

NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE'S
BIGHORN EWE, YEARLING RAM,
AND LAMB IDENTIFICATION
PRESENTATION



Goal of Nevada's Bighorn Ewe Hunts

- Remove adult ewes
- Keep the herd size within the habitat's carrying capacity
- Reduce the risk of disease events with lower density of animals
- Manage sustainable bighorn sheep herds

Purpose of this Slideshow

- Help tagholders have a successful hunt
- Teach bighorn hunters to recognize the differences between ewes, yearling rams, and lambs
 - Horn size and shape
 - Skull shape
 - Physiological differences between ewes and rams
- To test your knowledge through a series of “quiz” slides

What's a Bighorn Ewe?



- **NDOW's Definition of a Ewe**

“Any female bighorn sheep having a horn or horns of at least 5 inches in length each as measured on the outside curve of the horn from the skull to the tip” (NAC 503.345)

- This definition specifically targets adult ewes and is designed to prevent yearling rams and lambs from being harvested
- During the hunting season, ewes will be in “ewe groups” typically consisting of:
 - ewes of all ages
 - current year lambs
 - a few young rams (yearlings, 2, 3 & 4 year olds)

Things to Remember on Your Hunt

- Be patient and use good optics
- Confirm which animals are ewes
- Allow your target animal to show a front, side, and rear view before taking the shot
- Look for all characteristics that define a legal ewe
- If in doubt...DON'T Shoot

Ewes

Narrow horn base, sickle (crescent) shaped

Multiple rings indicating adult age

Wide space between horns at base of skull

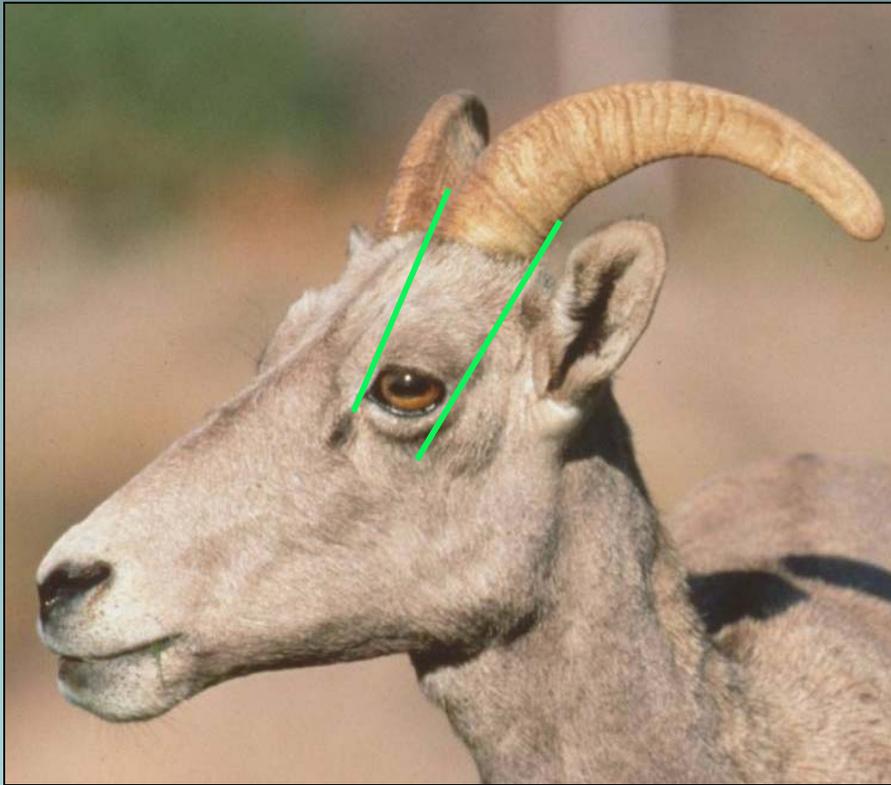
Urination Posture (squat rear legs)



