

Desert bighorn sheep ... king of the hill!



MEASUREMENTS

Length: 3–5.5 feet

Height: 2–3.5 feet
at shoulder

Weight: 130–180 lbs



Arid mountains



SW North America

IUCN
LEAST
CONCERN

<20,000
in the wild

Why exhibit desert bighorn sheep?

- Feature one of the most easily-recognized and iconic mammals of the North American deserts. This is a great native species for American zoos with hot, dry, and/or mountainous conditions!
- Share the successes of ongoing efforts to reestablish this species across its native range: a great conservation story close to home!
- Use this species to teach about desert adaptations: a great opportunity for keeper chats and school tours.
- This majestic animal is a visitor favorite, especially in the spring lambing season when the youngsters frolic to develop their climbing skills.

Stewardship Opportunities

Desert bighorn range states have committed conservation programs - support local initiatives!

Arizona: www.azgfd.gov/kofa

California: www.dfg.ca.gov/snbs

New Mexico: www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation

Nevada: www.ndow.org

Texas: www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Utah: wildlife.utah.gov

Care and Husbandry

YELLOW SSP: 28.44 (72) in 5 AZA (+2 non-AZA) institutions (2019)

Species coordinator: Maureen McCarty, The Living Desert
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Social nature: Can be kept in single-sex or mixed groups. During the breeding season, only a single male should be kept with females to ensure known parentage of offspring.

Mixed species: Typically not housed with other species due to habitat requirements. Have been successfully mixed with elk.

Housing: Tolerant of a wide range of temperatures. Hilly terrain is preferred but any area with rocky substrate will do. Fencing needs to be high; additional reinforcement at head-height is needed with males.

Medical notes: Generally robust. Foot problems may develop in wetter climates and in exhibits that don't promote natural hoof-wear.

Special requirements: Copper sensitivity can be an issue. As a precaution, mineral blocks and high-copper feeds should be avoided.

Keeper resources: Generally food motivated and easily shift-trained. Females are generally easy to work around, but males may require protected contact. Keepers need to be safety conscious on rough terrain.

Please contact the TAG for full husbandry guidelines.

<http://www.azaungulates.org/>

