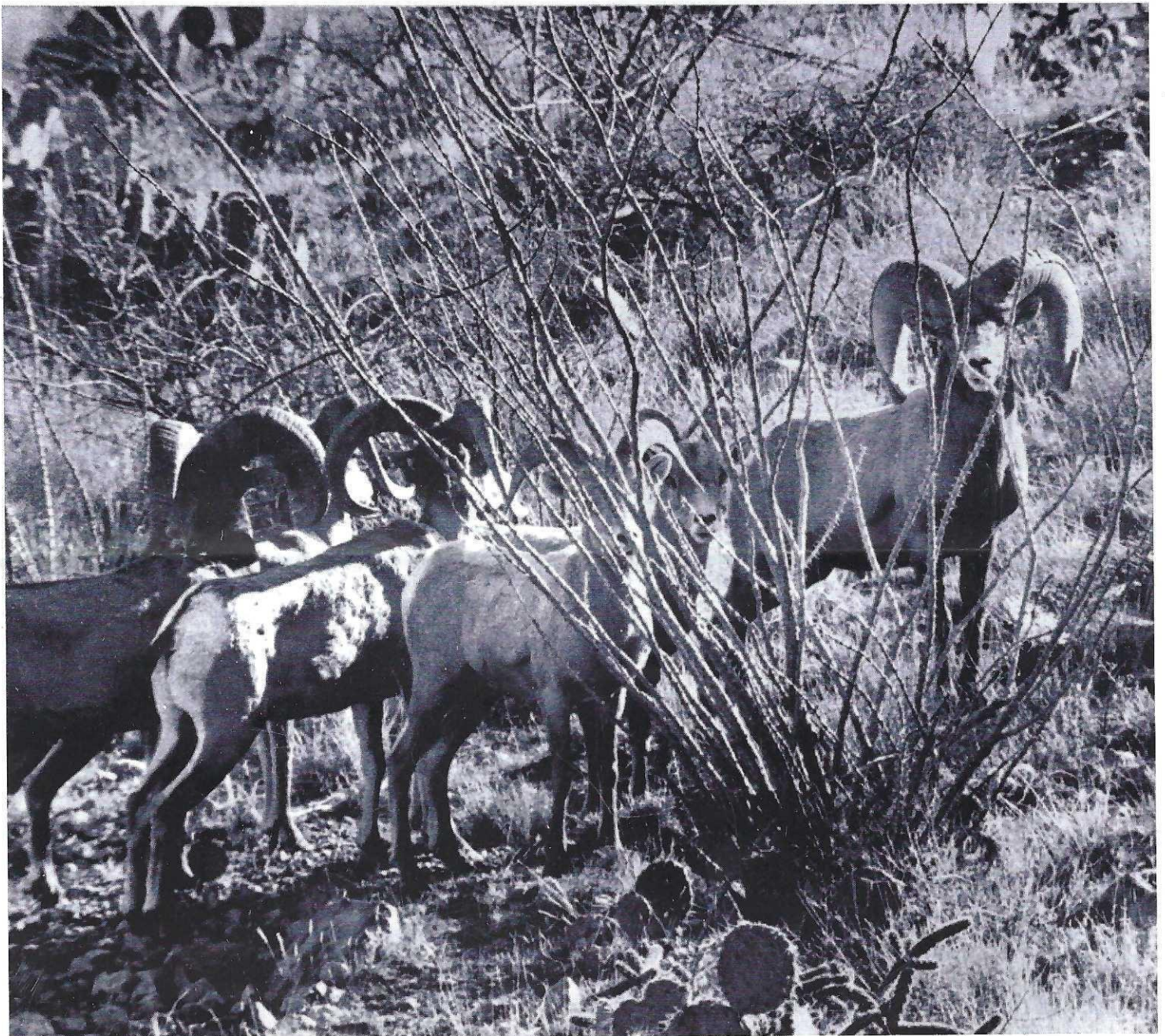
# THE RAM'S HORN

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE ARIZONA DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP SOCIETY, INC.  
A NON-PROFIT, TAX EXEMPT CORPORATION

