

# Aerial Wildlife Survey Report

## Sheep Management Areas 7 and 8 Bighorn sheep Survey (2018-19)

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### Background

Sheep Management Areas 7 and 8 are made up of the mountainous habitats located, respectively, between Highway 16 and Sheep Creek (WMUs 439, 440, 441, 444, and the southern portion of 442) and from Sheep Creek north to the Wapiti River and west to the British Columbia border (WMUs 445, 446 and the northern portion of 442).

Trophy sheep hunting in these units is a general season from August 25 to October 31, for 4/5 curl rams, with the exception of WMU 446 and WMU 444 north of the Beaverdam road, where trophy sheep hunting is managed by special licenses with the same size and season restrictions. Hunting of ewes and lambs is also by special license in all these WMUs, from Sept 10 to October 31, with generally low realized harvest rates (example 1 to 3% of the previous winter's total count).

Funding for these surveys was provided by the Wild Sheep Foundation.

### Survey Method

A Bell 206 helicopter was flown counter-clockwise around the mountain ridges of each distinct winter range, at an elevation between the ridgetop and tree line. Sheep were classified from the helicopter, and were also photographed using a Nikon D3200 with an 18-140 mm lens to verify the field classification.

A total of 46.2 hours were flown on:

- January 15 (Monaghan 5.0 hrs; Hayden Ridge 0.7 hrs)
- February 5 (SRC-Caw 2.3 hrs; Rocky Pass 2.0 hrs)
- February 6 (Stearn 4.4 hrs; North Persimmon 1.8 hrs; North Berland 1.1 hrs)
- February 9 (Swift-Horn 2.6 hrs; Triangle first half 2.5 hrs)
- February 10 (Triangle second half 1.5 hrs; Moon and Planet 3.0 hrs; Mumm and Collie aborted 1.6 hrs)
- February 14 (Sulphur 1.5 hrs; Ivy Ridge 1.7 hrs; Torrens aborted 0.5 hrs; plus 1.5 deadhead from Grande Prairie)
- February 21 (Torrens 1.5; Horn-Gorman 1.4; Mt May 2.8; plus 1.8 deadhead from Grande Prairie)
- February 26 (Brule-Solomon, Mumm and Collie, Stornoway JNP 5.2 hrs)

# Results

Table 1.

WMU	Winter Range	Rams				Ewes	Lambs	U/C	Total
		1/4	1/2	3/4	4/5				
439	Brule-Solomon	13	4	3	5	35	17	5	82
440	Hayden Ridge	0	0	2	0	17	4	0	23
440	Rocky Pass	3	7	5	1	58	19	3	96
440	North Persimmon	2	6	2	3	27	5	1	46
440	North Berland	10	5	10	2	35	17	0	79
440	Moon and Planet	1	5	4	1	34	8	4	57
440	Mumm and Collie	3	2	5	4	22	3	5	44
<b>440</b>	<b>Total 440</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>345</b>
442	Monaghan	9	15	17	14	128	46	0	229
442	Triangle	4	14	10	3	56	19	0	106
442	Swift-Horn	2	8	4	3	55	16	0	88
442	Mount May	1	1	4	1	18	10	1	36
442	Ivy Ridge	1	2	0	0	5	3	0	11
<b>442</b>	<b>Total 442</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>470</b>
444	Stearn	19	16	18	4	119	37	4	217
445	Sulphur	0	4	2	2	10	6	0	24
445	Torrens	1	4	3	1	20	11	2	42
445	Horn-Gorman	1	4	3	2	23	13	0	46
<b>445</b>	<b>Total 445</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>112</b>
446	SRC-Caw	10	15	7	2	132	46	3	215
JNP	Stornoway	14	12	15	14	51	25	0	131

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