

# Weminuche Bighorn Sheep (RBS-20)

2023-04-28

## General

- Population Estimate (in DAU Plan 2012): 460 (200 in S-15, 135 in S-16, and 125 in S28) (CPW 2012)
- Population Estimate 2022: 395, a decrease of 17% from 2012 (180 in S15, 135 in S16, 80 in S28). The largest decrease was in S-28 (Vallecito), a decrease of 36%.
- Statewide 6,900.

## Conservation Status Notes

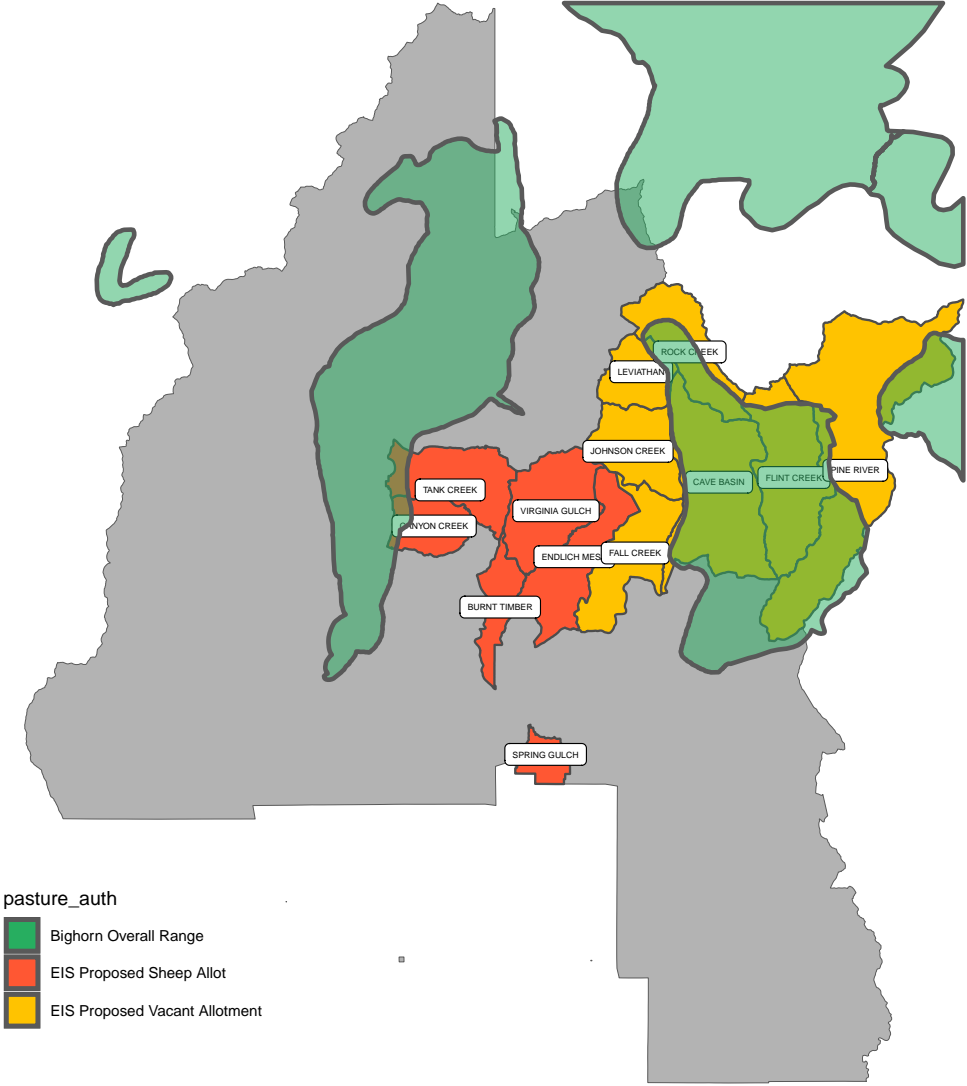
- CPW Statewide Action Plan: Tier 2
- Forest Service: Sensitive
- BLM Colorado: Sensitive
- CPW Satus: **Tier 1 Herd** (A Primary Population). Tier 1 herds: “are regarded as those large (i.e., 100 animals for 90% of the years since 1986), native populations comprised of one or more interconnected herds (in, or to be designated into, GMUs) that have received few (i.e., 50 animals total) if any supplemental releases of Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep in the past. Tier 1 populations should be given the highest priority for inventory, habitat protection and improvement, disease prevention, and research.” (CPW 2021)
- Nature Serve: Worldwide = G4 (Apparently Secure), Colorado = S4 (Apparently Secure)

## History

Excerpts from CPW DAU Plan:

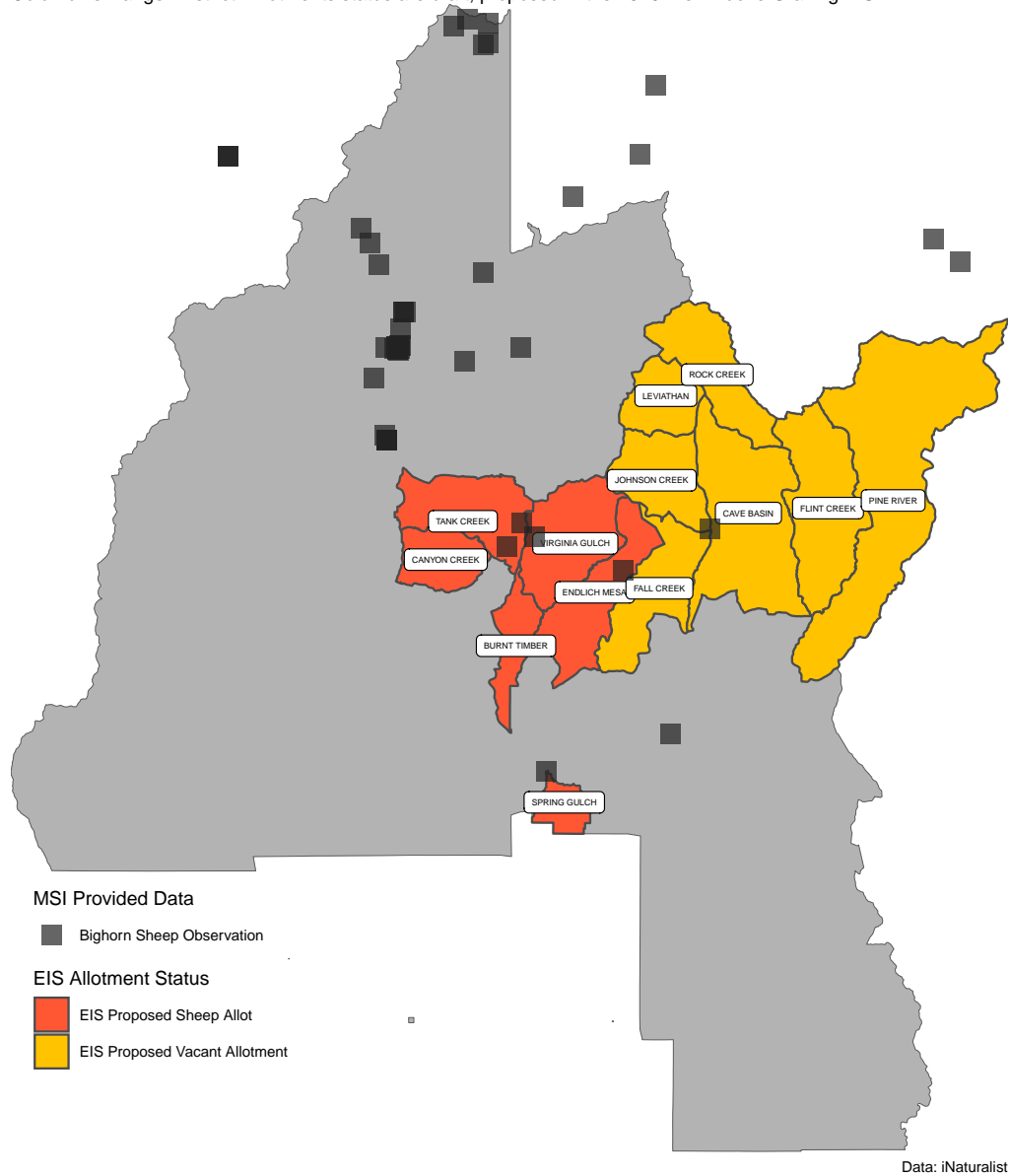
- 1911 - “Forest Ranger E. E. Chapson, of Pagosa Springs, says that a good many sheep are killed by snowslides in the San Juan Mountains north of that point.”
- “In 1962 Moser documented locations occupied by bighorn sheep representing a large geographical area within the San Juan Mountains. This included Cimarron Peak, South River Peak, Weminuche Creek, Grenadier Range, Sunshine Peak, and Engineer Mountain”
- “By 1973 the range of bighorn sheep had decreased significantly from historic occurrence. Summer range consisted of three main areas. The first was the country north of Wolf Creek Pass to Table Mountain and west to Beaver Creek. The second area included the headwaters of Weminuche, Cimarrona, Hossick, and Williams Creeks. And the third was the region between the Los Pinos River and Vallecito Creek north to Rock Creek (Bear and Jones 1973). The western areas, past Vallecito Creek, were no longer presented as occupied habitat.”

Grazing allotments and Bighorn Sheep Overall Range  
Allotment status as proposed in Draft Weminuche Landscape Grazing Analysis 2016



## MSI Citizen Science Bighorn Observations

Columbine Ranger District. Allotments status are draft, proposed in the 2016 Weminuche Grazing EIS



## Todo

[ ] - Need to look in more detail the observations that overlap with non-vacant allotments.