Vol. 17

Summer '83

#3



# NO SEASON NO LIMIT

Most of you have probably heard by now of the large ram that was taken by an Indian on the Papago Reservation. There have been newspaper articles and coverage in a national hunting magazine, and the sheep has also been submitted to the Boone & Crockett record book. One important item the news media has left out is that the Papagos have no sheep season and no management program or laws protecting the sheep. Therefore, as long as a hunter is within the vast reservation boundary, any Papago living on the reservation may shoot as many sheep (ewes and lambs included) as he or she pleases at any time of the year.

The state game management unit that borders the Papago Reservation was at one time one of our state's premiere sheep units. However, due to a steady decline in sheep numbers, we are now down to one permit each year and Arizona Game & Fish Dept. is planning a supplemental sheep transplant. Anyone who has spent much time in this area knows there is a considerable amount of sheep movement back and forth across the reservation boundary, and considering the current "open season" policy of the Papagos and the popularity of sheep hunting in recent years, one can't help but wonder if the Papago sheep hunters could be at least partially responsible for the decline in sheep numbers in this area.

To honor any of the reservation rams (with no game management program), especially in the same category as regular season sheep hunters, whether Boone & Crockett, state record books, or positive newspaper and magazine articles, would seem to encourage the decline of our state's valuable sheep population and go against everything organizations like the Sheep Society stand for.

There are reports of the Rocky Mountain sheep herd in eastern Arizona being on the Ft. Apache and San Carlos Reservations. Past migration patterns and increasing numbers show that these reservations might some day, with proper management, have substantial Rocky Mountain sheep herds. Also, the transplanted Desert sheep in Aravaipa Canyon border the San Carlos Reservation. The increasing number of Aravaipa sheep and current movement show that some day soon San Carlos may have a large year-round population of Desert sheep.

As a concerned sportsman, I would like to encourage any of the reservations which do not have a management program for bighorn sheep to realize this valuable resource and manage it wisely.

— One Society Member's point of view

## Cover Picture

Another of those eye popping rams living in the Aravaipa Canyon area. One thing so remarkable about some of those 180+ rams is their relatively young age. The chances of a 200+ B&C ram coming from this area is very good.

Picture by Norris Dodd, Arizona Game & Fish Dept.



Photo courtesy of Bill Bianconi



Photo courtesy of Bill Bianconi

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# ARAVAIPA CANYON SHEEP

By Norris Dodd

Taken from Arizona Game & Fish publication *Wildlife Views* with permission from Norris Dodd, Az. Game & Fish.

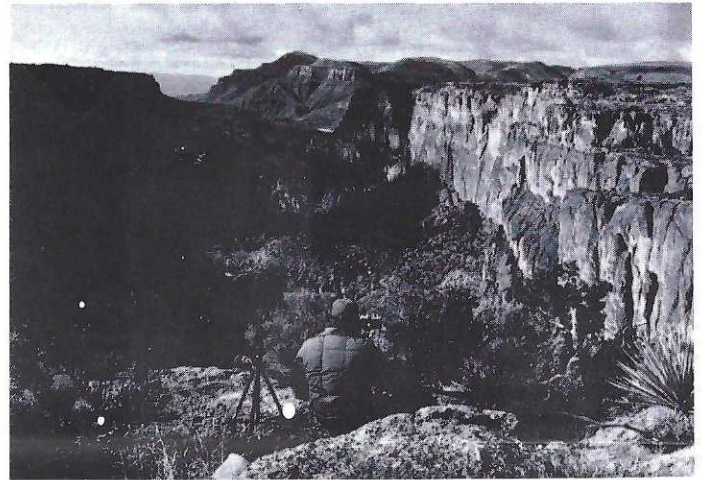
As everyone knows, financially things have been pretty rough for the Game and Fish Department lately, which means higher license and tag fees. The human population is booming, and that means the odds of getting drawn for hunt permits get worse all the time. Some people blame the Department for this situation and wonder if it ever does anything right. The Aravaipa Canyon bighorn reintroduction is a success story that should quell the doubts of even the toughest critics.

