Desert bighorn sheep ... king of the hill!

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](http://www.azgfd.gov/kofa)
- California: [www.dfg.ca.gov/snbs](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/snbs)
- New Mexico: [www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/conservation)
- Nevada: [www.ndow.org](http://www.ndow.org)
- Texas: [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)
- Utah: [wildlife.utah.gov](http://wildlife.utah.gov)

Care and Husbandry

**MEASUREMENTS**
- **Length**: 3–5.5 feet
- **Height**: 2–3.5 feet at shoulder
- **Weight**: 130-180 lbs

**Arid mountains**  **SW North America**  **<2,000 in the wild**  **IUCN LEAST CONCERN**

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

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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/

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