



The **Bighorn**

SPRING 2017

>>> **PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS BIGHORN SOCIETY**

Restoring Bighorn Sheep to their Native Ranges in Texas, and Ensuring the Viability of their Habitat

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THE DESERT BIGHORN SHEEP IN WEST TEXAS**

BIGHORN

The official magazine of the Texas Bighorn Society
Advertising Rates Effective 1-1-2009
Bighorn is published 3 times annually

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

Bighorn is a four-color glossy publication, and the following is required:

Ads should be supplied on a disk and in one of the following formats:

- Photoshop
- TIFF (Preferred)
- PDF (Preferred)
- JPEG

Each ad should be: 300dpi (minimum) in CMYK color space

All other formats must be approved by our production staff

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

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Fall / Winter – October 1st

DISPLAY ADVERTISEMENT RATES

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Note: An exchange of advertising for Donations, Sponsorships, and In-Kind Advertising will be considered on a case by case basis.

PRODUCTION

Bighorn's production staff is available to help you build your advertising copy. Production costs, hourly rates, and estimates are available upon request.

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BIGHORN

SPRING 2017

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bighorns don't
 bighorns don't need our help
 bighorns don't live in Texas
 bighorns don't matter



bighorns don't need the internet. bighorns need you.



Texas Bighorn Society

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR DONATE TODAY

4

M. Jones



Texas Bighorn Society

[Summer 2016 Membership Application]

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Howdy, New Members!

On behalf of the current members, the TBS Officers & Directors, and all the Texas Bighorn Sheep your patronage will go to support, we'd like to welcome you to our organization! We appreciate your support and look forward to seeing you at the next TBS event!

individual

Adam Casagrande
Dr. John Clader
Aaron Hackett
Katy Hebb
Rafael Madrid

Brennan Potts
Steve Schroeder
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family

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life

David Butler
Darin Fiedeldey
Jesus Gutierrez-Aja
McLean Russell
William Russell
Jim Bob Salter

student

Don't forget - Student Memberships are only \$25/year!
Encourage students you know to join today!

* please,

Help us stay current with your address and email information! Contact Diane Gregson if you have moved, changed email addresses, or have questions about your membership. She can be reached at:

dgregson@texasbighornsociety.org

806-745-7783

This & That

Bull Roar

Q: What does a nose-y pepper do?
A: Gets jalapeno business!

Q: What do you call a fake noodle?
A: An Impasta

Q: What do you call an alligator in a vest?
A: An Investigator

Q: What happens if you eat yeast and shoe polish?
A: Every morning you'll rise and shine!

Q: "What's the difference between a guitar and a fish?"
A: "You can't tuna fish."

Q: What do you call a pile of kittens?
A: a meowtain

Q: What do you call a baby monkey?
A: Spoiled milk.

A: A Chimp off the old block.

Q: Did you hear about the race between the lettuce and the tomato?
A: The lettuce was a "head" and the tomato was trying to "ketchup"!

Q: Did you hear about the hungry clock?
A: It went back four seconds.

Q: What do you call a boy who finally stood up to the bullies?
A: An ambulance.

Q: Why can't you give Elsa a balloon?
A: Because she will Let it go.

Q: What do you get from a pampered cow?
A: Spoiled milk.

Q: If Mississippi bought Virginia a New Jersey, what would Delaware be?
A: Idaho... Alaska!

Q: Did you hear about that new broom?
A: It's sweeping the nation!

Q: What do you call an elephant that doesn't matter?
A: An irrelephant.

Q: What do lawyers wear to court?
A: Lawsuits!

Q: What gets wetter the more it dries?
A: A towel.

Q: Where do crayons go on vacation?
A: Color-ado!



Check facebook.com/texasbighornssociety for more news, info, photos and videos!



September 2016 Board Meeting Summary

On September 24, 2016, the TBS Board met at the Warren Galleries in Austin, Texas. The Board passed the minutes from its last meeting and reviewed the Treasurer's and Membership reports. TBS now has 796 members.

