



# PRONGHORN

Official Publication Of The Arizona Antelope Foundation, Inc., A Non-Profit, Tax-Exempt Corporation • Volume 2, Number 2 • Spring 1994

## HISTORY OF PRONGHORN ANTELOPE IN ARIZONA

### *Part Two Of A Series* by David E. Brown

*“Our wild turkey, deer, antelope, and mountain sheep, have already been exterminated or driven out of a vast area of our once good game country, and at the present rate at which the work of destruction is going on, largely through the convenient and efficient medium of the automobile our twenty thousand or so licensed hunters, will finish the work of extermination before the general public awakens to a realization of the situation, and demands a sudden and abrupt halt in order to give our few remnants of game a chance to replenish.”*

-Report of G. M. Willard, State Game Warden of Arizona, December 31, 1914

As elsewhere in the West, settlement was hard on Arizona's pronghorn antelope. Pinpointing the most serious of the pronghorn's early difficulties is hard to interpret, but it appears that the first noticeable declines in pronghorn populations did not occur until some time after the coming of the railroads and large herds of range cattle in the 1880s. More detrimental, according to most observers, was the arrival of increasingly large flocks of domestic sheep after 1890. Feeding on forbs as well as grass, the “woolies” (and, later, goats) competed directly with the pronghorn for food. Even more importantly, the end of the open range and the fencing off of pastures restricted the movements of the antelope and made them susceptible to human and animal predators. Woven sheep fences were especially detrimental, as the antelope would follow these impassable barriers for miles before succumbing to lack of forage, deep snow or drought.

The most serious inroads on pronghorn numbers, however, were more direct. Antelope, whenever and wherever they were encountered, were shot for food, as potential competitors with domestic animals or just for the fun of it. Numerous articles reflected the then prevailing attitude:

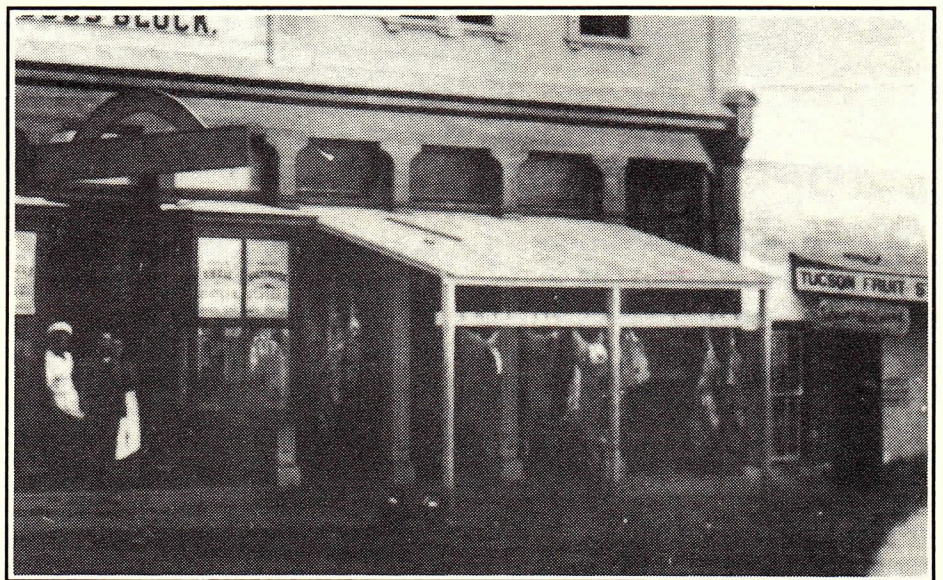
*“For the past week the driver of the stage between Florence and Mesa city has noticed a large band of antelope on the desert a few miles the other side of Desert Wells (near present-day Apache Junction). There are some twenty-three antelope in the bunch and they do not appear to be very wild. On the last trip across the country the antelope were within a hundred feet of the road and did not take alarm until the stage was opposite them. Here is a good opportunity for the hunter who wants some rare sport”.*

