



ZEROED

NEWSLETTER
of the
Idaho Chapter
of the
Wildlife Society

Number 18, August 1968

SYNOPSIS OF SUMMER FIELD TRIP

The Idaho Chapter of the Wildlife Society held its annual summer field trip July 16 - 17 in conjunction with the Idaho Fish and Game biologists' summer meeting. Twenty-seven persons participated.

The group assembled at Bowery Guard Station on the East Fork Salmon River where Regional Biologist, Ralph Pehrson, explained the problems of managing the East Fork deer and elk herds. The principal problem is one of hunter access to public lands. Much of the valley floor is privately owned. Landowners attitudes toward the public are somewhat less than cordial. Most of the watershed is not accessible from the limited road system. No camping areas are available above the river's mouth. The deer herd is increasing and the elk herd is about stable.

Jim Morgan, IF&G biologist, discussed the status of the 45 head of bighorn sheep which winter on Marco Creek, tributary of the East Fork. One of the major problems is high mortality of first-year lambs due to pneumonia, probably resulting from poor nutrition. The herd now includes 10 legal rams.

The caravan left the East Fork by way of Spar Canyon road, and crossed over the Lost River Range at Double Springs Pass.

Errol Nielson, IF&G biologist, outlined the Upper Pahsimeroi pronghorn study conducted by Dr. Fichter, I.S.U. professor, in the late 1950's. His study shows that most does threw two fawns, but within 90 days 50% were dead. The cause was thought to be nutrition oriented. Recent studies indicate an upward trend in pronghorn populations.

At Patterson Creek, tributary to the Pahsimeroi, the group viewed mountain goat winter range, where mountain mahogany is the principal forage species. Ralph Pehrson said the herd had declined from a peak of about 200 herd three years ago to about 100 animals. During this decline, a high incidence of mange was observed. High goat densities on the limited winter range and poor nutrition were named as possible causes of the reduction of this herd.

Pehrson pointed out that a high deer population was noted in the Pahsimeroi Range at the time of the high goat populations. Direct competition on mountain mahogany was observed. Later seasons and extra deer tags have increased the annual deer harvest from about 150 to over 1,000 head.

On the next morning the caravan traveled down the Salmon River to Morgan Creek where Jim Morgan outlined his bighorn sheep study. This herd numbers about 150 head but is a declining population. The winter range on Morgan Creek is in poor condition. Bighorns must compete with deer and trespass cattle. Jim has vegetation transects in this area and is collecting data on the soils. He hopes to transplant the resident herd of 13 bighorns to the Lost River Range. He would like to carry out a controlled sagebrush spraying operation to allow blue-bunch wheat grass (the key bighorn forage plant) to increase. However, control of competition from deer and trespass cattle must be achieved first. Jim and his assistants are experimenting with radio telemetry, with an eye to determination of the extent of the herd's summer range.

The caravan left Morgan Creek drainage and dropped into the upper end of the Panther Creek basin. We met Jim Davis, Idaho Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit fellow, who is studying the effects of controlled logging operations on elk in the South Fork of Moyer Creek. The U. S. Forest Service has made a timber sale in this area, which is a principal calving ground for a herd of from 150 - 200 elk. Logging operations are slated to begin in late July. Jim is in the first year of a two-year study.

The caravan continued down Panther Creek and crossed over the Divide in the Main Salmon River, terminating in Salmon, Idaho.

HIGHLIGHTS OF BUSINESS MEETING

A short business meeting was held in Challis July 16, 1968, to take up matters requiring action prior to the winter meeting.

President Norberg, who has been named to the NW Section Nominating Committee, outlined the Society's new procedure for soliciting nominations for officers of the parent society from the membership. Anyone wishing to make a nomination should contact President Norberg before November.

The president asked those members present for their comments on the pending dues increase in keeping with the directive from the executive secretary. Comments were generally positive.

President Norberg called for suggestions for improving the Technical Session of the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference to be passed on to the Technical Session chairman.

Membership Committee chairman, Keith Bayha, announced appointment of the following members to this committee: Walt Browne, Elwood Bizeau, Stu Murrell, Dave Neider, Don Metz, Levi Mohler, Ralph Pehrson, Bob Autenrieth, Dale Turnipseed, and Frank DeShon. They will contact potential members in their areas to enlist their support for the Chapter and the parent society.

New appointments made at this meeting include:

Bylaws Review Committee	Les Trout, Chairman
Awards Program Committee	Don Metz, Chairman
Historian	Dr. Ken Hungerford

Keith Bayha
Secretary-Treasurer
Idaho Chapter Wildlife Society