

Game and Fish Wildlife Disease Laboratory

Bighorn Sheep Herd Health Assessment

The Wildlife Disease Laboratory staff continued working on both cultures and PCRs from samples collected during last month's herd health assessment of the state's bighorn sheep herds. This is a three year project to document the presence of bacterial pathogens circulating in these herds, and to evaluate how they are affecting overall health (e.g. pregnancy, adult and lamb survival).



Gary, Rob, Jessica, and Hank gently lower an anesthetized mountain goat from the mountain side.



Team collects samples for disease testing and general health status

Mountain Goat Surveillance

Our field surveillance efforts in March were centered on mountain goats rather than bighorn sheep. Mary, Hank and Jessica spent four days in the Snake River Canyon between the Town of Alpine and Hoback Junction, darting mountain goats from the side of the road. The entire operation was orchestrated by South Jackson wildlife biologist Gary Fralick, with additional help from Kyle Lash and Rob Hipp. Because this is a collaborative study with Montana State University, we were also joined by Dr. Robert Garrett and Carson Butler who provided help chasing goats and taking samples. Mary collected additional data on physiological response to anesthesia to help evaluate a new drug protocol for mountain goat immobilization.



All females were tagged and radio collared with both VHS and GPS units



Jessica draws blood for disease testing and genetic analysis



Colorful head gear wards off the evil spirits and also protects Dr. Robert Garrett from the incredibly sharp goat horns



Mary uses a pulse oximeter to measure how well the goat is oxygenating under anesthesia.