



Santa Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Project

January 28 - February 10, 2016

BRIEFING

The following is a summary of bighorn sheep reintroduction activities on the Coronado National Forest from January 28 through February 10, 2016.

LAMBING SEASON

The total number of lambs confirmed by visual observations this season is 13, as of February 10. Five of these lambs were born to ewes from the 2013 release and four each were born to ewes from the 2014 and 2015 releases. See our Facebook page for video footage of some of the lambs (see below under Links).



A lamb is shown here with its mother from the 2014 release and another ewe from the 2013 release.

Photo by Andrew Jones/AZGFD

We are currently within the lambing season for bighorn sheep, and many of the ewes may be in the later stages of pregnancy. Ewes with new lambs are particularly sensitive to disturbance, and recreationists are being asked to help minimize human-caused disturbance by adhering to the trail restrictions within the Pusch Ridge Wilderness Bighorn Sheep Management Area. From January 1 through April 30, travel more than 400 feet off designated Forest Service trails is prohibited. Dogs are prohibited year-round.

A lamb is shown here on a cliff with its mother. Photo by Andrew Jones/AZGFD



MORTALITIES

The GPS component of the collar on Ewe #39540 sent a mortality signal on February 8. On February 9, her carcass was found, revealing that she had suffered a severe injury to her left front leg in addition to a superficial wound on her chest, both injuries likely sustained in a fall. She was also in poor body condition. Samples were collected for disease testing. Ewe #39540 had been observed by a research biologist on January 15, and at that time she was having difficulty walking. Ewe #39540 was captured in the Imperial Hills in 2015.

As a follow up to Ewe #39554 that fell and fractured her leg and skull in December, she did not have lesions consistent with pneumonia. No *Pasteurella* or *Mycoplasma* organisms, which are common causes of pneumonia, were cultured or detected. It appears that injuries sustained in the fall were the cause of death.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

As of February 10, 2016, 45 collared sheep are known to be alive.

LINKS

For project background and previously-reported information on project events, including photos and videos, as well as meeting notes and minutes please visit www.azgfd.gov and click on “Wildlife”, then “Catalina Bighorn Sheep” under the heading “Additional Wildlife Information”.

Additional project information can be obtained by visiting the Arizona Game and Fish Department Facebook page at www.facebook.com/CatalinaBighorns, the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society webpage at www.adbss.org, or by visiting the Catalina Bighorn Advisory Committee webpage at 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 ldesouza@azgfd.gov.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The next written briefing will be provided on February 26, 2016.

CONTACT

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