

HISTORY OF TRANSPLANTING MOUNTAIN GOATS AND MOUNTAIN SHEEP – MONTANA

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Trapping and transplanting data for both Rocky Mountain Goats (*Oreamnos americana missoulae*) and bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) was taken from reports by Couey (1950, 1971), Janson's 1974 report on the status of bighorn sheep transplanting in Montana, Rogrud (1983) and an assortment of memos and requests from various biologists and Regional game managers in Montana. In addition, communications with other states while preparing this document resulted in the inclusion of several trapping and transplants, both into and from Montana, that were not found in other historical records.

In working with the records it was obvious that in some cases the numbers reported trapped did not agree with numbers released. For this report, because it deals with herd establishment, numbers released were used where that information differed with the trapping data.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN GOATS

Between 1941 and 1995 the state engaged in 44 captures totaling 423 animals, 399 of which were transplanted into Montana, 12 were moved to Colorado and 12 given to Wyoming. Transplants in Montana were taken from 5 native populations and one transplant site (Gates of the Mountains) in the state and moved to 28 other areas, 17 of which currently support huntable populations. (Table 1)

ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGHORN SHEEP

Two bighorn herds in Montana were begun with stock from other areas. Montana received 12 bighorn sheep from the Banff area in Alberta in 1922. These animals were introduced onto the Moiese Bison Range and were the seed stock of the current herd. Sixteen head were imported from Colorado in 1947 and moved to Billy Creek in the Missouri breaks. This population increased to 130 head and was hunted for two years prior to a gradual decline that resulted in only a remnant population occupying the area in the mid-70's.

This same scenario, establishment of a population and a later loss of that population, has been repeated several times with bighorns that have been transplanted within Montana. This should make managers a little leery of declaring a transplant "successful", even after the population has expanded and is capable of sustaining hunting.

A total of 1754 bighorns have been transplanted within Montana from herds within the state (Table 2). An additional 93 have been sent out of state, with 46 going to Washington and 47 to Oregon. The Sun River herd has accounted for 819 animals or 47% of the transplanted stock, with the Wildhorse Island and Lost Creek herds, which are both introduced populations, accounting for an additional 28% of the transplanted animals.

LITERATURE CITED

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Table 1. Mountain Goat Trapping and Transplanting, 1941-1996.

Year	Number	Source	Transplanting Area
1941	10	Deep Creek, Teton County	Crazy Mountains, Sweet Grass County
1941	4	Deep Creek, Teton County	Benchmark, Lewis and Clark County
1942	14	Deep Creek, Teton County	Beartooth Mountains, Stillwater County
1943	11	Deep Creek, Teton County	Crazy Mountains, Sweet Grass County
	4	Deep Creek, Teton County	Square Buttes, Choteau County
1945	10	Deep Creek, Teton County	Stillwater Canyon, Stillwater County
1946	9	Deep Creek, Teton County	Beartooth Mountains, Stillwater County
1947	6	Deep Creek, Teton County	West Fork Gallatin, Gallatin County
1948	9		Colorado
1948	5	South Fork Flathead County	Stillwater Canyon, Stillwater County
1950	40	Deep Creek, Teton County	Madison Dam, Madison County
1950	3		Colorado
1951	4	Deep Creek, Teton County	Gates of the Mountains, L & C County
1951	29	South Fork, Flathead County	Gates of the Mountains, L & C County
1951	12	Van Lookout, Lake County	Madison Dam, Madison County
1952	18	South Fork, Flathead County	East Rosebud, Carbon County
1952	2	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	East Rosebud, Carbon County
1953	11	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Snowy Mountains, Fergus County
1953	7	South Fork, Flathead County	East Rosebud, Carbon County
1954	11	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Snowy Mountains, Fergus County
1955	14	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	South Boulder, Jefferson County
1956	15	Deep Creek, Teton County	Elkhorn Mountains, Jefferson County
1956	12	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Mill Creek, Madison County
1956	8	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Pine Creek, Park County
1956	10		Wyoming (Sybill research unit)
1957	2	Deep Creek, Teton County	Elkhorn Mountains, Jefferson County
1957	10	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Pine Creek, Park County
1958	2	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Elkhorn Mountains, Jefferson county
1958	4	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Pine Creek, Park County
1959	27	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Wolf Creek, Madison County
1962	7	Canyon Creek, Beaverhead Co.	Highland Mountains, Silver Bow Co.
1969	13	Gates of the Mountains, L & C	Bridger Mountains, Gallatin County
1970	13	Gates of the Mountains, L & C	Mt. Edith, Broadwater County
1971	7	Gates of the Mountains, L & C	Square Buttes, Choteau County
1971	8	Gates of the Mountains, L & C	Mt. Edith, Broadwater County
1972	12	Gates of the Mountains, L & C	Snow Crest, Madison County
1980	7	Washington	Drift Creek, Lincoln County
1985	12	Olympic National Park	Cougar Peak, Sanders County
1987	12	National Bison Range	W. Fk Thompson R. Sanders County
	12	National Bison Range	Rattlesnake, Missoula County
1989	13	Olympic National Park	Red Mountain, Lewis & Clark County
1990	2	National Bison Range	Wyoming
1990	2	National Bison Range	W. Fk. Thompson R. , Sanders County
1990	6	National Bison Range	Copper Creek, Lewis & Clark County

Table 2. Source, Sex composition and release locations of mountain sheep transplants in Montana, 1922-1966.