-Arizona Daily Star, November 19, 1896

Antelope were shot regardless of sex and every month of the year. As mining camps and cities were founded and grew, market hunting took an ever-larger toll of Arizona's game animals. Antelope, while not as popular as venison, were much in demand and easier to obtain. What is not generally appreciated today is that many, perhaps most, market hunters in Arizona were Native Americans. His traditional way of life no longer possible in a cash economy, the Indian took to making a living the only way he knew how:

*“Yesterday a Papago sold a fine antelope for \$2. Nearly everyday some Indian comes in from the mountains with a deer or an antelope on his horse's back.”*

-Arizona Daily Star, December 17, 1893



Butcher Shop, Tucson, circa 1896.

Photo courtesy of Arizona Historical Society Library

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I hope you and all fellow members of AAF have set aside the weekend of May 21-22 for the first work project of 1994. AAF, along with several other organizations will be removing *all* and replacing some of the miles of wildlife-unfriendly fence. This is a particularly exciting project as it affords us the opportunity to gather with organizations which, in other settings would be considered non compatible This is a significant opportunity to demonstrate not only the commitment of the sportsman to the welfare of wildlife, but also the fact that we are not the enemy of wildlife conservation. This opportunity does not come along often and we should not let it slip away. Participants in this work project will be important ambassadors for all sportsmen.

Have you as a 1993 member, renewed your membership for this year? Have you taken the time and made the effort to sign up at least *one* new member for 1994? The AAF Board and I need your help as it is our goal to double our membership and we cannot do that without your assistance. We can have a significant impact upon the future of antelope in Arizona. but you and your friends are needed.

I hope to see you at the May 21 project.

**JIM McCASLAND**

## AAF THANKS ITS 1994 SUSTAINING MEMBERS

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*Pronghorn* is a quarterly newsletter for the members of AAF. Letters, comments, news items, articles, pictures and stories are welcome and will be considered for publication. Address all such items to: Nancy L. Lewis, *Pronghorn* Editor 576 W. Moon Valley Dr., Phoenix AZ 85023. Deadlines: March 15, June 15, September 15 and December 15.

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# C H A L L E N G E

by Mike Cupell

The bench appeared to be solid and sturdy. Three-inch metal pipe legs planted in concrete held up eight-foot lengths of 4 x 6 planks ~ all painted a brilliant blue. The bench was strategically located in a saddle on a ridgeline just above a new tract of stereotypical subdivision homes located adjacent to U.S. Highway 89, just north of Fort Whipple, on the outskirts of Prescott. I briefly sat on this bench one blustery day in February of this year. Looking northward, I could see over several grassy, undulating hills. Beautiful antelope country, I thought. Underlining that thought and proving it true, I observed approximately three dozen antelope doing what antelope are prone to do on any lazy winter afternoon. They were staying below the ridgelines and out of the wind as they intermittently fed, bedded and, just for the fun of it, chased each other around in circles.

I turned to the south and looked down into what used to be prime antelope habitat and what is now the new subdivision. Houses sprouted from the ground like noxious weeds (or so it seemed to me) and surrounded a small stock pond. Antelope used to water at that stock pond. But no more. Antelope will never again inhabit that little valley, will never again seek water at that stock pond. Sad.

The home builder who had stolen part of the range from the antelope behind me had constructed the bench upon which I sat ~ unbelievably so that the new homeowners could stroll up to that same saddle, sit and observe the same antelope they had so effectively just displaced. These will be the very same people who will decry the loss of these antelope when they finally disappear. These people will blame everybody else ~ especially you, me and other hunters ~ and never look to themselves for the blame. Really sad.

These little ridges just north of Prescott, encompassing perhaps a total of 2,000 acres, have, in all probability, been home for antelope far longer than there have

been people around to observe the antelope. In recent years, the areas all around these hills have been relentlessly developed until the antelope residing there can't go anywhere else. They are trapped there. All natural corridors for movement in and out of the area have been taken away.