Ears = 4 to 4 ½ inches

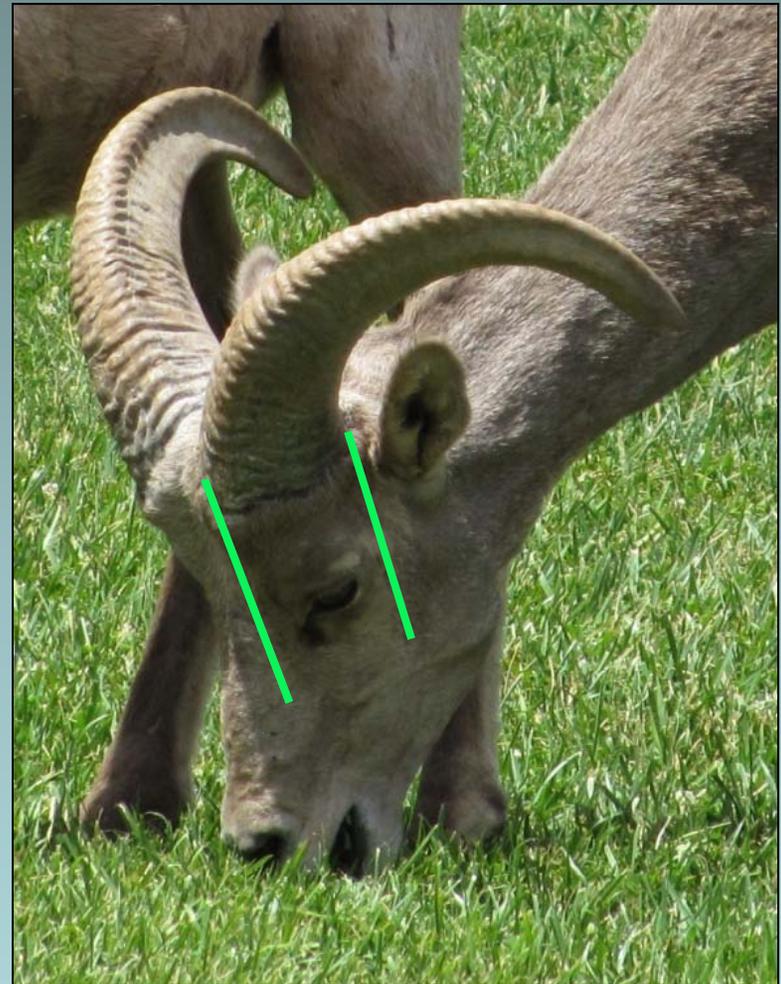


Ewe



Base of ewe horn is roughly the same width as the eye.

