



Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction Project June 23, 2014 – July 7, 2014

BRIEFING

The following is a summary of Catalina Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction activities on the Coronado National Forest. This project status update covers the period from June 23, 2014 – July 7, 2014. For project background and previously-reported information on project events, including photos and videos, please visit www.azgfd.gov/catalinabighorn.

Additional project information can be obtained by visiting the Arizona Game and Fish Department Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/azgafd#!/CatalinaBighorns>, the Arizona Game and Fish Department webpage at <http://www.azgfd.gov/catalinabighorn>, the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society webpage at <http://www.adbss.org> or by visiting the Catalina Bighorn Advisory Committee webpage at <http://www.catalinabighornrestoration.org/>. This update is a public document and information in it can be used for any purpose.

TO SUBSCRIBE

If you would like to receive project updates as they are published please send your email address to jsacco@azgfd.gov.

CURRENT POPULATION STATUS

No mortalities occurred during this reporting period. The original release of 31 sheep consisted of 21 adult females or ewes, three yearling/juvenile ewes, five adult males or rams, and two yearling/juvenile rams. Thirty of the released sheep were outfitted with satellite GPS collars to provide managers with up-to-date information to help make adaptive, data-driven decisions. As of July 7, 2014, 13 of the remaining 14 collared sheep are known to be alive; one of the collars maybe malfunctioning.

To date there have been 16 bighorn sheep mortalities. Fourteen of the sheep were killed by mountain lions, one died as the result of predation by an unidentified cat, such as a small mountain lion or a bobcat, and another died from myopathy. To date, three lions associated with bighorn sheep kills have been removed, and the most recent of these lions was believed to have killed multiple sheep.

LAMBS

Biologists continue to monitor the population and check on the lambs born earlier this year. To date five lambs have been observed during this season. The lambs are growing quickly. In fact, one lamb observed recently is already $\frac{3}{4}$ the size of an adult and is starting to grow horns! All lambs appear to be healthy. As the lambing season draws to a close it is encouraging to note that the survivability of the known lambs has exceeded expectations. Seeing the continued development of the lambs is a source of cautious optimism as the project moves forward and there is video of two of the lambs interacting

available on the website. Because females with new lambs are especially sensitive to disturbance, there are trail restrictions in place inside the Bighorn Sheep Management Area to minimize any negative impacts from human disturbance on the sheep. Both trailhead notices and volunteers on the trail have been reminding hikers of the potential adverse impacts to the sheep caused by dogs (a year round restriction) or by people hiking more than 400 feet off-trail (restricted January 1 through April 30) within the bighorn sheep recovery area. For additional information, please visit the U.S. Forest Service webpage at www.fs.usda.gov/coronado/.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The next written briefing will be provided on July 25, 2014.

CONTACT

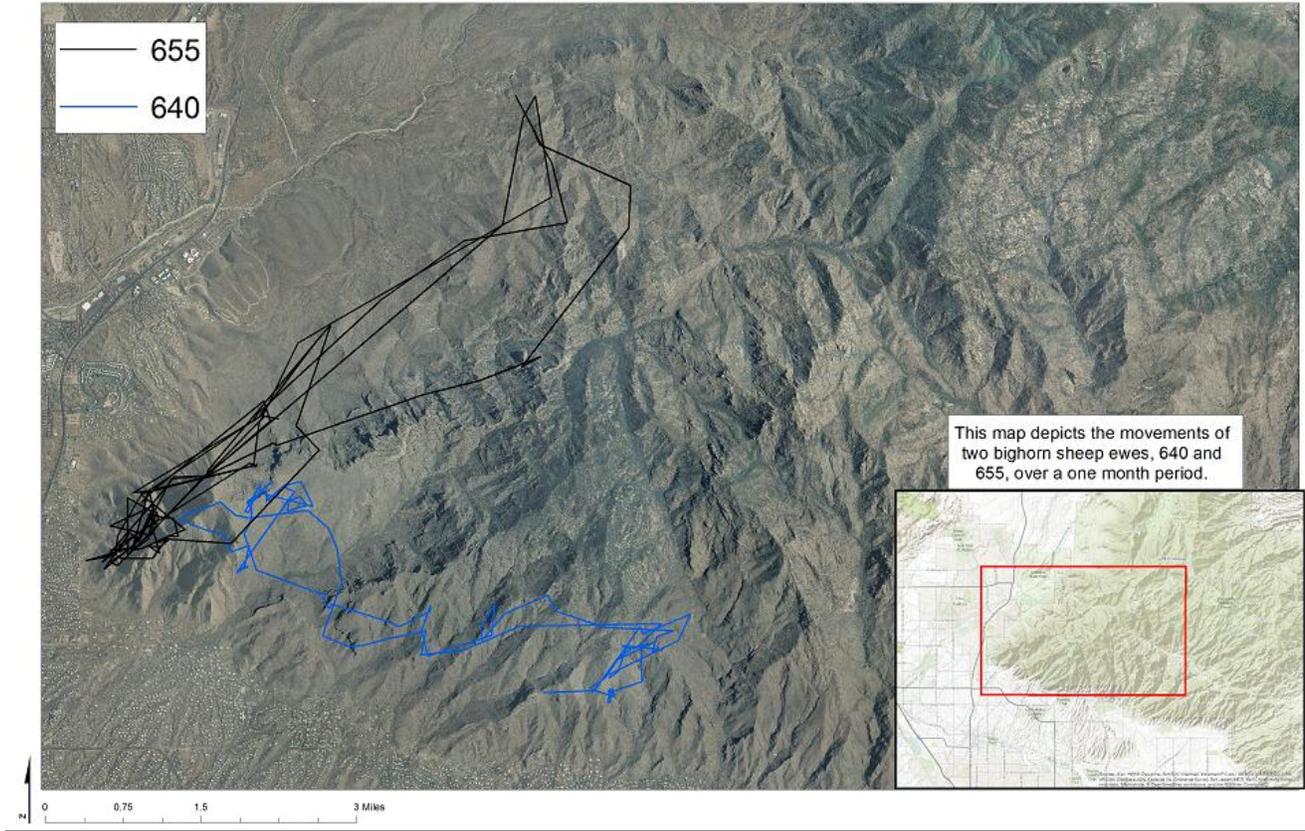
Mark Hart is the Public Information Officer for this project and can be reached at (520) 628-5376.

