

Large Mammal Advisory Committee

Approved Project

July 2014 QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT

**Project Name:** Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep Population Monitoring and Assessment

**Quarter:** 1 April – 30 June, 2014

**Feasibility Project Objective:**

The primary objective of the peninsular ranges bighorn sheep monitoring and assessment project is to improve the monitoring capabilities for the on-going peninsular bighorn sheep population recovery program. This will be facilitated through the purchase of Very High Frequency (VHF) telemetry-collars (MOD 500, Telonics, Inc., Mesa AZ, USA) with Global Positioning System (GPS) “pods” (Quantum 4000 Enhanced GPS Pod, Telemetry Solutions, Concord CA, USA) for deployment on Desert Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis Canadensis Nelsoni*) during fall 2014.

A population monitoring and assessment program designed to determine and track population status, distribution, habitat use, recruitment, survival, and mortality using radio-telemetered bighorn sheep has been in place since 1992. Continued implementation of this program remains crucial to the development and refinement of recovery strategies and achieving established population conservation objectives. Deployment of radio-telemetry collars on bighorn sheep and subsequent ground and aerial monitoring is vital to the collection of data crucial to the development of new management strategies, refinement of existing management strategies, and to achieving established population conservation strategies.

**Work Performed:**

Work performed between 1 April - 30 June, 2014 included the refurbishment of 35 previously deployed VHF radio-collars to be deployed on sheep during fall 2014. Monitoring of previously radio-collared bighorn sheep in the Peninsular Ranges occurring within eastern San Diego and western Riverside and Imperial Counties was continued.

Due to the unavailability of helicopter services required to capture bighorn during fall 2013 deployment of VHF/GPS collars could not be undertaken as planned. Further, due to the timing of lamb birth in the Peninsular Ranges and helicopter availability collaring work will not be possible until fall of 2014. Project funds originally allocated to helicopter time were re-allocated to telemetry equipment purchase for use in fall 2014.