A copy of the 2016 sheep survey was reviewed and discussed. Jim Payne reported that overall the herd is in good shape. There are good numbers in the Black Gap area and the Big Bend Ranch State Park herd is holding steady. However, there was a decline in the number of sheep in the Sierra Diablo area. To help understand this decrease, the Board approved funding to capture 50 sheep in order to obtain tissue samples. The samples will be tested for various diseases, pathogens, and parasites. The results

will provide a herd health baseline and help with herd management decisions. The project is in conjunction with the Wild Sheep Working Group's disease/herd health monitoring efforts.

Clay Brewer discussed the Wild Sheep Disease Management Venture program initiated by the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA). The program supports collaborative cross-jurisdictional projects to evaluate and prevent bighorn sheep herd diseases. The program's objective is to enhance and standardize herd monitoring by standardizing sampling protocols and parameters. WAFWA will also develop and maintain a Western states information database. Clay will provide TBS continuing updates on this effort.

Additionally, Clay agreed to and was elected by the Board to fill an unexpired Board member position. We are fortunate to have someone with Clay's experience and knowledge as a Board member. The Board also nominated the following individuals as replacements for retiring Advisory Board members: Dr. Warren Conway, Hunter Holloway, Rutledge High, J.D. Bolner, and James Payne. Congratulations to all of the new Board and Advisory Board members.

The 2017 Work Project will be held at the Lado Ranch south of Van Horn. The project will consist of constructing two new guzzlers and field work. Finally, don't forget that the 2017 Roundup will be held at Tapatío Springs on June 9-10. I hope to see you all at both events.

Letters to the Editor

Dan,

I have been meaning to compliment you on the latest BIGHORN magazine! Very impressive, and a nice collection of interesting stories.

David Wetzel

Comments or Feedback?
Send us a note!

Dan Boone, Editor
dan@sonoramfg.com

Dear Editor:

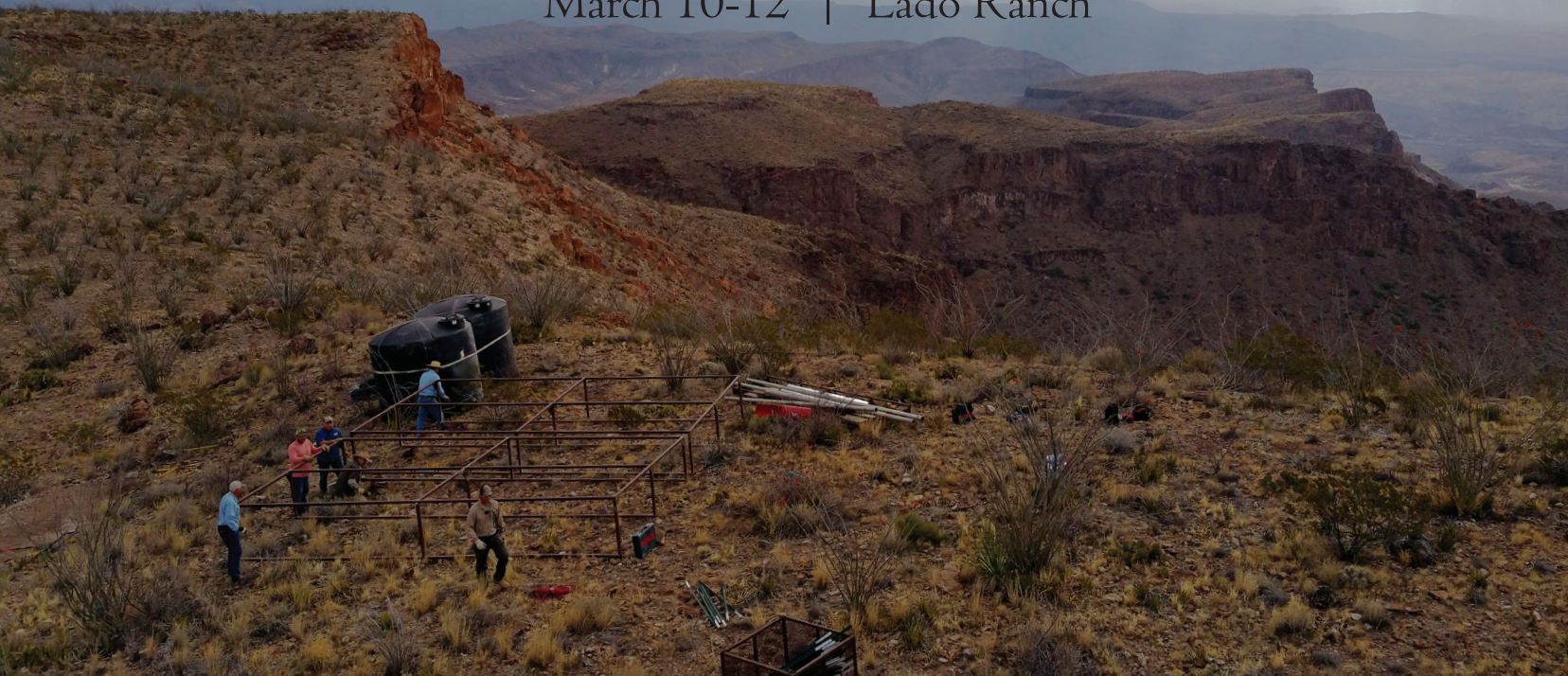
I just received my copy of The Bighorn (Fall 2016), and have read it through and through. As usual, the issue contained a great deal of information, but the article, "A Week in the Field at Sierra Diablo WMA" by Clay Roberts really got my attention. It was gratifying to see him write about the long hours, time away from home, extensive hikes, and the enthusiasm with which he approaches his job.

