

Chairmen Spraker,

Several years ago concerns were expressed that dall sheep were being harvested at levels that were removing a high percentage, if not practically all of the older cohorts eight years old and older were being harvested each year. If true, there would certainly be a host of concerns regarding hunter opportunity and general health of dall sheep populations.

To test the validity of these concerns the ages of harvested rams were calculated to determine the minimum number of animals, legal by age that remained at the end of each hunting season. The results were presented to the Big Game Commercial Services Board, Fairbanks Advisory Committee and Board of Game and presented in a written paper prepared by Wayne Heimer.

The above method is intended to determine the age structure of rams remaining at the conclusion of the sheep hunting season. Though not a specific indicator of the number of full curl animals remaining at the conclusion of the season. The "method" has given rise to the question/statement that *"animals are still being shot as soon as full curl is reached"*.

If the question/statement is correct and animals are in fact being harvested when full curl is reached, using a 32" full curl sheep as an example, the following assumptions would have to be accepted:

- Sheep hunters are capable of evaluating to within 15/16s of a full curl. Two inches of growth during the eighth year would be on the upper end of the spectrum for expected growth.
- Degree of brooming with some animals would suggest they were in fact available during the previous season.

Every effort has been made during the past three plus years to explain what the back-aging methods illustrates with an emphasis on the fact that it does not represent the number of full sheep remaining at the end of the season. However, any evaluation of those sheep being presented for sealing that are full would seem to suggest we are leaving a reasonable number of full curl rams "on the mountain" at the end of the season.

I will be more than happy to present the BOG with a detailed analysis of age/curl information.

Joe Want

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Want", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.