Meet the Bighorn Sheep slide show
This slideshow provides background information on the bighorn sheep and its habitat and breeding habits.

Implementation
- Use the maps to start a discussion on bighorn sheep and their habitat.
- Show pictures of bighorn sheep and describe important elements of their biology. Like:
    i. They live in small mountaintop populations of often less than 50 individuals.
    ii. Males use valleys to travel from one high rocky mountaintop to another, in order to find females to mate.
    iii. Teacher Tip: Make sure that students know that populations are individuals of the same species that live in the SAME geographic location.
- Use the series of maps of bighorn sheep habitat to discuss the 27 mountaintop populations of bighorn sheep. Help students interpret the patterns on the map.

Discussion

Key Idea: Bighorn sheep live in small mountaintop populations in the desert, and they breed with nearby bighorn sheep populations.

Slide of map of bighorn sheep habitat with vegetation
Question: So what are we looking at?
Answer: A close up-view of the bighorn sheep habitat

Question: How would you describe their habitat, the terrain? Use the colors and patterns on the map to help you?
Answer: You can see some green vegetation (along the coast, but that is not the bighorn sheep range), but mostly it looks like a brown desert. The terrain looks very mountainous.

Slide of map of bighorn sheep habitat with vegetation and bighorn sheep range overlaid in brown
Question: Where do bighorn sheep live?
Answer: They live on the mountaintops. You can tell because their range (brown) is now shown and it overlays the mountains.

Slide of map of bighorn sheep habitat with vegetation, bighorn sheep range (brown), and human population centers (black) and highways (yellow)
Question: What are we looking at now? What do the different colors represent?
Answer: The colors represent where people live (black) and show the major highways (yellow) that run through the sheep habitat. Refer to key in the next slide.

Different slide of map of bighorn sheep range that contains the same information in a different representation
Comment: This is the same map as shown previously, only a slightly different representation. Let's go over the key.
Show the next slide with a map that contains a key. This representation is the map that the students will be using in the rest of the unit.

Background on Bighorn Sheep

- There used to be between 1.5 and 2 million bighorn sheep in the U.S.

- Now there are fewer than 70,000 sheep, with some subgroups considered to be endangered.

- The biggest threats to the sheep are thought to be from livestock. Overgrazing and diseases spread from domestic sheep to the wild bighorns have caused major population declines.

- Recent habitat fragmentation caused by urbanization is a new threat to the survival of the bighorns.

- Each population is restricted to its mountaintop and separated from others by the desert below.

- It is thought that mountaintop populations sometimes go extinct, only to be re-established by sheep from other mountains.

- Movement of sheep between mountaintops is critical for the long-term survival of the sheep.