A major news publication recently named Prescott the most desirable place in the entire United States to live. Not so for the antelope in those little hills, however. You see, it is news such as this that will surely speed up the development of the 2,000 measly acres left to the antelope. In fact, three separate housing tracts are planned for the very near future for the heart of what is left of this chunk of antelope range. Such advertisement for Prescott indicates that the builders, in all probability, won't be able to build homes fast enough for the anticipated, newly-created demand.

There are approximately one hundred antelope left on these 2,000 acres. As I left the blue bench and rejoined the rest of my fellow board of director members of the Arizona Antelope Foundation so we could proceed with our "on-site" tour, I felt as if I were carrying a ponderous load. I didn't like the feeling.

A representative of one of the developers accompanied us. He seemed to be a nice young man, yet he was embarrassingly ignorant of wildlife and unconsciously callous in the way he addressed the complex issues surrounding what was to be done with and for these antelope as his employer systematically goes about destroying the only home these antelope know.

As the afternoon's tour progressed, so did my depression. Everywhere we went, we saw evidence of a multitude of antelope trails beat into the hillsides. Never in my life have I seen antelope trails before. Not in the Seligman country when I was growing up and not in some of the most prolific antelope country in southern Wyoming.

It was apparent to me these antelope are caged. To be sure, the cage is large at

2,000 acres, yet caged they are, walking the same trails back and forth, over and over. Just like zoo animals, I realized. The same black mood of depression that descends on me anytime I'm forced by circumstances to go to a zoo descended on me that February afternoon.

There are no easy answers about what can be done for these antelope. The only certainty is that their habitat is gone, parts of it stolen by human encroachment over the last fifty years, a little at a time, and the remainder currently being stolen away as rapidly as paved streets, sewer lines and houses can be stuck in an on the ground.

The antelope themselves are another matter. They need to be moved because they cannot do it for themselves. But where? How? When? These questions beg for answers that haven't come yet.

This situation is but a microcosm of what is happening virtually everywhere in Arizona to one degree or another. There, in those hills north of Prescott, it is easily seen and, because of the timing, demands solutions almost immediately. So we will wrestle with this problem mightily and somehow muddle our way through to some sort of compromise solution in which you can be sure we will all lose ~ especially the antelope!

What of the myriad of similar situations all around us everywhere in the state ~ situations on a grander, more obscure, harder to see, harder to handle yet no less important scale? *This is our challenge!*

When I first decided to write about the hills north of Prescott and the soon-to-be-displaced antelope, it was with a sense of immense depression. I no longer feel that way. I feel challenged ~ challenged to make a difference when and where I can, to be glad for victories, no matter what their size and frequency. To do less is unacceptable. Will you join me in this challenge?

*Mike Cupell is a financial planner, avid sportsman and freelance author. He serves as a Director on the AAF Board.*

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# PRONGHORN FAWNING IN ARIZONA

by *Cindy L. Ticer*

Pronghorn does are sexually mature at one year of age and may breed for the first time at 15 to 16 months. Their gestation lasts for approximately 250 days. Fawning in Arizona may occur from mid-March through mid-June, depending on elevation and rainfall patterns.

When the doe is ready to give birth, she leaves the herd - sometimes with other pregnant does - to search for an acceptable fawning area. Fawning areas are typically of minor topographic relief and usually contain more cover than pronghorn typically use. Fawning area characteristics may vary with habitat type and other limiting factors, such as predation. For example, in a desert grassland community of central Arizona, I observed pregnant does retreating to isolated herbaceous (grass and forbs) flats adjacent to steep, rocky outcrops for fawning. In contrast, I observed little selection by pregnant does of fawning areas in a short-grass prairie with intensive predator control.

During labor, does initially lie on their sides, rocking back and forth. Once the fawn's head, forefeet and shoulders have emerged, the doe will stand as the fawn slides free. Usually, the doe will give birth to a single fawn if it is her first; thereafter, twinning generally occurs. At birth, fawns weigh 5 to 7 pounds.