As a result of the insight, hard work and persistence of Department personnel 25 years ago in reestablishing bighorns in Aravaipa Canyon, we are now realizing and enjoying the returns on what has proved to be a very good investment. Not only does the area now support one of the healthiest bighorn populations in the state, providing recreational opportunities for hunters and non-hunters alike, it is also giving researchers an opportunity to study sheep in a situation that is ideal. The knowledge gained from studying this herd as it disperses and expands will aid us tremendously in our continuing endeavors to reestablish bighorns in historical habitat throughout the state. It will also be of benefit in the management of our present population.

The roots of the present day Aravaipa Canyon bighorn herd trace back to sheep transplanted into an enclosure just north of Aravaipa Canyon which was constructed 25 years ago. Somehow, what appears to be about 2 square miles of rugged sheep habitat were crammed into the "tiny" 112 acre enclosure. Its purpose was to hold the transplanted sheep for breeding, acclimation to their new environment and to allow them to develop social ties. Plans were made to trap 25 bighorns in western Arizona and place them in the enclosure until a viable population was obtained, at which time they would be released into the wilds of Aravaipa Canyon. Capturing bighorn sheep in those days was hardly anything like it is today, as the sophisticated gadgetry we now take for granted, such as helicopters and safe drugs and darting equipment were not available. The initial sheep captured were trapped in the searing heat of summer near waterholes, which was no doubt a tedious (if not downright miserable) operation.

Between 1958 and 1960 eight sheep were released into the enclosure and it appeared the project was off to a great start. But, for unknown reasons the sheep in the pasture disappeared slowly until only two rams remained in 1964. Things weren't looking too bright at this point and the project could easily have been written off as a failure.

Meanwhile, after painstaking efforts by Department biologist Gerry Day, a drug combination was developed to immobilize bighorn sheep. Using this new tool, three young ewes were captured by darting near waterholes in 1967-68. Once released into the enclosure these ewes were to become the breeding stock from which our present day population was to evolve. Once again, Game and Fish was in the sheep transplant business. Still, increases in the penned herd were slow to come and any substantial gains in herd numbers were made from additional releases rather than from reproduction by the penned ewes. In 1971 another new sheep capture tool was tested for the first time when a helicopter was used to capture three yearling sheep.



*Dan Artery of Wyo. glassing Aravaipa Canyon during December sheep hunt. Photo by Dean Priest.*

By 1973 a total of 16 sheep had been brought in from western Arizona and released into the enclosure. It was also determined that the herd had reached the carrying capacity of the pen, the level of sheep numbers which could be supported by the forage resources in the enclosure. The decision was then made to open the gate, and the 22 sheep were set free to explore and disperse into their new surroundings. Even at this point the experiment was not yet touted a success, and the future of the herd was uncertain. Up to this point, any gains which had been made in the project were related to the persistent efforts of Department personnel and the interested local ranchers like Duard Sandford who helped maintain the enclosure fence and babysit the sheep. Now, out of the safe confines of the enclosure, the herd's future was in the hands of good ol' Mother Nature. If the herd was to persist such factors as the high quality of the sheep habitat, the area's remoteness and high javelina numbers would play important roles. (We'll discuss this in a bit and let you mull over the relationship between pigs and sheep for a while.)

In the years following the release, a large part of the interest and attention paid the herd was generated by "Old Grandad", one of the original relocated rams which survived to at least 15 years of age. This magnificent ram soon became a symbol of the efforts to reestablish sheep at Aravaipa Canyon, and it eventually sparked some controversy over suggestions that he be harvested before he succumbed to old age. He eventually died in the remoteness of Aravaipa Canyon and his magnificent head adorns the lobby of the Department's Phoenix office, a gracious gift from those who found it.