I spent 8 of my 34 years as a wildlife biologist in a nearly identical position and it was the most rewarding position that I held during my career. In my opinion, Clay has one of the best jobs in the world, and it sounds as though he realizes it. Thanks, Clay, for writing the article and thanks, Dan, for including it in The Bighorn.

Vernon C. Bleich, Ph.D.
California Department of Fish and Game
(retired)
Advisory Director, Texas Bighorn Society

2017 TBS Work Project

March 10-12 | Lado Ranch



The Texas Bighorn Society will once again go to the mountains of West Texas to build water catchments for the Texas Desert Bighorn.

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Date:

March 10th, 11th, and 12th

If you show up in Van Horn on the evening of March 9th at the Red Roof Inn in Van Horn you will be on time to start out on Friday morning. We will head for the Lado Ranch at 8:00 A.M. Join the group this morning and we will convoy out.

Location:

The Lado Ranch

The Work:

We will build two complete guzzlers. We have also been requested to lay water line from a well/pump system to a drinker that the Lado has installed. If you are a worker on the guzzlers be prepared to helicopter up the mountain and to walk off the mountain should such become a necessity.

The Hotel:

TBS has blocked off 40 rooms at the Red Roof Inn, (formally the Ramada Inn) for the dates of March 9th, 10th, and 11th, 2017. Red Roof Inn has set a rate of \$59.99 single bed and \$69.99 two Beds. The Cutoff date for this rate will be Feb 28, 2017. Please mention the Texas Bighorn Society when reserving the rooms.

The contact at the front desk is Mary Melendez.

The local phone number for the motel is 432-283-2800. The motel is located on the west side of town at 200 Golf Course Dr. Check in time is 3:00 PM

Rules:

You must be a member of TBS to participate in the work project. We will be prepared to sign up anyone who shows up and wants to work as a member.

What to bring:

Hand tools (i.e. battery drills, pipe wrench, screwdriver, etc.)
TBS will bring water and the Coburns will arrange for the food. (See Pam Coburns commentary to follow)
P.S. The deer, rabbits, quail, chapacubra, and other critters will be allowed to drink from our drinkers.

Sign Up:

We need to know how many are coming so we can plan the food. If you are coming, please, please sign up. Let us know when you are coming and how many people.

By phone: 806-745-7783

By email: dgregson@texasbighornsociety.org
On the TBs website: www.texasbighornsociety.org

We will see You there- Drive safe



ARE YOU READY TO WORK?



