

# SONORAN PRONGHORN MONTHLY UPDATE

July – August 2014

## *Captive Breeding:*

### Cabeza Pen

#### Status of Pronghorn in Cabeza Pen

Currently there are 89 pronghorn in the pen; 28 adults and 14 fawns in north half and 33 adults and 14 fawns in south half. Breeding behavior continues to be observed in both herds. On July 25, an adult doe in north half (Blue) was found dead. She was one of the original breeding stock, brought into the pen as a fawn in 2004. Cause of death is unknown; she had a broken front leg which likely contributed to her death. She had been seen on July 21 and appeared normal.

The pen and surrounding area has received almost 10 inches of rain since July 8. On the night of July 8, 3.5 inches of rain fell causing washes to run and major damage to the pen. The perimeter fence was washed out from 6 sections around the pen; three of these were fairly large probably due to sediment flow that weighed down the shade cloth which flattened the fence. The midline fence came down in several sections also. The pen crew worked hard and quickly to repair damage and a temporary fence was constructed that day; pen crew with the assistance of the refuge staff, worked diligently several days after to repair damage. No pronghorn escaped, and no predators got into the pen. The two breeder bucks, which were moved to the opposite pen during the December 2013 boma capture, moved themselves back to their original pens while the midline fence was down. Both bucks were observed showing breeding behavior, and no negative behaviors have been observed among the other bucks towards the new bucks.

Rain continued throughout July; 0.1” on July 14<sup>th</sup>, and 0.70” in the early morning of the 27<sup>th</sup>, with minimal damage to the pen which was easily repaired. Then, during the night of August 12, 6 inches of rain fell on the pen. Washes were still running as the pen crew went to the pen on the morning on August 13, causing them to have to walk the last ¼ mile with tools and equipment to start to repair the pen. The pen sustained major damage again, with several sections of perimeter fence coming down, parts of the midline coming down, the electric fence destroyed, major debris on the fence, and the road around the pen damaged to the point it was impassable. The pen crew, with much appreciated assistance from Cabeza Prieta refuge staff and Kofa pen personnel quickly put up temporary fence on the perimeter and started the long process of repairing the pen. Pen personnel are evaluating ways to make the fences better adapted to these large flood events so that they can keep the pen secure, but not have such extensive damage when the washes run. The original swing gate design has proven to be inadequate for the observed high flow events.

After the August storm while the perimeter fence was down, a buck, released in 2010, that was often observed near the pen, decided life was easier on the inside, and went back in the pen. The midline fence in the pen was down or damaged for several days while the pen crew worked on getting the perimeter and electric fences repaired and several pronghorn moved back and forth between the two halves; however all marked animals have returned to their original halves. The pen crew is still trying to determine if any fawns moved between the pens; this is more difficult to figure out since the fawns are not marked.

August 2014

NORTH HALF		SOUTH HALF	
Adult Females	10	Adult Females	10
Yearling Females (b 2013)	13	Yearling Females (b 2013)	10
Breeding Buck (b 2010, Purple 3)	1	Breeding Buck (b 2010, Yellow 3)	1
Back up Buck (b 2011, Yel/Blk 3)	1	Breeding Buck (b 2012, Grn/Wht 3)	1
Yearling Bucks (b 2013)	3	Adult Bucks (b 2010, 2012)	3
Fawns (born 2014)	14	Yearling Bucks (b2013)	8
		Fawns (born 2014)	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Total Pen</b>	<b>89</b>		

The pen and surrounding areas including Charlie Bell forage plot, East Release and Morgart tank are very green with ample forbs and other native forage.

### **Kofa Pen**

There are 30 pronghorn in Kofa pen including 14 fawns. The pen crew has recently verified an additional female fawn that somehow escaped detection until now in the pen. Kofa pen has received 2.3 inches of rain, and did not sustain any major damage. The pen and surrounding area is green though, and the pronghorn are foraging heavily on native forbs and other plants such as ocotillo in the pen. Blue doe, who had an eye injury and was very lethargic, appears to have recovered to normal health and behavior.

### **Status of Pronghorn in Kofa Pen**

	August 2014
Adult Females	11
Yearling Females (b 2013)	1
Adult Males	3
Yearling Males (b 2013)	1
Fawns (born 2014, 10 females, 4 males)	14
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>

### ***2013 Released Pronghorn - Cabeza:***

The four pronghorn released on BMGR-West have remained in the same general areas as previously reported. Three of the pronghorn released on ORPI have continued to use the Valley of the Ajo, and have recently been near the northern border of ORPI. The male that was on the Tohono O'odham reservation returned ~ 42 miles back to Cabeza, and was last located north of Adobe Well forage plot. The two bucks that were released near the captive breeding pen have been using Child's Valley and occasionally the tactical ranges on BMGR.

***2013 Released Pronghorn - Kofa:*** The pronghorn released on Kofa are still being seen in two general areas. Seven pronghorn including one fawn are generally in the vicinity of or a bit south of the pen. The other pronghorn are generally found on the north part of YPG or the

southern King Valley. We still believe there are 10 fawns with the wild herd on Kofa. With the recent rains and greening up of the habitat, the pronghorn are less dependent on the waters on YPG and have been ranging further north in King Valley on Kofa NWR.

**Water Projects:** The rains have filled most of the waters on Cabeza NWR, with the exception of Sierra Pinta 1.

**Forage Enhancements:** All the forage plots are exceptionally green with the recent rains; consequently we are not irrigating any.

**Other Projects/Personnel:** Nothing new to report.

**Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR herd:** On the last telemetry flight, the pronghorn were spread out over most of the range. Much of the range is incredibly green including ORPI, the Tactical Ranges, Childs Valley, northern Tule Desert, Mohawk Valley and northern Growler Valley. There are some areas, particularly southern Growler Valley, and southern San Cristobal Valley that don't appear to have received much rain and are relatively dry.



Storm Damage, July 2014



Storm Damage, August 2014

*Written August 28, 2014*