

PRONGHORN

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"Arizona's Newest Conservation Organization"

A group of individuals, concerned about the status of Arizona's pronghorn antelope, met through the summer and fall of 1992, and formed Arizona's newest conservation organization, the Arizona Antelope Foundation. Bylaws were drawn up, a slate of officers and a Board of Directors were duly elected in October, and the organization was incorporated in December.

The Arizona Antelope Foundation is now up and functioning. A Mission Statement has been adopted: "The Arizona Antelope Foundation is dedicated to increasing the antelope population in Arizona through active participation in and advocacy of antelope management and habitat enhancement programs."

Goals and objectives of the AAF include the following: 1) Acquiring blocks of key antelope habitat and managing them for antelope, 2) Participating in habitat manipulation projects to enhance antelope habitat, 3) developing additional water sources for antelope, 4) modifying existing fences to exceed current wildlife standards, 5) reintroducing antelope into historic habitat, 6) supporting predator control efforts where necessary to insure the survival of antelope populations, 7) educating the public about antelope in Arizona, 8) coordinating with the livestock industry, land management agencies, private landowners, and game management agencies to encourage programs emphasizing antelope, 9) promoting research necessary to better manage antelope, and 10) serving as an advocate for the enhancement of antelope.



Photo courtesy of AZ Game & Fish Department

The AAF has the support of the Arizona Game and Fish Department, and anticipates a good working relationship with them. All habitat improvement projects, which will be scheduled during late spring and the summer months, will be done with the approval and coordination of the Department and other land management agencies. Board and membership meetings will be held throughout the various regions in Arizona on a regular basis in an effort to involve a maximum amount of participation from the membership.

The officers and directors of the Arizona Antelope Foundation invite any interested party to become a member of this new conservation organization. Char-

ter memberships are available for \$100 through December of 1993. Charter members receive all the benefits of regular membership, and they also provide the AAF with immediate funds to operate the organization.

A membership application can be found on the back page of this newsletter. If you would like more information, you are invited to call any of the officers or the Board of Directors. Arizonans have done their part for the bears, ducks, elk, and sheep in our state. Now it's time to roll up the sleeves and go to work for Arizona's antelope!

Arizona Antelope Foundation

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Pete Cimellaro
Phoenix 275-7096

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Jim McCasland
Prescott 445-3886

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Don Johnson
Phoenix 278-3010

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"Pronghorn"

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President's Message

February 1, 1993

Wildlife Conservationist:

Arizona is fortunate to have many active and accomplished wildlife conservation organizations. Because of the work of these groups, wildlife habitat has been improved, water sources have been built, research has been done, transplants have occurred, etc. Often, single purpose groups are responsible for accomplishments that so much of our wildlife benefits from. It is for this reason the Arizona Antelope Foundation was established.

Arizona's antelope need help! The founders of our organization believe that if antelope populations are to prosper and increase, we must become aggressive in our support of this magnificent wildlife resource. We plan to work closely with wildlife management agencies, land management agencies, and land owners to improve habitat and increase cooperation among all involved parties for the benefit of Arizona's antelope. This joint effort will help secure the future of our

antelope and hopefully begin an upward turn for this species in Arizona.

If the goals and objectives of this organization interest you, we want your help! We want individuals, families, businesses, and other groups to join with us in beginning this important work. Help is needed and wanted at all levels of this organization. Give us your input and help launch our first year's work program.

Come and spend some time with us on our summer projects in Arizona's antelope country!

Investing in Arizona's wildlife future,

Pete Cimellaro, President
Arizona Antelope Foundation

Next Meeting April 18

1:00 pm at the Administrators

3875 N. 44th Street

Suite 102

Phoenix, Arizona

(602) 952-8116

"Arizona's Pronghorn Antelope"

by Raymond Lee

Perhaps no other animal so typifies the western plains as the pronghorn antelope. Few people have travelled the blue highways in antelope range without falling under the curious gaze of a herd of these animals. Driving down a dirt road, it's not uncommon to have a herd lope alongside your vehicle, using their characteristic rocking gait; then, with an exhilarating burst of speed, dashing ahead to cross the road in front of you.

Antelope appear vividly marked with their tan and white markings—until they lie down. In the dry grass fields they frequent, the distinctive coloration blends in amazingly well and serves as predator protection for newborn fawns.

