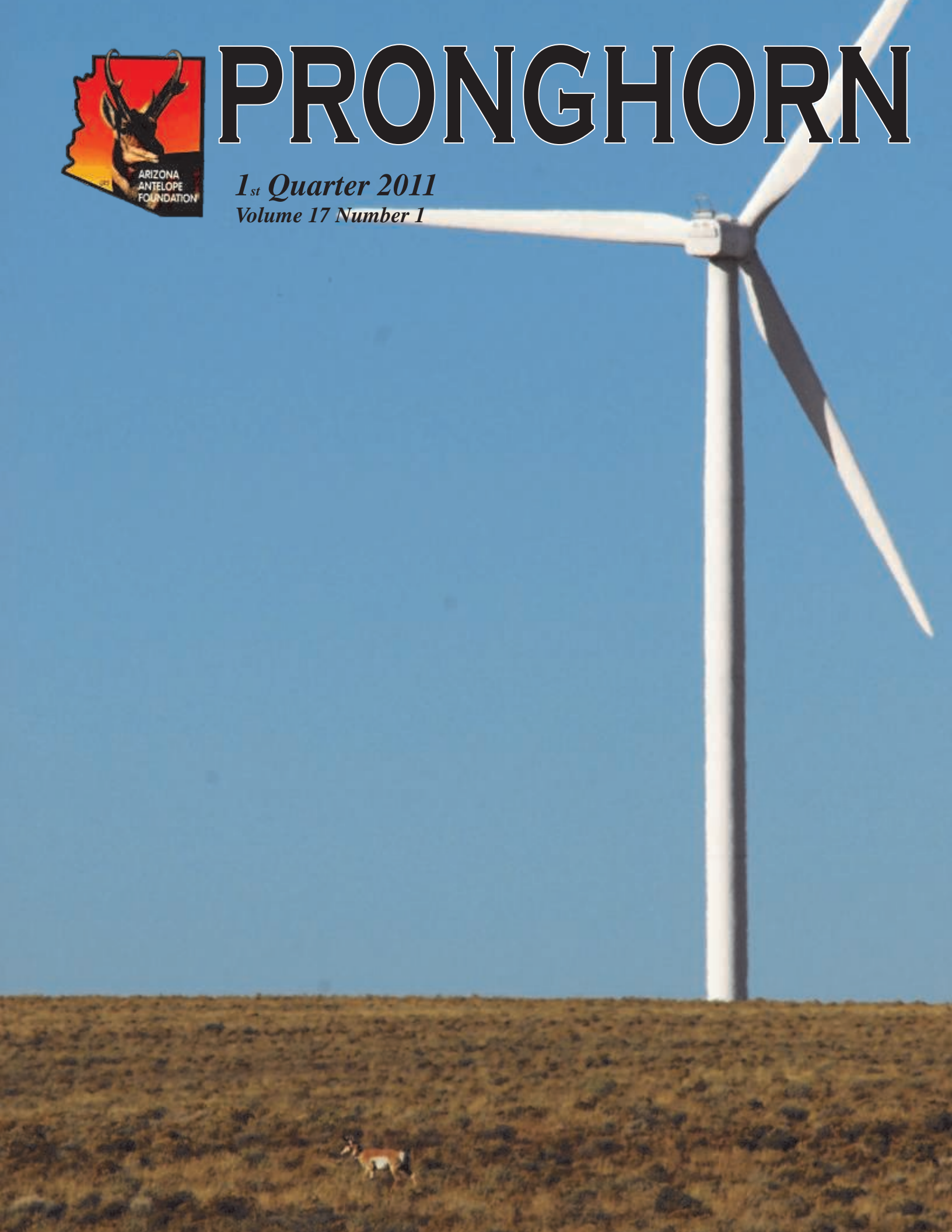




PRONGHORN

1st Quarter 2011
Volume 17 Number 1



ARIZONA ANTELOPE FOUNDATION, INC.

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AAF Mission Statement:

The Arizona Antelope Foundation is an organization dedicated to the welfare of pronghorn antelope. The Foundation's Mission is to actively seek to increase pronghorn populations in Arizona through habitat improvements, habitat acquisition, the translocation of animals to historic range, and public comment on activities affecting pronghorn and their habitat.



On Our Cover

AAF Director Richard Ockenfels took this stunning photo while assisting on a recent pronghorn capture, the purpose of which is to study the effects of wind farms on pronghorn. See more photos and read about this capture activity on page 5.

Pronghorn is a quarterly newsletter for the members of AAF. Letters, comments, news items, articles, pictures and stories are all welcome and will be considered for publication. Address all such items to: Pronghorn Editor, PO Box 12590, Glendale, AZ 85318, or by email at info@azantelope.org.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, 2011 is off and running and the AAF has another year planned full of worthwhile activities. Our Annual banquet is planned for May 21st at Chaparral Suites in Scottsdale and for the 2nd year in a row we are holding a joint banquet with the Arizona Deer Association. This year's banquet is shaping up to be a truly great event, and one that you should be sure not to miss.

