

Summary Report: Bighorn Sheep Respiratory Pathogen Sampling and Health Assessment Workshop

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ABSTRACT September 2013, a bighorn sheep disease sampling and health assessment workshop was conducted at the request of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Wildlife Health Committee (WAFWA WHC) to prioritize and standardize testing protocols for respiratory pathogens of bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*). Specific concerns included: 1) numerous tests for a variety of pathogens are available but interpretation of results is challenging; 2) laboratories do not have standard methodology; and 3) the 2009 WAFWA WHC Sheep Sampling Guidelines required updating.

The workshop included wildlife health professionals from 9 western states and 2 Canadian provinces. Members of the WAFWA Wild Sheep Working Group were surveyed prior to the workshop. Funding was secured from the Wild Sheep Foundation to support attendees with travel restrictions.

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The group produced documents: 1) outlining sampling protocols for various herd management goals; 2) listing important terms and their concise definitions; 3) standardizing necropsy protocols; and 4) providing a concise article on herd health monitoring recommendations. The group also identified several tests and protocols requiring future research, as well as topics and techniques for agency staff training to support consistent approaches to sample collection and handling. These products will support recommendations across agencies for different management practices and provide a valuable resource and reference for all wildlife health and management professionals.

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KEY WORDS bighorn sheep, disease sampling protocols, herd health, *Ovis canadensis*, pneumonia complex, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Wildlife Health Committee.