Yearling Ram



Notice base of horn is much wider than width of eye

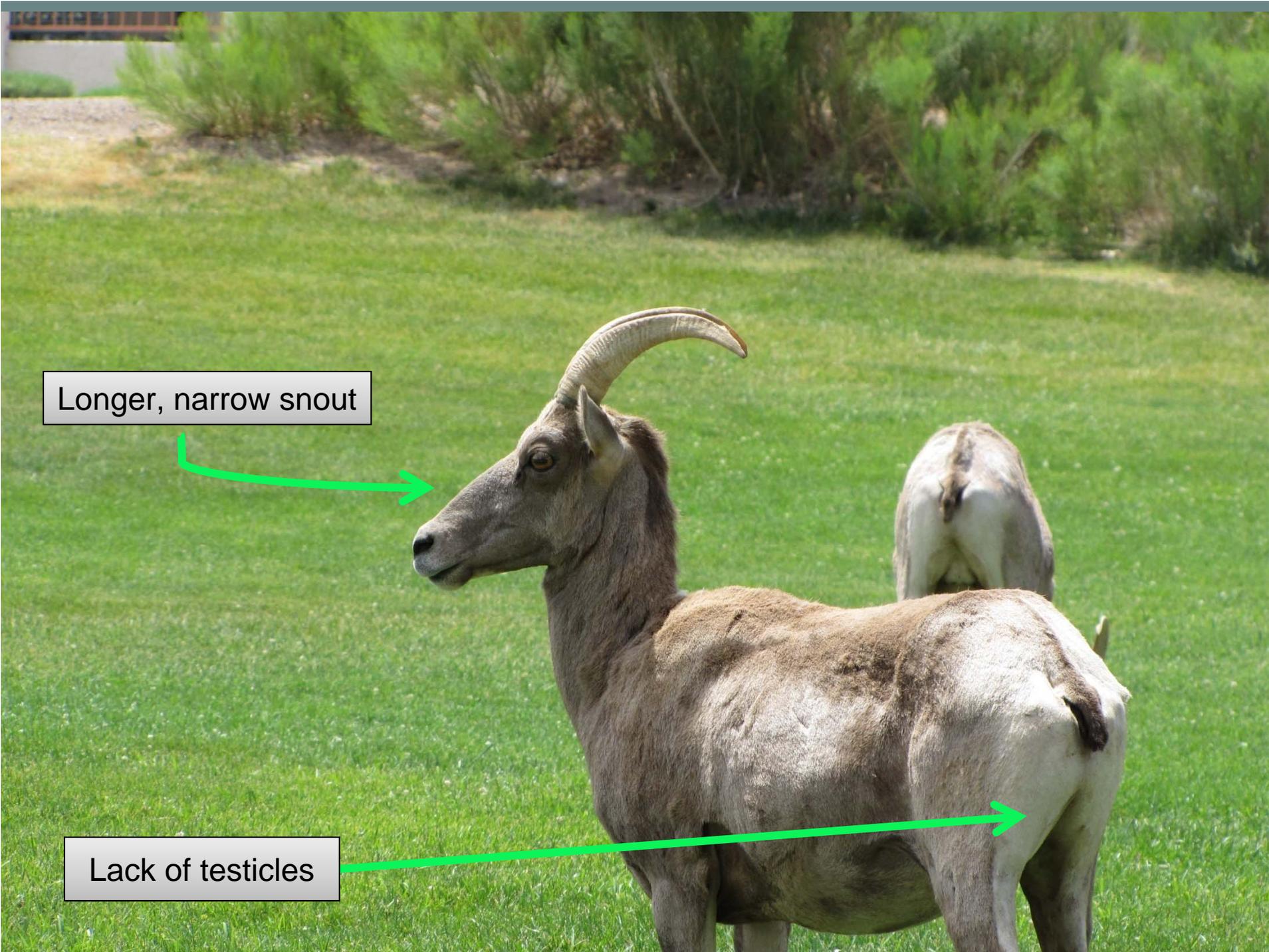


Ewes have narrow sickle shaped horns.



Thin horn at base

Ewes have narrow sickle shaped horns.



Longer, narrow snout



Lack of testicles



Yearling Rams

Wider horn base, wider than the eye

Larger pronounced forehead

Testicles

Urination posture (stretch legs)