Fawns are born in a partially independent condition, and they begin walking within 25 minutes of birth. By the time they are 4 or 5 days old, they can outmaneuver a research biologist. (Remember, it's illegal to harass wildlife, so don't chase fawns!)

Predation is a major contributor to pronghorn fawn mortality. Thus, pronghorn have developed adaptive behavioral strategies to reduce predation on fawns. For example, to decrease scents which would attract predators, soon after giving birth does will consume all afterbirth and move their fawns 50 to 100 yards from the birthing



*Newborn Pronghorn Antelope*

*Photo Courtesy of Cindy L. Ticer, Arizona Game & Fish*

site. Additionally, to decrease the likelihood that the doe will give away her fawn's location, contact with her fawn is reduced considerably. In fact, within 40 to 50 minutes following birth, newborn fawns will leave their mothers to seek out bedsites, where they remain for up to 5 hours at a time. Doe-fawn contacts are only for brief periods of feeding and cleaning. Fawns generally will not bed together from shortly after birth until after they are about 3 weeks old; they then join nursery herds. Solitary bedding behavior reduces the likelihood that more than one fawn will be taken by a predator.

Pronghorn fawns also rely on camouflage for protection from predators. At birth, the fawns are a grayish-brown in color, which blends in well with the environment. Their rump patch is yellowish in color, as compared to the conspicuously white color of adults. Because fawn mortality is highest from birth to 2 weeks of age, selection of bedsites is very important for their survival. Vegetative cover and height should be enough to camouflage a bedded fawn but not impede its view or escape of predators. The amount and height of cover required to

adequately hide a fawn from predators varies with habitat type and density. In most areas of Arizona, these requirements may be met by much less vegetative cover and height than we would expect. For example, studies conducted in a high montane valley of Idaho have shown that predation losses in areas of high cover exceeded those of low cover. To further reduce the risk of predation, fawns will change bedsites as many as 10 times a day, never using the same location twice.

The coyote is the predominant predator of pronghorn fawns in Arizona. Other predators include bobcats and golden eagles. Additionally, I have observed ravens attempting to take down newborn fawns. Pronghorn does will usually protect fawns from predators by charging them. Adult bucks have also been observed chasing off predators while "baby-sitting" newborn fawns. However, fence lines appear to provide coyotes with an advantage in eluding these attacks by adult pronghorn.

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## HISTORY OF PRONGHORN ANTELOPE IN ARIZONA

(Continued From Page 1)

Nor was antelope venison only an occasional commodity:

*"Game continues to come in great numbers. Quite a number of antelope and several deer were hanging in front of the butchershops yesterday."*  
-Arizona Daily Star, November 19, 1896

Shot at every opportunity, its freedom of movement increasingly curtailed by fences and living with a price on their heads, Arizona's pronghorn were under siege. The Territory's conservationists, then almost exclusively sportsmen, had good reason to be concerned with the pronghorn's problems. America had just lost the buffalo and the passenger pigeon, and now pronghorn antelope were fast disappearing. The extent of concern and the dwindling status of antelope is apparent by reading Arizona's Territorial game laws. The Territory's first game code, passed in 1887, showed an imprecise knowledge of Arizona's big game animals, but a noble intent to protect them:

*"It shall not be lawful, for any person or persons to take, kill or destroy any elk, deer, antelope, mountain sheep, mountain goat or ibex in the territory of Arizona at any time between the first day of February and the first day of October in each year."*

In 1893, the game code was amended to close the season on antelope and deer from January 1 through September 1, with the added provision that it would be unlawful to ship game meat out of season. As in earlier years, there was no restriction on which sex or age of animal was killed and game could still be sold. As antelope numbers continued to dwindle and populations disappeared, the game laws became more restrictive. In 1897, the legislature prescribed a closed season on doe and fawn antelope throughout the year, but allowed the taking of buck antelope between August 2 and December 15. More importantly, game could now no longer be sold at any time. And, to keep Indians from killing game, the game code made illegal for an Indian to hunt off the