Year	Trapsite	Male	Female	Unc.	Transplanted	Release Location
1922	Bamff, Alberta			12	12	National Bison Range, Moiese
1941	Mission Mountains	1	1		2	Wildhorse Island, Lake County
1942	Wagner Basin, Sun River	2	9		11	Gates of the Mountains, Lewis and Clark County
1943	Wagner Basin, Sun River	1	2		3	Gates of the Mountains, Lewis and Clark County
1944	Gallatin	1			1	Hannah Gulch, Lewis and Clark County
1944	Kootenai River	2			2	West Fork Gallatin River, Gallatin County
1947	Scattering Springs, Sun River	2			2	West Fork, Gallatin River, Gallatin County
1947	Scattering Springs, Sun River	3	3		6	Wild Horse Island, Lake County
1947	Colorado (Tarryall Herd)	5		11	16	Billy Creek, Garfield County
1954	Scattering Springs, Sun River	3	3		6	16 Mile Canyon, Gallatin County
1954	Wild Horse Island	2	10		12	Kootenai River, Lincoln County
1955	Wild Horse Island	5	4		9	16 Mile Canyon, Gallatin County
1955	Wild Horse Island	4	4		8	Bull Mountains, Jefferson County
1955	Wild Horse Island	3	1		4	Kootenai River, Lincoln County
1955	Wild Horse Island	1	2		3	Bull Mountains, Jefferson County
1956	Gibson Lake, Sun River	5	8		13	Sheep Creek, Cascade County
1957	Gibson Lake, Sun River	1	6		7	Bull Mountains, Jefferson County
1957	Wild Horse Island	2	4		6	Bull Mountains, Jefferson County
1958	Wild Horse Island	4	1		5	Sheep Creek, Cascade County
1958	Wild Horse Island	4	3		7	Blue Hills, Custer County
1958	Gibson Lake, Sun River	5			5	Blue Hills, Custer County
1958	Gibson Lake, Sun River	2	5	2	9	Two Calf Creek-Sheep Pasture, Fergus County
1959	Gibson Lake	4	9		13	Eddy Creek, Sanders County
1959	Wild Horse Island	1	5		6	Thompson River, Sanders County
1959	National Bison Range	9	4		13	Two-Calf Creek-Sheep Pasture, Fergus County

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1960	National Bison Range								Stickney Creek, Lewis & Clark County
1960	National Bison Range								Two-Calf Creek-Sheep Pasture, Fergus County
1960	Scattering Springs, Sun River	1	2			34	11	3	Sheep Creek, Cascade County
1961	Scattering Springs, Sun River	4	7	1			12		Two Calf Creek-Sheep Pasture, Fergus County
1962	Gibson Lake, Sun River	5	13				18		Sheep Creek, Meagher County
1963	National Bison Range	5					5		Kootenai River, Lincoln County
1963	National Bison Range	6					6		West Fork, Gallatin River, Gallatin County
1963	National Bison Range	6	8				14		Doris Mountain, Flathead County
1964	Hannan Gulch, Sun River	6	19				25		Willow Creek, near Pony, Madison County
1967	Scattering Springs, Sun River	5	16				21		Highland Mountains, Madison County
1967	Ford Creek, Sun River	5	20				25		Olson-Foster Creek, Deer Lodge County
1968	Gibson Lake, Sun River	5	27				32		Sieben, Lewis and Clark County
1968	Gibson Lake, Sun River	2					2		Stillwater Canyon, Stillwater County
1968	Castle Reef, Sun River	3	13				16		Petty Creek, Missoula County
1968	National Bison Range	6	9				15		Teakettle Mountain, Flathead County
1969	Scattering Springs, Sun River	3	15				18		Highland Mountains, Carbon County
1969	Scattering Springs, Sun River	4	19				23		Berray Mountain, Sanders County
1969	Scattering Springs, Sun River	1	12				13		Highland Mountains, Silver Bow County
1970	Castle Reef, Sun River	2					2		Stillwater Canyon, Stillwater County
1971	Castle Reef, Sun River	9	26				35		Pryor Mountain, Carbon County
1971	Ford Creek, Sun River	2	3				5		Beartooth Game Range, Lewis & Clark County
1971	Castle Reef, Sun River	10	26				36		Beartooth Game Range, Lewis & Clark County
1971	Ford Creek, Sun River	1	5				6		Beartooth Game Range, Lewis & Clark County
1971	National Bison Range	2					2		Beartooth Game Range, Lewis & Clark County
1972	Gibson Lake, Sun River	6	13				19		East Fork Bitterroot-Ravalli County
1972	Castle Reef, Sun River	5	11				16		East Fork Bitterroot-Ravalli County
1972	Ford Creek, Sun River	3	18				21		Little Rockies, Phillips County
1973	Castle Reef, Sun River	1	4				5		Beartooth Game Range, Lewis & Clark County
1974	Gibson Lake, Sun River	8	19				27		Pryor Mountains, Carbon County

