



10-31-1990

Two pronghorn antelope found locked together during the rut in west central Utah

David R. Smith

Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Delta, Utah

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn>

Recommended Citation

Smith, David R. (1990) "Two pronghorn antelope found locked together during the rut in west central Utah," *Great Basin Naturalist*: Vol. 50 : No. 3 , Article 11.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/gbn/vol50/iss3/11>

This Note is brought to you for free and open access by the Western North American Naturalist Publications at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in Great Basin Naturalist by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact scholarsarchive@byu.edu, ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.

TWO PRONGHORN ANTELOPE FOUND LOCKED TOGETHER DURING THE RUT IN WEST CENTRAL UTAH

David R. Smith¹

American pronghorn antelope (*Antilocapra americana americana* Ord 1818) bucks begin showing signs of entering the rutting period in late August in western Utah (Smith and Beale 1980). Bucks exhibit territorial dominance by marking vegetation with subaricular gland secretions, urine and feces, and by direct interactions with other bucks (Kitchen 1974, Yoakum 1978). This territorial behavior assures that the larger, healthier males do the majority of the breeding (Kitchen 1974). Often fights between bucks result in injury (Kitchen 1974); on rare occasions these fights have resulted in the deaths of male mule deer (Geist 1981) and white-tailed deer (Marchinton and Hirth 1984) when their horns have become locked together. The occurrence of pronghorn bucks locking together as a result of fighting has been documented very few times. Spencer (1942) reported a case in South Park, Colorado, in which the right horn of one buck pierced the underside of the second buck's jaw while its left horn locked behind the second buck's right horn. Yoakum (personal communication, 1988) reported that two bucks with interlocked horns were found dead on the Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon during the late 1940s.

On 17 September 1986 a rancher from Sutherland, Utah, found two dead pronghorn bucks locked together. The pair were found approximately 10 km west of Sand Mountain in Juab County, Utah (T14S, R6W, Sec. 9.). This area is flat saltbrush desert, and dominant vegetation species include black grease-

wood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*) and shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*). One buck had heart-shaped horns, 39.4 cm in length, with inward curving tips 3.8 cm apart. During the fight this buck evidently thrust its horns upward on the underside of the second buck's neck; the horn tips flexed far enough apart to allow the second buck's neck to pass through. The horns were then locked around the second buck's neck. The second buck's neck was rubbed raw and heavily scabbed, indicating that the two animals may have remained locked together for some time before dying.

LITERATURE CITED

- GEIST, V. 1981. Behavior: adaptive strategies in mule deer. Pages 157-223 in O. C. Wallmo, ed., Mule and black-tailed deer of North America. University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.
- KITCHEN, D. W. 1974. Social behavior and ecology of the pronghorn. Wildlife Monograph No. 38. 96 pp.
- MARCHINTON, R. L., AND D. H. HIRTH. 1984. Behavior. Pages 129-168 in L. K. Halls, ed., White-tailed deer: ecology and management. Stakepole Books, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.
- SMITH, A. D., AND D. M. BEALE. 1980. Antelope in Utah: some research and observations. Utah Division of Wildlife Resources Publication 80-13. 87 pp.
- SPENCER, C. C. 1942. Antelope with locked horns. Journal of Mammalogy 23: 92.
- YOAKUM, J. D. 1978. Pronghorn. Pages 103-121 in J. L. Schmidt and D. L. Gilbert, eds., Big game of North America. Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Received 7 March 1990

Accepted 15 June 1990

¹Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, 1950 W. 1120 S., Delta, Utah 84624.