From 1973 to 1976, the bighorn sheep population appeared to increase in numbers rather slowly, as the sheep moved about exploring their new environment. Several sightings of young rams were made many miles from Aravaipa Canyon, presumably never to be seen again. By 1976, the herd numbered about 35 and it looked like it was gaining steam.

The fact that the herd was now reproducing well was a  
*continued on page 4*

## Aravaipa cont.

good sign that the experiment was headed for success. The factors mentioned earlier were now beginning to show their significance. The abundance and quality of forage, water and rugged escape terrain combined to make Aravaipa Canyon some of the state's best sheep habitat, and the sheep were now beginning to respond accordingly.

And what of the relationship between javelina and bighorns? The area supported (and still does) large numbers of javelina, large numbers of mountain lion and a handful of "lost" sheep. Everyone knows that lions kill both javelina and bighorns but the large numbers of javelina most likely relieved a great deal of the pressure that lions might have exerted on the sheep (the concept of a buffer species) and allowed the sheep to make steady gains in numbers.

And gain they did! By 1979 the herd was estimated at somewhere around 60 sheep. It was slowly expanding its range into new habitat and showed every indication of being a healthy, vigorous herd. In 1980 the first hunt permits were authorized for the area and two impressive rams were taken by hunters. The herd had now reached a level at which a harvestable surplus of trophy rams were present, though it was still a relatively young age structured herd. Not only was the herd being tapped by hunters, but sightings of bighorns within the popular Aravaipa Canyon Primitive Area by hikers, backpackers and photographers were on the increase. Everyone was enjoying the apparent success of the sheep transplant and opportunities to experience the Aravaipa bighorn herd were just beginning to be realized.

Also in 1980, an intensive research project was initiated by the Department to explore various aspects of the Aravaipa

bighorn sheep herd. The major goals of the project are to investigate: 1) population characteristics (numbers, age and sex structure); 2) seasonal movements and home range; 3) seasonal diet and food preference; 4) ecological relationships with cattle in the area; and 5) causes of mortality. In a later issue a detailed look at the findings to date will be published and discussed in terms of what this information means to future reintroductions, as well as the management of all our other sheep populations.

By 1981 the herd had increased to between 75 and 85 sheep, and it was apparent that the herd was doubling its size about every three to four years. Needless to say, the bighorn herd was now well established in the area. One permit was authorized in 1981 and the state's largest ram for the year was taken at Aravaipa.

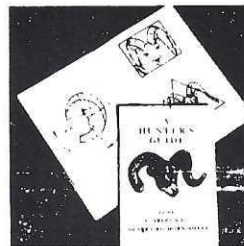
Currently, the bighorn population is hovering around 100 animals, certainly an impressive increase from the 22 sheep released from the enclosure just eight years ago. Two permits are up for grabs this year and Unit 31 (including Aravaipa Canyon) has quickly become the highest odds unit in the state for bighorn sheep (we'll all have to take the bad with the good). Just as interest in hunting the herd has increased, so have the non-consumptive interests. An ever increasing number of wildlife photographers visit the area for the purpose of recording some of the impressive desert inhabitants on film. Hikers and backpackers are always on the lookout for a glimpse of a bighorn sheep — something that always "makes the trip."

It is clear that the desert bighorn is again firmly entrenched in the rocky confines of Aravaipa Canyon, and through sound management by the Department they'll be around for a long, long time, compounding interest daily.

The following items are offered for sale in consideration of minimum donations as specified:



Note cards and envelopes reflecting a variety of super sheep pictures.



Guide — A collection of facts and articles by knowledgeable sheep hunters.



T-Shirts in Blue, Tan with Society Emblem. (S, M, L or XL)



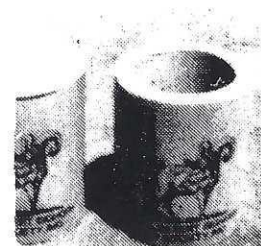
Lightweight Outdoor Caps. Blue & White, Yellow & White



Colorful Blue & Gold Patch



Colorful 6" x 4" ADBSS Decal



Koozie Kups plain or with cup.

### Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society

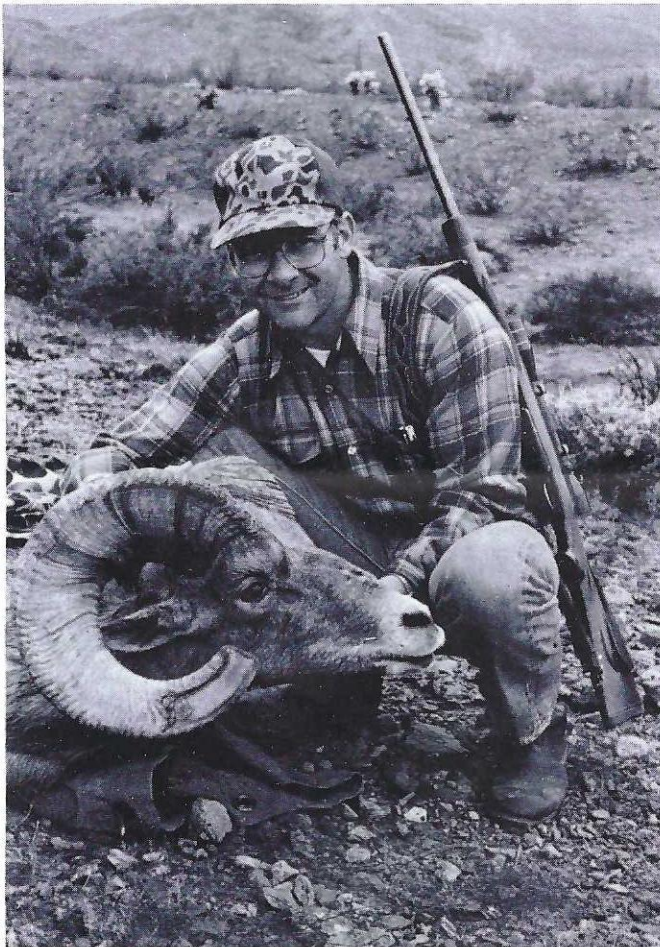
Make checks payable to: A.D.B.S.S. Inc., P.O. Box 5241 Phoenix, AZ 85010

<b>FORWARD ORDER TO:</b> Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State, Zip _____	<b>ORDER FORM</b> Patch ..... \$ 2.50 Decal ..... 1.50 T-Shirt ..... 6.00	<b>Postage prices are as follows:</b> Cap — 1.00 ea. T-Shirt — 1.75 ea. Kups — 1.75 ea. All other items are .75 ea.	<b>CAPS:</b> Specify color and size.  <b>T-SHIRTS:</b> Specify size, style — emblem front or back, color.
	Hunter's Guide ..... 1.00 Caps ..... 5.00 Stationery - 14 pak ..... 5.00 Koozie Kup - Plain ..... 3.00 Koozie Kup - With Cup ..... 4.50		

