

**WAFWA Wild Sheep Herd Health Monitoring Recommendations**

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**Abstract:** Bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) populations throughout western North America have suffered historic or recent declines. Mortality events in many bighorn populations were associated with recurrent outbreaks of pneumonia and occasionally other diseases. Periodic disease outbreaks in bighorn populations can contribute to instability and potentially to local extinction. Although apparently spared from disease outbreaks thus far, thimhorn sheep (*O. dalli*) are susceptible to respiratory and other pathogens that cause epidemics in bighorns, and their populations would be harmed by disease introductions. Consequently, preventing epidemics and minimizing their severity or impacts are universal management goals for North American wild sheep species. The paper outlines principles, guidelines and minimum recommendations for key elements of wild sheep herd health monitoring and management that can be practically applied across herds and jurisdictions. The intent is not to prescribe a comprehensive set of actions or activities for all agencies or for use in all management situations, but to provide guidance in assessing and monitoring herd health as an essential element of wild sheep management in North America.

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