Ewe and young ram comparison



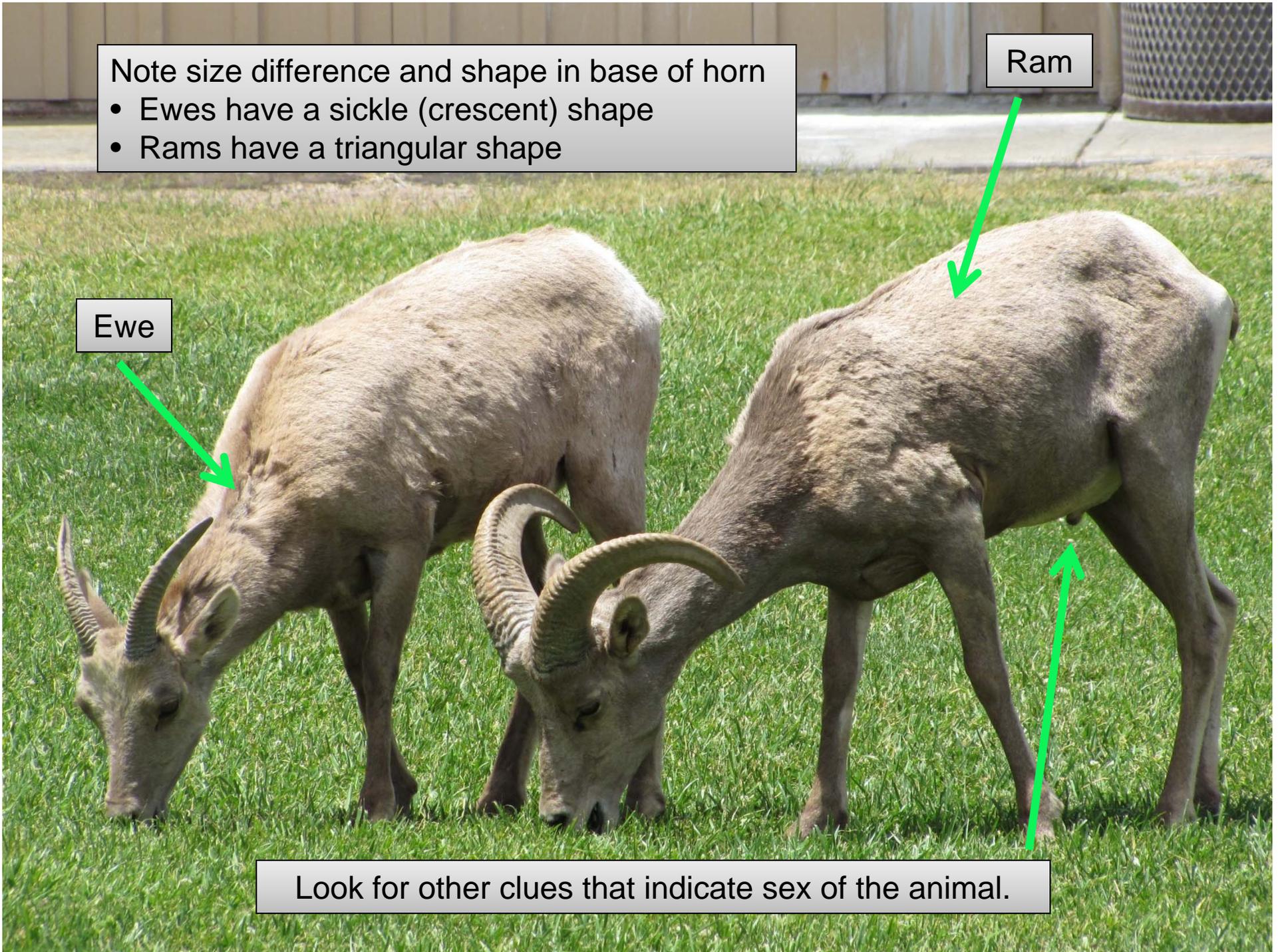
Note size difference and shape in base of horn

- Ewes have a sickle (crescent) shape
- Rams have a triangular shape

Ram

Ewe

Look for other clues that indicate sex of the animal.





Notice both the horn length and horn base differences.

Rear View to See Testicles



Ram Physiology

- Generally, the testicles on both mature and young rams are readily identifiable from the rear. When in doubt as to gender, be patient and wait for a rear view of the animal. Keep in mind, however, that the testicles on ram lambs are not as easy to see.

- Adult ewe
- Lamb
- If in doubt...DON'T shoot



By the Fall season lambs associated with ewes within a ewe group are fully capable of surviving with the herd.