We have 4 exciting volunteer projects planned for this year, and the work that will be completed, will as always, truly be beneficial to Antelope and their habitat. Be sure to log onto our website for all the dates and details, and make it a point to come out and join us on one of the project sites.

We recently completed the Habitat Partnership Committee funding process where AAF was able to allocate nearly \$180,000.00 towards habitat projects throughout the state. These funds are raised by the raffle and auction of the (3) commission assigned tags for antelope. Every dollar raised goes right back into habitat improvements, EVERY DOLLAR! This year's group of projects we had to choose from was truly beneficial, and we feel the projects we funded are going to make a huge impact in the betterment of Pronghorn habitat.

You may have noticed that wolves have been in the news quite a bit lately as the battle will culminate in a decision of whether or not to delist them. The AAF is keeping a close eye on this process. I would encourage you to do the same and come up with your own decisions, and stay vocal about your feelings. Contact your politicians and make sure they are aware of the way you

feel. The process is only as good as the people that are involved in it.

I feel extremely proud when I look back over what the AAF has accomplished since its inception. We have worked hard to develop great relationships

with the department, land owners and the public. Our work is far from done however, and if anything, our level of commitment has increased exponentially. Funding is the key to allow us to continue our work. Take a minute to look over our underwriting program on the website; www.azantelope.org. For as little as \$5.00 you can make an impact in helping us to improve pronghorn numbers and better their habitat. Time is also paramount to helping out OUR organization. We are always in need of committed individuals to help us in varying facets of our organization operations. If you feel as though you have been called to serve, drop me a line and we'll figure out a place to get you plugged in.

Keep conservation on your mind, as we will!

“LIBERTAS AD VAGOR”... FREEDOM TO ROAM”

Shane Stewart

602-616-0383

shane@ssiaz.com



Mark your calendar

2011 AAF Projects

April 30 - Horseshoe Ranch

August - Eagle Creek

October 1 - SE Arizona

Other Events

May 14th AZSFWC Heritage Banquet

May 21st Fundraising Banquet with AZ Deer Association

Board Meeting Schedule

April 11

May 9

June 13

All meetings are at 6:30pm at El Zaribah Shrine in Phoenix

WCC Meeting Schedule

April 26

May 24

June 28



Two fine organizations - One Great Night!



Fundraising Banquet

Saturday May 21, 2011

Chaparral Suites
5001 N. Scottsdale Rd.
Scottsdale, AZ
Waterhole 4:00 PM
Dinner 6:00 PM



Don't miss this event!

Come on out for a fun evening and support conservation efforts for antelope and deer

Live & Silent Auctions, Raffles & Blitzes for Lots of Hunts, Trips and Outdoor Gear

Auction of Commissioner's State of Arizona Special Tags for Antelope, Whitetail, Mule Deer, Mountain Lion, & Bear



Tickets must be purchased in advance and are available online at our website.

We are always looking for donations that can be used in our auctions and raffles, as well as cash. Our website contains information on how you can become an underwriter for as little as \$5, and explains what types of donations we are accepting.

**For more information see our website,
www.azantelope.org or call
602-361-6478**

Do Wind Farms Affect Pronghorn?

By Richard Ockenfels, 2011 AAF Director



Most people can understand that wind turbines directly impact birds and bats. This is understandable, as the twirling blades can injure or kill flying animals, particularly at night. Although the blades look like they are moving slowly, at the tips speeds can reach high mphs, by rotating every 3 seconds. Considerable research around the world has been conducted to measure the negative impacts on birds and bats.

Most people won't think that a wind turbine, 396 ft high, with its massive 142-ft blades high above the ground, could have a direct impact on pronghorn or other ground-based species. But, could the noise or moving shadows of the blades be a problem and affect habitat use or movements? However, the concern just doesn't end with the wind turbine itself. To build a wind farm sufficient to supply energy for a large number of homes requires considerable numbers of turbines, and the energy created by each turbine must be collected and transported to the energy grid. This requires disturbing the land to bury cables, and worse, a road network must be built during the construction phase and for regular maintenance of each turbine. Do the road net-

works, noise levels, and increased human disturbance levels associated with maintenance negatively impact pronghorn individually and at a population level?

The Pinetop Region of Arizona Game and Fish Department expressed concern over the unknown effects of wind farms on pronghorn populations, since several wind farms were planned for the northeastern portions of the state. Along with the Habitat Evaluation and Research Branch staffs, the staff in Pinetop worked towards a research study to determine whether wind farms would impact pronghorn. With the mid-November 2010 capture and radio marking of study animals, the research study was underway.

