



Santa Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Project

November 19-December 2, 2015

BRIEFING

The following is a summary of bighorn sheep reintroduction activities on the Coronado National Forest from November 19 – December 2, 2015.

RESEARCH BRANCH UPDATE

In November, Department researchers observed 21 of 34 collared animals from the 2013 and 2014 releases. Four animals from the 2015 release were observed, two of which were grouped with sheep from previous releases and two which were not with sheep from previous releases but were together. The overall lamb:ewe ratio was 28 lambs per 100 ewes. At least 6 lambs and 1 yearling were observed. The lamb:ewe ratio was lower for November than October; however, the observation window was much shorter in November.

Mixed groups of ewes and rams are still present. However, several of the rams appear to be spending less time grouped with ewes. Many of the ewes from all transplant years appear to be pregnant. Overall, the GPS data indicates that the sheep released last month can be found in the same general areas where the 2013/2014 released sheep have settled. However, a few individuals have made some exploratory movements to areas farther away.

MORTALITY FOLLOW-UP

In early November, a hiker found the remains of Ram #34641 in the Catalinas. A Department research biologist later examined the skull and photos of the bones and determined the ram's death was not caused by predation. Due to the age of the remains, no further investigations regarding cause of death are possible. Ram #34641 was captured in 2013 from the Plomosa Mountains as a 4-year old. The collar for this animal had been on recovery mode since April of this year, but volunteers tracking the bighorn sheep using the VHF component of the collars reported that this animal was moving around as recently as mid-to late September.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

As of December 2, 2015, 60 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 December 18, 2015.

CONTACT

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