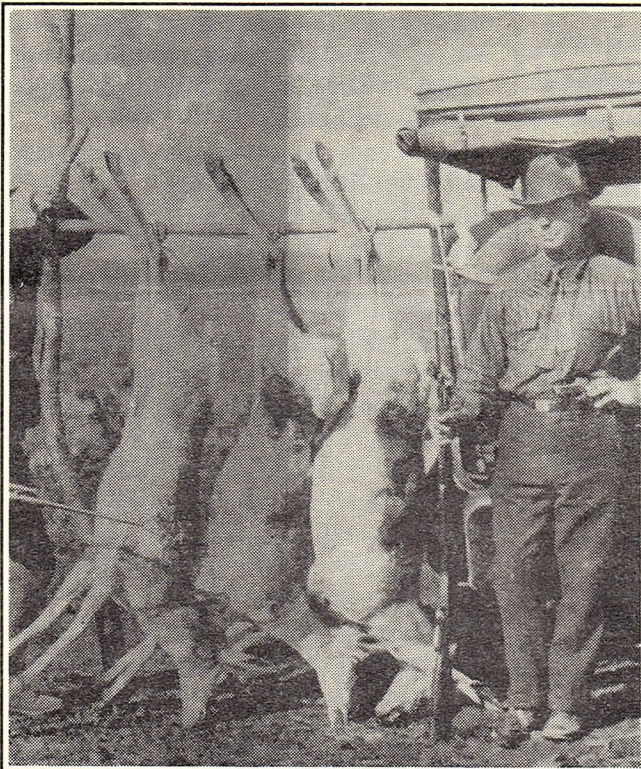
reservation to which he belonged. None of these proclamations had the desired effect, however, and, in 1905, the antelope season was closed until March 1, 1911 - in essence a hunting moratorium for five years. The problem was that the game laws, no matter how good their intent, were often ignored. Moreover, early antelope hunters were often "game hogs" in the truest sense - flock shooting into running herds of animals and killing or wounding as many or more does and fawns as bucks. Game laws were rarely enforced, and antelope shooting was a popular and unregulated pastime,

as indicated by numerous articles and such tongue-in-cheek dispatches as:

*"Messers. Sampson and Bent have returned from a ten days' trip to the Las Guias country. They report having seen several fine herds of antelopes. The trip was one of recreation only and to get away from the omnipresent politician."*  
-Arizona Daily Star, October 17, 1906

The moratorium on hunting antelope was continued in the new state game code, which took effect in 1913, but Arizona's pronghorn populations were in for even worse times. Not only were motorcycles and automobiles now being used to pursue antelope into oblivion, but the Great War in Europe also provided a market for every cow, sheep and goat grown in America. Arizona range lands, already suffering from overuse, were stocked at ever higher levels. When America entered the war in 1917, what few grazing restrictions were in effect on the newly created national forests were canceled. What was more, killing pronghorn antelope and other big game was seen as almost a patriotic duty. Not only were beef and mutton bringing high prices, but these commodities were also touted as just as important as ammunition for America's war effort!

Nor did the pronghorn's problems cease after World War 1. National legislation was making small ranch homesteads available, and returning "doughboys" were encouraged to take up what few lands remained with water and forage. Few Arizonans today realize that the peak period of homestead filing in their state was not in the 1880s or 1890s, as is popularly portrayed in Hollywood "shoot-'em-ups", but in the 1920s. To make matters even worse, a postwar depression struck the West in 1919, exacerbating already depleted range lands and encouraging the consumptive use of antelope and other big game animals by rural residents.



Illegal pronghorn taken near the Arizona/Sonora border in the early 1900's  
Photo courtesy of Bob Housholder

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**SPECIAL TAGS**  
(Continued From Page 3)

**The Foundation's Role**

Both available special pronghorn tags for 1994 were issued to the new Foundation, which will, for the first time act as the middleman between the successful bidders and the Department's management program. Since all collected funds are required by State law to be returned to the Department, Foundation funds to administer the sale of both tags must come from other sources. Because the Foundation is so new, the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society has graciously offered to assist the Foundation this year. The work

doesn't end here - the Foundation needs people to help the Sheep Society, and, in the future, the Foundation needs to go it alone.

This is where you, as an individual, can help. So join up. get new members or piggyback all or part of the administration cost yourself. Get involved in a great program that pays tremendous dividends to Arizona's pronghorn. Act now, not later.

*Richard A. Ockenfels is a Research Biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department.*

YEAR	DOLLARS COLLECTED	METHOD	ORGANIZATION
1985	\$2,441	RAFFLE	Safari Club International Arizona Wildlife Federation
1985	\$3,340	RAFFLE	
1986	\$4,700	AUCTION	Safari Club International Arizona Wildlife Federation
1986	\$2,240	RAFFLE	
1987	NO TAGS	—	—
1988	NO TAGS	—	—
1989	\$7,600	2 AUCTION	1 Shot Antelope Foundation
1990	\$11,000	2 AUCTION	1 Shot Antelope Foundation
1991	\$8,100	2 AUCTION	1 Shot Antelope Foundation
1992	\$21,700	2 AUCTION	1 Shot Antelope Foundation
1993	\$13,000	AUCTION	Az Desert Bghrn Sheep Society Safari Club Internationall
1993	\$12,400	AUCTION	
IN JUST 7 YEARS	A TOTAL OF \$86,521 WAS RAISED	FROM 14 TAGS ISSUED	TO 4 DIFFERENT ORGANIZATIONS

Table: Income from sale of special big game for pronghorn in Arizona (pursuant to Commission Rule R12-4-120). All collected monies are required to be returned to the Arizona Game & Fish Department for pronghorn management programs. \$86,521 has been raised for Arizona's pronghorn antelope from the sale of 14 special permit-tags in the 7 years the tags were available.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Please Note:** AAF Board meetings are regularly scheduled for the third Monday of every month at The Administrators, 3900 East Camelback, Phoenix, at 6:00 P.M. Everybody is welcome to attend.

The Board encourages your participation and input. The exception to the regular meeting date is: any month there is a work project scheduled, the Board will meet at the project site. Call The Administrators at (602) 912-5300 for information as to date, time and place of Board meetings for any particular month.

**Monday, April 18:** Board meeting at The Administrators, 6:00 P.M. Tice Supplee and Jim Whitham of the Arizona Game & Fish Department will be in attendance to discuss alternatives for the Willow Lake antelope herd in Prescott and the Department's recommendations.

**Saturday, May 14:** Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society annual Fund-raiser. Our two special antelope permit-tags will be auctioned at this fund-raiser. Please call 912-5300 or 491-0213 for more information.

**Saturday & Sunday, May 21 & 22:** Work project in southern Arizona near Elgin. See President's Message - Page 2. If you plan to attend, call The Administrators to let us know. Please attempt to arrive there on Friday evening. Board meeting Saturday evening at project site.

**June:** Fence project - to be announced. Board meeting at project site.

**July:** Fence project - to be announced. Board meeting at project site.

**Tuesday, August 16:** Second Annual Antelope Hunters' Clinic: Fantastic Membership Drive raffle, door & raffle prizes, terrific trophy head display, no-host bar, free munchies, incredible speakers and lots of fun. Experts will "Teach You How To Do It". You may simply wish to attend to refresh your memory and hone your antelope hunting skills. Airport East Holiday Inn, 4300 E. Washington. Phoenix, 6:30 P.M.

**Wednesday, August 17:** Same song, different town. If there is an interest to you members "down South", please let us know. We would be glad to set up our Clinic for you in Tucson, but we need a little local assistance. Call any Board member ASAP.

