

SONORAN PRONGHORN MONTHLY UPDATE

February – March 2014

Captive Breeding:

Cabeza Pen

Status of Pronghorn in Cabeza Pen

All the pronghorn in Cabeza pen are doing well. The thin doe with tapeworms has recovered and put on near normal weight. The first fawns of the season were observed on March 8. We have 13 fawns in both the north and south halves of the pen, with 6 more females likely to still give birth. This year we are putting small radio collars on a few fawns to assist in locating fawn mortalities earlier and determine causes of fawn mortality. Since we have not done this before, this year is mostly aimed at determining the best methods to do this, and whether our handling and collaring causes any mortality. The biologists at Cabeza pen have put fawn collars on 4 fawns successfully with no parental abandonment or fawn mortality. The breeding buck in south half should have been removed this year, but he was not caught in the bomas during the December capture, and we were unable to capture him in the bomas later, or remove him by darting.

March 2014

NORTH HALF		SOUTH HALF	
Adult Females	11	Adult Females	10
Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2013)	13	Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2013)	10
Breeding Buck (<i>b</i> 2010, Purple 3)	1	Breeding Buck (<i>b</i> 2010, Yellow 3)	1
Back up Buck (<i>b</i> 2012, Grn/Wht 3)	1	Breeding Buck (<i>b</i> 2011, Yel/Blk 3)	1
Yearling Bucks (<i>b</i> 2013)	3	Adult Bucks (<i>b</i> 2012)	2
Fawns (born 2014)	13	Yearling Bucks (<i>b</i> 2013)	8
		Fawns (born 2014)	13
TOTAL	42	TOTAL	45
Total Pen	87		

Kofa Pen

All the pronghorn in the Kofa pen are also doing well. We observed the first fawns on March 4. So far we have 12 fawns in the Kofa pen, with only 1 more female likely to give birth. The biologists have been able to put fawn collars on 2 fawns, again with no mortality or abandonment. It is more difficult to observe where fawns bed in the Kofa pen due to thicker vegetative cover in the pen and lower elevation observation points. We are still working on getting a better tower for observing at Kofa.

One female pronghorn who was transported in the trailer from Cabeza to the release pen at Clancy Tank in December was observed with a fairly substantial limp in the release pen; she was subsequently moved to the main Kofa pen where she can be monitored and perhaps recover from

the injury. If she recovers, she will be released at a later date; if not, she will be kept in the pen as breeding stock.

Status of Pronghorn in Kofa Pen

	March 2014
Adult Females	12
Yearling Females (b 2013)	1
Adult Males	3
Yearling Males (b 2013)	2
Fawns (born 2014)	11
TOTAL	28

2013 Released Pronghorn - Cabeza: The two bucks in the emergency holding pen were released into the wild on February 7. They immediately joined up and ran off with a buck released in 2011 who had been in the vicinity of the pen. On the last telemetry flight, they were just north of Cabeza, on the east side of South Tac.

On the last telemetry flight, 2 of the 4 pronghorn released on BMGR-West were near the southwest end of the Sierra Pintas; one was near Devils Hills; and one was just west of South Tac. All 6 of the pronghorn released on ORPI have remained in the Valley of the Ajo or just north of the Monument on BLM land; however we believe one of these GPS collars has failed.

2013 Released Pronghorn - Kofa: The 9 pronghorn in the release pen at Kofa were released to the wild on January 23, 2014. The 15 in the holding pen at Clancy Tank were released on January 27, 2014. Telemetry and GPS data has shown that these pronghorn have joined up into several smaller groups and are using most of the King Valley south and east of the pen, continuing onto YPG. One buck wandered east of Kofa into the Palomas Plain area, but returned to King Valley. Four pronghorn have returned to the vicinity of the pen. The three pronghorn released last year, have also been seen with these newly released animals. Two bucks with VHF collars were not heard on the last telemetry flight, and will be searched for on subsequent flights.

Water Projects: Sierra Pinta #3 was enlarged to 10,000 gallons during February thanks to volunteer help from the Marines, University of Arizona and Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club. The EA to enlarge Fawn Hills and build a new water in the Agua Dulces has also been signed.

Forage Enhancements: The forage plots are still green from precipitation so we have not started irrigating at any. We have replaced alfalfa hay at Point of the Pintas, where at least 9 pronghorn including one fawn have been photographed, and at Devils Hills.

Other Projects/Personnel: Due to scheduling conflicts we were not able to finish the Pinacate area of the Mexico survey before the pronghorn began breaking up into smaller groups for fawning. Consequently, we will complete this in November.

Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR herd: On the last telemetry flight, the pronghorn were spread out over most of the range. Thirteen fawns were seen with 22 females. Most of the range is still green, especially the Tule Desert, Growler Valley and parts of South Tac. There has been lots of new off road activity in the Tule Desert.



Newly collared fawn in Cabeza pen with expandable fawn collar.

Written April 1, 2014