

BIGHORN SHEEP
(*OVIS CANADENSIS*)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G3² / not listed under the ESA.

Distribution: Range of subspecies *O.c.nelsoni* range extends from CA to TX and south to northern Mexico. Present range on Navajo Nation includes San Juan River in UT, and possibly Little Colorado River; with rare sightings along Marble Canyon of the Colorado River. Potential throughout the deep-canyon reaches of San Juan, Colorado, and Little Colorado Rivers.

Habitat: Found year-round in arid, precipitous terrain with rocky slopes, ridges, cliffs, and rugged canyons; vegetation is typically low shrubs, grasses and forbs.

Similar Species: No other wild sheep on Navajo Nation; may be confused with exotic and domestic sheep.

Phenology:

e.NOV-1.DEC: mating season (peak in AUG)

e.APR-1.JUN: birthing of young (peak in MAY; young mobile at 1-4 days)

e.OCT-1.NOV: weaning of young

Survey Method: ≥1 pedestrian or aerial survey throughout year with high-power optics; or consultation with Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife (NNDFWL).

Avoidance: No disturbance within 1.6 km (1 mile) of lambing areas during 1 APR-1 SEP; minimize disturbance to individuals and habitat year-round, especially activity during 1 APR-30 SEP that prevents access to feeding areas and to San Juan River for water; consultation with NNDFWL necessary.

References:

Hoffmeister, D.F. 1986. Mammals of Arizona. The University of Arizona Press. (description p.554)

² Occasional special hunts of *Ovis canadensis* for management / research purposes may be developed and implemented only by the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife.