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THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN BIGHORN IN GRAND TETON NATIONAL PARK

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This is a summary of a preliminary survey of the bighorn sheep population of Grand Teton National Park during July, 1976.

The National Park's data on bighorn in the park are sparse, with approximately fifty-five reported observations between 1936 and 1975 on file at Park Headquarters, Moose, Wyoming. However, through the courtesy of Mr. Garvice Roby, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Jackson, Wyoming, records of winter aerial observations from 1969 and 1976 were consulted. From those observations, and from further consultation with park service personnel, a decision was therefore made to concentrate my investigation in areas of the northern portion of the park, within the area extending from Snowshoe Canyon on the south to the northern park boundary, and from Jackson Lake on the east to the western park boundary.

The specific areas of interest were Ranger Peak, Doane Peak, Owl Peak, Moose Basin Divide, Red Mountain and Forellen Peak (see U.S.G.S. map: Grand Teton National Park). Approximately fifteen days were spent in the field during three backpack trips between July 5th and August 1, 1976. Ranger, Doane and Owl Peaks were surveyed by telescope; Moose Basin Divide and the range divide at the head of Moose Basin were investigated directly, where some possible sheep signs (old tracks and scat) were found.

The remainder of the field time was spent in the Berry Creek drainage and around Red Mountain. Forellen Peak was also surveyed by telescope. No evidence of bighorn was found in these areas.

Within the limits of this brief study, it might be recommended that summer investigation of the bighorn of Grand Teton National Park may be impracticable, and that aerial surveys during the winter may be a more workable approach.

I would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Jackson Hole Biological Research Station, Grand Teton National Park, Dr. William Barmore, Mr. Robert Wood, Mr. John Carr (personnel of Grand Teton National Park), and Mr. Mike Whitfield (of Driggs, Idaho).