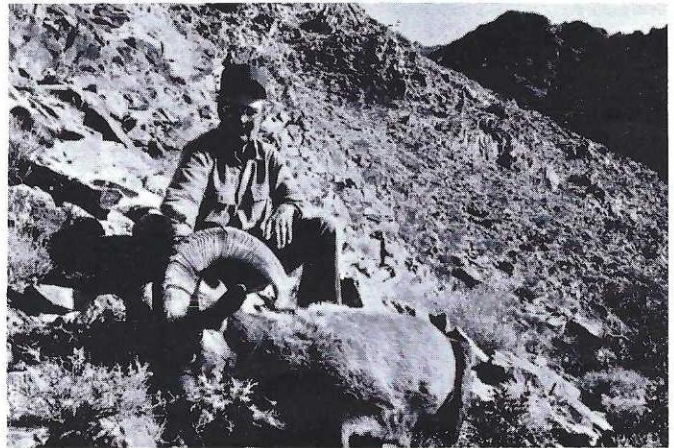
# Some of the 83 Hunt



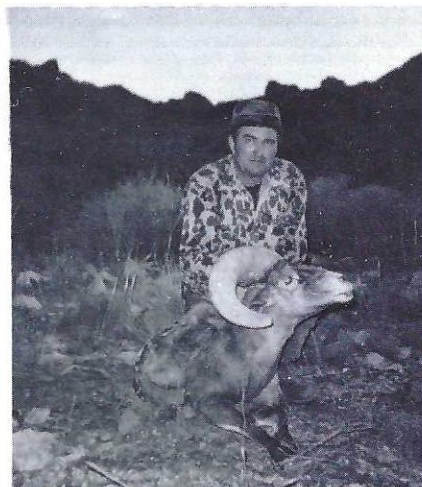
At left is John Harris of Tucson with his large ram taken in Aravaipa Canyon during last December's sheep hunt. The ram was taken early in the season, but many days of scouting played a big role in taking this ram. Not only did Harris spend many hours scanning the canyon, but guides Dean Priest and Tom Boggess also logged many hours looking for the ram that would go better than 180. Joe and Jim Machac, Joe Bill Pickrell, and Dan Artery of Wyoming were others that were of great help on the hunt. This ram sets the new state record at 188-2/8. The old record was 187 taken in 1965 by Louis Dees in the Kofas. Harris' ram was mounted by Jim Englemann of Tucson.



Unit 45C was the area Kenneth Jones of Provo, Utah drew. Ken's hunt was extra nice because his son, David, got to share his sheep hunting experience with him. Ken said he saw several good rams. The one he took was with another ram about the same size. Assisted by Floyd Krank.



Casey Jones of Pine Bluff, Arkansas hunted Unit 15B with Floyd Krank and John Houzenga for this ram. Casey reported the area had plenty of sheep but was rough to hunt.



Pictured at left is Jerry Chalupnik of Phoenix with his ram taken in Unit 15D. The ram is eight years old plus. Assisted by Gary Asmus.

# 1983 BANQUET



*John Harris*

1983 marked another year of an almost too successful banquet. How can that be you ask? Well, the place was packed. A lot more people showed up than were expected, but with a little shuffling everyone had a seat and a meal. The staff from the Scottsdale Country Club must be commended for their excellent hospitality. Even though the PA system was the pits, loudmouth Boggess was able to emcee the event in fine order.

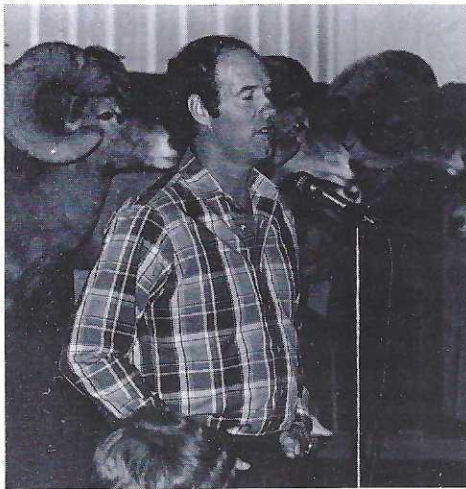
Our guest speaker, Tom Weiskopf, did an excellent job on filling us in on some of the behind the scenes situations that had occurred during the filming of ABC's "American Sportsman". He also spoke about his experiences on the pro golf tour and big game hunting around the world. One thing that was very evident in Tom's talk was his fondness of hunting and that, to me, is what really makes a guest speaker special.

There were many great door prizes given away, but the most sought after was the crawdad boat made available through Dave and Betty Moulton of Arizona Port-A-Boat. Who won it you ask? Well, it was none other than Board member Win Welsh's wife, Margie. Win, if you're really good to her maybe she'll let you rent it.

