



Wyoming Chapter

Foundation for
North American

Wild Sheep

Volume 6

Winter 1998

Number 1



THE 1997 SUMMER BRING YOUR OWN HORSE (BYOH) TOUR OF COTTONWOOD PEAK AND THE OWL CREEK DRAINAGE. ATTENDEES AGREED MILES OF GREAT BIGHORN HABITAT JUST WAITING OUR HELP TO BRING BIGHORNS IN. A WORTHY GOAL FOR THE CHAPTER.



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- \$15 for One-Year Membership
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The Wyoming Chapter of F.N.A.W.S. is offering up to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of anyone poaching Bighorn Sheep in Wyoming. Call (307) 234-9597

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The Wyoming Chapter Newsletter is published semi-annually and your subscription is included with your paid up Wyoming Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep dues at no cost.

RON BALL



tion I had gained for bighorns after 15 years of studying, radio tracking, and working with them jumped several notches. The culmination of this successful hunt, in one of the most scenic basins in the Absarokas, accompanied and assisted by two good friends, has only reaffirmed my commitment to the best possible management for bighorn sheep and their habitat. I commend FNAWS and our members for over 20 years of dedicated support for wild sheep. Without this commitment, we wouldn't have the sheep resource we all enjoy. I can't wait for the next 20 years to unfold!

P.S. On October 2nd, my hunt was completed when I harvested a nice bull moose along the Hams Fork in Hunt Area 26. The only down side was having to pack quarters out on our backs with an old-fashioned packboard!



Kevin's Wyoming Shria Moose

Kevin Hurley is a Wildlife Biologist with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department, stationed in Thermopolis. Since working on a FNAWS-funded master's project on the Trout Peak herd (Hunt Area 2) in the early 1980s, Kevin has been involved with bighorn sheep management in Wyoming and beyond. In addition to his position with WGFD, Kevin volunteers as Executive Director of the Northern Wild Sheep and Goat Council, an international scientific and educational organization of wildlife managers, researchers, and administrators with responsibilities throughout the western U.S. and Canada.

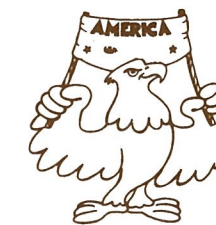


ASPEN GROVE RANCH OUTFITTERS

Fred Neuman
110 E. Brooks
Rawlins, WY 82301
307-324-2310

Pete Johnson
54 E. El Rancho Rd.
Wheatland, WY
307-322-4231

Call To Arms



We need members' help with:

- 1.) Hunting pictures and stories.
- 2.) Auction items and door prizes for Casper.
3. Sponsors for coffee and events at Casper.
4. Ad's for newsletter.
- 5.) The chapter needs your shed antlers: Call Mike Mohr 307-577-7218.
- 6.) Help recruiting new members and life members.
- 7.) Dalmation Toad Flax Control project. Hand pulling the weed in the winter range, South Fork Shoshone River, this May or June. The WY Chapter is sponsoring a barbecue for the attendees. Call your Board members to volunteer or for information.

**DARBY MOUNTAIN
OUTFITTERS**

**BIG PINEY, WYOMING
307-386-9220**



Year of the Sheep

By: Kevin Hurley

With apologies to the Chinese calendar, for me, 1997 had to be the Year of the Sheep. At the beginning of 1997, I had the honor of being nominated (by the Wyoming Chapter FNAWS) and selected for the FNAWS "State Statesman Award for 1997." The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) sent me to the FNAWS convention in Philadelphia, where I represented the department and accepted this prestigious award on behalf of sheep enthusiasts across Wyoming. Having been privileged to work with big-horn sheep in the Absaroka Mountains (Hunt Areas 2-5) and throughout Wyoming for the past 15 years, I couldn't imagine a greater honor for someone in my profession.