Work Project – 2017- Addendum

The saying goes “All work and no play is not good for the soul” TBS’s work projects always include a lot of play time. It seems that as soon as each work project is complete the big question is when and where are we going next year, what are going to do and what are we going to eat. I can answer the last one as Jerrell and I have been in charge of the meals for the last 25 years. It’s different every year, depending on where we are going. This year we will host a cookie bake-off at our home, where several TBS members come over and we bake those wonderful oatmeal raisin and chocolate chunk cookies that you have come to love, I can almost smell them now. When they are cool enough we wrap and label them and we just have to do some quality control and sample the broken ones. It seems that there are lots of those! There are many times that we make all the sandwiches in advance as well, spreading out the sandwich bread, weighing and putting on the meat, then the cheese, adding the top piece of bread, wrapping and labeling each one. When our work is done it’s time to relax and enjoy a great dinner. Since

we are based in Van Horn this year, sandwich duty will be transferred to the convention center on Thursday afternoon. If you arrive early, come on by and give us a hand. Friday morning everyone will line up and pack their own sack lunch to take to the mountain. Friday night we have hired Margie’s Bakery, a local restaurateur to prepare a hand-breaded chicken fried steak dinner for us at the convention center, followed by a fun auction arranged by Steve & Kathy Bolner and it wouldn’t be the same without our world-famous auctioneer, Dan Boone. Saturday, we start all over again with sack lunches and we will have a pizza party Saturday night at the same venue. Sometimes we finish the work project early and if we do, Kai Buckert has lined up a tour to see some amazing pictographs that are not available for viewing to the general public. Come on out, I guarantee you will have a great time!

See you there,
Pam Coburn

TPWD Desert Bighorn Sheep Program

Disease: Are Texas Bighorn the Exception?

by Froylan Hernandez

Bighorn sheep herds in many of the western states have been plagued with disease, primarily bacterial pneumonia, and disease die-offs for many years. The transmission of these agents has been traced back to contact with domestic sheep and goats. Once a herd is infected, anywhere from 30%, and even up to 90% of the herd may be lost to the disease. And the effects of the disease seem to persist in the herd years after the initial outbreak.

While some populations appear to have timely recoveries after such outbreaks, most do not. And annual outbreaks are seen in lambs, as well as stagnant recruitment in subsequent years. Consequently, populations struggle and dwindle.

Fortunately, in Texas there are no thriving domestic sheep/goat operations in the Trans-Pecos. This reduces the risk for contact between domestic sheep/goats and bighorns. However, there are a few small "raisers" (e.g. 4-H and FFA projects, family pets, 20 ac. ranchitos, etc.) that potentially could pose a threat. TPWD recognizes the importance of the domestic sheep/goat industry. But the consequences of contact cannot be denied. Therefore, continues monitoring is critically important.

But respiratory diseases associated with contact between domestic livestock are not the only ones which could affect a bighorn herd. There are other diseases and illnesses such as blue tongue, contagious ecthyma (sore mouth), keratoconjunctivitis (pink-eye) as well as parasites (e.g. tapeworms and lungworms) that occur naturally on the landscape. While some of these illnesses such as sore mouth or pink-eye may not be fatal, they do reduce the animal's performance leading to a decrease in health. And any unhealthy animal becomes susceptible to other illnesses. The combined effects could lead to death. Also, weakened animals can become more vulnerable to predation.

In the last two years, sore mouth "outbreaks" were seen across the Trans-Pecos landscape. Infected animals were observed in at least 3 different mountain ranges. A few bighorns were euthanized and several others were sampled after being found dead. Samples were submitted to the Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) where the sore mouth virus was confirmed. Even though sore mouth lesions are commonly seen around the mouth, they can be found throughout the body.

Parasites have also recently gone through the population. An abnormally high parasite load was detected in a euthanized young ram last year. TVMDL identified several species of tapeworm in the sample that was submitted. It is highly likely that other bighorns also carried high parasite loads and subsequently died because of that.

One common question asked is, "can we vaccinate, put treated blocks, or treat water to stop the spread?"

