



Santa Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Project

November 13 to December 3, 2014

BRIEFING

The following is a summary of Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction activities on the Coronado National Forest. This project status update covers the period from November 13 to December 3, 2014.

LINKS

For project background and previously-reported information on project events, including photos and videos, please visit www.azgfd.gov/catalinabighorn. To view meeting notes and minutes please visit http://www.azgfd.gov/w_c/CatBighornReintroProj.shtml.

Additional project information can be obtained by visiting the Arizona Game and Fish Department Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/azgafd#!/CatalinaBighorns>, the Arizona Game and Fish Department webpage at <http://www.azgfd.gov/catalinabighorn>, the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society webpage at <http://www.adbss.org> or by visiting the Catalina Bighorn Advisory Committee webpage at <http://www.catalinabighornrestoration.org/>. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose.

TO SUBSCRIBE

If you would like to receive project updates as they are published please send your email address to jsacco@azgfd.gov.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

The population received sheep through supplemental releases conducted on November 19 and 20, 2014. The 12 remaining sheep from the 2013 release sheep were joined by 23 ewes and 7 rams. The new sheep were outfitted with satellite GPS collars to provide managers with up-to-date information to help make adaptive, data-driven decisions. As of December 3, 2014, all 42 collared sheep are alive. One of the collars from the 2013 release may be malfunctioning and status of the sheep is unknown. Aerial surveys will be conducted in December to determine the survival rate of the lambs.

CAPTURE AND RELEASE

On November 19, 2014, sixteen bighorn sheep were captured in the Canyon Lake Area on Tonto National Forest lands. The sixteen sheep were composed of 11 ewes (females) and 5 rams (males). Unfortunately during the capture effort 2 of the rams died. One of the rams broke a leg and was humanely euthanized while the second died in the helicopter during transport from the field to the processing station, due to the stress of the capture as determined by an autopsy and laboratory testing. The remaining fourteen sheep were transported to the Santa Catalina Mountains and released.

On November 20, 2014, 17 bighorn sheep were captured in the Plomosa Mountains east of Quartzite. The seventeen sheep were composed of 12 ewes (females) and 5 rams (males). One of the rams died shortly after being captured and the cause of death was due to the stress of the capture effort based on its condition upon arrival at the processing station. The 16 remaining sheep were then transported to the Tucson area for release.

During capture operations every effort is made to ensure the health of the animals; still, losses due to trauma or stress related factors do occur. Individual bighorn sheep vary in their ability to handle stress and physical exertion. Whenever a mortality occurs in a capture operation, the Department examines environmental and handling variables that could have affected the success of the capture so that we can improve our processes. We have applied this knowledge to our capture operations and between 2005 and 2014, there have been 23 translocation efforts with 623 bighorn sheep captured during these efforts with 17 of the 623 bighorn sheep (2.7%) having died.

MORTALITIES

There were no known mortalities.

LAMBS

No lambs were observed during this reporting period.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The next written briefing will be provided on December 17, 2014.

CONTACT

Mark Hart is the Public Information Officer for this project and can be reached at (520) 628-5376.

RESEARCH FIELD NOTES

There are no new field notes for this reporting period.

MAPS

Santa Catalina Mountains, Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction

The blue symbols show the movements of the bighorn sheep released in 2014, for the first week after release. The yellow symbols show the movements of the bighorn sheep released in 2013, for the first week after the 2013 release.

- Bighorn Sheep Released in 2014, 1 Week Movements, Post-release
- Bighorn Sheep Released in 2013, 1 Week Movements, Post-release

