



Santa Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Project

February 25 – March 9, 2016

BRIEFING

The following is a summary of bighorn sheep reintroduction activities on the Coronado National Forest from February 25 through March 9, 2016.

LAMBING SEASON

On March 9, research biologists confirmed the nineteenth lamb observed this season. The lamb was born to a ewe captured in the Middle Mountains in 2015. In addition to these two animals, there were two other adult ewes, a yearling ram, and two other lambs in this group.

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.

MORTALITIES

There were no known mortalities of collared sheep during this reporting period.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

As of March 9, 2016, 44 collared sheep are known to be alive. There could be as many as 43 uncollared sheep in this population as well, bringing the total potential population to 87 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.

VOLUNTEER MONITORS

Part of the success of this project can be attributed to the daily efforts of a handful of volunteers who monitor the collared bighorn sheep using VHF telemetry. These volunteer monitors sometimes get rewarded with unique opportunities to view the desert bighorn sheep in their native habitat. The six rams shown in the photo below were seen clashing horns on March 1. The group included five rams from the 2014 release and one ram from the 2015 release.



*On March 1, six rams
were observed
exhibiting dominance
behavior.
Photo by Ron
Yee/Project Volunteer.*

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 lidesouza@azgfd.gov.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The next written briefing will be provided on March 25, 2016.

CONTACT

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