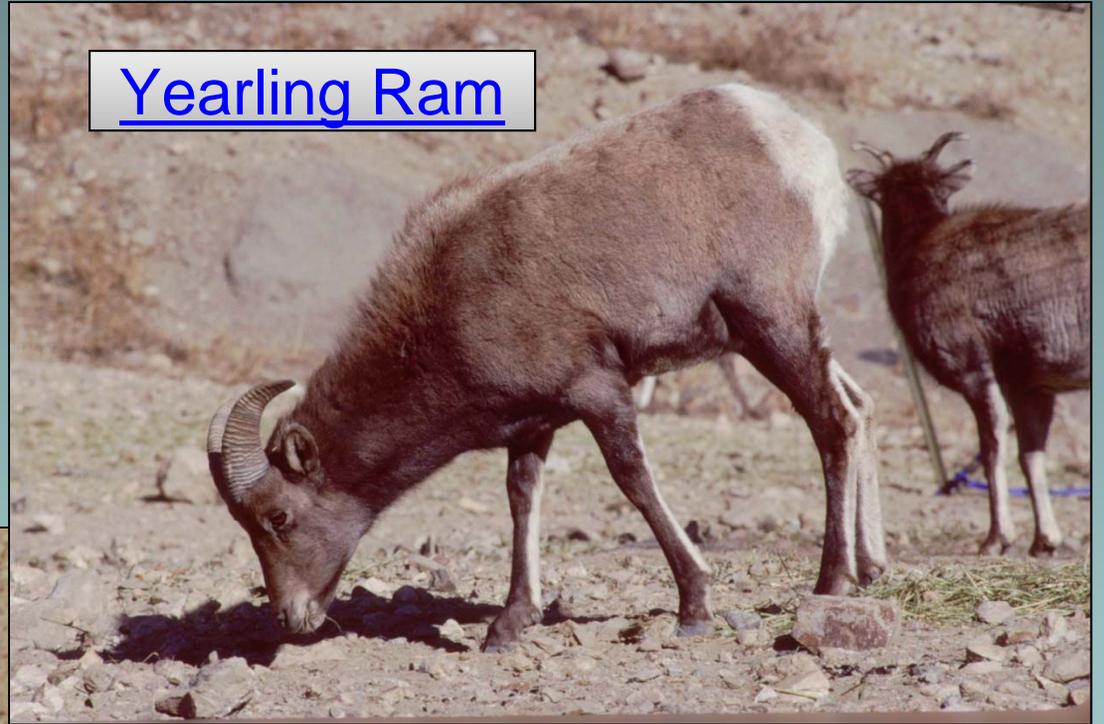
If in doubt...DON'T shoot.
Horn length is questionable.

