



OR-FNAWS Policy on Ewe Hunting

The primary focus of the Oregon Foundation for North American Wild Sheep is to enhance the population, health and vitality of bighorn sheep herds in Oregon. The Oregon Chapter supports the scientific solutions to resource management challenges and to this end we heavily invest the funds we raise in disease research, wild sheep transplants, habitat enhancement, population management, predator management, and conservation education.

Occasionally, favorable environmental factors or management successes result in wild sheep populations that meet or exceed management objectives. Also, maintenance of wild sheep populations below management objectives helps reduce dispersal and potential forays into areas containing domestic sheep or goats. To maintain wild sheep populations at or below management objectives for their habitats, it is the policy of OR-FNAWS to encourage translocations to suitable vacant habitats or augment existing populations, as determined by wildlife agency personnel. However, when suitable areas are not available, population reduction may be desirable. In such cases, our policy would be to encourage harvest of female sheep by hunting as a tool for bringing population numbers in line with the management objectives of the area in question.

OR-FNAWS acknowledges that hunting of females will be viewed by some as philosophically at odds with the traditions and practices of male-only harvest, which have been successful in maintaining or re-establishing wild sheep populations in North America. However, population reductions have always been integral to successful, sound wildlife management. Whether by translocations or harvest of females, when wild sheep populations exceed management objectives of their habitats, scientific management is warranted.

OR-FNAWS also recommends that the 2003 Oregon Sheep and Goat Plan be updated. Topics that need to be addressed are ewe hunting, allowing license holders to apply for both California and Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep, a plan for disposal of surplus pick-up heads to conservation groups for fundraisers and the establishment of management objectives for some of the sheep herds that are doing well.

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"Putting Wild Sheep
on the Mountain"

Sincerely,

Walter Chuck