



**Preventive Cougar
Control
in Bighorn Sheep Range**

Biennial Report

December 13, 2012

New Mexico State Game Commission Meeting

Lordsburg, NM

History

- **Cougar Removal began in 2001**
- **Less than 170 desert bighorn sheep**
- **Two prong approach**
 - **Transplants of bighorn sheep**
 - **Cougar control**



Cougar Control

- **Removed 2.6 cougars per bighorn sheep range**
- **Spent \$13,500 per year per bighorn sheep range**



Funding the work

- **Sportsmen**
 - **Bighorn sheep enhancement licenses**
 - **Grants from bighorn sheep conservation groups**



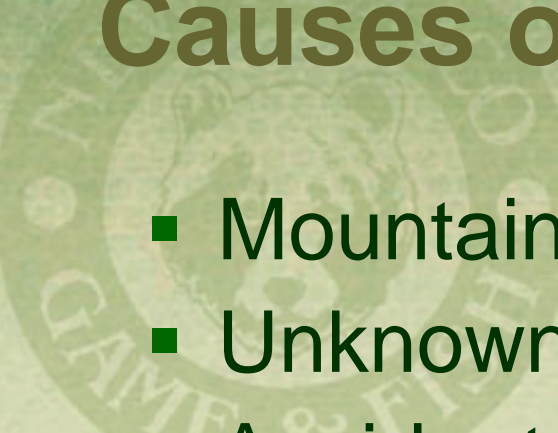
Results

- **Decrease in bighorn mortality**
- **Current population estimate 750**



Questions ?

Causes of Mortality Prior to 2001



■ Mountain lion predation	76%
■ Unknown	13%
■ Accidents	4%
■ Poaching	3%
■ Other predation	2%
■ Scientific collection	1%

85% of Known-Caused Mortality was due to mountain lion predation

Mortality Rates from Lion Predation Only

Pre-Lion Control: 0.16

Post-Lion Control: 0.06

63% decrease in lion-caused mortality

Mortality Rates From All Other Causes of Mortality

Pre-Lion Control: 0.06

Post-Lion Control: 0.06

*******0% decrease in mortality*******

NM Statewide Desert Bighorn Sheep Population Numbers 1980-2012



Individual Population Estimates 2012

- San Andres=125
- Fra Cristobals=220
- Caballos=80
- Ladrones=55
- Peloncillos=123
- Hatchets=150
- STATEWIDE=752