



Newsletter of the San Clemente Island Goat Breeders Association

NOTES FROM THE PASTURE

Update from the SCIGBA President

Greetings Herd! Happy San Clemente Island Goat Day!

Celebrated the 2nd Saturday of every October, SCI Goat Day is an opportunity to celebrate our dedication to this breed. To not only review our history and accomplishments, but look to the future journey ahead as our community comes together to move San Clemente Island Goats off the priority lists with the creation of a sustainable population in perpetuity.

Today marks the first anniversary of the SCIGBA opening for paid membership. We are blessed with amazing members and want to thank each and every one of you for your support. We look forward to serving you for many years to come. Today also marks an important milestone as the SCI Goat population has crossed the 2000 threshold which ironically is the approximate number of goats which were originally removed from the island. It has taken us 40 years to regain this number, but I am happy to say we are well on our way to ensuring our numbers are never at a critical low again.

We look to the future. The SCIGBA Registry has been established to help with the documentation of our breed. In the upcoming year, we are hoping to add an online herdbook accessible to all members. Features to include, but not limited to uploading photos, adding up to date information, researching potential stock, and running trail matings. In January, we will be launching "The Complete Capra" project - a campaign to promote and document the true multi-purposeness of SCIGs. We want to move the breed away from anecdotal to data proven. Our committees continue to develop new projects in order to better serve you and your herds. Personally, I am most excited about our seeking accreditation through The Livestock Conservancy. This is a new program they are offering to breed associations. To learn more, please visit their [website](#). Another exciting venture is our collaboration with the Arapawa Goat Breeders Association on projects such as this

year's Goat-Palooza. By working together, learning from each other, I hope to see both of our communities strengthen.

On a final note, I cannot wait to see everyone this afternoon for Goat-Palooza either in person or virtually. Come enjoy the fellowship, fun, & food. Details can be found on our [calendar](#).

Onward & Upward, Sarah

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EVALUATING YOUR GOATS

As our population crosses the 2000 mark, one of the priorities of the San Clemente Island Goat Breeders Association during the upcoming year, will be to start exploring evaluation protocols owners can use when choosing breeders. Our overall goal is to preserve our limited genetic diversity while ensuring we maintain a healthy population that exhibits the best traits from the island. We will be calling on our membership to lend their thoughts in helping us to develop these protocols. Some traits we will be considering are parasite resistance, hardiness, and skeletal structure. Are there other items you would like to be considered?

Below is a reprint of an article to help educate and spark the thought process. Written by The Livestock Conservancy's technical advisor, Dr Phil Sponenberg, it discusses the potential effects of removing genetics from the population in reference specifically to coloration and supernumerary teats. It is a cautionary tale of how arbitrary decisions can affect the genetic diversity of the population, create issues, and ultimately extinction of the breed. It is a reminder that the dismissal of portions of our population can have disastrous effects.

To see the photos that accompanied the original print of the article, please visit our [website](#).

San Clemente Goats, Culling, and Breed Standards

Originally Printed in the Sept/Oct 2008 ALBC News (American Livestock Conservancy)

By D.P. Sponenberg

Editor's Note: One of the challenges we face as breeders is that of balancing diversity with breed improvement when making culling decisions. Conservation breeding strategies require breeders to be much more tolerant of phenotypic differences for the goal of maintaining genotypic diversity. The following article gives a wonderful example of these issues of concern with a case example of a very rare breed. The conservation strategies utilized in this article could easily be applied to any breed.

San Clemente goats are an important genetic resource, partly because of their low genetic variability, but also due to their remote relationship to other goat breeds in the USA. This genetic treasure must be guarded carefully, and breeders need to be clear-headed in their thinking about what this "breed" is, and how to assure that it remains a resource for future generations.

San Clemente goats were only saved from extinction by the slimmest of threads. The vast majority of the animals of this breed comes to us through a handful of breeders who

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wisely kept and bred goats captured from the island. This number was never very great, which has important implications for managing this breed for the future.

With any breed, one question that needs to be answered is “what is this breed?” and a second is “which animals should be bred, and which not bred, to produce future generations?” There are two approaches to defining a breed, and both of these result in a breed standard. One is a prescriptive approach, which defines what the ideal animal of the breed should look like. This type of standard is typically used for standardized, production-oriented breeds. A second approach is descriptive, and describes the range of variation that is present in the breed. The differences between the prescriptive and descriptive approaches are important because they have profound effects on what the breeders actually keep and what specific genetic material is lost in ensuing generations. In short –standards shape the breed.

Two breed definitions of San Clemente goats are possible. One that can serve the breed well is “goats that descend in all lines from ancestor goats caught on San Clemente Island.” This definition encompasses all the variation, hidden and visible, that was present on the Island goats. A second definition is “goats that descend in all lines from ancestor goats caught on San Clemente Island, and that have an appearance typical of the majority of those goats.” The two are fundamentally different in how they shape the future of the breed.

The goats on the island, as demonstrated by photographic evidence and personal reflection, clustered around a single type and a single color pattern. In addition, though, were some variants that occurred consistently, if only more rarely than the usual pattern. DNA evidence points to no recent crossbreeding, so these variants are indeed part of the original San Clemente goat package.