RESEARCH PROJECT FIELD NOTES

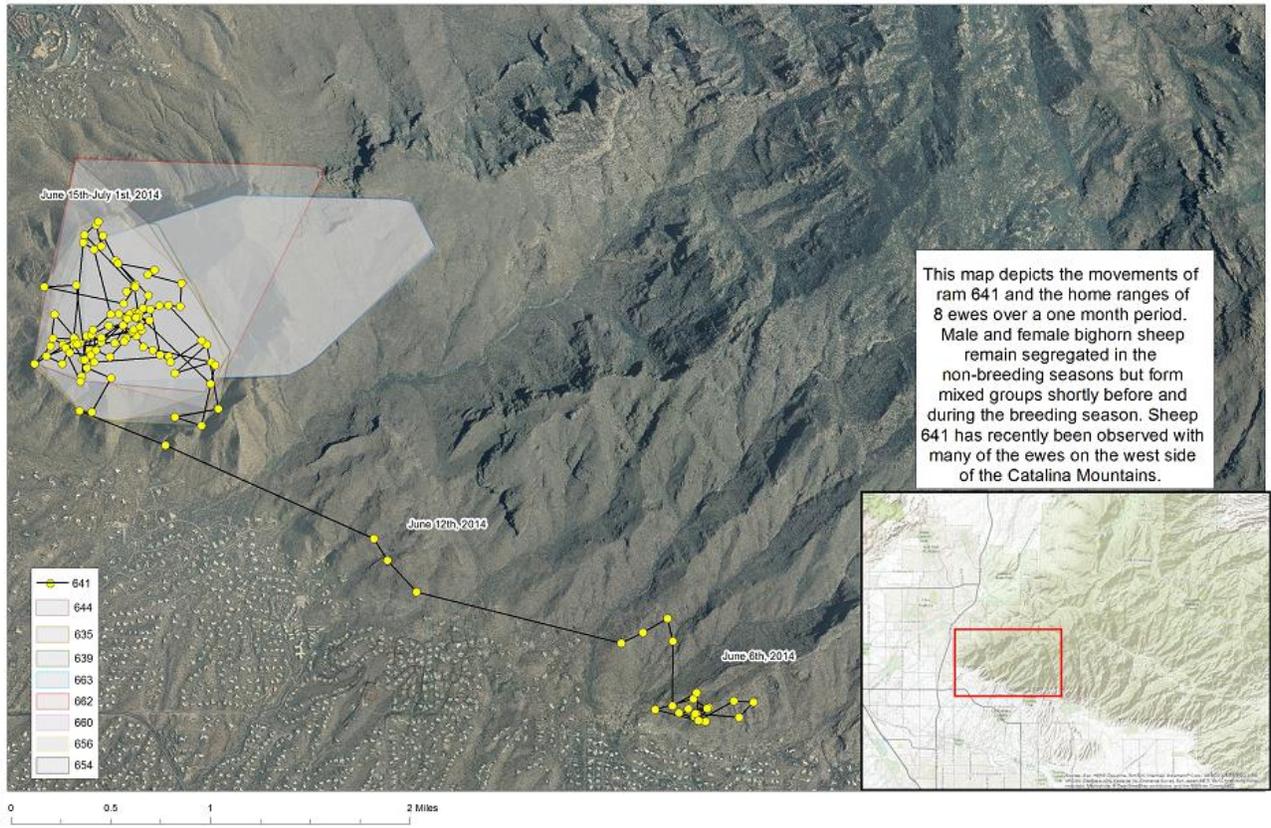
Research biologists are now using location data on all Catalina sheep to build polygons that outline sheep movements and home ranges. Once a polygon is constructed for each sheep, we will randomly select a number of sheep locations within each polygon to measure habitat characteristics. We will also use random points within specific habitat types or within sheep polygons to collect comparative data for analyzing what sheep are selecting and how the habitats they select either increase or reduce their risk of mortality. We continue to monitor the sheep and have been encouraged to see that the lone adult ram has moved back into a group of ewes as breeding season begins.

MAPS

Santa Catalina Mountains, Bighorn Sheep Reintroduction



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