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Title:

Comments: [External Email]Comments on 2022 IDFG Sheep Collaring Project (Salmon and Red River Ranger Districts)

[External Email]

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Dear Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest,

Dear Idaho Department of Fish & Game,

It's time wildlife managers stopped using trap and collar techniques to observe bighorn sheep. This method is violent, invasive, stressful, disruptive, and unnecessary. One of the primary drivers of disease in any species is stress. If the IDFG wishes to observe pneumonia in bighorns, driving them with helicopters, netting them, darting them, etc. them is a fantastic way to trigger a disease outbreak. I strongly believe that bighorns have a far better chance of thriving if they are left in peace and observed from a distance. Much more can be learned from standing back and quietly watching than from capturing and manhandling. Evidence of health or disease can easily be tracked by simple on-the-ground observation and head counts, all of which can be done on foot. It is more work and probably less fun than swooping in with helicopters, but it is far less disruptive to the herds and I believe far more can be learned from boots-on-the-ground observation than from aerial reconnaissance. On-the-ground study is a job that college interns could do to earn their degrees in wildlife biology, and in the process they will learn details about the entire ecosystem in which these creatures live and move than anyone could ever see from the air. It's time for wildlife managers to rethink how they manage and take a step back to watch and learn in the quiet, old-fashioned way of the classic conservationists of yesteryear.

Thank you for your time,

-Nan

Sincerely,

Shannon Hassey

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