

Seasonal Variation in Ruminating Behaviour of Bighorn Sheep

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Abstract: Rumination is a key step in the digestive process of bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis*). This physiological process occupies a large part of the day, and as such has major impact on behavioural outcomes. Since individuals spend large amounts of their time in groups they must synchronize their activities. However, throughout the year different sex and age groups face varying energy demands. We tested the hypothesis that yearly changes in energy demands and environmental conditions on different sex and age groups result in a change in ruminating behaviour. We have collected rumination data for a group of marked bighorn sheep throughout the year at monthly intervals. Preliminary data analysis suggests different classes vary ruminating behaviour according to temporal changes in the yearly cycle.

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