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BIG-HORN MOUNTAIN SHEEP
MAY AGAIN FREQUENT THE WEST

"Can you tell me where I can secure two buck mountain sheep and three ewes for extensive ranges in this State which were once occupied by large numbers of big-horn"? Such inquiries are quite commonly addressed to the Biological Survey of the United States Department of Agriculture. The only answer that can be given, says Dr. E. W. Nelson, Chief of the Bureau, is that there is no place in the United States at present where mountain sheep can be secured either for exhibition or for breeding purposes. Several shipments of big-horn have come into the United States recently as a result of the courtesy of the Canadian Government. These animals -- eight ewes and four bucks -- were captured in one of the Canadian parks, shipped into Montana, and turned loose in 1922 on the Montana National Bison Range. On this 18,000-acre game refuge in the northwest part of the State they have bred twice, and the flock now numbers 28.

As far as now known, the breeding of mountain sheep is similar to that of domestic sheep, with which 75 and 80 per cent lamb crops are not unusual. The Biological Survey, therefore, confidently looks forward to the time when the mountain sheep on the Montana Bison Range will number 500 -- say 450 ewes and 50 bucks. With such a flock, allowing a wide margin for losses, there should be 350 or more available each year for shipment from the range to stock suitable areas throughout the country.

One shipment of mountain sheep recently received in this country from the Canadian Government was placed on the Custer State Park and Game Refuge in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The six ewes each gave birth to a lamb the year they were received. One animal, injured in shipment, died during the summer, but at last reports the others were doing remarkably well.

There is an enormous acreage of good mountain sheep country in the western United States, and there is no finer big game animal for such areas than the big-horn.