

Perceived Threats to Wild Sheep: Levels of Concordance Among Western States, Provinces, and Territories

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Abstract: In 2008, representatives of 19 states, provinces, or territories that are members of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies informally ranked 7 perceived threats to the conservation of wild sheep from greatest to least concern. Statistical analyses indicated significant concordance among respondents when all responses were considered simultaneously ($P < 0.001$), but there was little agreement among representatives from areas inhabited by thimhorn sheep ($P \approx 0.23$). I failed, however, to reject the null hypothesis of no agreement among states inhabited primarily by desert bighorn sheep ($P \approx 0.02$) or Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep ($P < 0.001$). Further, when within-group and between-group rankings were considered simultaneously, the null hypothesis of no agreement among participants representing areas inhabited by desert bighorn sheep or Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep again was not rejected ($P < 0.001$). Categories of threat considered in this analysis were preliminary in nature and not mutually exclusive and, thereby, confounded interpretation of results. Thus, I suggest further refining the list of threats with which wild sheep are faced, and combining those issues into fewer categories of risk.

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