The intuitive answer would be "yes, let's do something!"

Initially, our tendency is to manage wildlife much like we would livestock. However, in this case it is not as simple. Though putting blocks out or treating water might help the infected animals making use of the "treatment", it would neither cure the ones not making use of the treatment, nor would it stop the spreading of the illness.

Additionally, a cure generally requires multiple treatment applications, which is very difficult to attain in a wild setting. It would be essentially impossible to ensure an infected animal returns to the treatment for the predetermined number of visits to be cured. Furthermore, if those multiple applications are not administered, inevitably, there will be "bugs" that survive the treatment, effectively developing a resistance. Many in the

medical field believe this creates a "super bug" resistant to many treatments. And instead of curing the problem, it is only worsened.

So what can be done?

In cases such as sore mouth, it is probably best to let nature take its course. Not only is the virus found naturally in the wild, but it also runs through the herd in a few weeks. Several will be lost to the illness, no doubt. But the short term application of a treatment may only be a patch, and not necessarily a cure.

In the case of pneumonia, things become even harder. Some western states have experimented with several options, with varying results.

There is always the option to "do nothing". Let nature work. Another option is for snipers to only take out seemingly sickly animals. Yet another option is to depopulate – take out all animals, regardless if they are sickly or not.

Obviously, all options have pros and cons. They all come with their own set of consequences and political/public backlash. In reality, there is no silver bullet. It is not exactly "one size fits all".

Consequently, all actions after an event must be well thought out.

That still does not answer the "what can be done?" question.

Luckily, Clay Brewer worked tirelessly to create a wildlife veterinarian position for TPWD. And we are very fortunate to have Dr. Bob Dittmar onboard. Dr. Dittmar comes with over 30 years of practice and experience with both domestic as well as wildlife species.

Together, we are developing a tissue sampling and testing protocol which will standardize our

field techniques. It will also help us determine the appropriate action to be taken in the event the Texas bighorn herd experiences any sort of disease die-off.

Additionally, the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies –Wild Sheep Working Group (WAFWA-WSWG), of which TPWD forms part of, has embarked on a Disease Management Venture (DMV) which will standardize disease monitoring and sampling protocols across the western states and Canadian provinces. TPWD supports and will be collaborating with other states in this venture to determine effective management actions, understand different disease dynamics and the impacts to wild sheep herds, sampling and testing protocols, comparing herd resilience to die-offs, among other things.

So, is the Texas herd immune to such die-offs or diseases? Are they the exception? The answer obviously is NO. It is likely only a matter of time before Texas is put to the test. Our goal is to be prepared when the time comes.

*Right: Example of sore mouth.
Below: Euthanized sickly ram.*



Letter From the Editor *Dan Boone*

Dear Members & Readers,

My wife Kathy and I have been involved with the restoration of the Bighorn in Texas since either 1981 or 1982. I really can't remember that far back. It is time for one of you younger guys or gals to take over publishing the newsletter. It is really not that hard and is rewarding when someone tells you that they enjoyed reading what you published.

The job consists of keeping your eyes open for possible content and then storing it on your computer. And then once every four months you send that information to member René Graham who puts it into digital form, makes it look nice, and sends it to the printer who prints and mails. I am not running the organization but always have an opinion and it is my opinion that whomsoever volunteers for this job would need to attend the board meetings and make friends with the guys at TPWD who furnish an awful lot of the information that I put in the magazine. If you have questions call me at 806-773-0590.

I think that I have done this job for a total of 17 years

and this last issue I received my first two letters to the editor which René will put in the magazine somewhere. I have given the board notice and this is my last issue. I still wish to be involved with TBS as I consider it to be one of the best organizations that I have ever been connected to. Kathy and I have made friends with some really good people and if you will think about it a true friend is hard to come by. I have seen us go from 0 bighorns to 40 and up to 1500.

The Texas Bighorn is probably the most successful wildlife restoration in the U S of A. I'll see you at the work project in March or at the Roundup at Tapatio Springs.

