

Utilizing Wildlife Forensics to Protect Natural Resources: A Case Study in Catching a Bighorn Sheep Poacher

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Abstract: Illegal take of trophy big game species reduces the legal hunting opportunities for the general public on already small populations. In addition to being highly valued as watchable wildlife, sales of big horn special tags & permits funds big horn sheep conservation efforts throughout North America. The value of these animals and limited hunting opportunity leads some to attempt to take these trophies through less than legitimate means. In 2008, Idaho Conservation Officers received information about a potential illegal harvest of a trophy ram from the Salmon River drainage. This case study describes the criminal and forensic investigation that lead to the prosecution and felony conviction of the poacher.

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