Past President (2006) Dave Laird and I volunteered to help the Department with the capture, as ground spotters and general laborers—doing whatever is requested by the capture team and research personnel. A pre-capture meeting was held in Taylor, a small community north of Show Low on SR 77, on November 8. Dave was assigned to ride along with Wildlife Manager Eric Podoll, while I had the opportunity to ride along as

(Continued on page 14)

Project Report March 2011

By Glen Dickens, AAF Director

Another successful AAF project was completed by 46 volunteers in Southeastern Arizona on March 12, 2011 in the north end of game management unit 32 at Bonita on state and private land on the Homack grazing allotment and an adjoining alfalfa field leased by another local land owner. This was a joint project sponsored by the AAF in conjunction with the Southeastern Arizona Sportsmen's Club (SEAZSC) from Thatcher.

The project weekend had three elements; the first modifying 2.5 miles of existing fence to 4 strands by removing and rolling up the 4 bottom, barbed-wire strands and replacing with smooth-wire; roll up and removal of 1 mile of 8 strands of old wire from a newly built pronghorn friendly fence and; installation of 7 "goat bars" surrounding a 640 acre alfalfa field that provides forage for up to 42 pronghorn. The day of our project the field was occupied by 12 pronghorn.

This effort was located in direct proximity to ongoing mesquite removal for the Bonita Grasslands NRCS/G&F restoration project with a goal of improving up to 10,000 acres in the next 5 years and was 2 miles west of a 2011, AAF/NRCS/ranch funded HPC 300 acre mesquite removal project. This corridor improvement project will help ensure that resident pronghorn can travel through the smaller Bull Pasture to open grasslands surrounding the pasture to

(Continued on page 7)



(Project Report continued from page 6)

the east/west and south and have access to newly installed water troughs immediately west of the Bull Pasture and an alfalfa field one mile to the south. It accomplished a key portion of the overall northern Bonita Plains pronghorn travel corridor improvement project.

Lunch was donated by and grilled on the project site by SEAZSC, special thanks go to Bill Hoopes and Anita Willis for that effort. A delicious green chili pork carnitas dinner with sides was provided by Caterer Frank Hernandez of Tucson and Camp was located at the Stockton Pass USFS Campground the weather was perfect with no rain or wind. Mesquite for the evening fires was provided by George Hayes of the Cluff Management Wildlife Area.

Thanks go out to several groups of folks that contributed to this successful project...

-The Boswell family Art, Mark and sons Kyler, Zach and Samuel.

-Representing the AAF Board: Art of course, Jay Morrison, Al Sue, Connie Taylor and yours truly.

-Representing SEAZSC, Bill Hoopes, Anita Willis, Sam and Bob Turman, Jim Armbrust, Kandyce Smith, Rayburn Smith, Daniel, Jacob, Abraham and Joseph Ward, Jason and Kelkee Smith, Shayla Hancock, Chad and Christopher Kelleher, Bill Willis, Clay Sorriagarte, Brenda Stone, Chuck, Darlene and Elizabeth Brooks

-Other AAF members and volunteers: Betty Dickens, Will Hayes, Janet Millard, Andrew Oldak, Mark Tervo, Dave Cruce, Terry Schupp, Ken and Kathy Cook and Barry and Andy Sopher

-University of Arizona Wildlife Majors, Ashley Williams and Myriam Hanna

-Game & Fish personnel: John Bacorn, Troy Christensen, Duane Aubuchon and George Hayes

Thanks everyone for your efforts!



Photos by John Bacorn, Betty Dickens, and Barry Sopher

Long Wait Over...Antelope in Arizona Again!

By Jim Unmacht, Past President



I hadn't been drawn for Arizona antelope since 1993. With 18 bonus points, I wasn't even at the max, and knew some that had even more. I figured one of these days I'd get drawn again, and the Kid hadn't ever been drawn for antelope in Arizona, with 10 points to his name going into the Spring draw. I thought what the heck, I'll put us in together and see what happens.

Well it happened, we got lucky! We drew two rifle tags in 5A. Why 5A...I'd heard many reports of "nice" bucks in there, suggesting some good mid 80's animals, and possibly a 90 incher or two.

Out of the chute, kudos to the Bar-T-Bar folks for the access! That's a special thing these days that

unfortunately many take for granted. Thanks to the Hopi Tribe too, for if you take out the private ranches, Arizona antelope hunting becomes a past-time that is passed. One only has to look at 19B this year to know the ramifications (see related story on page 16). Finally to 5A Wildlife Manager Garret Fabian. He's dedicated to the pronghorn, and is endeavoring to make a difference in his unit.