While in Philadelphia, my dad came up from Florida to the convention and helped me achieve something I had long dreamed and schemed how to do, and that was to upgrade my FNAWS membership to that of Life Member. In fact, my dad (a former WWII pilot) enjoyed visiting with General Joe Engle at the Life Member sign up desk so much that we couldn't find him during the auction! Late last spring, I made the leap to Life Member status in the Wyoming Chapter FNAWS, a small but active chapter that I've been involved with since 1982.

Just when I didn't think things could get any better, I got a call from Jay Lawson, Chief of the WGFD Wildlife Division in Cheyenne, informing me that not only had I drawn a coveted moose license in Hunt Area 26 near Kemmerer, but I was also the lucky recipient of Hunt Area 5 bighorn sheep license! Right then, knowing Wyoming's preference point system and the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity ahead of me, I knew my fall work schedule of checking hunters was due for some major alteration.

Having management responsibilities in Hunt Area 5 for the past 10+ years, I was optimistic I knew the area well enough to find some good rams. However, as summer progressed, other work assignments and conflicts allowed me only three partial days of pre-season scouting. As the days on the calendar whipped by, my optimism waned, and I placed an increasing amount of pressure on myself to find a good ram.

Fate smiled on me, though, when two good friends and I packed up and headed to the hills. On this special hunt, I was accompanied by Jim Wilson, a Thermopolis area rancher and Ron Lockwood, a WGFD wildlife biologist from Kemmerer. Two nights before the season opened and from almost two miles away, we spotted a group of rams, one of which was dark chocolate in color, with light-colored, heavy horns; no doubt the best ram I had seen all summer.

For the next 36 hours, we waited and watched this ram, planning our strategy for opening morning. Following an 0400 hours sneak by dim flashlight, I found myself pinned down by a lack of cover in an alpine basin topping out at 12,300'. Instead of coming to water like they had the past two days, this ram band arose, stretched, and fed uphill, heading up and over the ridge. From over 500 yards and at a 45 degree angle uphill, the shot of my lifetime instantly made my dream come true. A 45-minute scramble to 12,100' brought us to a 10 year old ram. As I regained my breath, I could feel the self-imposed pressure vanish, being replaced by elation.

Through the years, I had trapped, netgunned, darted, captured and handled hundreds of Rocky Mountain bighorns, but I was never as happy to have my



Kevin's Area 5 Ram.

hands on one as that day! The respect and admira-



CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE LIFE MEMBERS WHO JUST FINISHED THEIR GRAND SLAM!



DAVID
LUZMOOR



LOU
MISTERLY



“My Becoming an Outdoor Woman”

By Bonnie Hildner

Why am I doing this? I have never enjoyed camping. I know nothing about outdoor cooking or survival, and I certainly have never enjoyed wearing “Ode to Cutter.” These were the thoughts running through my head as I was heading down a very rough, dusty road. Thank goodness I believe in the tested theory of the world being round; otherwise, I would have been convinced I was driving off the end of the world.

It was Friday morning and I was headed to the BOW-Whiskey Mountain Camp. This is a camp that will be attempting to turn me into a Wyoming outdoors woman. At about 10:30 a.m., I finally arrived at camp and assumed it must be where I was supposed to be. What occurred for the next two days was not only a very pleasant surprise to me, but was probably a much bigger surprise to the camp instructors.

During my weekend stay, attended four in depth sessions and three mini-sessions, and I was totally amazed how much I thoroughly enjoyed and learned from every class. Being the very wise individuals that they are, they required a gun handling safety class from me before I could take rifle and handgun marksmanship. Well, I found a new love. I love target shooting, and I am pretty good at it (I am only quoting what my instructor said). I also learned how to survive in the wilderness under the most extreme conditions. The shelter I built would never win a blue ribbon, but I think it would keep me dry and protected. Fly fishing - now that was another story. I have only been fly fishing for one year; consequently, my instructor had to display a tremendous amount of patience, and I am embarrassed to admit a tremendous amount of ducking. I had a wonderful time attempting to catch a fish, but to no avail.

The three mini-sessions I attended were just as

rewarding. I was given information concerning fly rods, winter clothing, and what to do when I encounter a bear. I am anxious to use my new found knowledge on fly rods and proper winter clothing, but I am hoping I never need to use my information on bear encounters.

