

# THE RAM'S HORN

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

Volume 20

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#5



See Inside Story AWARDS BANQUET

# RAM'S HORN

P.O. Box 5241, Phoenix, Arizona 85010 is the official publication of the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, Inc., and is published for the Society's membership.

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1988

#### Waterhole Projects

January 9/10

AGF

Jan. 30/31

Fish & Wildlife

February 20/21

Foundation for North American Wild

Sheep

March 5/6

Minn/Wisc Chapter

March 19/20

AGF

April 9/10

AGF

April 23/24

AGF

1988

#### EVENTS

February 13

5th Annual Fund Raiser

Hyatt Regency, Phoenix

### COVER PHOTO

Provided by:

Bill Hook

# Where Water Counts

By Don Belknap, Development and Maintenance Branch Supervisor

Water is Arizona's liquid gold. How much moisture we get each year directly relates to the increase or decrease in wildlife populations.

For wildlife located in the desert, water becomes precious. It is its availability that becomes the challenge. The Department's water management program has helped wildlife obtain this very finite resource in arid lands.

The desert areas of Arizona receive less than 10 inches of precipitation per year. Only during the monsoon season of July through August and in winter through early spring does Arizona "bathe" itself in precipitation. During the driest months of the year, humidity levels can be as low as 10 percent with temperatures climbing well above 100 degrees.

The rate of evaporation of open water in Arizona arid and semi-arid regions can be extreme — as much as six to seven vertical feet per year or more. The growth of wildlife populations and survival itself are guided by the amount of moisture that falls each year.

A water management program is founded on two basic concepts which are: thirst is a well-defined response, and that excess body heat must be dissipated from body tissue through evaporative water loss or physical deterioration of the animal is certain. Thus, the need for the availability of water. The role of water management through the placement of free water satisfies the immediate needs of wildlife precluding other uses of water.

For nearly 40 years now the Arizona Game and Fish Department has had an active program of improving the availability of water for wildlife. Water management for wildlife was begun to help quail and small game. This was the first use of rainwater catchment by the Department to hold water for wildlife. It wasn't too long before other wildlife such as deer, antelope, elk, and desert bighorn sheep became part of the water management program.

Since water is the most precious in the driest parts of the state, considerable effort is put toward building and maintaining waterholes for desert bighorn sheep.

The survival of resident populations of desert bighorn sheep during recent years has prompted an aggressive water development program for this species to stabilize existing populations and enhance reintroduction on former range areas. This program has been co-shared by the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society, the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and other dedicated sportsmen groups concerned with the long term welfare of this unique species.

Surface water improvement recommendations for desert bighorn sheep are prescribed only for those areas where sheep are resident or will be as a result of pending transplant projects. Also, the area under consideration must exhibit a potential for water permanency and satisfy those habitat specifics geared to the requirements of the desert bighorn.

Desert bighorn sheep occupy some of the most inhospitable habitat in the state. And while the desert bighorn has adapted to heat stress, and has acquired a tolerance to dehydration, these animals cannot exist indefinitely without water. One study noted that bighorns lose water at a decreasing rate the longer they remain away from water. When body weight loss equals four percent per day, the bighorn must replace this weight loss on a daily basis to maintain water balance.

Sites for waterhole projects are generally located in terrain that is extremely rough and very remote. To choose such a site isn't a matter of spinning the bottle on a map of the Arizona desert. Waterholes need to be located adjacent to existing sheep trails, and should be positioned to allow escape from predators. Trees, overhanging ledges, cliffs, or similar features are natural obstacles which can block the escape of a fleeing bighorn.

Sites must also be free of domestic or feral livestock wire fencing since sheep are reluctant to come to water that is protected or enclosed.

There are several types of waterholes that can be developed. These are the construction of rainwater catchments, the improvement of natural springs and seeps, the installation of windmills over water-filled mine shafts, the use of siphons, the building of safe ramp access into "deathtrap" pothole, and the improvement of natural rock tanks. What is most often used is the natural rock tank, or tinaja, which is generally found in steep washes created by natural erosion as depressions or potholes in the bedrock.

Before the first rock is put into place to build a natural rock tank site, considerable pre-development activity takes place. Each site is reviewed and appraised since each natural tank is different and requires different methods of construction. Thought is given to the water management needs within a designated bighorn sheep range. Documents are drafted for federal aid funding for approval by the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. Proposals are then submitted to the responsible land management use agency for review and approval. Once all this has been given the green light, material, equipment, and who will help build the waterhole are finalized. For a good number of years, the Department and the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society have been working together on bighorn water development projects.

Since 18 years ago when the Society and the Department improved the first waterhole as a joint cooperative effort, 86 water developments have been completed in conjunction with the Department U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). During these years Society volunteers have provided follow-up maintenance on 40 separate occasions.

Each year the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society undertakes five or six waterhole projects which usually include one project on either the Kofa or Cabeza Prieta Game Range. What began as a commitment to provide volunteer labor on such projects has now grown to include labor and frequently total funding to pay for material and helicopter time. The recently completed Signal Peak Pothole project cost more than \$2200 for materials and \$2800 for helicopter time.