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## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE UPDATE

by Don Johnson,  
Membership Chairman

The response to the Foundation's appeal to our members to renew their 1994 memberships **AND** recruit new members has not exactly been overwhelming. As we go to press with this issue of the *Pronghorn*, only 68 of our 214 1993 members have renewed their memberships and, of those, we have processed 18 new members for 1994 - only **NINE** of them sponsored by existing members. You may recall our plea for help in recruiting new members in the January *Pronghorn*. We are still hopeful of growing to over 500 members this year, but we need the help of **ALL** members to reach this goal.

How can you help? **FIRST:** renew your membership today. If you can afford to become a sustaining member, the additional money will be spent on antelope work. (NOTE: if the mailing label on this newsletter does **NOT** show 9412, your dues are **NOT** paid for 1994.) **SECOND:** sign up

as many new members as possible. ( If you need more applications, call any Board member or Susan Rae at 912-5300.)

As an incentive, we plan to have a special drawing for **TWO** 1994 antelope hunts on two very special private ranches in New Mexico. Both of these ranches are respected for the trophy quality of their antelope.

Every member who renews his 1993 membership will be entered in the drawing for one of the hunts. Moreover, he will get an **ADDITIONAL** chance for **EACH NEW MEMBER HE RECRUITS**. (If you renew as a sustaining member or recruit a sustaining member, you get **FOUR** chances for your sustaining member renewal and **FOUR ADDITIONAL** chances in the drawing for **EACH SUSTAINING MEMBER YOU RECRUIT**.)

Each **NEW** member will be entered in the drawing for the second antelope hunt. New members recruiting other new members will receive additional chances for this drawing. (Again, become a sustaining member or recruit one, and you will also receive four additional chances in the drawing.) Winners will be drawn at the Foundation's Second Annual Antelope Hunters' Clinic August 16. Winners are responsible for transportation, lodging, hunting license, antelope tag and all related and personal expenses. The hunts can be transferred to a friend or relative only with Arizona Antelope Foundation Board and ranch management approval.

Thank you for your previous and continuing support. Renew your membership today and get to work on those new members. These hunts are truly "once in a lifetime" hunts on ranches few people have had or ever will have the pleasure of hunting. The opportunity is well worth your recruiting efforts.

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### HISTORY OF PRONGHORN ANTELOPE IN ARIZONA

(Continued From Page 5)

By 1921, conservationists were despairing of saving the pronghorn, not only in Arizona, but everywhere in the West. The American Bison Society estimated that only 11,749 pronghorn antelope remained in the United States and Canada. Even the most dedicated sportsmen believed that, even if the animal could be saved from extinction, antelope would always be confined to a few remote desert regions and special refuges. Not only had protective legislation failed, but efforts to obtain suitable pronghorn refuges, including one at Bonita in Arizona's Sulphur Springs Valley, were also largely unsuccessful. To make matters even more discouraging, the few fledgling attempts to transplant antelope to national parks and other potential sanctuaries had been dismal failures

Next: The Washington Conference for the Pronghorn and the road back.

*David E Brown is a wildlife biologist and author. Before retiring from the Arizona Game and Fish Department he was Game Branch Supervisor. He currently serves as a Director on the Board of the Arizona Antelope Foundation.*

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### PRONGHORN FAWNING IN ARIZONA

(Continued From Page 4)

Available water sources are crucial for lactating does and ideally should be no farther than a fourth of a mile away. Unfortunately, although waterholes may be abundant in an area, they are not accessible when they are surrounded by antelope-proof fences or thick vegetation at

heights impeding pronghorn vision.

At 3 to 4 weeks of age, pronghorn fawns will join "nursery herds", which contain several does with fawns. At this point, the fawns are fast runners and more likely to evade predators.

In most areas of Arizona, pronghorn fawning occurs far from civilization. However, a very successful fawning area of the state is located adjacent to the city of Prescott Valley. During the early morning and late afternoon hours from mid-May through July, fawning behavior can be observed with binoculars from Fain Road, between Highway 69 and Highway 89A. Travel off the main road is prohibited to prevent human disturbances during fawning season.

*Cindy L. Ticer is a Wildlife Biologist with the Arizona Game and Fish Department.*