

# SONORAN PRONGHORN MONTHLY UPDATE

January 2016

## *Captive Breeding:*

### **Cabeza Pen**

The 26 animals moved to the holding pen on BMGR-East were passively released into the wild on December 30, 2015 by taking down one section the fence. All the animals left a few hours later. On the first telemetry flight after the release, all 26 were together about 5 mile east and north of the holding pen. On subsequent telemetry flights they have broken up into 2 – 4 groups and moved back closer to the release pen and south. They appear to be adjusting to their new home and all appear good. The holding pen at Organ Pipe was opened on January 8; one male left later that day, the other was gone by the next morning. Both bucks had joined up together within a few weeks and moved west of Organ Pipe onto the Cabeza Prieta NWR.

The pronghorn handled and released back into the captive breeding pen all appear fine; one doe has a limp but continues to feed and keep up with the herd.

The pen and surrounding areas (including ORPI and BMGR-East) received between ½ - 1 inch of rain over several storms. The rain will provide good green forage as the season warms up.

### Cabeza Pen

<b>NORTH HALF</b>		<b>SOUTH HALF</b>	
Adult Females	11	Adult Females	10
Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2015)	5	Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2015)	8
Adult Males	2	Adult Males	3
Yearling Males ( <i>b</i> 2015)	1	Yearling Males ( <i>b</i> 2015)	8
Fawns ( <i>b</i> 2016)		Fawns ( <i>b</i> 2016)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Total Pen</b>	<b>48</b>		

### **Kofa Pen**

The Kofa pen crew caught all but 2 animals in the Kofa bomas on January 3, 2016. In the days just prior to closing the doors on the bomas, one doe was found dead in the bomas. From the necropsy, it appears she suffered some trauma in the bomas, which was likely the cause of her death.

The capture and release took place on January 7, 2016. Many thanks to all the hardy souls who assisted with the capture during the pouring rain and cold. There were 49 pronghorn processed. The pen crew thought there was one more buck fawn than there was in the pen which is easy to miscount since all the fawns and yearlings were unmarked in the Kofa pen.

Nineteen animals (8 males, 11 females) were processed, radio collared, and moved by stretcher to the release section in the southeast corner of the main pen. The remainder of the animals were vaccinated, ear tagged or radio collared and returned to the captive breeding pen.

There was one mortality during the capture/handling. A doe fawn ran into the bomas walls fairly hard before she could be caught. Although she appeared fine and was alive during the vaccinating, blood draw, and ear tagging, she collapsed as she was being released and was died. Necropsy results showed signs of some trauma but also signs of high stress which likely killed her.

The 19 animals for release were given Haloperidol which wears off in about 24 hours. We kept them in the release pen for 3 days to ensure there were no lingering effects of the drugs and no injuries. One buck jumped over the fence and back into the main pen the first day. This is the same buck we tried to release in January 2014, who jumped back in the main pen then also. The holding pen gate was opened on January 11. One buck left that day, 7 more animals left the next day. All the animals left by the third day. On recent telemetry flights they have been in 3-5 groups in the general vicinity of the pen, and all appear well.

On February 3, the Kofa biologist caught 20+ animals in the bomas again including the buck that jumped back in the pen and needed to be released and the 2014 buck that was not caught the first time. We sorted and returned all but 10 of the animals back into the captive pen that day. On February 5, Game and Fish and Kofa NWR personnel sorted 7 of these animals and let them back into the pen without handling. The two bucks were radio collared and released by moving them out the south gate; one buck fawn was in the bomas with the animals for release and was caught and released back into the captive pen.

Kofa Pen

Adult Females	11
Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2015)	8
Adult Males	2
Yearling Males ( <i>b</i> 2015)	8
Fawns (born 2016)	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>

***Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR Herd:*** The radio-collared pronghorn are mostly using the same areas as usual. The females are beginning to break up into smaller groups for fawning. Two fawns have already been seen by a UA biologist.

***Wild Pronghorn Kofa Herd:*** The pronghorn on Kofa have generally been using the same areas around King Valley on the Kofa NWR and Yuma Proving Ground. One of the females released over a year ago took up residence near the Gila Bend Mountains returned to the King Valley. The other 3 animals that are out of the King Valley area are all by themselves and in the same general areas as previously; a buck on the west side of Highway 95, one female in the Gila Bend Mountains, and a female near New Water Well.

***Water Projects:*** Nothing new to report.

***Forage Enhancements:*** Nothing new to report.

***Other Projects:*** We are working on a re-design of Tiller Well infrastructure. We want to pump water into a storage tank and pressurize the pipeline to allow irrigation with high volume sprinklers.

*Written February 8, 2016*