

HISTORY OF TRANSPLANTING MOUNTAIN GOATS AND MOUNTAIN SHEEP — SOUTH DAKOTA

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOATS

Rocky Mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*) were not native to South Dakota. In 1924, 6 animals were obtained from Alberta, Canada which were placed in an enclosure within Custer State Park in the Black Hills (Richardson 1971). Two escaped that day, and the remaining four escaped in 1929. This established the present herd in the Harney Peak range of approximately 150-200 animals. In 1954, 6 goats were transplanted from this herd to Spearfish Canyon in the northern Black Hills. This transplant failed, leaving the Harney Peak herd as the only viable herd of mountain goats in South Dakota.

In 1960, 9 mountain goats were trapped from the Harney Peak herd and shipped to Wyoming (Richardson 1971). During 1961, 11 goats were trapped and sent to Colorado. Colorado received an additional 10 goats in 1964 and 5 goats in 1968 (Richardson 1971). No further trapping and transplanting has occurred with this herd.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGHORN SHEEP

Audubon's bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis auduboni*) were native to the Black Hills and Badlands of South Dakota. Uncontrolled hunting caused the extinction of this subspecies by 1916 (Buechner 1960). Therefore, the three viable herds of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis canadensis*) in South Dakota are a result of transplants from other states.

Slim Buttes

In 1961, 12 sheep from Alberta, Canada (Sheep Sanctuary) were transplanted into the Slim Buttes of northwestern South Dakota. This transplant failed and no further attempts have been made for this area.

Custer State Park

In 1922, 8 bighorn sheep from Montana and Wyoming (unverified origin) were transplanted into Custer State Park within the Black Hills. This herd built to approximately 150 animals until a suspected waterborne disease caused the extinction of the herd in 1959. A second transplant of 22 bighorns from Whiskey Mountain, Wyoming was placed in the park in 1965 (W. Jackson unpubl. rept. 1981, CSP SD). This transplant established the present herd of approximately 150 animals. During 1974, 26 sheep were trapped from this herd and shipped to Colorado. Fort Robinson, Nebraska received 6 bighorns in 1980, 6 in 1981, and 4 in 1982 that were trapped from this herd.

Badlands National Park

In 1964, 22 bighorns from Pikes Peak, Colorado were placed in a 370 acre enclosure in the Badlands National Park. By 1967, only 16 sheep remained and were released into the park (McCutchen 1980) establishing the present herd of approximately 160 animals. During 1992, 5 bighorns were trapped within the park and transplanted into Spring Creek Canyon in the Black Hills.

Spring Creek Canyon

Twenty six bighorns from Georgetown, Colorado were transplanted into Spring Creek Canyon in the Black Hills in 1991. An additional 5 sheep were trapped in Badlands National Park and transplanted into the canyon in 1992. This established the present herd of approximately 90 animals.

LITERATURE CITED

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