



Wild Sheep FAQs & Data

- From their estimated high of nearly 2 million prior to European settlement of the West, **bighorn** sheep numbers plummeted for a variety of reasons, primarily due to disease transmission and competition for forage from domestic sheep and goats brought into their range and over harvest for food, reaching their low point in the 1950s at ~25,000 in all of North America.
- Through cooperative efforts by western fish & game agencies and conservation organizations like the Wild Sheep Foundation, bighorn sheep now number more than 80,000 in the western U.S. and Canada – a three-fold increase.
- More than 22,000 bighorn sheep have been translocated by western fish & game agencies, in over 1,500 discrete transplant actions, over the past ~90 years.
- These transplants and restoration of bighorn sheep to many of their historic ranges have largely been paid for via revenues from hunting licenses + contributions from conservation, pro-hunting organizations, such as the Wild Sheep Foundation.
- Across North America, current estimates of ALL wild sheep are 170,000 to 190,000, with over 50% being **thinhorn** sheep - Dall's and Stone's sheep in Alaska, British Columbia, NW Territories, and Yukon.
- Virtually everywhere bighorn sheep are found in 15 states in the West, hunting opportunities are limited, with licenses issued via highly-competitive lottery systems or drawings.
- Hunters lucky enough to have hunted wild sheep, and thousands more who are still awaiting their opportunity, have contributed many millions of dollars in license fees and applications, + excise taxes on firearms and ammunition, to wild sheep conservation and management.
- No other segment of society has contributed as much to the conservation and management of wild sheep and other wildlife as hunters have, and continue to do so.
- Dollars raised and spent by hunters have maintained and/or enhanced millions of acres of wildlife habitat, for literally thousands of species, the majority of which are NOT hunted, fished for, or trapped.
- In almost 40 years, the Wild Sheep Foundation has raised and helped direct \$110 Million toward conservation and management of wild sheep and their habitats.

BIGHORN SHEEP – THEN AND NOW

Estimated Bighorn/Desert Bighorn Populations in the United States

	<u>1960</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
1. Arizona	3,500	6,200	177%
2. California	2,500	4,800	192%
3. Colorado	3,000	7,500	250%
4. Idaho	2,800	3,070	9%
5. Nebraska	Unknown	350	~%
6. Nevada	Remnant	11,000	~%
7. New Mexico	Remnant	2,030	~%
8. North Dakota	Unknown	300	~%
9. Montana	1,700	6,050	391%
10. Oregon	25	4,960	1,984%
11. South Dakota	Unknown	250	~%
12. Texas	Remnant	1,800	~%
13. Utah	Remnant	4,700	~%
14. Washington	Remnant	1,310	~%
15. Wyoming	2,000	6,500	325%

Sources: *Buechner Monograph (1960)* and *Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (2014 data.)*

Estimated Bighorn/Desert Bighorn Populations in the Alberta, British Columbia & Mexico

	<u>1960</u>	<u>2014</u>
1. Alberta	?	6,400
2. British Columbia	?	6,600
3. Mexico	?	8,000

THINHORN SHEEP – THEN AND NOW

Dall's Sheep Population Estimate

	<u>1960</u>	<u>2014</u>
1. Alaska	?	42,800 – 49,500
2. British Columbia	?	350 - 550
3. Northwest Territories	?	14,500 – 27,000
4. Yukon Territory	?	19,000
Total		76,650 – 96,050

Stone's Sheep Population Estimate

	<u>1960</u>	<u>2014</u>
British Columbia	?	10,000 – 16,000
Yukon Territory	?	3,000
Total		13,000 – 19,000

Source: *Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (2014 data.)*

LICENSE & HARVEST DATA
(Current Data Available)

Jurisdiction	Ram Licenses Issued	Auction/Raffle Tags	Total Harvest
<i>Dall's Sheep</i>			
Alaska	6,311	?	700
British Columbia	2,731	2*	4
Northwest Territories	262	0	201
Yukon Territory	1,657	1	236
<i>Stone's Sheep</i>			
British Columbia	?	2*	334
Northwest Territories	?	0	?
<i>Bighorn Sheep</i>			
Alberta	2,442	1/1	170
Arizona	18	1/1	16
British Columbia	?	2*	65
Colorado	199	1/1	115
Idaho	91	1/1	61
Montana	119	1/1	119
Nebraska	0-1	0-1	0-1
Nevada	68	1	62
New Mexico	21	1/1*	15
North Dakota	5	1	5
Oregon	95	1	99 (License & tribal harvest)
South Dakota	3	1	2
Utah	46	11 (6DB&5RM)	46
Washington	32	1	31
Wyoming	213	5/1	167
<i>Desert Bighorn Sheep</i>			
Arizona	107	1/1	86
California	23	3?	19
Colorado	12	0	11
Nevada	312	2	258
New Mexico	29	1/1*	15
Texas	13*	1/1*	9*
Utah	46	11 (6DB&5RM)	45
Baja California Sur	?	0	35
Sonora	?	0	55
Chihuahua	?	0	2
Coahuila	?	0-1	2-5

**Notes: British Columbia auction tag is buyer's choice (bighorn, Dall's or Stone's.) New Mexico total does not include 3-5 landowner tags. Texas totals include landowner tags.*

Source: Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies (2014 data.)