Scouting took place in earnest, and most of the late summer weekends found the Dodge Ram headed North. I covered most of it, and even had my wife on a quad trail in the truck along Clear Creek Canyon one

(Continued on page 12)

For the Book

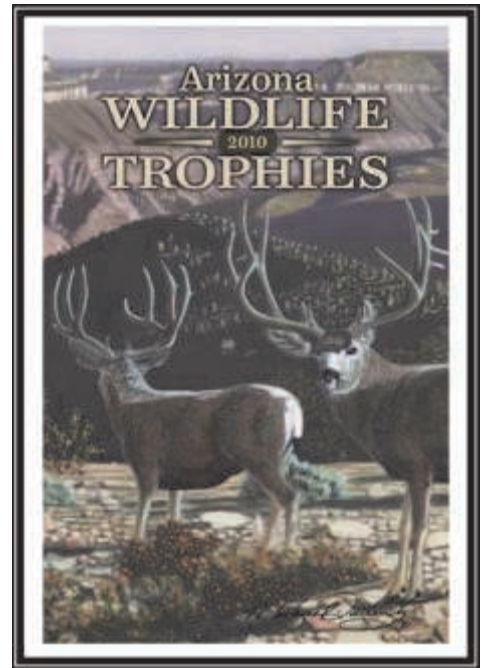
By Bill Keebler

The 2010 edition of the Arizona Wildlife Trophies book is now available. This edition lists 3,427 individual trophy records in 14 different categories using the Boone and Crockett Club scoring system. These records include 163 new trophy records since the 2005 book. The book includes photos of some of the highest ranking trophy records. It includes three new pronghorn entries in the top ten. These are a 94 4/8 pronghorn killed by David Meyer in 2008 and two 94 2/8 pronghorns, one killed by Denny Austad in 2006 and another killed by Shaun Friesen in 2007.

The book honors four deceased sportsmen who have contributed to wildlife conservation in Arizona. It pays special tribute to Ed Stockwell whose world record Coues' deer is the second longest standing Arizona trophy record. Articles in this book offer the first definitive history of the transplant efforts for eight of the eleven big game species. It also includes eight hunting tales written by, or about, those who have benefited from the management actions like species transplants.

The Arizona Wildlife Trophies Record Book has been published every five years since 1970 by the Arizona Wildlife Trophies Committee of the Arizona Wildlife Federation. This is the ninth edition.

(Continued on page 10)



Antelope Eaters Event

By Todd Hulm, AAF Vice President

A weekend full of driving... interrupted by hours of sitting.... following a few miles of walking.... punctuated by moments of sheer panic..... ended with smiles, laughter, and memories that will last a lifetime....

That description fits the Annual Antelope Eaters event hosted by the Mohave Sportsman Club in Northern Arizona each year, and once again, the event was a huge success this year with promise of the best event yet coming in 2012.

The event is held each spring prior to the fawning season for pronghorn, mule deer, and wapiti in efforts to reduce predator numbers prior to this critical season. As many active conservationists realize, predation on newborn fawns and calves is a major hurdle our big game herds must overcome if population levels are to be maintained. Antelope are especially vulnerable to coyote predation of newborn young due to the habitat in which they fawn where eyesight and open ground is preferred to areas of thick cover. Researchers have observed coyotes simply following pronghorn at a distance waiting for the newborn fawn to arrive at which time they feed on the defenseless young. Nature can be

cruel, indeed.

Unfortunately, antelope are not nearly as adaptable as the wiley coyote, and they are not able to recover at-risk populations at the amazing rate with which coyotes can either. Controlling predator populations in



Photo by Jake Fousek, AZ Game & Fish

(Continued on page 10)

(Antelope Eaters continued from page 9)

early spring is critical.

A good number of coyotes were harvested again this year with amazing turnout by sportsmen from Arizona, Nevada, Utah and California. Over 120 teams and 300 shooters registered for the event. The Mohave Sportsman Club provided cash prizes as well as raffles for the event and over 60 prize packages were given away with prizes ranging from predator calls and camouflage clothing to overnight packages at area resorts. The Arizona Antelope Foundation provided a number of prize packages as well which included antelope merchandise and memberships. Other Arizona conservation groups supporting this event included Wildlife Conservation Council, Arizona Deer Association, Arizona Bowhunters Association, Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society and the Arizona Elk Society

Also, with great anticipation, the Mohave Sportsman Club announced that Fred Eichler of Predator Nation will be attending the event next year, and a team will be able to hunt with Fred as he films an episode of the popular television series at next year's event. To accommodate the filming schedule, the event will be pushed back a couple of weeks. They are also anticipating record sponsorship and donations for the event.

The AAF was represented by President Shane Stewart, along with his son, Cade, and Vice-President Todd Hulm. The team was successful in calling in 9 coyotes over the weekend...due to gun malfunction, trees moving into the way, bullet inconsistency, and bionic coyotes, we won't be able to mention the number of coyotes the team was able to harvest. Just rest assured, those three guys can really shoot.



