

Game and Fish moves bighorn sheep

By Tara Hodges
Cody Region Information and Education

Along with help from many volunteers and local landowners, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department recently moved 20 bighorn sheep from Lovell, Wyoming, to an area north of Rawlins, Wyoming.

To capture the bighorn sheep in Devil's Canyon, a person in a helicopter shot a net onto them. After the net landed on the bighorn sheep, a person on the ground quickly and gently took the net off and strapped the sheep into a sling.

The bighorn sheep got a shot of medicine that relaxed them and they also wore a mask that covered its eyes to help keep it calm. The helicopter carried the bighorn sheep in slings over to the area where the sheep were given a quick health checkup.

The Game and Fish biologists put a special GPS collar around the sheep's neck so that they can study where the bighorn sheep go after they are released. Finally, the bighorn sheep took a ride in a hay-filled livestock trailer to its new home.

The sheep were released in Miner's Canyon on the east end of the Ferris Mountains to join the group of bighorn sheep that already live there.

Game and Fish does this because the Devil's Canyon herd of bighorn sheep has more animals in it than the habitat can support in a healthy way. The Ferris-Seminole herd of bighorn sheep isn't doing as well and their habitat can support more bighorn sheep, so it is a nice solution to move the bighorn sheep from the bigger herd to the smaller one.

Game and Fish has captured and moved bighorn sheep from the Devil's



After giving the sheep a shot of medicine to relax them, Wyoming Game and Fish Department employees transfer them to a helicopter that will take them to an area for their health checkup.
(Photo by Tara Hodges)

Canyon herd to the Ferris-Seminole herd five times now. In 2010, they moved 12 bighorn sheep, followed by 25

bighorn sheep in 2015, 24 bighorn sheep in 2016, and then 22 bighorn sheep earlier in 2017.