Quiz



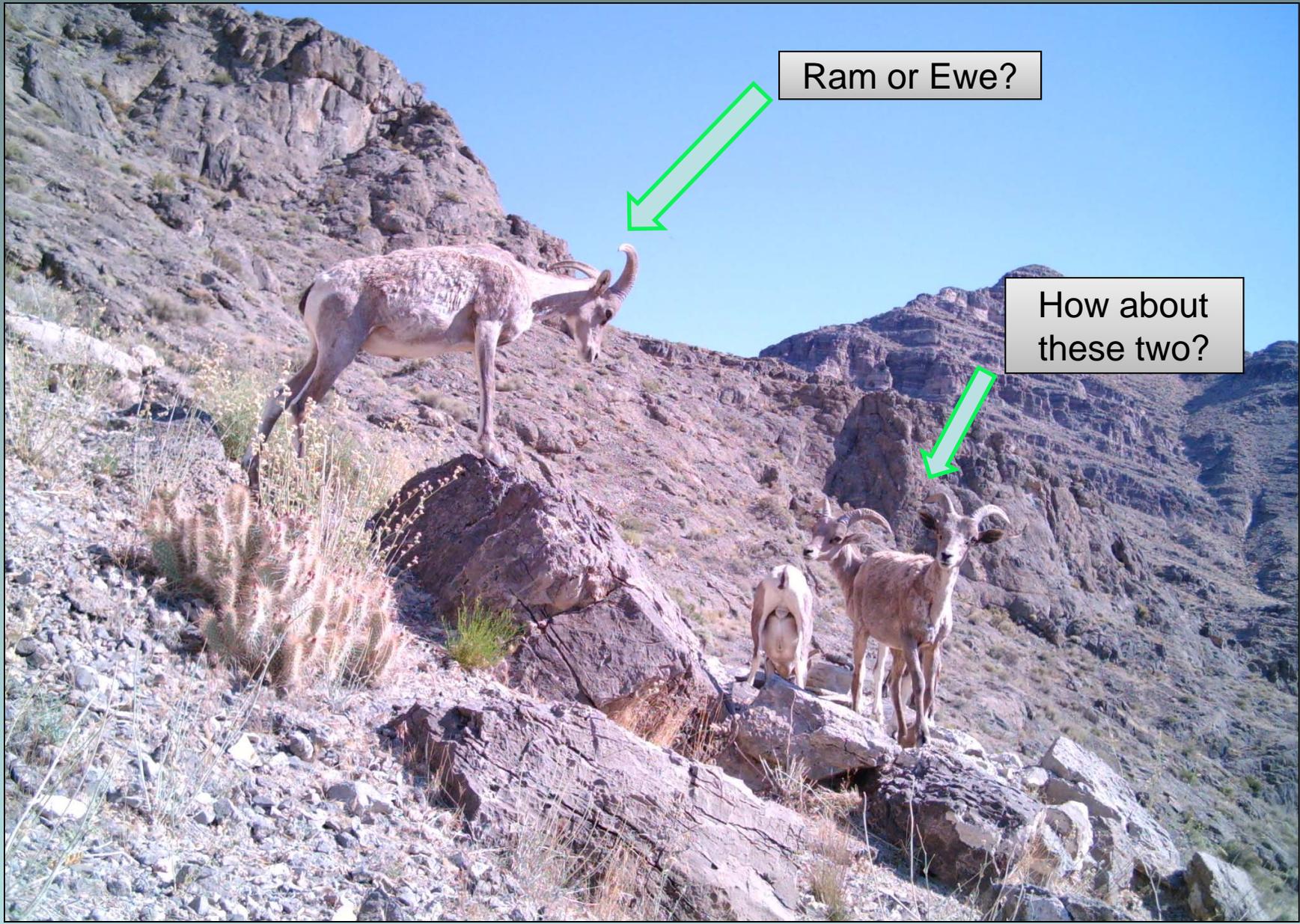
**What is each
animal?**

Yearling Ram



Ewe

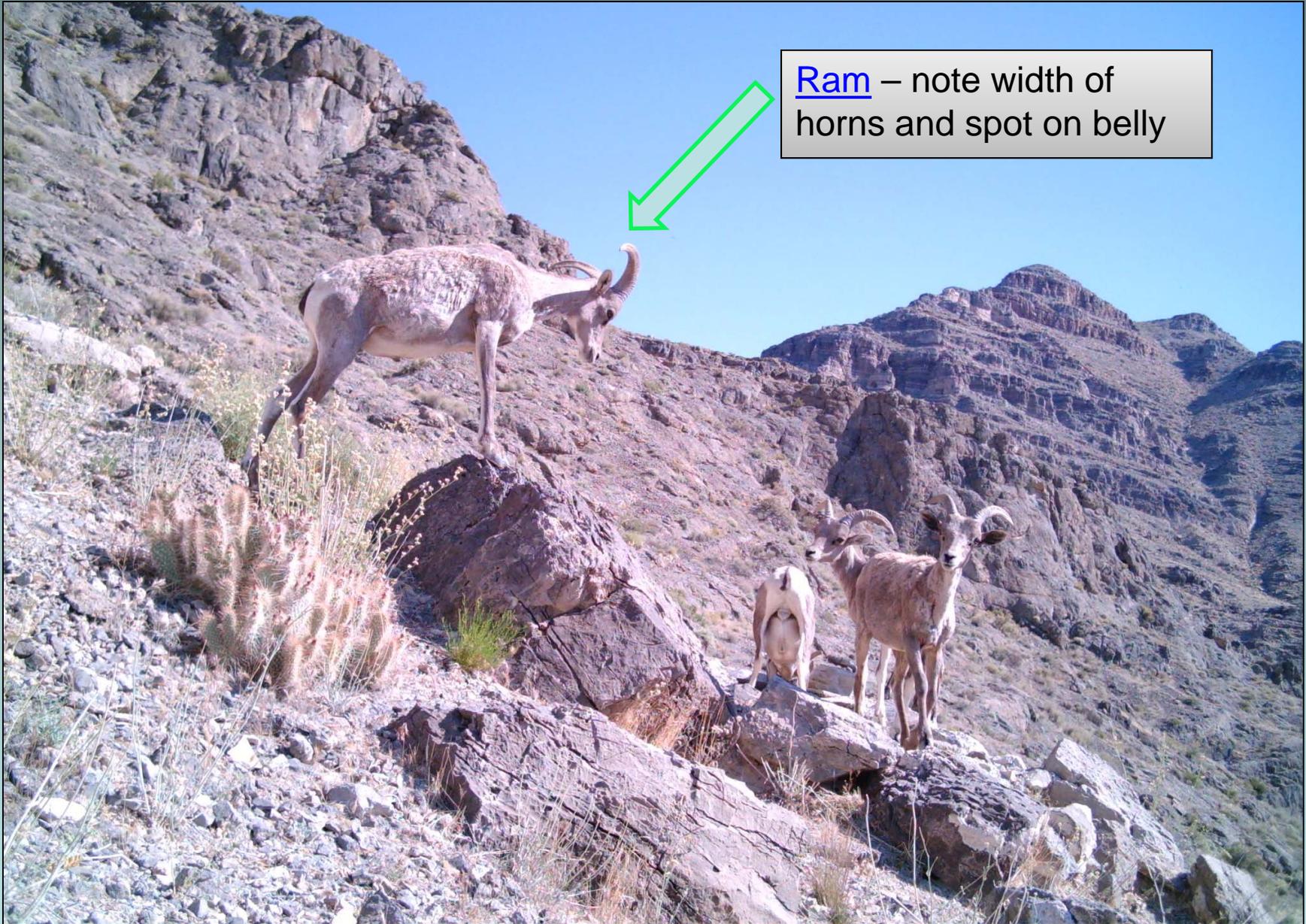




Ram or Ewe?

How about these two?

Ram – note width of horns and spot on belly





Ewe – note the narrow and sickle shape in the horns





If in doubt DON'T shoot.
This is a yearling ram.

Which one is a ram?