Approximately 500 members strong, the Society annually accumulates a funding reserve of approximately \$150,000 to be used

on cooperative bighorn sheep transplant programs, population monitoring studies and water development projects. These funds are derived from special fundraising events and the annual auction of two bighorn sheep permits. Monies obtained from these activities are transferred to the Department for use on bighorn sheep projects.

(Other organizations which have and continue to fund projects include the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep, its Iowa Chapter, and the Minnesota-Wisconsin Chapter which generally funnel funds through the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society.)

With construction plans reaffirmed, helicopter assignments confirmed and project material and equipment assembled for transport, the next thing is to start construction.

In years past, prior to helicopter usage, materials and equipment were backpacked to those construction sites which could not be reached by trucks.

With grateful acknowledgement to the helicopter, all of the necessary materials and equipment are now airlifted to the job site in 600 to 700 payloads. But to get it right to the site still requires hand delivery. Try to imagine the energy it takes to do this in rough terrain.

To build the pothole, rock must be gathered for the rock dam and gabian, and entrapped silt debris must be cleaned from the natural tank reservoir. Reinforced steel must be set, mortar mixed and rock placed to form a masonry dam and the fabrication of a rock-filled post and wire basket silt diversion structure. A shade cover should be constructed over the pothole and all masonry and bedrock fractures sealed to minimize seepage. And then the waterhole holding will be complete holding Arizona's precious resource.

While Arizona's precious resource is difficult to find in desert areas, with continued volunteer cooperation and making water available, the quest will move forward to restore the desert bighorn to its former prominence on the mountain ranges of Arizona.

REPRINTED FROM "ARIZONA WILDLIFE VIEWS" BY PERMISSION OF THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT.

## Desert Bighorns Captured Near Mead for Transplants

Working in cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), crews from the Arizona Game and Fish Department's Kingman and Flagstaff regions and the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society spent the weekend of July 17 through 20 capturing desert bighorn sheep in the Black Mountains near Lake Mead for transplant to the Arizona Strip and to the State of Colorado.

In the latest of an ongoing series of operations aimed at re-establishing desert bighorn sheep in areas of historic habitat, the animals were lured to predetermined capture sites over a period of weeks with applemash baits and then captured at these sites by means of large drop nets that were released when radio-controlled blasts cut the support ropes.

Capture crews then moved in to tie each sheep, take a blood sample to test for disease and fit each animal with a coded, numbered ear tag for future identification. A few animals were also fitted with radio telemetry collars.

Nineteen of the sheep, six rams and thirteen ewes were released in the Hacks Canyon area of the Arizona Strip. They will supplement an existing herd that was established by a similar transplant there in 1985.

Since 1979 desert bighorns have been successfully reintroduced at several sites on the BLM-administered Strip. Other release sites have included the Virgin Mountains, Grand Wash Cliffs and Paria Canyon-Vermillion Cliffs.

Additional supplemental plants will be conducted, if necessary, to offset losses caused by predation or disease. The goal is to establish self-sustaining sheep populations.

Transplant sites are identified in master habitat management plans, and other actions in support of the reintroductions are conducted in accordance with these plans. These include the development of water catchments to improve the animals habitat and to encourage them to utilize specific geographical areas.

Volunteers from the Sheep Society often contribute greatly in labor and cash to build and maintain these water developments, and the Society raises funds to help pay for the transplants.

The released sheep will be monitored along with their habitat conditions to help determine the success of the project.

However, not all the bighorns captured over the weekend are destined for release in Arizona. Twenty were transported to Colorado as part of a wildlife exchange in which that state has already contributed 100 pronghorn antelope and is due to send 100 more.

REPRINTED FROM THE "WILDLIFE BULLETIN" BY PERMISSION OF THE ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT.

# SUCCESSFUL '86 HUNTS

Gary Steinmann poses with his fine ram taken in Unit 15C. Gary's bighorn is the first to be taken in the Kingman region with archery tackle. The ram scores  $164\frac{7}{8}$  points.

Gary reports seeing lots of sheep on his hunt, and was assisted by his father and Matt Nuessle.



Glenn Dickens (right) and Steve Williams admire Glenn's very good Unit 15C ram. The final score of this exceptional region 3 ram is  $172\frac{7}{8}$  points.

Fourteen days of scouting really paid off on Glenn's hunt. Also assisting on the hunt was Glenn's wife Betty.



# California Holds First Bighorn Hunt Ever

Last year legislation was passed in California removing desert bighorn sheep from the endangered species list. This opened the door for the first ever sheep hunt in California.

Nine permits were authorized (8 lottery and 1 auction) for the hunt which runs December 5th through December 21st.

Steve Hill of the California Society for Conservation of Bighorn Sheep, reports that a mandatory clinic will be held for the sheep permit holders as well as any guides and helpers on the hunt. The agenda will be similar to our own hunters clinic and will be held on November 7th at the Department of Fish and Game's Camp Cady Field Station.