My time was not entirely spent in classes. I spent a considerable amount of time eating deliciously prepared food, visiting with ladies from Wyoming and other states, laughing around our evening camp fire, and hiking through nature’s most beautiful landscape.

My weekend experiences were so rewarding, I will definitely attend next year. I still may not want to camp or smell of “Ode to Cutter,” but I certainly can appreciate and enjoy more of the available outdoor experiences. Besides I couldn’t take all the classes, so I have to return to camp and learn how to do camp cooking, orienteering, canoeing, etc. Oh yes, for the curious folks, even though it was a camp for women, we did have a few men instructors. I don’t know why but the men certainly kept a very low profile for the entire weekend. I wonder why?

Becoming an outdoor woman in Wyoming can be a very rewarding experience for every woman. Regardless of your interests or level of ability, this camp has something to offer every woman. It was a very fulfilling, educational, relaxing, fun filled weekend. I want to personally thank the Wyoming Chapter of FNAWS for presenting me with a scholarship for the camp. It was an experience which allowed me to grow in ways I never thought I would. I will always remember my first, but not last, camp.

Bonnie was awarded the Becoming an Outdoor Woman scholarship in a drawing to reward the Chapter’s ladies who helped at the 1996 Cheyenne Convention.



Our final call came September 29. Fritz said we would ride out the morning of October 2. Both John and I wanted and didn’t want to go. I was afraid I’d fail. However, on our drive to Dubois, I kept thinking of 3’s. Friday was October 3, this was our 3rd trip in, John is my third husband (maybe that doesn’t sound like a good omen, but it is), we were married on January 3, 1989, John got his sheep on September 3, 1992, and Dale Earnhart, the Winston Cup NASCAR driver, drives #3. You get the idea. I was psyched up - ready to get my sheep on the 3rd. Superstitious? It started to rain and snow right after the tent was set up. We hibernated till it stopped, which was just long enough to grill brats; then it started again. I would guess we were in our sleeping bags for the night by 8:30. No one wanted to open the tent flaps the next morning. Whoever was the most desperate had to make the first move. We were sure there would be lots of snow, since we had heard it hitting the tent off and on during the night. Not so! We were lucky. Just a skiff; enough to make the boulders slippery, but nothing significant. It melted before long.

Fritz started up the boulders ahead of John and me. Just as we were leaving camp, Fritz motioned for us to stay put. We knew he had seen something - he had - 8 rams feeding up behind our camp.



Left to right: John, Pat, Fritz & Area 10 Ram.

We took to the boulders to get ahead of them. This was a slow process for John and me. Fritz can leap from boulder to boulder, not me! I did a little creative trail blazing to end up where Fritz did. When I would

look down between those boulders, my heart would do flip-flops. Heights and I don’t get along real well. There were actually times I got on my hands and knees. Not much fun for the very fainthearted.

When we finally reached the top of the mountain and crossed over the other side, we were just about blown over. My apprehensions returned. How could I possibly hit a ram when it was that windy? Our luck held out. The rams hadn’t fed across the top yet. We came back to the protected side of the mountain and proceeded across the boulders toward where the rams were last seen. Suddenly, I saw two of them running up another outcropping of boulders just across from us. Fritz put me in a good spot with a big boulder for a rest. Everything worked just like it was supposed to. With his “the one on the left,” and my confirming it, I squeezed the trigger and had a perfect hit. The number “3” was very lucky for me.

What a happy bunch of people we were. After a total of 13 days hunting, I had gotten my sheep! Talk about elation. It was truly the hardest hunting I have ever done, but also the most satisfying. Again, John and I can’t thank Fritz or Dirk enough for their patience with both of us.