Mr. Jim Payne, our current President, is a really good guy and he needs your help. If you would like to participate in one of our programs – give him a call. All of the officers' phone numbers are in the front of the magazine.

Yours truly,
Dan F. Boone

Sheep Hunter and Conservationist



The Bolner Family volunteering at the TBS booth during the Dallas Safari Club Convention in January. We appreciate our wonderful volunteers!

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Sierra Diablo Hunt



I have never been on an easy desert bighorn sheep hunt. I have been on some that were more difficult than others, but none that I would classify as easy for one reason or another. After our most recent hunt at Sierra Diablo Wildlife Management Area I can still say...I have never been on an easy sheep hunt.

Our hunt began in late July of this year. There is nothing easy about hunting Sierra Diablo and there is definitely nothing easy about hunting Sierra Diablo in July. I know what you are thinking, why on earth would any sane and rational person schedule that hunt in July? I too had these same questions when I started. There are a number of factors that led us to this decision. First of all, historically the sheep have been more abundant and accessible in Victorio Canyon during July. Second, the application process for the public hunt drawing is open during the fall and early winter months. Lastly, it is when "we have always done it".

Much like the level of difficulty involved in a hunt, the level of comfort can also vary a great deal. Luckily for us the comfort level would be high on this one. Scott and Leloise Roosevelt

once again graciously allowed us to utilize their headquarters for our base camp. This not only provides accommodations for the hunt party and hunter, it also provides easier and faster access into the hunt area. Their hospitality and assistance would play a vital role in our eventual success.

Most of the hunt crew arrived Monday morning to get set up and start glassing the canyon. Our hunter, Kenneth "Shawn" Everett, arrived mid-afternoon on Monday. Once he was issued the permit, sited his rifle in, and got situated in his room it was decided that we would wait to begin the hunt until the following morning. Tuesday morning everyone loaded their packs, grabbed a lunch and lots of water, and headed out. With temperatures exceeding 100 degrees and only a few clouds in the sky, the hiking and glassing seemed even more difficult than usual. After a full day of hiking and scanning the canyon we returned empty-handed. Unfortunately, Wednesday would prove to be eerily similar and produce the same results.

In addition to the previously mentioned amenities, the Roosevelts had also allowed us

to use the ranch pack mules. Thursday morning we decided to take them up on this offer. Ranch employees, Juan and Leopoldo, saddled up the mules and headed into the canyon with Shawn. The rest of the hunt party was not so lucky and would be travelling on foot. Our plan was to find a ram somewhere in the canyon and already be in a position to make a move. The plan did not come to fruition. To add salt to the wound, on average those that did make the trip on foot each hiked over fifteen miles that day.

Friday was more of the same, high temperatures and lots of hiking. After four days, we had not seen an acceptable ram that we thought we could safely go after. Then came day five.

It was now the last day and our guide, Clay Roberts, decided no rock would be left unturned. We had eyes all over and down in the canyon. Mid-morning we spotted some rams near the Box Canyon guzzler. Unfortunately, they were too far from us to make a definite decision. We could have stayed put and hoped for something else to show up, but again this was day five. Clay rallied the troops and made assignments. As we

covered the ground on foot, Shawn was taken in on mules by Juan and Leopoldo.

Once we arrived everyone spread out and began to glass. At 4:30 we still had not located the rams we had seen earlier. It was decided that we would give it another 30 minutes and then call it. Twenty minutes later Juan noticed two young rams at the drinker. We watched them for a little while. Then an older ram we had not seen before walked into view. He turned out to be the one we wanted. The stalk was made and Shawn got ready to shoot. Once the green light was given, he did not disappoint. The ram ran about 15 yards and fell. Finally we knew we would not go home empty handed. The 8 year old ram scored 150 0/8.

On a side note, this also turned out to be a ram that had been radio collared two years earlier during our translocation efforts in the Diablos. The collar recently stopped working and should have fallen off by now. So as it turned out this hunt not only provided Shawn with the hunt of a lifetime and a fine trophy, but we were also able to collect the collar and the valuable data it contained which otherwise would most likely have been lost.