For more information contact Steve Hill at (805) 257-8248.

## Wildlife Advocate Passes Away

Frank Ferguson, of Yuma, died Friday, September 11th.

Frank served 11 years on the Arizona Game and Fish Commission. Frank "Specks" Ferguson was a member of many wildlife and outdoor groups, among them the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society.

Frank is survived by his wife Norma.

## Lost Cabin Springs

ADBSS members gathered in the Kingman region to revamp Lost Cabin Springs, a pre-existing project sight.

The dam was raised to increase capacity of the pothole and a fiberglass holding tank was added to greatly increase water availability for sheep. The project was accomplished in conjunction with the Arizona Game and Fish Department, as well as the Bureau of Land Management.

## Annual Sheep Hunters Clinic

October 3rd found approximately 129 sportsmen attending the ADBSS annual sheep hunters clinic. This very important function is aimed at helping those lucky desert sheep permit holders realize the most benefit possible from a pool of knowledge within the society about desert sheep. Topics covered at the clinic were:

- The use of optics:
- Hunting methods
- What makes a ram a trophy
- Photography of the hunt
- Aging and scoring a trophy ram

Several of this year's permit holders were in attendance at the clinic. The society wishes to thank all those involved in helping with the event, particularly the personnel from the Game and Fish, National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service.

# ADBSS Awards Banquet

## — Well Attended —

Following the Annual Hunters Clinic, also held at "The Other Place" in Mesa, was the Society Awards Banquet. The purpose of the yearly gathering is to recognize those hunters (and the rams they took on the preceding sheep hunt) who exercised care in judgment during their hunt in taking a trophy desert ram.

Temple Reynolds, newly appointed Director of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, was guest speaker. Among other subjects, Temple spoke on the recent success story for desert sheep in the Planet Ranch area.

Also recognized at the banquet for his tremendous contribution to the Society's goals was Don Belnap, recently retired project coordinator for the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Don's close work with the Society on many, many water hole projects is of immeasurable value to sheep in the state. Ray Lee of the Arizona Game and Fish, was Emcee for the evening.

Larry Heathington, as program chairman deserves Society praise for putting together an excellent clinic and awards banquet.

## RAMS AWARDS BY SCORE

1)	Mark White	Black Mountains	162.3
2)	Dan Eckstein	Black Mountains	164.0
3)	Henry Knuck	Black Mountains	164.3
4)	Dennis Hankerson	Kofa Mountains	164.5
5)	Pete Reardon	Black Mountains	164.5
6)	Gary Steinman	Black Mountains	164.7
7)	James Del Rey	Plamosa Mountains	165.5
8)	Louis Lane	Black Mountains	165.7
9)	Charles Marsalla	Kofa Mountains	166.4
10)	Alfred Del Rey	Castle Dome Mountains	171.0
11)	Gary Sitton	Kofa Mountains	169.6
12)	Brian Rogers	Kofa Mountains	170.6
13)	Don Parks	Cabeza Prieta Mountains	171.0
14)	Robert Gray	Plamosa Mountains	172.0
15)	Glenn Dickens	Black Mountains	172.7
16)	Ted McNeely	Kofa Mountains	175.2
17)	Bob Christy	Catalina Mountains	180.1
18)	Beverly Nuessle	Aravaipa Canyon	184.0

## RAMS AWARDS BY AGE

A)	Robert Gray	10+
B)	David Neighbor	10+
C)	Alfred Del Rey	10+
D)	Pete Reardon	11+
E)	Dan Eckstein	12+
F)	Julian Gutierrez	12+

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

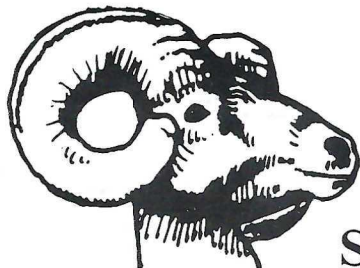
The annual membership meeting was held at Holiday Inn Airport on September 9th. Newly elected officers and board members are:

President —	Pete Cimellaro
Vice-President —	Dean Bowdoin
Secretary —	Paul Ruskaup
Treasurer —	Bill Hook
Directors —	Stan Cunningham, Tom Martin, Kris Miller, Lendell Sherrick John Harris, Bob Orth, Steve Williams

# RAM'S HORN

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**Send Pictures!**

Had a successful hunt???? Send us an article, along with pictures, and we will print them in the Rams Horn.

## REWARD

### Report Wildlife Violations

The ADBSS offers a \$1,000 Reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone poaching bighorn sheep in Arizona.

**CALL: 1-800-352-0700**

## TRINKETS

Arizona Bighorn Sheep Society shirts, books, Koozie cups, prints and pins are available.

Contact Kris Miller, 841-5899

Any member interested in serving on a committee, contact Society President Jim Marquardt 922-7220 or 996-1997.

### 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 hereby 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 follow:

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

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TEL. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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