The ram is being life-size mounted by Sundowners in Casper, as was the one that John shot five years ago. The body on his sheep is much bigger than mine, but the horns on mine are larger! John suggested it might look nicer if we swapped the horns (more proportion, you know). Obviously you can guess my response! I would like to encourage women to put in for a permit to hunt bighorn sheep or accompany your husband or significant other if they draw one of these permits. The bighorn sheep is truly a magnificent animal. Seeing where they live and how agile they are, makes a person really respect their beauty and stamina. You will see Wyoming and the whole outdoors in a very different light if you make the commitment to hunt one. You feel like you’re on top of the world, and at times, you literally are!

The following quote says it all. “Sheep hunting should, as far as possible, be saved for those who value the privilege,” author unknown. Pat Shaffer, Green River, Wyo.



The Lucky Number "3"

Try to imagine if you will . . . getting a phone call in early May, 1997, saying you had drawn a Wyoming bighorn sheep permit in area 10. Sounds wonderful, right? Well it did . . . to a point. Then try to imagine your feelings if you are 53 ½ years old, a female, and a Certified Professional Secretary. Does it still sound wonderful? Well, it did to me! Wonderful, exciting, and terrifying all at the same time. I went with my husband, John on a sheep hunt with Fritz Meyer of Dubois, in area 4, five years ago. Every day on that trip without fail, I wondered why we spend good money to attempt suicide! You see we are not "horse people." The term "dude" fits us to a tee.

Don't get me wrong, we are dedicated hunters. John is a self-employed gunsmith in Rock Springs and taught me how to really hunt. I moved to Wyoming from Michigan almost nine years ago when we got married. This is a wonderful place to live! I love the outdoors, fishing and hunting, and have always been a tomboy.

When Fritz called to say I had drawn a permit, it was hard to believe. Wow! It had happened before I turned 55! John was 55 when he got his sheep. We were both thrilled and could hardly wait! Originally, we planned to go the first week in October. But, if that trip was unsuccessful, there wouldn't be much time left before the season was over. My vacation schedule can be very flexible, so when Fritz asked, if he called when he had a few days open, would I be able to go spur of the moment. Obviously, I could and would.

Our first call came the 18th of August. The first night neither John nor I were able to sleep much. We had company in our tent - a scratching mouse. I've never been afraid of mice, but the pitter patter of tiny footsteps on my shoulder was enough to unnerve me. Cold blooded murder was in my mind for the next several nights!

The next morning, Fritz spotted 2 rams and a group of 6 rams. It was decided that we should get above them. The idea was fantastic. In climbing over some rocks, my 7MM rifle John custom built for me, slipped off my shoulder and clanked into the rocks. Less than 100 yards later, we came broadside to a

legal ram (I probably woke him up with my crashing noise). By the time I got ready to shoot, he had turned to give me a frontal shot. Not good! It would have been just fine, except . . . remember, I had just dropped my gun. It appeared I missed. The shot should have been good; so we did go and check for blood, even though he looked pretty healthy when he bounded away. Nothing! I did have another rifle with me, and carried it while we hunted a couple more days without seeing any more rams.

Before Fritz called us to come hunting again, we took my rifle to the range. The scope had been knocked pretty good. There were a couple of gouges in it. My group was great, just 4 ½ inches to the left, and almost 2 inches high. No wonder I missed! That ram had been approximately 225 yards away.

Now we were ready to go hunting again, or were we? After our first trip, John had a pretty nasty saddle sore. Both of us, being dudes, had scraped a few trees with our knees. There was definitely a lot to remember about horses from our first sheep hunt five years ago. We are supposed to be the horse's boss, not the other way around. These horses were really good, too. Occasionally, they caught us daydreaming and would try to wake us up, one way or another. They might brush a tree or jump the creek (just because). We just seemed to be slow learners! What a wake up call sometimes!

The next trip found us riding in September 13. About half way in we "met" a ram head on. He didn't wait for me to get off the horse and get my gun out, but instead disappeared into the timber. The rest of that trip was not always fun. Dirk Edgeington, one of our guides, took us out the next few days. On the second day, we did see a ram quite a ways off. When we got within range, he detected our presence and didn't stick around to give me a decent shot. After that, the weather turned bad, with rain and/or snow and extremely strong winds. I learned to play poker while we were stuck in camp. Dirk tried hard to find rams for me, but they were holding up in the timber. On our way out, again with Fritz, we did see a lot of ewes and lambs, but no rams.

