



Wildlife Manager, AGFD

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## **Arizona Game and Fish Department**

### **NEWS RELEASE**

For immediate release

## **Up to \$4,000 Reward Offered in Bighorn Sheep Poaching Near Canyon Lake**

August 30, 2010

The Arizona Game and Fish Department is asking for the public's assistance in finding the person or persons responsible for the illegal killing of a bighorn sheep lamb along Highway 88 (also known as the Apache Trail) northeast of Apache Junction, on August 24.

On the afternoon of Tuesday August 24<sup>th</sup> the department received a call from a concerned citizen reporting that a bighorn sheep had been struck by an automobile on Fish Creek Hill along the Apache Trail, between Canyon and Apache Lakes. Upon investigation biologists discovered the animal had not been hit by a car, but had been illegally shot.

Investigating officers found firearm casings at the scene and determined the bighorn sheep lamb had been shot by someone standing on the road. Evidence indicated that the sheep was initially perched on the bluffs that tower above the uphill side of the route and fell to the road below after being shot.

The department received the phone call at approximately 2:45pm. At that time the animal, though mortally wounded, was still alive. The extent of the animal's injuries and the time of the report would place the time of the poaching between 2 and 2:30pm on August 24, 2010.

"Recent surveys indicate the bighorn sheep population in this area is just starting to increase" Says Wildlife Officer Kriselle Colvin "Lots of hard work has gone into the reintroduction and recovery of these animals and senseless crimes like this undermine the efforts of many dedicated conservationist and steal from the citizens the state."

The department's Operation Game Thief Program is offering a reward of up to \$3,000 for the arrest of the subject or subjects who committed this crime. The Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society will, as with past cases, offer an additional reward of up to \$1,000 for a criminal conviction in this case.

To report information on this incident, or any wildlife law violation, call the department's Operation Game Thief hotline, toll-free at (800) 352-0700, or report online at [www.azgfd.gov/thief](http://www.azgfd.gov/thief). Caller identities may remain confidential upon request