

# SONORAN PRONGHORN MONTHLY UPDATE

July 11, 2013

## *Captive Breeding:*

### Cabeza Pen

Currently, there are 95 pronghorn in the Cabeza breeding pen; 26 adults and 17 fawns in north herd, and 31 adults and 21 fawns in south herd. One of last year's fawns gave birth to twins on May 31, but one of her fawns was found dead on July 5. There was no sign of predation.

The water and alfalfa station the crew has been maintaining outside the pen for wild pronghorn in Child's Valley has seen heavy pronghorn use on a daily basis. At least 12 different pronghorn have been using the site. Two does released from the pen onto Organ Pipe last December have returned to Childs Valley and are frequenting the site. These does were known to have fawns while on Organ Pipe, but lost them. Soon after the last fawn disappeared, the does returned to the vicinity of the pen. Based on the thin appearance of these pronghorn, the pen crew has also been putting out the pelleted feed used in the pen for additional nutrition.

There was no measurable precipitation in the last month and so the leafy forage in the pen and in Childs Valley is very dry. The crew has been irrigating in the pen, and the vegetation has been leafing out and providing more forage due to these efforts.

Illegal alien/smuggling activity near the pen and at Morgart Tank has continued at a relatively high level. The pen crew has contacted Border Patrol on several occasions to intercept smugglers or help illegals. The pen crew has continued working in pairs and has been using radio and cell phone protocol when communicating with Border Patrol and USFWS and AZGFD.

### Status of Pronghorn in Cabeza Pen

July 2013

<b>NORTH HALF</b>		<b>SOUTH HALF</b>	
Adult Females	10	Adult Females	11
Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2012)	5	Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2012)	9
Yearling Males ( <i>b</i> 2012)	9	Yearling Males ( <i>b</i> 2012)	9
Breeding Buck ( <i>b</i> 2010, Purple 3)	1	Breeding Buck ( <i>b</i> 2010, Yellow 3)	1
Back-up Buck ( <i>b</i> 2011, Yel/Blk 3)	1	Back-up Buck ( <i>b</i> 2011, Green 4)	1
Fawns (born 2013)	17	Fawns (born 2013)	21
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Total Pen</b>	<b>95</b>		

### Kofa Pen

There are 26 pronghorn in the Kofa pen, including 2 fawns. Eleven fawns were known to have been born this year, but only 2 survived. The cause of death of the fawns is unknown, and currently being investigated. The fawns were born very late in the year at Kofa with the first fawns not been seen until April 5, compared to February 26 in the Cabeza pen. The remains of 8 of the fawns have been recovered, and are being sent to a lab for analysis. Grey doe is currently pregnant, and should be giving birth within a month.

Two bucks that were released in January returned to the pen in April and were provided with water and alfalfa outside the pen. Since all the collars malfunctioned and we can't track any of the pronghorn released last year, it was decided to recapture these bucks, and re-release them with working collars in December. The gate on the release section was opened and the bucks moved on their own into the pen, and the gate was shut behind them. The gate between the main pen and the release pen was then opened and the bucks returned to the main pen and are mingling with the herd. Breeding behaviors are beginning to be observed in the herd. Of the 4 mature bucks, Green appears to be the dominant buck.

The Kofa pen crew has completed installing all the components for the irrigation system and has been able to start irrigating in the pen. They also added another line of electric fence in an attempt to deter a bobcat that periodically goes in the pen to get water at the drinker.

### Status of Pronghorn in Kofa Pen

	July 2013
Adult Females	11
Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2012)	4
Yearling Males ( <i>b</i> 2012)	5
Breeding Buck	1
Adult Bucks	3
Fawns (born 2013)	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>

***2012 Released Pronghorn - Cabeza:*** As mentioned earlier, the two females released on Organ Pipe have returned to the vicinity of the captive breeding pen. The two males are still in the Valley of the Ajo on Organ Pipe.

One of the females released on BMGR-West was found dead on June 5<sup>th</sup>. Although she had been using the water and alfalfa at Devils Hills forage plot, she left that herd, and wandered by herself north and east. She was seen near Interstate 8, between the right-of-way fence and the Interstate. She then moved east onto the Air Force Range but never seemed to find any other pronghorn herds. She was found dead in the bathroom of an abandoned house just west on Highway 85 near Gila Bend. Cause of death is unknown; there was no predation or scavenging. Human foul play is not suspected, as there were no tracks or other signs of anyone being near the house. It is very odd that she went in the house, and in the bathroom – we wonder if she was desperate for water and could smell water in the septic tank or in the plumbing, although no

water was visible. The other 3 pronghorn released on BMGR-West are still in the vicinity of Devils Hills.

**2012 Released Pronghorn - Kofa:** Nine pronghorn were released in January 2013, and all the collars malfunctioned so we can't locate any of them with telemetry. We know 3 bucks have died (2 in the canal, 1 unknown). The female that was rescued alive from the Wellton Mohawk Canal on May 16, was rescued alive from another canal near Texas Hill on June 20. She has since been seen near Red Mountain Farms near Dateland. Two bucks returned to the Kofa pen and were recaptured into the pen. Two pronghorn (a male and female) were recorded on camera at a pond on YPG just south of the Kofa boundary in King Valley (see photos below). There is only one female unaccounted for.

**Water Projects:** Approximately 2,700 gallons of water was hauled to the Kofa pen drinker on July 1. On July 7, 2800 gallons of water were hauled to Uken tank on South Tac. USFWS personnel are maintaining this site, and numerous pronghorn have been using it. The Cabeza pen crew has been maintaining the Morgart Tank water and alfalfa feed station. At least 13 pronghorn including 2 fawns have been using this enhancement on a regular basis.

**Forage Enhancements:** The Cabeza pen crew has been irrigating at Charlie Bell FEP. The vegetation is leafing out and providing additional forage due to these efforts. At least 10 pronghorn including 3 fawns have been using the site. Devils Hills forage enhancement plot has also been irrigated several times and a few pronghorn have visited the plot. At least 19 pronghorn have been using the water development and alfalfa feed station located near the Devils Hills. At least 6 pronghorn have been using Point of the Pintas water development and feed station. USFWS personnel have been working on fixing and irrigating Lower Well and Adobe Well forage enhancement sites, but those areas are constantly being vandalized by illegal aliens/smugglers. These sites are consequently not functioning as intended for Sonoran pronghorn.

**Other Projects/Personnel:** We hired 3 summer interns from NAU-Yuma, ASU, and Grand Canyon University, to help with the captive breeding pens and other projects. They have been very helpful.

**Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR herd:** Forage conditions are deteriorating rapidly over most of the range. The greenest habitats are currently found on the tactical ranges on the Air Force Range. The driest habitats are found around the Mohawk Valley on the Marine Range.



Two pronghorn released from Kofa pen at pond on YPG.