

Bighorns: weather has been helpful

(Continued from page 1)

The monitoring increases in April, when just after the lambs are born.

Besides the ram that was killed at Wapanitia Creek, another fatality was discovered three weeks ago, Luther said.

"We found an ewe. We don't know why it died," he said.

More recently, Luther said a report from early last week indicated a sighting of 16 sheep in the area where the animals were dropped off last December.

"There was one ram with horns of a three-quarter curl, and ewes and lambs for a total of 16," Luther said. "We had almost a 100-percent survival on our lamb crop."

That seven lambs were born and are still alive heading into the winter is encouraging.

"It indicates to me that the habitat is suitable," he said. "That they're staying in same area indicates we picked a good spot to place them."

"And there hasn't been the predation, which is another factor. That usually happens in first months after they're born."

Of the 15 sheep transported last December, at least 10 were ewes, and some were pregnant at the time.

"When you capture sheep when they're pregnant, there's always a potential they lose lambs from stress, but we didn't have much of that," he said.

The bighorns benefited from a mild winter last year that allowed them to freely move. The lack of snow left forage plants uncovered, then a wet spring produced more available food for the sheep.

"I talked to the wildlife biologist at The Dalles, and they're



The animals wear radio collars, so Natural Resources can track their location.

seeing high (lamb) production as well," Luther said. The wet spring produced lots of good feed, and a good year for lamb production.

This winter could present more of a challenge for the sheep, he said. "Where the sheep are, you get snow, but it dissipates quickly because you have southern exposure and fairly low elevations," Luther said. "If you have a winter like two years ago, when we had a deep snow that can be pretty stressful"

The sheep know where to go to stay protected from elements and to find food, "but long periods of snow and cold are going to have an impact," said Luther.

The bighorn sheep typically have lambs in late April. This constant provides a set guideline for Fish and Wildlife personnel to inventory lambs. "We saw lambs when they were only days old," he said.

Such early observation can reveal interesting information. "We saw three ewes with three lambs. The ewes led them down a steep embankment. They deliberately chose this rough, rocky area to have the lambs go through. I'm convinced they were exercising the lambs. The

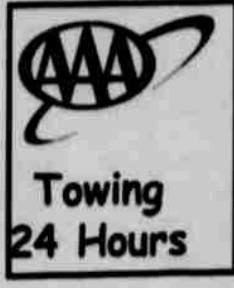
lambs were only a week old, and they were exercising that way so they can escape."

Luther said the department will do inventory surveys a couple times a year, the main ones being lamb surveys.

The herd began in 2002, when sheep were captured in the John Day River canyon for transport to the reservation.

In the 2002 planting the sheep were released at Antoken Creek from the back of a live-stock trailer. Last December the sheep were hauled in a trailer to Criterion Peak and flown into Eagle Creek Canyon in the Mutton Mountains.

— by Brian Mortensen



Automotive and Towing

Serving Warm Springs and Madras

If you're not a member of AAA we have applications (24 Hour a day Road Service)

Now is the time to winterize your vehicle!



12-month/12,000 mile nation wide warranty
All work by certified technicians
All manufacture warranty maintenance available here with electronic record keeping

What this means to you... We can take care of all your Automotive Repair and Maintenance needs! NEW or OLD Vehicles.



CALL 475-6663
Or stop by for an appointment

Office now open through Lunch

755 S.W. Hwy 97, Madras, OR 97741

World of Treasures & Second Time Around

Fill Your Christmas List Here!

Antiques, furniture, collectibles, candles & gifts.

Authorized dealer for Beyer Horses, Fenton Glassware, Anheuser Busch Steins.

15,000 square feet of great treasures!

Have a Merry Christmas!



Stop by, there's more to see!

Layaway, credit card welcome.

World of Treasures Inc.

178 SW 5th St, Madras, OR 97741 - 541-475-6991
(The old Hatfield Building in downtown Madras)

First-team selection for Alvarez

Madras High School senior Jose Alvarez Jr. was named as a first-team selection in the Tri-Valley League 2006 all-league football team. He was a player on

the Madras White Buffalo team.

Alvarez is the son of Lois Estimo and Jose Alvarez Sr.



24 NE Plum
Madras
475-7560

Thomas Sales & Service Madras

Deals starting at \$495!

475-2279

475-2333



97 Thunderbird
Nice, nice car!
Stk #35644A
\$4,995



96 Buick Century
90,500 miles!
Stk #35460B
NOW \$2,395



85 GMC Jimmy Stk#34960B
Economy 4x4!
\$1,681

RESERVATION READY RIGS!

- 1993 Dodge Dakota, 4x4 Club Cab...\$3,585..... Low book price! #34960B
- 1988 Ford Ranger 4x4 Club Cab.....\$2,795.....Great deal, good runner! #35484C
- 1984 GMC Jimmy 4x4 Diesel.....\$1,150.....Runs and drives! #34351B
- 1998 Mazda Protege, cute!.....\$4,838.....Loaded, wheels, automatic #35387A
- 1998 Camaro, very nice car\$7,995.....automatic-black! #35307B
- 1988 Dodge Colt, runs and drivers!..\$495... good tires, automatic, heater #35193A

Financing available on approved credit O.A.C.

Free balloons for the kids!