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
  o Horn size and shape
  o Skull shape
  o 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.
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

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?
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.
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.
How many ewes can you see in this photo?
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”.