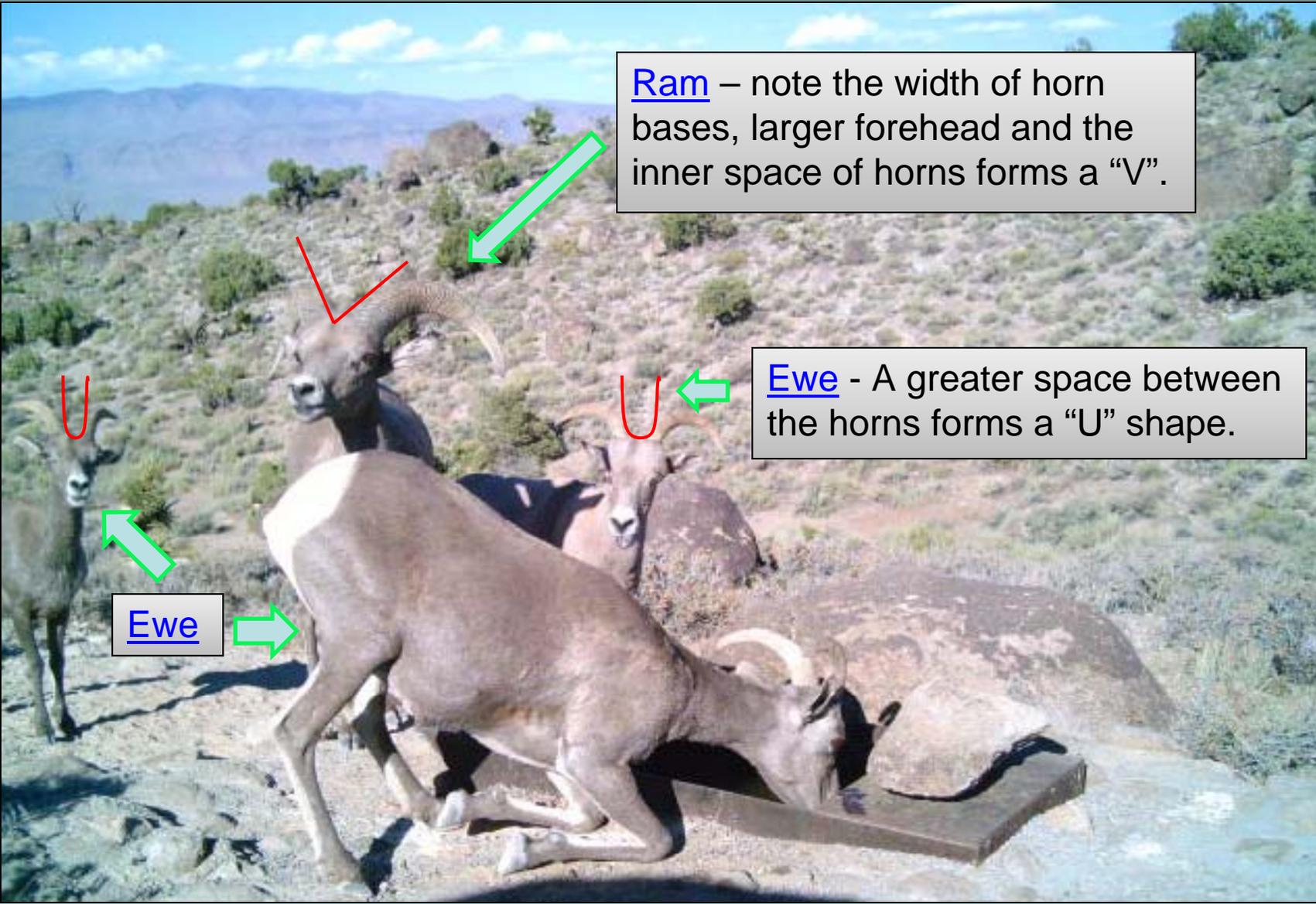




Ram – note the width of horn bases compared to eye & the length of horn.

Which one is a ram?





Ram – note the width of horn bases, larger forehead and the inner space of horns forms a “V”.

Ewe - A greater space between the horns forms a “U” shape.

Ewe



Ram or Ewe?



Ram – note the width, length and shape of horns.

Ram or Ewe?



Ram – width of
horns compared to
eye & visible penis.



Ram or Ewe?



Most likely a ewe, wait for
the animal to show a front
and rear view to confirm.
BUT
If in doubt....DON'T shoot.



Ram or Ewe?



Ram

The testicles are partially visible.
The wide horn base is the key
characteristic from this angle.



Identify these three animals.



This is a photo taken in the summer of Rocky Mountain Bighorn.
Note the wider base horns on the yearling ram and visible penis.



Yearling Ram

Lamb

Ewe



How many ewes can you see in this photo?

One



Note: This is a photo taken in the Fall of Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep.

We hope the slide show has helped you better understand and detect the characteristics and differences between ewes, yearling rams and lambs.

When on your hunt please remember,
“If in doubt....DON’T shoot”.