

# SONORAN PRONGHORN MONTHLY UPDATE

June 2015

## *Captive Breeding:*

### Cabeza Pen

There are 55 adults and yearlings in the pen and 6 fawns in north herd and 16 fawns in south herd. North herd has 5 female fawns and 1 male fawn. Sex ratios of fawns in south herd is still being observed and documented by pen biologists.

Although we had photos of 2 different coyotes in the pen, after we removed one, we have had no further evidence of another coyote still in the pen and suspect he either got out or died in the pen. We had photos of coyotes in both the north and south halves of the pen, and know they were able to cross under the midline fence. The coyotes were much more effective at taking north herd fawns, likely due to differences in pronghorn vigilance and herd behavior between the two herds.

The pronghorn have been using areas of the pen with thicker vegetation as temperatures increased and have been observed grazing heavily on Palo Verde. The adult breeder bucks have been showing several breeding behaviors including chasing adult females, marking creosote bushes, and standing and moving more erect than usual. Both animals injured during the last boma capture are continuing to maintain weight and appear to be doing well. The pen biologists continue to repair numerous irrigation line breaks due to illegal alien/smuggler's damage and vandalism.

#### Cabeza Pen

NORTH HALF		SOUTH HALF	
Adult Females	10	Adult Females	13
Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2014)	5	Yearling Females ( <i>b</i> 2014)	8
Breeding Buck (from wild, L Yellow 55)	1	Breeding Buck ( <i>b</i> 2013, L Black 8)	1
Back up Buck ( <i>b</i> 2013, L Blue 52)	1	Buck ( <i>b</i> 2013, Black collar)	1
Yearling Bucks ( <i>b</i> 2014)	8	Yearling Bucks ( <i>b</i> 2014)	7
Fawns (born 2015, 5 female, 1 male)	6	Fawns (born 2015)	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Total Pen</b>	<b>77</b>		

### Kofa Pen

There are 48 pronghorn in the Kofa pen; 31 adults and yearlings and 17 fawns. A yearling doe was observed with a new fawn in early June, but the fawn died about 2 weeks later. We suspect the late birth and high temperatures contributed to its death. The pen biologists also observed an additional fawn in the last 2 weeks. The pen biologists have been irrigating at the pen as it is quickly drying out from the high temperatures. They have also been working on securing the electric fences with new insulators, and filled the waters in and outside the pen.

Kofa Pen

Adult Females	12
Yearling Females (b 2014)	11
Adult Males	4
Yearling Males (b 2014)	4
Fawns (born 2015)	17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>

***2014 Released Pronghorn - Cabeza:***

The ORPI released pronghorn continue to use the same general areas, including both sides of Highway 85. The animals released on BMGR-West continue to use the Mohawk Valley; the buck has been documented at the Devils Hills water and feed station, and the doe at Point of the Pintas feed and water.

***2014 Released Pronghorn - Kofa:*** The 20 pronghorn released on Kofa have generally been using the same areas for the last month. No major movements have been documented.

***Water Projects:*** With recent rain on both Cabeza and Kofa, most of our waters are full or nearly full.

***Forage Enhancements:*** Personnel have been irrigating at Charlie Bell forage plot in an effort to keep it green. The Devils Hills forage plot is still green and does not need irrigation; we are working to fix or replace the pump there.

***Wild Pronghorn Cabeza/ORPI/BMGR Herd:*** The radio-collared pronghorn are mostly using the same areas as last month. Nineteen fawns were seen on the last flight, including 2 with the animals in ORPI. Parts of the east side of the range received rain the night of June 26, and some areas received up to an additional 0.6 inches of rain on June 30. Range conditions still appear good to excellent. A large group of pronghorn, including 4 fawns, have been using the feed and water station located outside the pen. Several pronghorn have also occasionally been photographed at the Morgart feed and water station, and at both Devils Hills and Point of the Pintas. However, due to good forage conditions, alfalfa use by the wild herd is much lower this year than the past several years, and may be merely opportunistic while they are using the water source.

***Wild Pronghorn Kofa Herd (prior to 2014 releases):*** The pronghorn on Kofa are using the same general areas during the last month. Five fawns were seen on the last telemetry flight. Kofa/YPG received additional rain on June 30, and conditions are still good in the areas the pronghorn are using.

***Other Projects:*** Biologists in Sonora have expressed a desire to gain information on fawn production and recruitment in the pronghorn herds in Sonora. AGFD and CEDES personnel conducted fawns surveys June 15-17, in the Quitovac herd, east of Highway 8. Using a Cessna,

pronghorn groups were located and classified as to number of males, females and fawns. A GPS waypoint was taken, and the area was classified by habitat type and current condition (excellent, good, fair, poor).

A total of 99 pronghorn were observed in 33 groups. Twenty-six bucks, 45 does and 28 fawns were observed. Nearly all sighting occurred in the sand dune habitat type with chain fruit cholla present. Habitat condition varied from good in the north to fair/poor further south. Number of fawns per doe varied greatly with habitat condition. In areas classified as good condition, 23 fawns were seen with 27 does for an 85.1 fawns/100 doe ratio. In areas classified as fair or poor, only 5 fawns were seen with 18 does, for a ratio of 27.7 fawns/100 does. Overall, the fawn/doe ratio was 62.2 fawns per 100 does.

Fawn recruitment for the year will depend on the habitat condition through the rest of the summer. We plan to conduct another survey in late September to estimate with greater confidence fawn recruitment this year in the Quitovac population.



Single buck bedded in shade of chain fruit cholla in Sonora.



Large group of pronghorn observed in Sonora.