AZ Game & Fish biologist taking samples



(For The Book continued from page 9)

Each year there is an annual competition. All entries received by May 1 of the year following the year the animal is taken are automatically entered in the competition. Entries received after the May 1st deadline are not eligible for the annual competition but are still entered into the next record book. The annual competition awards given each year are bronze awards and honorable mention awards. The bronze award is awarded only to outstanding trophies in each category at the dis-

cretion of the Arizona Wildlife Trophies committee and any number of honorable mention awards can be awarded in each category. The bronze award is so titled because it is a bronze medallion presented in a shadow box. For 2009 there were 11 bronze awards presented.

The requirement for trophy entries, minimum scores and a list of measurers are on the Arizona Wildlife Federation web site at www.azwildlife.org. The price of the 2010 Trophy Record Book is \$45.00. To order a copy an order form can be downloaded from the web site or you can call Kim at 480 644-0077.

Pronghorn Aging Study Preliminary Results 2010

In 2005, the Arizona Antelope Foundation in cooperation with the Armendaris Ranch in New Mexico began a study to age harvested pronghorn antelope and compare their respective horn size and B & C score. The hope was to obtain some meaningful results that will be useful in determining which age classes to manage for, and how it may impact the various pronghorn herds. Here are the preliminary results from 2010. Thanks to all the hunters who submitted teeth for this analysis.

Catalog #	Hunter Name	B&C Score	Age	Kill Date	Location
A-1001	Steve Hightower	68 5/8	6	10/2/2010	Armendaris
A-1002	Steve Adams	72 3/4	4	10/2/2010	Armendaris
A-1003	Laura Whetsten	73 1/2	5	10/2/2010	Armendaris
A-1004	Richard Rog	73 1/4	4	10/2/2010	Armendaris
A-1005	Bill Hedlund	73 3/4	9	10/2/2010	Armendaris
A-1006	Evan Hedlund	75 3/4	4	10/2/2010	Armendaris
A-1007	Troy Slocum	70	5	10/2/2010	Armendaris
A-1008	Ron Wheeler	75 3/8	4	10/2/2010	Armendaris; buffalo tank
A-1009	Wesley Stark	66 3/8	4	10/2/2010	Armendaris, Cedar pas.
B-1001	Patrick Martin	83 1/2	3	x/x/2008	GMU 34B AZ
B-1002	John Vanko	78 1/4	7	x/x/2009	Moffit Co., CO
B-1003	Jimmy Unmacht	75 7/8	8	x/x/2010	GMU 5B AZ
B-1004	Charles Kelly	78 1/8	5	x/x/2010	GMU 19B CV Ranch AZ
B-1005	Jim Unmacht	73 3/8	6	x/x/2010	GMU 54 AZ
B-1006	Tyler Dotson	72 1/2	8	x/x/2010	GMU 10 AZ
B-1007	Robert Heffelfinger	62 3/4	5	x/x/2010	GMU 30A, Wells Tank, AZ
B-1008	Cole Medlin	78	9	x/x/2010	UU NM
B-1009	Brent Trumbo	81	5	x/x/2010	Ojo Feliz, NM
B-1010	Larry Strawn	84	5	x/x/2010	GMU 44 NM
A-0920	Lawrence L. Cales		4	x/x/2010	AAF (19B)
B-1011	Grant Medlin	81	3	x/x/2010	Ojo Feliz, NM
B-1012	Trish Strawn	76	3	x/x/2010	Ojo Feliz, NM
B-1013	Lyle Poser	85	4	x/x/2010	Fort Union, NM
B-1014	Dennis Greensage	87	6	x/x/2010	Fort Union, NM
B-1015	Mike Jenkins	83	4	x/x/2010	Fort Union, NM
B-1016	David Jenkins	82	3	x/x/2010	Fort Union, NM
B-1017	Bob Jenkins	85	5	x/x/2010	Fort Union, NM
B-1018	Sam Jenkins	77	4	x/x/2010	Fort Union, NM
B-1019	Ben Jenkins	80	4	x/x/2010	Fort Union, NM

(Long Wait Over continued from page 8)

weekend...she won't make that trip in a truck again. Thankfully it was dry that day, for if not, a slippery slope it'd been, and you probably wouldn't be reading this story right now.

As August rolled on, we started to see some animals, and rain started to wet the landscape. Gradually parts of the unit started to green, but surely not all. Many waterholes remained dry through the hunt. Some didn't so those areas began to see some pronghorn activity, and with it, swarms of mosquitoes...after living in Minnesota, I hate mosquitoes.

By a couple weeks out, we had a handful of bucks spotted, but archery season was still on tap. I figured that would mix things up some more, and we attempted to find 4 or 5 good bucks so we had some choice come our hunt time. I was going to be there for the duration of this expedition, but my hunting partner would only have the second weekend to hunt as a result of a hockey tournament over Labor Day weekend. I planned on "saving" him a smaller buck for the second weekend. He didn't totally appreciate the humor.