All in all it was a good banquet, but I'm wondering about 1984. It is going to be tough to fill Tom Weiskopf's boots. Good luck to the next banquet chairman!!



*Harris Ram*



*Tom Weiskopf*



*Tom Boggess*



*Mernice Alrine & Harry Hussey*



*Leslie Bowdoin*

# MY BIGHORN SHEEP HUNT

by Nancy C. Hyler

December 3, 1982 was a chilly morning. A light dew had settled on the sparse mesquite and creosote bush. The silhouette of the Harquahalas west slopes looked dark and shapeless now at break of dawn. The smell of fresh coffee brought me to stage 2 of consciousness. Then the realization of why five men, all "die-hard sheep hunters" and myself were there brought me to stage 3. My heart beat a little faster with the excitement. Today is opening day! Wow! I thought back on the six weekends we came out to scout the area and wondered if our homework would pay off. On the final weekend before the hunt we located 2 legal rams.

Everyone at camp seemed quiet, thinking to themselves, hoping we could find what we came for and that I could hold up my end of the bargain. I had never shot any big-game, only dove and quail, but I love the outdoors and was brought up by a hunting father. As a young woman I have a good eye and a steady hand with a rifle on targets, but they probably all wondered if I'd fall prey to "buck-fever" if the actual moment came.

I relied heavily on their experiences, soaking in all the information I could, reading books and attending the A.D.B.S. Society seminar. About 7:00 we headed out to the point where we last located the rams. In my area, Unit 44A, there were an estimated 30 sheep and only 1 permit! Definitely a good location for a water catchment to be built. By the prior weekend we had located a total of 17 different sheep. Not alot to choose from. Incidentally, I had been putting in for this hunt for 5 years.

We all had our spotting scopes on the rams. My dad, Gary Hyler, a Mesa Dentist for 25 years; Dean Layman, a successful guide for years and owner of Layman Concrete; Clark Root, hunter and owner Co-Hone Industries: Industrial Hydraulic Repairs; Junior Beltram, archer and raises fighting roosters; Steve Simantian, Junior's partner and 4-wheeling devil and myself all watched the rams and ewes. One ram was collared, a project of C.A.P., the new canal site was no more than 5 miles away. The other ram was uncollared. Of the two, we figured the collared ram was bigger. Now at approximately 2 miles, using 30 power scopes, the sun in our eyes and the vegetation around the sheep, it was somewhat difficult to determine.

Around 10:30 they bedded down, our signal to start out. We quickly examined our maps and started on our way. Junior and Steve stayed behind to keep an eye on the rams. We had done a considerable amount of hiking before the hunt, so we were primed and the adrenaline was flowing. We seemed to glide up and over the ridges quietly, no one talking, using only sign language. Each ridge we came to we carefully scoped it out as not to spook anything into the sheep, or possibly find something better.

Around 11:45 we located them on a ridge just opposite us, about 150 yards away. I was amazed at what I saw. Like a King napping with his head held high, it was a beautiful scene. I wanted to see the other ram too, before I decided on one. Dad stayed behind and kept an eye on the first ram while Dean, Clark and I went up the ridge. There he was right in the middle of his harem of ewes. I just wanted to watch him for awhile. Any noise made he heard and picked up his ears, we held our breath and he'd close his eyes again.

I told Dean and Clark I wanted Dad to be here with me,



Nancy Hyler

so Clark went back down and got him. My dad had a permit about 10 years ago and had an unsuccessful hunt. Now I love my dad, and we'd been through alot together and I wasn't about to have him miss this. I tried to get into position and scrunch down in the rocks, trying also to stay out of sight and be quiet all at the same time! I whispered to Dean "I'm gonna shoot now" and he'd say "Okay" this went on for about 5 minutes, I was so darn excited!