Fritz and Dirk were so patient with me. I'm not a fast shot, but I am a good one. I just needed a decent chance at a ram.



Wyoming Game & Fish Department's Bighorn Sheep Working Group

In November 1996, Chief Game Warden Jay Lawson created the Wyoming Game & Fish Department Bighorn Sheep Working Group. This group was formed to address bighorn sheep management issues in Wyoming from a broad perspective, incorporating not only a statewide view, but a view encompassing the entire range of bighorn sheep. The group is comprised of game wardens, habitat biologists, and wildlife biologists from around the state who have extensive experience dealing with bighorn sheep. Members include:

- Gary Butler - Habitat Program Manager
- Pat Hnilicka - Wildlife Biologist
- Kevin Hurley - Wildlife Biologist
- Jerry Longobardi - Game Warden
- Doug McWhirter - Wildlife Biologist, (Chair)
- Tom Ryder - Wildlife Biologist
- Dan Stroud - Habitat Biologist
- Cole Thompson - Game Warden

The group's first meeting in February 1997, brought several general items that were identified that the group should address. These include:

- 1) Review and revision of Bighorn Sheep Transplant Guidelines
- 2) Coordination With Other States/Provinces
- 3) Identification and Prioritization of Research Needs
- 4) Data Collection and Analysis
- 5) Literature Review 6) Statewide Management Plan

The Bighorn Sheep Working Group meetings have been structured to include field tours in order to become more familiar with Wyoming's various bighorn sheep herds and the issues associated with each herd. So far, we have visited the past and recent habitat improvement efforts on the South Fork of the Shoshone River and ridden the proposed transplant site on the North Fork of Owl Creek. Coordination with local personnel is necessary for these "tours" to be successful. In fact, part of our first meeting was to identify key contacts, existing information, current status, and potential and existing problems for each bighorn sheep herd unit. This "Herd Unit Review" was reviewed by local Game & Fish personnel and has recently been completed (two of these reviews are included in this newsletter). This coordinated approach has fine tuned these assessments and should help us in our at-

tempt to identify common problems and hopefully present some solutions. Bighorn sheep are a prized component of Wyoming's wildlife resource and worthy of our best efforts to provide for their continued existence. The Bighorn Sheep Working Group would like to thank Jay Lawson for initiating this effort and looks forward to working on the many issues involving bighorn sheep within Wyoming.

North Fork of Owl Creek Transplant Site Update

In late July 1997, more than a dozen enthusiastic members of the Wyoming Chapter gathered 50 miles west of Thermopolis for a two-night camp out and adventure. The purpose for the trip was for chapter members to get a first-hand look at the North Fork of Owl Creek drainage, site of a proposed bighorn sheep transplant which the Wyoming chapter has been very supportive of. Led by WGFD biologist Kevin Hurley, the group rode to Cottonwood Peak, enjoying the fantastic Absaroka Range views throughout the day. Everyone agreed the potential for a successful transplant was high, and all were impressed by the country they saw. High-elevation ridgetops and south-facing slopes provided ample forage, and escape terrain was plentiful. Originally scheduled to begin in 1995, this proposed transplant has unfortunately been postponed again. As Kevin explained to the group, if and when the transplant happens, release sites, occupied habitat, and access to these transplanted sheep could largely occur on private land. From the beginning, WGFD has clearly stated that landowner support for this transplant was essential to proceeding. Due to uncertainty of how transplanted bighorns might affect their BLM and USFS cattle grazing allotments, and concerns over the BLM's draft Grass Creek Resource Management Plan (RMP), landowner support has wavered enough over the past two years to convince WGFD to postpone implementing this transplant. Kevin assured the group that even though this transplant was going to the "back burner" for a couple years, WGFD still views the North Fork Owl Creek drainage as one of the most promising release sites for bighorn sheep in Wyoming. Efforts will continue to implement this transplant as soon as possible. On the trip, and subsequently at the Rock Springs board meeting in December 1997, the WY-FNAWS board reiterated their support for this transplant, and promised their support and funding when the time is right!