I would like to thank Texas Bighorn Society for graciously providing all of the food for the entire hunt. Your continued support helps make these hunts successful and more enjoyable.

I would also like to thank Scott Roosevelt for allowing us to use his facilities, staff, equipment, and mules. His generosity, along with Juan and Leopoldo's assistance, was instrumental in our success.

Texas Parks and Wildlife employees Clay Roberts, Cody McEntire, Dewey Stockbridge, Travis Smith, Will Rhodes, Bill Gulihur, and Froylan Hernandez did an outstanding job on this one. I cannot thank them enough.

For more information on public hunting opportunities provided by Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, including the guided desert bighorn sheep hunt, please visit <http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/hunt/public/>.







A Hunt for the Ages

by Cody McEntire

Over the Thanksgiving holiday, Trans-Pecos WMA staff members, Cody McEntire and Dewey Stockbridge, had the privilege of guiding 13 year old Abigail, accompanied by her father, Scott, on a management mule deer hunt. Abigail and Scott showed up Friday morning excited to see the beautiful landscape that Elephant Mountain Wildlife Management Area encompasses. Once their orientation was completed, Dewey, the hunting party, and I set off in search of a mature management mule deer. As is seemingly typical of opening day of mule deer general season in the Trans-Pecos, a cold front had blown in and provided the task of enduring adverse weather conditions during the hunt. Rain fell intermittently throughout the day and a constant North wind kept most sensible creatures bedded. After bouncing around over miles of dirt road, and straining our eyes as we glassed for a "shooter" buck, we made our way back to camp with only a hand full of deer spotted. Though we knew the weather conditions were not conducive to our quest for a mature buck, it was slightly disappointing knowing we had covered so much country with little to show for it. With our hopes still held high, we called it a day and crossed our fingers that the next day would be more productive. The next morning, we had intentions of hunting the top of the mountain where staff members had previously seen a few bucks that fit our mold of a "shooter." Mother Nature had other plans. As the sun lit up the desert landscape, it was evident we would



be hunting the low country, as from mid-slope up to the top of Elephant Mountain dense fog had settled in. We quickly adapted and headed south to the lower elevation pastures. It wasn't long before we spotted a buck that we wanted to go after. He stood on a hill over 300 yards from us and acted as if he had no idea we were even there. Dewey led Abigail and Scott on a stalk through some of the crunchiest, rockiest country the WMA has to offer. Unfortunately, the buck was having none of the hunters as they continued their approach. He anxiously topped the hill he was on and played hide and seek with the hunting party for a little over an hour. A young buck in the same area gave Abigail an opportunity to get a "hunting selfie" with him in the background. Tired, yet excited about their opportunity, the hunters returned to the truck and we headed for new

country. As we continued around the low country, we saw several does and fawns and even made a few stalks on younger bucks to further evaluate them. With some stalks under our belts, and deer sightings being often, we headed into camp for lunch and made a new game plan. As we ate, the sun started peeking through the clouds, and before we knew it, the top of the mountain was visible with a small ring of fog still sitting on half slope. We quickly packed up and head up the mountain. As we ascended the towering sky island, we scanned the slopes for deer and bighorn sheep. We soon summited and headed east to see what we could find. The drive offered some excellent views of Southern Brewster County, and we could not help but stop for a few photo opportunities. We immediately spotted deer as we continued our hunt and even made a move on a buck

across the high desert mountain top. As we approached the buck, Abigail was part of an ethical decision to let this 3 ½ year old buck walk. After we passed that deer, it seemed like bucks were popping up everywhere. Unfortunately, they were all young and did not fit our target criteria. The evening slowly arrived as we attempted to "knock out all of our teeth" bouncing down the rocky roads on top of the mountain. Right before sundown, a buck was spotted across a canyon that looked like it would suite our needs. Dewey, Scott, Abigail, and I geared up and headed down the canyon slope to get a closer look. As we were in route to the buck we had spotted, another buck busted out of the canyon bottom and ran up the slope across from us. Dewey quickly got Abigail set up on her shooting sticks and began talking her through the shot angle and placement.

