



## **Wild Sheep Foundation Policy on Ewe Hunting**

*North American Conservation Vision 2020: Bighorn Sheep Goal #11 - Population Management*

Conservation of wild sheep and the ecosystems they occupy comprise the primary mission of the Wild Sheep Foundation (WSF). The WSF supports scientific solutions to resource management challenges and, to this end, WSF has invested heavily in research, disease investigations and mitigation, population management, wild sheep translocations, habitat enhancement, control of non-native wildlife, predator management, and conservation education in cooperative efforts with universities, governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations.

Occasionally, favorable environmental factors or management successes result in wild sheep populations that meet or exceed their habitat's capacity to support them, with the expectation that their health is at risk due to overpopulation and resulting nutritional limitations or disease transmission within the population. Also, maintenance of wild sheep populations below carrying capacity helps reduce dispersal and potential forays into areas containing domestic sheep or goats. To maintain wild sheep populations at or below carrying capacity of their habitats, it is the policy of the Wild Sheep Foundation to encourage translocations to suitable vacant habitats or to augment existing populations, as determined by wildlife agency personnel. However, when suitable areas are not available, population reduction is still desirable. In such cases, the policy of the Wild Sheep Foundation is to encourage harvest of female sheep by hunting as a tool for bringing population numbers in line with the estimated carrying capacity of the area in question.

The Wild Sheep Foundation 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. Nevertheless, population reductions have always been integral to successful, sound wildlife management. Whether by translocations or harvest of females, when sheep populations exceed the carrying capacity of their habitats, scientific management — as described in the Wild Sheep Foundation Bylaws, Mission Statement and North American Conservation Vision 2020 — is warranted.

*WSF North American Conservation 2020:* <http://www.wildsheepfoundation.org/Page.php/cp/Conservation%20Strateg>

*(5/27/2016)*