Fifteenth Annual Banquet Best Ever!

The annual Banquet/Auction was held at the Inn of Rock Springs, December 5 & 6, 1997 and Rock Springs and Sweetwater County welcomed the Wyoming Chapter with a sell out. The auction proceeds were the largest gross ever recorded, raising over \$56,000 to fund sheep projects in the future. Friday started early. The board and many members met to hear funding requests. Nearly \$60,000 in funding requests were submitted. After listening to all requests, the Board voted on its recommendations for the general meeting Saturday. Many hard working volunteers then set up the auction lineup, Chapter booths, and finished last minute details for the Saturday lineup, followed by an evening get together with cocktails, and cheese and crackers.

The general membership meeting was called to order by president Jim Collins. Reports were given on last years funded projects, followed by



Lee Howard President of Utah Chapter

the board's recommendation for 1998 funding. After discussion, the Wyoming Chapter voted to fund: \$1500 for biological weed control of dalmation toadflax in the South Fork of the

Shoshone River, \$500 to share a booth with the Bighorn Sheep Center at the National FNAWS Convention in Reno, \$5000 to continue the lamb survival study in the Whiskey Mountain herd, \$1000 to help sponsor the first annual Hunting and Fishing Heritage Exposition to be held in Casper, September 11-13, 1998. There was much discussion on a request for the Wyo-



Jack Finnerty enjoying the wine and cheese seminar

oming Chapter to take a position on seven clear cuts for a total of 129 acres for bighorn travel corridors on the north rim of the North Fork of the Popo Agie River. A motion was made and passed unanimously in favor of clearing the travel corridors using all possible care to protect the scenic beauty of the area. The meeting was concluded with the election of four Directors. Fritz Meyers was elected to a second two year term along with Dennis Clamen. David Luzmoor and Jack Hildner were elected to one year terms.

Six hours of informative seminars on Sheep judging, High altitude survival, Our Bighorn Sheep Herds, Herbs and Spices and a



Wapiti Ridge (Area 3) (BHS203) Revision Date: 10/10/97

Population Estimate: 1000 (post season 1996)

Population Objective: 1000

Most Recent Hunting Regulations: 44 licenses 3/4 curl ram

Current WGFD Managers: Larry Roop (Cody Wildlife Biologist), Craig Sax (North Cody Game Warden), Tim Fagan (South Cody Game Warden)

JCR (Job Completion Report) Responsibility: Larry Roop

Other Agency Contacts: Dave Henry, Bernie Spanogle (USFS), Kevin Hurley, Scott Smith, Doug McWhirter (WGFD)

Previous Studies: Hurley (1985) Smith (1988) McWhirter (1993)

Problems:

Habitat - Private land issues, winter range condition, reliance on improved meadows, primarily on the Valley, Deer Creek, and Hawkeye Ranches.

Fenced in-holdings on USFS lands - Ongoing land exchange efforts.

Coordinated Resource Management Plan (CRM) for the Upper South Fork. Initiated by USFS.

Noxious weed problems on sheep winter range - "toadflax"

Tremendous habitat improvement opportunities - control invading limber pine/juniper on the South Fork. Some habitat improvement opportunities on N. Fork, but more limited.

Domestic Sheep - Potential for domestic sheep on private lands.

Predation - Predation, eventually wolves on the Upper South Fork.

Genetics - Large herd, no suspected problems.

Disease - Scabies has been a problem in the past.

Migration - Some long distance migrants but some sheep merely descend in elevation to reach winter ranges in the early winter.

Herbivore Competition - Building elk numbers on the South Fork. Possible livestock competition in the Ishawooa Hills

Recreation/Development Encroachment - Winter range recreation (ice climbing, photographers, wildlife viewers) becoming more prevalent. Potential impacts are high. Worth The Watching - Lots of interest, very high profile sheep herd.

