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Arizona Game and Fish Department

NEWS RELEASE

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Learn about mountain lions and bighorn sheep at free presentation

Seminar with panel of wildlife experts to be webcasted online

PHOENIX — The Arizona Game and Fish Department invites the public to a free educational presentation on Wednesday, Sept. 23 to learn about the natural history, management efforts and biological and social issues related to mountain lions and bighorn sheep in Arizona.

The event will be held at 6:30 p.m. at the department's Phoenix office at 5000 W. Carefree Highway. To accommodate all interested constituents, the event will be webcasted simultaneously on the Internet by visiting www.azgfd.gov/webcast. For those watching online, questions may be submitted electronically for consideration during the interactive question and answer period of the seminar.

A panel of three of the department's expert wildlife biologists will provide a 15-minute informative presentation with pictures, natural history and management objectives. Ron Thompson will speak on mountain lions; John Hervert will cover bighorn sheep; followed by Pat Barber with an overall summary of the department's role for managing both in the reaches of southwestern Arizona, including the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge.

Pat Barber, a second-generation Yuma native, is the department's Yuma Regional Supervisor. Barber has a Bachelor of Science degree in biology with an emphasis in fish and wildlife management from Northern Arizona University.

In his 14 years with the department, Barber spent eight years in the field as a wildlife manager, he was the predator and furbearer biologist and was the department's chief of law enforcement. Barber is very knowledgeable in bighorn sheep and mountain lion management. Barber played a lead role in the change to the three-month closure for the lion hunting season, regulatory protection for female lions with spotted kittens, and establishing the mechanisms requiring physical check-in for hunter-harvested mountain lions to improve data collection.

John Hervert, is the department's wildlife specialist and program manager in the Yuma regional office. Hervert has a master's degree in wildlife ecology from the University of Arizona.

He is a veteran biologist of 25 years with the department. His knowledge and experience is extensive with 30 years working with desert ungulates (desert bighorn sheep and mule deer) and 20 years experience working with mountains lions in the Sonoran Desert. Hervert's areas of special interest include water physiology, development of aerial survey techniques, re-establishment of bighorn sheep and two endangered species, the Sonoran pronghorn and Mexican Wolf.

Ron Thompson is the department's large carnivore biologist. Thompson has a Bachelor of Science degree in wildlife biology from the University of Arizona.

Thompson spent his career as a wildlife manager. In retirement, he was a contract wildlife biologist involved in adaptive management strategies of bighorn sheep and mountain lions for projects in New Mexico as part of the Turner Endangered Species Fund and in Arizona and the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge. He has highly regarded for his fieldwork and research work, much of it leading-edge using DNA collection.

After the presentations, the public is encouraged to engage in an extensive question and answer session to address many of the concerns, questions, and issues around these dynamic species. Web viewers will have access to a link for submitting questions to the panel electronically for consideration.

The mission of the Arizona Game and Fish Department is to conserve, enhance, and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and management programs, and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation, and use by present and future generations.

To learn more about the desert bighorn sheep and mountain lions in Kofa Mountains Complex and the department's management objectives, visit www.azgfd.gov/kofa.

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