On the last weekend of the archery season, we saw some more bucks, and one in particular caught our attention. Not because it was a giant, but because of its dark hind quarter, slow deliberate movements, and didn't seem right. We took some photos and our suspicions were confirmed when we got home, the dark stains were blood. We weren't sure how long that buck would make it.

Several years ago Game & Fish transplanted bucks from Chino Valley into 5A and we heard a couple were still around, but so far we hadn't spotted any of the blue-tagged animals. We kept our eyes open however, for if they were still here, they had to be some good bucks!

Opening weekend finally arrived and with our camp in the pines secured the prior weekend, our Camp Chef was ready to go, too. We were going to eat well with Tracy and the camp canines in charge of the base.

Before I go on, many thanks to the folks that joined us on the trip and helped us out...First weekend, David Hussey, Avil Garcia, Matt & Georgia Massey and veteran Bill Keebler with apprentice Johnny Koleszar. Second weekend, veterans Jim McCasland and Pete Cimellaro.

Opening day offered us some excitement and after a good stalk, we crested a mesa looking for a shot, but the buck had disappeared. We were bummed, it was a good buck, and we thought it had an ear tag... As we headed back to the truck, we saw the silhouette of a hunter on the east of the Mesa. We didn't know who it was, nor what he had seen. Did he know where this ghost went?

Saturday morning broke and we split up the group to cover more ground. This time my group

headed up to Winslow and headed west to the Meteor Crater road. We worked our way through the green areas, some grass and forbs, but mostly mustard. Glassing along we went, and we found some activity. A long ways away to the east, we thought we spotted a buck and quite a few does...we headed that way.

After a couple of miles, and nearing the landmark where we last saw the buck, we looked up and coming right at us was a nice buck! It was running west, tongue hanging and not looking back. Was that the buck we saw? It did not have an ear tag, and we weren't quite sure what had happened, but it had good bases, nice prongs, tall, but thinner at the top. We would see this buck again....

We made it to the mesa and set up Glassing Johnny. David and I set a plan and put the sneak on where we thought the herd had been. There was antelope sign everywhere. As we crawled around the outcrops and used the gullies to our advantage, we finally got to a vantage point to see the herd. There they were, a dozen does and a buck...a closer view confirmed this one had a blue ear tag! He was a good buck, but he wasn't the monster I had envisioned. I ranged him at 600 yards. Too far for now, we needed to get closer and there was one more small butte between us and the herd. We headed there, mid morning, and as the sun got higher, it was getting hotter.

After some cautious back tracking and maneuvering, we made it to the last cover between us and the now resting herd. As we watched them eat, lay down and kept in line by the buck, I ranged them again, 410 yards. Again not the distance I wanted to shoot from, but I didn't want to blow this stalk.

We backed out and decided to rethink our plan of attack. We got back to Johnny who had been baking on the butte, wondering what the heck we were doing. We decided to head around the herd and come up from the south and use the spine of an outcrop for cover. As we did that the sun got even hotter. We made it about a half mile from the herd and as we glassed them, a doe spotted us and pinned us down. We were on the hard pan late morning, sun rising, no cover and the temperature had to be 90. We pulled out the Zebu cattle decoy and tried to use him for some shade. The wait was on.

Past noon we needed water. At about the same time, Johnny had driven the truck up about a quarter mile from us and he was borderline dehydrated. David went back for water, I watched the lopes. Shortly thereafter, I ran out of water, and as David came back, and we drank that, I went back for more. Johnny was horizontal, trying to cool off. Resupplied, I headed back to David with water. Right around 2pm seemingly out of nowhere, another fine buck ran up to our herd. The herd buck was sleeping in what appeared to be a shal-

(Continued on page 13)

(Long Wait Over continued from page 12)

low cave. The other buck ran up to a doe and mounted her. In the commotion the herd roused and we witnessed a pronghorn battle. This went on for a couple minutes as David and I watched and Johnny slept.

They started running around, zigzagging through the hard pan and we wondered if our long wait was done. They turned...and we realized they were running right up the draw at us! The antagonist was a good buck too, and I whispered to David, "which one"? Without dropping his binoculars he said "shoot the second one if you get a chance".

I did, as in the next minute here they came, the younger buck ahead of the herd buck by 10 yards, but now at full steam. Zebu was still balancing behind us for shade, and I readied my rifle. At 150 yards, the young buck blew by us, and the second buck stopped dead in his tracks, broadside and stared at us. With one shot, he fell in his tracks.

My shot woke up Johnny and we heard him yelling from the truck wondering what just happened. As we walked toward the buck, the other buck did, too. At 50 yards out, he stood there and looked at us as we admired my trophy. Once he made sure his dominator was done, he headed to the does!

We found my buck at 8 in the morning, and by

the time we started our stalk, we had been on the high desert hard pan for 5 hours, with the temperature peaking at 95 degrees. I harvested a great trophy that would not make the record book, but did make many memories! Old # 53 was the dominant buck in this part of the country as was evidenced by the youngsters we saw him dispatch!