Poor/Inconsistent Classification Data - Data collected from this herd is usually quite good.

Hunting Related -

Other - Potential for trapping sheep off the South Fork winter ranges to relieve grazing pressure. This area is considered by many to be the premier bighorn sheep unit in the state. Average age of harvested rams and hunter success are typically higher here than in any other hunt area. In most years, this is the area where purchasers of complimentary Governors sheep licenses hunt. For these reasons it is also a very difficult area to draw a license.



Bighorn Sheep Herd Unit Review

Herd unit reviews were completed by the Wyoming Game & Fish Department's Bighorn Sheep Working Group to become more familiar with the various sheep herds across the state, and to put all the known information about these herds in one place. In each newsletter, we intend to include two such herd unit reviews, one from an established native herd, and one from a transplanted herd. The two selected for this issue are the Darby Mountain Herd Unit (Hunt Area 24), a transplanted herd, and Wapiti Ridge (Hunt Area 3), a native herd.

Darby Mountain (Area 24) (BHS121) Revision Date: 10/10/97

Population Estimate: 160 (post season 1996)

Population Objective: 150

Most Recent Hunting Regulations: 4 licenses 3/4 curl ram (Closed for 1998)

Current WGFD Managers: Brad Hovinga (Big Piney Game Warden), Gary Fralick (South Jackson Wildlife Biologist), Dan Stroud (Pinedale Habitat Biologist)

JCR (Job Completion Report) Responsibility: Gary Fralick

Other Agency Contacts: Bernie Holz (WGFD), Chuck Thornton (WGFD-ret.), R. Borrego (USFS)

Previous Studies: S. Smith, Moody, Fralick/Stroud (JCR's)

Transplant History: 1981 Transplant - 35 sheep released on Mt. Darby - Johnson (1981), Hurley (1996)

1987 Transplant - 25 sheep released on Fish Creek Mtn. - Wollrab (1987), Hurley (1996)

Total - 60 sheep released into herd unit

Problems:

Habitat - Conifer encroachment is a problem. Burn plans are to treat avalanche chutes.

Domestic Sheep - Domestic sheep have been observed running with bighorn ewe/lamb groups. Domestic sheep allotments surround this herd unit.

Predation - Increasing mountain lion populations could be impacting sheep, perhaps some coyote predation.

Genetics - This is a small, isolated population, but the effects of this are unknown.

Disease - Not known. However, potential for disease transmission from domestic sheep is high.

Migration - Most sheep summer and winter in the same general location. The possibility of migration, however, is interrupted by conifer encroachment.

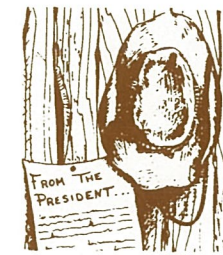
Herbivore Competition - Nothing substantial.

Recreation/Development Encroachment - No impacts at this time.

Poor/Inconsistent Classification Data - Due to weather and location of wintering sheep, data is difficult to obtain and is inconsistent. Sample sizes are usually quite small.

Hunting Related - This herd has only been hunted with 4 permits since 1988 when Hunt Area 24 was opened. It is extremely unlikely that this has impacted the population adversely.

Other - Although 3 rams were taken during the 1996 season, hunter effort increased dramatically. With funding provided by the Wyoming Chapter of FNAWS, a summer survey was conducted in August, 1997. Few sheep were found and no legal rams (3/4 curl) were observed. The permitted hunters in 1997 also could not locate any 3/4 curl rams. Postseason 1997 helicopter surveys in Hunt Area 24 also did not produce any legal rams. The reason for this obvious decline is unknown at this time. As a result, this area has been closed for 1998.



President's Thoughts

Our Bighorn sheep have more possibilities than problems! Both need our action. The Chapter and its members need to become proactive not just reactive.