Finally I took a deep breath and held it and got the cross-hairs right on him and squeezed the trigger . . . Nothing! The rifle miss-fired! It was fine before we left. I cursed under my breath, calmed down and tried again. A hit! He got up and looked around, at first I thought I missed him. Everyone was yelling "shoot again" so I proceded to shoot 7 more times, and hit him once more. All this time Dean was saying "he's right there by that saguaro!" There were only about 100 saguaros on that ridge! There was alot of commotion, the ewes went uphill and he headed downhill. I ran around in front of the rocks, layed down on my belly, steadied myself and took one more shot.

What seemed slow motion through the scope the ram tumbled down the side of the mountain. I hit him in the lungs. "Yahhhoooo!!!" we all yelled like Indians on the war-path. I had held up my end of the bargain. All the hopes of the prior months, the religious homework paid off. I was finally "initiated" into this special and privileged group of people who had hunted the Arizona Desert Bighorn. I did the 150 yard dash in 5 seconds to examine my ram. Junior and Steve down on the road had watched the action through scopes and heard our yelps. That was their signal to bring up the beer.

That was around 12:30, I felt so happy and proud. We stayed up there for an hour and celebrated and dressed him out. Finally we brought him down and returned to camp where we proceded to celebrate for 2 days. The hunt was the most sacred and exciting thing I have done in my life. Now I'm gonna go for the Grand Slam and have a whole lifetime to do it. At 23 I'm one real lucky lady. Most important of all, I'd like to thank all the "good-ol-boys" who had the patience and faith in me to help a dream become a reality! THANKS GUYS — YOU'RE THE GREATEST!!!



Gene Coon, far right, hunted Unit 46B for this 168-7/8 B&C ram. This was Gene's third time to draw a permit in fourteen years. Looks like the third time was a charm, but with help from guys like Steve Wiser, Mike Mell and Gary Nicklous, that narrows the ram's chances by quite a bit. This was the seventh ram seen and he was taken on the tenth day. Wiser at left, Nicklous is above left and Mell is above right.

## Price Increase Approved

For a number of years the Society has been selling the Limited Edition of "The Wilderness of Desert Bighorns and Seri Indians". Since the supply is dwindling and the demand is strong, The Board approved a price increase effective 1 August 1983. This will allow members who still want a book to buy one before the price increase. Send your check to the Society's P.O. Box with your order. Offer limited to the books on hand, so get your order in early.

	Price til July 31
Regular Copies	\$ 37.50
Collectors copies	125.00
	Price after 1 August 1983
Regular copies	\$ 50.00
Collectors copies	200.00
U.S. Funds or equivalent Please.	

## THE RAM'S HORN

P.O. BOX 5241  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85010

### MEMBERSHIP INVITATION

Individuals who are interested in promoting the welfare of the Desert Bighorn Sheep and desire to affiliate with an organization dedicated to this purpose may do so by joining the Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society, Inc.

The membership roster of the Society includes conservationists, sportsmen, professional wildlife managers, educators, biologists, photographers and just plain folks all interested in the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep.

The Society undertakes an annual program of several (usually 5) major habitat improvement construction projects in cooperation with and under the direction of the State and Federal agencies responsible for management of the Desert Bighorn Sheep.

One of the more important projects of the Society is the conduction of the annual Sheep Clinic training program.

In addition to projects, members of the Society participate in other conservation and game management activities; a special legislative committee of the Society closely watches legislation that may affect the sheep or its habitat and general welfare.

While the opportunities for active participation are numerous, such participation is not a prerequisite for membership. All interested persons are encouraged to join, the Society needs and welcomes your moral and financial support.

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I thereby make application for membership in the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Inc., and enclose my membership donation. DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

New membership prices are as follows:

Regular membership	\$25.00/yr.
Youth membership	\$15.00/yr.
Sustaining membership	\$100.00/yr.
Lifetime membership	\$500.00

RENEWAL     NEW MEMBERS    DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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