Fast forward to weekend #2...With the hockey trip behind him, it was time for Jimmy's hunt. We hoped for another nice buck, and Jimmy hoped for a buck bigger than Dad's.

Saturday morning with Jim and Pete helping, we scoured the same country I had been in the week before. As we worked our way east, we glassed up a buck about a mile south of us. The scope told us he was a good buck. Good bases and prongs, nice shape, but a bit thin on the top...I knew this buck! This was the same buck that ran past our truck the prior Saturday.

Jimmy had to decide what he wanted to do. As we watched the buck, Jimmy said he wanted to go for it! Jim and Pete would stay where they were and watch him, and we agreed on a set of hand signals. Jimmy and I would drive east, park and then hike in, with the country affording us the cover and opportunity to get close.

The kid and I set out on the stalk. Easy at first,

(Continued on page 15)



(Do Wind Farms Affect Pronghorn cont. from page 5)

a spotter for Wildlife Manager Evan Lautzenheiser. I got to see former co-workers and friends and meet some of the newer staff at the briefing.

After the briefing lead by research biologist Vince Frary, who was the biologist responsible for conducting the study, I joined the capture team at the evening campsite along SR 377, whereas Dave headed home, since he recently moved to the Show Low area after retiring from the City of Phoenix. Everyone headed to bed at an early hour, since the capture operation would start pre-dawn. By 0500 (5am), prep for the capture was underway. The capture and veterinary teams had to prepare their respective gear for the helicopter/netgun capture operation. I assisted where I could, having been involved in netgun capture since the early 1980s, and also took some photographs of the operation. Soon, Evan arrived at the camp to pick me up so we could go look for pronghorn within the existing Dry Lake Wind Facility—with 30 turbines up in Phase I and 31 more in construction in Phase 2. The basic idea was for spotter teams like Evan and I, or Eric and Dave, to find a herd, call in the location to the base camp and spotter airplane, and maintain contact with the herd until the capture helicopter arrived.

Evan and I soon glassed up 3 antelope, plus a nearby coyote. Other herds were located nearby by additional observers. Close to us, Wildlife Program Manager Dave Cagle had located a herd of 14 between the 2 existing lines of wind turbines. After the netgunning crew of Larry Phoenix and Rick Langley had netted and collared 2 animals from a herd spotted by the base camp, the Papillon Helicopter was flying over us to get to the herd of 14. Evan and I got to watch and photograph 2 captures from the herd. One capture was close enough for me to run over and get some close-up pictures of the veterinary crew at work—taking blood and tissue samples, treating any minor injuries, and releasing the animal. The netgunning crew had already removed the tangled net from the immobilized antelope and put on the GPS-style radio collar, while the helicopter re

(Continued on page 15)



Photos by Richard Ockenfels

turned to base camp for the veterinary team of Dr. Anne Justice-Allen and Michelle Crabb. This same procedure, with different personnel at times, was repeated 15 times—for each of the captured pronghorn. The animal was netted by the capture team, the helicopter landed, the capture team subdued the netted animal, the pilot took off and returned for the vet team at the last capture site (each site was marked by GPS coordinates in the helicopter), the vet team finished up the collaring and biological sampling, while the capture team headed out to the next spotted herd. A very efficient system for a small area like the GMU 3A triangle within SR 277, SR77, and SR277.

The operation went so smoothly that all 15 animals were captured, collared, samples were taken, and released by 1600 (4pm) of the first day. Accordingly to

Dave Cagle, about half of the captured animals were initially seen by the ground crews, with the rest by a spotter team in one of the Department's aircraft or the helicopter team themselves. I was able to watch several captures, tour most of the wind farm, and see a lot of the triangle as Evan and I searched for different herds. Dave and Eric saw 15 antelope, but late in the day.

The research team will monitor the animals and collect data for 2 years, in a research design that should enable sound biological conclusions about whether the wind farm has negative or positive effects on the way individual animals use the habitat around the wind farm. The hardest part will be in determining whether there are any long-term impacts to adult survival or recruitment of young into the population. This 2-year study may not be sufficient to answer such long-term questions, but it is a great start.



(Long Wait Over continued from page 13)

but not able to see the animal. We kept hiking and hiking...and hiking. Jim and Pete, back at glass central began wondering what happened to us? At an hour in, we hit the fence line we saw, and fortunately didn't cross it. As more time elapsed, we finally saw our spotters. I unfurled Zebu, and tried to make out the hand signals. Our Morse code wasn't meshing. I'm watching Pete do jumping jacks, and they're trying to figure out what the black blob is that's moving over the high plains.

Zebu gave us great cover as we criss-crossed back and forth looking for this buck. At the same time we're searching for this resting buck, Pete and Jim appear to be doing a synchronized signaling act. It made no sense to us at the time, but we knew that buck had to be around there somewhere. We didn't know at the time that from a mile away, Zebu looked like a black blob prowling over the prairie, and we were the cause of some muted belly laughs from our spotters!

