

SONORAN PRONGHORN MONTHLY UPDATE

January 21, 2014

Captive Breeding:

Cabeza Pen

We did our annual capture of pronghorn in the boma traps December 13-15. The capture/release operation was a success again this year due to assistance from numerous personnel from many agencies including Arizona Game and Fish, US Fish and Wildlife Service – Cabeza Prieta and Kofa Refuges, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Luke Air Force Base, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, and US Border Patrol, and Yuma Valley Rod and Gun Club. In addition to our Game and Fish veterinarian (Dr. Anne Justice-Allen), a volunteer veterinarian, and contracted veterinarian (Dr. Ole Alcumbrac), we also hosted Dr. Ivonne Cassaigne from the National University of Mexico. Papillion Helicopters provided helicopters and pilots. Barry M. Goldwater Range, Marine Corps Air Station Yuma and Yuma Proving Ground permitted access to their restricted airspace. Many thanks to everyone who participated!

The Cabeza crew prepared for the boma capture throughout November by strategically feeding in the bomas, and monitoring activity with cameras. December 9 – 12, seventy pronghorn were captured in the north (34) and south (36) bomas. Processing took place December 13 – 15. All pronghorn were vaccinated against Bluetongue/EHD and other diseases and had blood drawn for disease and genetic testing. Pronghorn that were needed in the pens for breeding and this year's fawns were marked and released back into the pen. One adult buck from north was moved to south, and one adult buck from south was moved to north for breeding.

On the first day, all the pronghorn in the north herd were processed. All animals to be released were collared with either a VHF or GPS radio collar. Eleven pronghorn were tranquilized, and placed into a new specialized game trailer with air conditioning for transport to the 7-acre holding pen on Kofa NWR. The vehicle left the Cabeza pen around 12:30 pm and arrived at the holding pen on Kofa NWR at 6:00 pm. All 11 pronghorn were released from the trailer into the holding pen, and appeared to be in good condition. One buck got too hot to risk moving him to Kofa, so he was collared and placed in an emergency holding pen just west of the main Cabeza pen; an additional buck was collared and put in this pen to keep him company and reduce stress. We also started processing in the south herd, and two pronghorn were flown by helicopter to the holding pen on Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument.

On the second day, we continued processing in the south boma. An additional 5 pronghorn were moved to the holding pen on Kofa by helicopter. We did not use the trailer on the second day as this was our first attempt to move pronghorn by trailer and we were cautious of the potential for later mortality from capture myopathy, and didn't want to risk all the pronghorn slated for release. An additional 4 pronghorn were moved by helicopter to the Organ Pipe holding pen. On the third day, four pronghorn were moved by helicopter to the holding pen on the BMGR-West.

No immediate injuries or mortalities occurred during the capture, processing or transport. All animals released back in the main pen are doing well. There were no injuries or mortalities to the animals in the Organ Pipe and BMGR-West holding pens and they have been released and

are doing well in the wild. There is one doe in the Kofa holding pen that has a fairly substantial limp; we are going to recapture her and put her in the main Kofa pen rather than release her. There are also 2 animals whose GPS collars have quit working. We are debating recapturing them to replace the collars. We are holding the animals in the Kofa holding pen until the animals from the Kofa pen are ready to be released.

One doe in South herd had been thin before capture, and was examined by veterinarians during processing. It was determined she had tape worms; she was treated with an additional dewormer. The pen crew cleaned the feeding areas extensively, and moved the feeders. A treatment option for the whole herd is being investigated. The two bucks that were moved into the opposite pen appear to be adjusting; no aggressive behaviors have been seen.

There is a buck in the south herd that needs to be removed from the pen for breeding purposes; he was not caught in the bomas. We are investigating the best method to capture and remove him from the pen. He will initially be moved to the emergency pen to recover; we are holding the two bucks in the emergency pen, who are both doing well, until all are released together.

Status of Pronghorn in Cabeza Pen

January 2014

NORTH HALF		SOUTH HALF	
Adult Females	10	Adult Females	7
Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2012)	1	Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2012)	3
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
Fawns (born 2013, 13F, 3M)	16	Yearling Bucks (<i>b</i> 2012)	2
		Fawns (born 2013, 10F, 8M)	18
TOTAL	29	TOTAL	32
Total Pen	61		

Kofa Pen

The first annual capture and release from the Kofa pen took place January 8, 2014. Again we had a large crew including AZ Game and Fish, US Fish and Wildlife Service – Cabeza Prieta and Kofa Refuges, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument, Luke Air Force Base, and Marine Corps Air Station Yuma. The entire herd (25 animals) was captured in the bomas on January 5 by the pen technicians. Seven males and 3 females were processed, fitted with VHF radio collars, and transported by stretcher to the holding pen on the southeast corner of the main pen. These pronghorn will be monitored for 2+ weeks for any injuries or effects of the capture and then released. All the other pronghorn were processed, marked and released back into the main pen for breeding. There were no injuries or mortalities. However, one buck escaped from the holding pen back into the main pen the first night; sign indicated he jumped over the fence.

Status of Pronghorn in Kofa Pen

	January 2014
Adult Females	9
Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2012)	2
Adult Males	3
Fawns (born 2013, 1F, 1M)	2
TOTAL	16

Summary of Pronghorn for Release into the Wild

	Kofa NWR	BMGR-West	Organ Pipe Cactus NM	TOTAL
From Cabeza Pen				
Adult Females	2		1	3
Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2012)	5*	2	2	9
Adult Males	1			1
Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2012)	8	2	3	13
From Kofa Pen				
Adult Females	1			1
Yearling Females (<i>b</i> 2012)	2			2
Adult Males	1			1
Yearling Males (<i>b</i> 2012)	5			5
Total	25	4	6	35

* one injured doe to be moved back to Kofa pen

2012 Released Pronghorn - Cabeza: Nothing new to report.

2012 Released Pronghorn - Kofa: During deer surveys in January, three pronghorn were observed in King Valley near the Neversweat Mountains. It is believed they are the same three that have been recorded on camera at a water on YPG during the summer.

Water Projects: Nothing new to report.

Forage Enhancements: Nothing new to report.

Other Projects/Personnel: The biennial range wide survey in Sonora Mexico took place December 7 – 10. We had maintenance issues with one of the aircraft; consequently we were only able to complete the area on the east side of Highway 8. We saw 372 pronghorn (compared to 167 on the last survey in 2011 in the same area), and our estimate for that part of the range was 434 (versus 189 in 2011). We plan to go back and do the west side of the Highway - the Pinacate area - in February.

Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR herd: Nothing new to report.