

Status of the Mummy Range Subpopulation of Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) at Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado

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Abstract: In 2009 a report was completed to review the history of bighorn sheep in Rocky Mountain National Park, to compile existing research, data and information with emphasis on Mummy Range herd, to identify gaps and/or inconsistencies in knowledge regarding that subpopulation, to potentially clarify those inconsistencies and gaps with current literature on sheep populations from across North America, and to identify management considerations and future research for the Mummy Range subpopulation of bighorn sheep at Rocky Mountain National Park. Existing data was compiled to assess mineral use and deficiencies, habitat use, dietary information, disease, and the role of transplants/removals, interspecific interactions, genetic exchange, and human disturbances on sheep productivity and survival. Synthesis of research on sheep biology, physiology, behavior, and management appear to support priority areas identified at a workshop of key stakeholders held in February 2008 as well as identify other research that may warrant consideration – especially with regard to the band of sheep along the Mummy Range. Though numerous stressors exist and are further complicated by the removal of 135 animals over eight years, reported population estimates over time indicate that age/sex ratios may be relatively stable throughout the Mummy Range. Continued caution is encouraged, however. Numerous opportunities exist to expand current research or further analyze available data to fill gaps in knowledge that may lead to better understanding of potential threats to this herd.

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