As time ticked away, we crested a small knoll and I saw some horns up and head down; this buck was sleeping! I got Jimmy on him and we watched. The wind was right, and with Zebu in full furl, our spotters kept sending us signals we couldn't decipher.

And then the buck woke up. He couldn't smell us, and with the Zebu decoy, quite sure he couldn't see us. He stood up and started trotting away. I whispered

to Jimmy to get ready and when he stops to shoot. The buck kept trotting, much to our concern, so I yelled at him...that stopped him! Then one shot from the kid's rifle stopped him for good at 175 yards. A great shot and great stalk!

As we came up to Jimmy's buck, there was no doubt, this was the first buck mine sent packing the week before. He looked like he had been in some scrapes, and I knew who he had lost out to, but he too would soon have a place of honor on our wall. He would also score higher than my buck, which put a smile on the Kid's face! No worries here though, as a father who's hoping his son maintains his passion for hunting and the outdoors, that's a good thing!

We may never get drawn for an antelope hunt in Arizona again, but we'll never forget this one! All the memories came back this weekend when Steve Favour at Signature Taxidermy in Flagstaff called and said our trophies were ready to pick up. Boy were they, and what a great job he did!

Postscript...we learned later Stephen Williams was that hunter on the mesa opening day. He had watched our stalk and saw the buck disappear. He had been eyeing this buck too. When we set out on our stalk we didn't know he was there. He later found the buck again, and a couple days later had him coming into a waterhole. That fine buck is now destined for his wall. It too had a blue ear tag as we suspected!

Pronghorn Hunts in Unit 19b Eliminated for 2011

From AZ Game & Fish Wildlife News March 25, 2011

Faced with the loss of public access to a vast area of Game Management Unit 19B north of Prescott, the Arizona Game and Fish Commission on March 23 decided to cancel the pronghorn antelope hunt there prior to the big game draw for the 2011 season.

The commission's decision affects the hunting prospects for 65 hunters who would have received allocated tags. Commission Chairman Robert Woodhouse said, "There have been closures of other hunt units for a season or more based on biological reasons such as severe winter die offs, loss of habitat due to fires, etc. ... but this was the first time a decision was made to eliminate hunt tags due to public access closures. This was a difficult decision made only after extensive staff input and a long discussion by the commission."

During the discussion, commissioners pointed out that this was a "no-win situation" for the commission, the department, and for the hunters who applied for the general and archery pronghorn antelope hunts in Unit 19B this fall, but the commission was compelled to do what was most fair to all concerned.

Late last week, the property manager for the Chino Grande Ranch, which is a checkerboard of private and state trust land parcels, verbally notified the department that the ranch is now closed to public access, due to a proposed renewable energy project. Access to other portions of the unit has also become restricted, with some private lands being closed entirely and other ranches allowing access by payment of "trespass" fees.

The Chino Grande Ranch contains a significant portion of the available pronghorn habitat in 19B, and

its lands also hold the greatest density of pronghorn numbers in the unit.

The deadline to apply for the upcoming draw was Feb. 8 and the draw results are pending, giving the commission only days to modify the affected hunts without affecting thousands of other hunters.

There are 4,780 people who applied for the 65 pronghorn antelope hunt permits in the two hunts (one general hunt and one archery hunt) scheduled for 19B. Game Branch Chief Brian Wakeling said "the antelope hunts in 19B are some of the most coveted in the state."

The commission also considered reducing the number of permits in the hunt but after significant discussion, the members felt that option would do a disservice to those who applied, as the area left open for 2011 would differ substantially from that available when hunters applied in February.

With the elimination of these two hunts, the draw program will treat any choice where these hunts were selected as if all tags had been issued and move to the applicant's next choice. The draw examines first and second choices primarily and then third, fourth, and fifth choices secondarily. The majority of the commissioners felt that to be the most equitable approach.

The commission also expressed its desire to open up a dialogue on the whole land access and wildlife availability issue with land management agencies, county governments and stakeholders to include hunters, anglers and other recreationists. At issue is access to public lands and state trust lands and the management of public resources, such as wildlife and fish.



Short Shots

Hunter Clinic

By the time this publication reaches you, the antelope hunt draw results should be available. We are currently making plans for our annual hunter information clinic, which will take place early this summer. If you are one of the lucky ones to draw, watch your mail for your invitation. Hunting antelope can be challenging, but our clinic can provide you with the right information to help you become successful. We always have engaging speakers, and Game & Fish representatives will be present to speak to you about your specific unit.

THANKS

The following have made cash contributions recently:
Michael Forzano
Bill & Mary Keebler
John Koleszar
Keith & Jacki Menasco
Keith Shafer
Walt Scrimgeour

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