



Santa Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Project

April 28 – May 25, 2016

BRIEFING

The following is a summary of bighorn sheep reintroduction activities on the Coronado National Forest from April 28 through May 25, 2016.

RESEARCH NOTES

Department research biologists located and observed eight groups of bighorn sheep from May 17 to 20. A total of 28 sheep were observed, 16 of which were collared. In total, researchers recorded 13 collared adult ewes, three collared adult rams, seven uncollared yearling ewes, two uncollared yearling rams, and three lambs. All three lambs were first observed in early February and were born to adult ewes from both the 2014 and 2015 transplants. These lambs are starting to show horn eruption and growth.

MORTALITIES

On the afternoon of April 28, the GPS collar for Ewe #39552 sent a mortality alert indicating the animal had died early that morning. A site visit was conducted on April 29. The carcass was located, and it was determined the ewe died as a result of mountain lion predation. On May 2, the lion responsible for the kill was lethally removed. The lion was a male and was the seventh mountain lion removed as part of the bighorn sheep reintroduction effort, following two removals in April and one in March. Ewe #39552 was captured in the Imperial Hills in 2015.

Early on the morning of May 22, the GPS collar for Ewe #37446 sent a mortality alert indicating the animal had died on the afternoon of May 21. A field investigation on May 22 revealed that this animal had died from means other than predation. A necropsy was performed, and disease is suspected. Tissue samples will be sent to a lab for diagnostics. Ewe #37446 was captured in the Plomosa Mountains in 2014.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

As of May 25, 2016, 36 collared sheep are known to be alive. There could be as many as 45 uncollared sheep in this population as well, bringing the total potential population to 81 bighorn sheep. Uncollared bighorn sheep include those released without collars, those from the 2013 release whose collars have dropped off, and those born in the Santa Catalina Mountains.

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 June 24, 2016.

CONTACT

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