Pronghorn antelope, which are native to North America, are generally classified as a separate family of the order artiodactyla (even-toed ungulates). Other members of this order include elk, deer, bighorn sheep, and javelina. Pronghorn antelope differ from "true" antelope, such as those found in Africa, by having a pronged or forked horn, and also in that the horn sheath is shed annually following the rut.

Arizona is home to three sub-species of pronghorn antelope. The most common sub-species, *Antilocapra americana americana*, is found in central and northern Arizona, and its range extends northward into Canada. *A. a. mexicana* is found in southeastern Arizona, primarily the result of recent transplants from Texas. The range for this sub-species extends east to central Texas. The Sonoran antelope, *A. a. sonoriensis*, is found in southwestern Arizona, and its range extends southward into Mexico. The Sonoran antelope is currently classified as an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

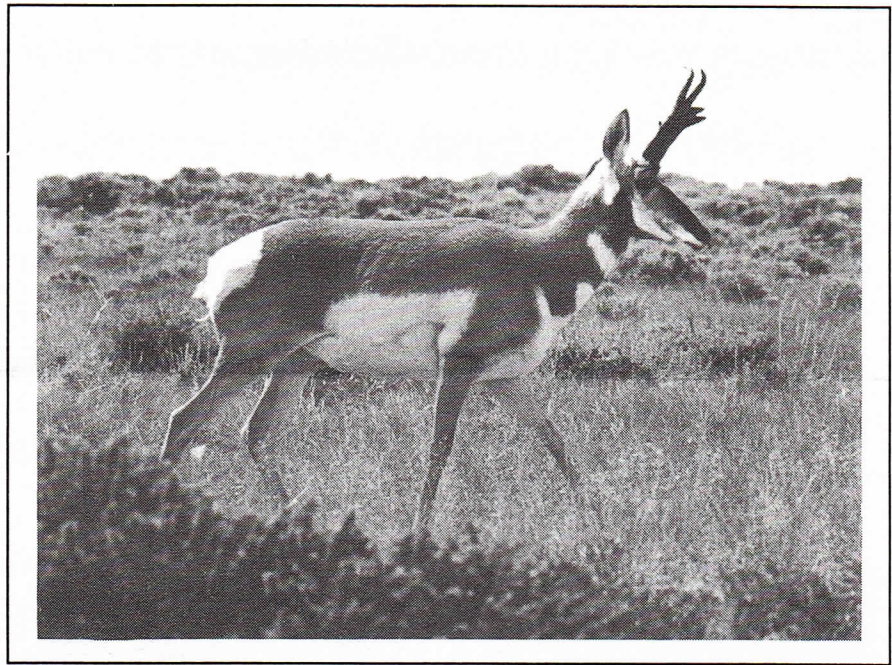


Photo courtesy of AZ Game & Fish Department

In 1990, it was estimated that there were at least 7300 pronghorn antelope in Arizona. These animals occupied 21,000 square miles of habitat, only 253 of which were considered high density habitat. Sonoran antelope were estimated to number at least 125. The present goal of the Arizona Game and Fish Department is to increase antelope population to levels which provide recreational opportunity to as many individuals as possible.

Due to their high visibility and curious nature, antelope are very popular with non-consumptive wildlife enthusiasts as well as with hunters. Due to the relatively large percentage of antelope habitat on private land, another Department goal is to maintain and enhance antelope habitat through cooperation with land management agencies and appropriate landowners.

The Arizona Antelope Foundation fills an important void in the group of organizations devoted to the conserva-

tion of Arizona's wildlife. The continued existence of pronghorn antelope in Arizona is in more jeopardy than any of the other big-game species.

The successes of the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society in the conservation of bighorn sheep serve as an inspiration and as an example of what can be accomplished by such organizations. The fund raising ability, the volunteer labor, and the potential to apply political pressure that such groups can possess are extremely important in the successful management of a species.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department wishes the Arizona Antelope Foundation success during their formative period and looks forward to working with its new members for the benefit of antelope throughout the southwest!

Editor's note - Ray Lee is a Wildlife Specialist Supervisor in the Game Branch of the Arizona Game and Fish Department.