1974	Castle Reef, Sun River	9	12	21	Little Rockies, Phillips County
1974	Castle Reef, Sun River	9	9	18	Pryor Mountains, Carbon County
1975	Wildhorse Island		2	2	Berry Mountain, Sanders County
1975	Gibson Lake, Sun River	10	21	31	Rock Creek, Granite County
1975	Ford Creek, Sun River	1	15	16	Berry Mountain, Sanders County
1975	Hornes Gulch, Sun River	4	11	15	Berry Mountain, Sanders County
1975	Hornes Gulch, Sun River	2	9	11	Beartooth Game Range, Lewis and Clark County
1975	Hornes Gulch, Sun River		untgd.	49	Beartooth Game Range, Lewis and Clark County
1975	Wild Horse Island	2		56	Beartooth Game Range, Lewis and Clark County
1976	Castle Reef, Sun River	8	17	25	Blue Hills, Custer County
1976	Reclamation Flat, Sun River	7	27	34	Sheep Creek, Cascade County
1979	Wild Horse Island	7	34	41	Fourteen Mile Creek, Lolo Forest, Sanders County
1979	Wild Horse Island	2	6	8	Washington State
1979	Wild Horse Island	9	16	25	Rock Creek, Granite County
1979	Wild Horse Island	5	9	14	Flathead Indian Res., Little Money Creek, Sanders County
1979	Wild Horse Island	5	4	1	Washington State University
1979	Wild Horse Island			11	Flathead Indian Reservation
1980	Reclamation Flat, Sun River	7	21	28	Stafford Ferry, Phillips County
1980	Reclamation Flat, Sun River	5	23	28	Mickey Brandon Buttes, Phillips County
1981	Wild Horse Island (?)	5		5	Fourteen Mile Creek, Sanders County
1982	Reclamation Flat, Sun River	5	7	12	Washington State University
1984	Rock Creek	1		1	
1984	National Bison Range	3		3	Stillwater Canyon, Stillwater County
1985	National Bison Range	4		4	Petty Creek, Missoula County
1985	Thompson Falls	2		2	Lost Creek, Deer Lodge County
1985	Thompson Falls		7	7	Mill Creek, Park County
1985	Lost Creek			20	Boulder River, Park County
1985	Lost Creek	13	26	39	Tendoy Mountains, Beaverhead County
1985	Cinnabar	3	10	13	Mill Creek, Park County
1985	Thompson Falls	2		2	National Bison Range, Moiese
1986	Thompson Falls	13	1	14	Tendoy Mountains, Beaverhead County

1987	Lost Creek	22	6		28	Ranch Creek, Granite County
1987	Lost Creek	6	3		9	Boulder River, Park County
1987	Upper Rock Creek	9	1		10	Boulder River, Park County
1987	Ural-tweed	2	2		2	Wildhorse Island, Lake County
1987	Thompson Falls	3	2		5	Boulder River, Park County
1987	Upper Rock Creek (two transplants)	15	12		27	Bonner, Missoula County
1988	Thompson Falls	6	13		19	Squaw Creek, Madison County
1989	Lost Creek	4	22		26	Boulder River, Park County
1989	Thompson Falls	2	3		5	Quake Lake, Madison County
1989	Lost Creek	2	16		18	Taylor/Hilgard's, Gallatin County
1989	Sun River	1	6	1	8	Joseph Wa
1990	Sun River, Reclamation Flats	10	26		36	Painted Rocks, Ravalli County
1990	Sun River, Castle Reef	8	23		31	Bonner, Missoula County
1991	Lost Creek	9	23		32	Blackleaf Canyon, Teton County
1991	Lost Creek	4	20		24	W. Fork Bitterroot River, Ravalli County
1992	Highlands	12	23		35	Sleeping Giant, Lewis and Clark County
1993	Wildhorse Island	10	22		32	Sleeping Giant, Lewis and Clark County
1993	Wildhorse Island	5	10		15	Walling Reef, Teton County
1993	Wildhorse Island	6	20		26	Little Mile Creek, Gallatin County
1993	Wildhorse Island	5	3		8	Washington State University
1993	Thompson Falls	3	3		3	National Bison Range, Moiese
1994	Wildhorse Island	12	35		47	Oregon (three transplants)
1994	Thompson Falls	3	3		3	National Bison Range, Moiese
1995	Knowles Creek	6	13		19	Beartooth WMA, Lewis & Clark County
1995	Knowles Creek	8	18		26	Boulder River, Park County
1996	Rock Creek	3	17		20	Beartooth WMA, Lewis & Clark County
1996	Rock Creek	5	20		25	Elkhorn Mountains, Jefferson County
	TOTAL	509	1036	209	1754	