This newsletter will be the start of running a synopsis on one native herd unit and one transplant herd unit each issue. This can be used by members to become informed and educated on the areas including the pros and the cons of applying for this herd unit, but also to spur us into action. We should each study, comment, and push for action on the possibility "to be proactive in each herd unit."

Jay Lawson, Chief Game Warden for our Wyoming Game and Fish Department, has taken the first step, by creating A Bighorn Sheep Task Force made up of the Game and Fish sheep experts.

They are starting the job of questioning, where do we go now! Our job is to question, suggest, get behind and then to see the job gets done.

**There's much to be done
Let's get with it!**

Jim Collins



National FNAWS Director Dan Artery was the Successful Bidder on this Original Moose Painting

Wine and Cheese seminars were on the lineup. This years seminars drew huge crowds and were at or near capacity. Booths were included for the first time this year and proved very popular.

Auction highlights included two Governor elk licenses bringing \$15,900 purchased by Jerome Carlson, and a British Columbia Dall/Grizzly hunt purchased by Larry Masserant for \$8000. Helping to reach an all time high for the Wyoming Chapter raising funds for sheep projects.

Our thanks to all that attended



Hugo Kilian bid for Jerome Carlson on the Governor's Elk Tags



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See ya in Thermopolis June 6 & 7th



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Wyoming Chapter of the Foundation of North American Wild Sheep

Past Presidents

- 1983-85 Dave Steger
- 1986 Ron Ball
- 1987-88 Ed Novotny
- 1989-90 Dave Steger
- 1991-92 Jack Hildner
- 1993-96 Ron Ball

The Chapter acknowledges these great supporters, their time and dedication made possible the heights the Chapter has reached today.

1998's Super Fun Weekend

Thermopolis Holiday Inn of The Waters will once again be the site of the Super Fun Summer weekend. Two fun filled days are planned again this year.

The Board and interested members will meet at 5:00 p.m. Friday, June 5, 1998 to review funding requests and discuss the Casper Convention, with any unfinished business addressed Saturday morning starting at 8:00.

The membership will meet at 12:00 and test our shotgun skills at trap, and for the first time Sporting Clays. This year we will hold both a women's and a men's competition, while Thermopolis's swimming and other great attractions occupy the non-shooters. Bring your shotgun to join the competition.

The general membership meeting will follow at 3:00 followed by a wine and cheese hour furnished once again by our great supporters at the Holiday Inn. Upon finishing our Chapter business, we will have dinner and a social evening, (Translation-B.S. Session). This year we will have an outdoor barbecue.

Those wishing can rise early and once again search for the elusive Wind River Canyon Bighorns. Back by popular demand, Sunday we will offer a Whitewater adventure down the magnificent Wind River Canyon. Both half day and full day trips will be available. Please let one of your board members know if you are planning to join the adventure! Reservations need to be made to reserve enough boats for the expected turnout.

Rip Snorting Good Time Planned! Chapter Convention 1998 Casper Hilton!

December 4 & 5, 1998 mark your calendars NOW! Wyoming Chapter FNAWS Banquet/Auction will take place at the Casper Hilton Inn. A full slate of booths and seminars are planned, as well as an exciting auction lineup including a 1999 Polaris 700 snowmachine. Watch for further updates in your summer newsletter and membership notice of the winter.



We're truly lucky to have this view within a short Wyoming drive. Have you visited our sheep lately?

Wyoming Chapter of the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep Announces a 1998 Governor's Bighorn Sheep License Auction!

Phone bids will be taken until 2:00 p.m., Monday, March 2, 1998. All bidders to that time will be contacted and given a chance to be high bidder. The successful bidder will be notified the evening of March 2. Anyone interested in bidding should contact:

- Jim Collins (307) 234-9597,
- Cole Benton (307) 736-2277,
- Fritz Meyers (307) 455-2464 or
- Jack Hildner (307) 856-1776.

Lakelander Supports Your Chapter!

Lakelander and The Sacred Hunt have graciously donated a Lakelander 270 rifle. These Swedish rifles are definitely the finest out of the box rifle available today. Please check out the article in Rifle Shooter on these tack drivers.

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