The buck began to climb the canyon slope across from us, and briefly, I think we all feared he would soon be gone. Abigail maintained her composure and steadied her aim on the buck's vitals. With a squeeze of the trigger, the buck kicked and headed across a rise and out of our sight. We hurriedly made our way to an area where we could see the bowl

he had run into. No sign of our buck. Dewey and I began the tracking process. I headed upslope and followed the path we observed him taking. Dewey and I converged on the first sign of blood. We followed the trail and found our prize at the end. Miss Abigail had just harvested and recovered her first deer, and he was a beauty. This awesome

deer was a 6 ½ year old 8 point with a 22 inch spread. After a lengthy photo session, we quartered and caped out the buck, and made our way to the top of the mountain in the dark. Dewey and I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to share this experience with Abigail and Scott. We look forward to our next hunting adventure.



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STATE OF THE HERD

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's 2016 Desert Bighorn Sheep Survey Results



by Froylan Hernandez

The 2016 Desert Bighorn Sheep aerial surveys were once again conducted by 2 crews (i.e. TPWD and Heliqwest International). The North Crew, flown by Heliqwest began in the Sierra Daiblos and gradually surveyed the mountains surrounding the Van Horn area and vicinity. The South Crew, flown by TPWD Law Enforcement pilots, began on the Black Gap WMA and S. Brewster County and worked their way north where they would linkup with the North Crew.

A little over 140 total hours were flown during the 2016 DBS Surveys.

This is the most hours ever flown and likely also the most comprehensive survey conducted. A “new” area (i.e. Capote Peak/Sierra Vieja Mtns) was added to the survey area list. Even though foot surveys were conducted in May 2016 as well as telemetry monitoring up until January 2016, an aerial survey was called for to ensure ample coverage. TPWD intends on aerially surveying Capote Pk/Sierra Viejas annually from this point forward.

Of interest was the Sierra Diablo Mtns count. The difference in count from 2015 (N=356) and

2016 (N=333) was only off by 23 animals. The concern for the Sierra Diablo Mtns bighorn herd health has been ongoing and a tissue sampling capture was conducted in December 2016 to further investigate the issue.

Overall, the 2016 count was up slightly from 2015, with 1,207 and 1070 respectively. TPWD intends on continuing to use the 140-Hr survey benchmark in the future to amply and adequately monitor survey populations in the West TX mountains.

LOCATION	RAM AGE CLASS				TOTAL			TOTAL		RATIOS		
	I	II	III	IV	RAMS	EWES	LAMS	SHEEP	GROUPS	M	: 100 F :	L
BAYLOR MOUNTAINS	2	8	6	10	26	45	22	93	25	58	100	49
BEACH MOUNTAINS	4	24	19	14	61	119	44	224	41	51	100	37
BLACK GAP / BREWSTER COUNTY	10	8	5	20	43	62	24	129	29	69	100	39
BIG BEND RANCH STATE PARK	0	8	9	2	19	58	13	90	17	33	100	22
CARRIZO MOUNTAINS**	0	1	4	1	6	0	0	6	5	-	100	-
EMWMA*	3	11	17	23	54	77	28	159	24	70	100	36
SIERRA DIABLO MOUNTAINS	4	34	37	27	102	140	91	333	72	73	100	65
SIERRA VIEJO MOUNTAINS	1	2	2	3	8	11	5	24	5	73	100	45
VAN HORN MOUNTAINS	1	4	4	10	19	36	6	61	10	53	100	17
9 POINT MESA***	2	5	2	7	16	30	13	59	20	53	100	43
TOTALS	27	107	107	112	363	593	251	1207	251	61	100	42

Tom Green
NEVADA | Dec 2015



John Dolan
MONTANA | Nov 2015



Brad Griffith
TEXAS | March 2015



Shannon Owen
NEW MEXICO | Aug 2015



Larry Altimus
NEVADA | Dec 2016



Mark Pease
TEXAS | March 2016



Johnny Bunsen
TEXAS | Jan 2016



Your Ram?
TEXAS | Jan ?



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