The San Clemente goat usually has a pattern of tan and black areas that is quite distinctive. As is typical of patterns in most breeds of goat, the pattern varies in the extent of black, and also in the shade of tan. The San Clemente goat is somewhat unusual, compared to other breeds, because the majority of them vary over an extremely small range –which means there is not much variation in most of them. In some few, however, the pattern is either less or more black than usual, and the tan is in some instances very pale compared to the usual pattern. In some goats the tan areas are nearly white. No DNA evidence has arisen to suggest that these goats are any other than real San Clemente goats, though, so it can be concluded that this pattern is consistent with a San Clemente origin.

Some breeders find the goats that are “palest tan” and “least black” to be unsettling, and refer to these as “white.” They are not white in the genetic sense, merely at the pale end of

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the usual pattern for these goats –and every bit as much San Clemente as their herdmates.

A second variation of color is the presence of white spots. White spots are very common in most breeds of animals, and completely removing all white spots from all animals of any breed is a long and difficult process.

The importance of the color to the goat breed is that each time a goat is removed from the breeding population on the basis of color, not only is the color removed, but also the entire genetic contribution of that goat is removed. This is trivial in very large breeds, but can drastically and irreversibly damage the gene pool of rare breeds such as the San Clemente goat. Color must be put into perspective –while uniformity may be a goal, it was not present in the original goats, was unlikely to have ever been present in the island goats, and insisting on uniformity in the descendants will hasten the demise of the breed to inbreeding depression. DNA evidence reveals that this breed is already minimally variable

A second controversial issue is the presence of supernumerary teats on many animals. This is a more substantive fault than is color variation. Supernumerary teats are frowned upon by dairy goat breeders for the good reason that these can interfere with milking. A few other nondairy breeds also penalize them (Tennessee Myotonic goats are an example) and other breeds tend to ignore them (Boer goats come to mind).

Multiple teats can and do cause problems in dairy situations, but in most other goat situations they are not usually a problem. It still makes sense to put some selection pressure against supernumerary teats, but if too many goats are culled, then the breed will cease to exist.

The genetic status of the San Clemente goat is precarious. DNA studies reveal very little variation at the genetic level, much less than in most other breeds. This is reassuring in one sense, because it is telling us that the goats from the island were isolated for a long time. If other goats were introduced, they left little or no trace in the genetic character of the breed.

The low genetic variability of San Clementes is important as it affects breeding decisions for these goats. Breeds can, and do, go extinct simply because the last one dies. Extinction can be with a bang as the last one is eaten, or it can be with a whimper as a small population suffers from inbreeding depression and the last ones are simply less and less productive (and reproductive). Culling decisions in rare breeds, and the San Clemente is disastrously rare, must be undertaken carefully for a variety of reasons. Considerations of primary importance must be breed survival, then production traits, and then fancy traits. Every goat is important to the future of this breed.

One good way to proceed is to realize that EVERY female goat will ideally leave a few

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BY THE BREEDERS. FOR THE BREEDERS. FOR OUR GOATS.

EVALUATION CONT.

offspring. Males are somewhat less critical, but it is easy to overuse a male so that he becomes a genetic bottleneck. This breed has clearly had significant bottlenecks in the past, and needs to avoid them in the future.

Culling for color variation (too white, white spots, other variants) should not be done in this breed, especially on the female side. The variation that is there is inherent in the breed, and by eliminating those does from reproduction the breeder is also eliminating the entire essential genetic contribution that those does could be making to the breed. If bucks of odd colors are from rare bloodlines, then they need to be used. When bucks of odd colors come from more common bloodlines, then (and only then) does culling for color make sense. And, it only makes sense if the breeders decide to change this breed into a single-color breed, which it was not on the island, and is not today. The breed can be changed, but breeders must not fool themselves into thinking that they are recapturing lost purity by choosing a single color. The breed is predominantly one color, but the other variations are just as pure as the predominant one.

Culling for multiple teats is more perplexing. At this point it likely makes little sense to cull does for multiple teats. In most cases it is possible to try to put more pressure on the male side of the equation. If a buck with multiple teats has a brother with only two, then it makes sense to use the one with only two teats. In some cases, though, culling bucks with multiple teats will cull entire families, and that weakens the breed considerably.

If the San Clemente goat is to exist twenty years from now, then numbers are going to need to expand, and the entire spectrum of the current breed is going to need to contribute to that. Drastic culling assures that the breed will be uniform –but only temporarily as it drifts slowly and inevitably to extinction. This unique and beautiful goat deserves better than that!

Be Part of History!

The Archives committee is creating an archival history of the association and our breeders for the future. To be part of this documented history, please submit your photos, articles, and any other information you would like saved for perpetuity. An annual presentation will be done at the Annual Meeting of the SCIGBA in May. You can contact the Archives committee chair, Stephen Howell at SkaraBraeHomestead@gmail.com.

REGISTRY UPDATE

Have you registered your goats with the SCIGBA Registry?

Your registry is open for business. Let me repeat that - YOUR registry. The only San Clemente Island Goat Registry that is: **Member Owned. Member Run. Member Perfected.** Registration and record keeping are essential in not only breed conservation, but growth into a sustainable population in perpetuity. The number of annual registrations is one of the criteria used by The Livestock Conservatory and Heritage Livestock Canada to evaluate the San Clementes' status on the priority lists.

Registration also has direct benefits for the owner. Registration and the soon to be online herdbook can add value to your goats by having documentation of pedigrees, genetics, and a proven record. It can become a part of your marketing and branding for your herd. In addition, registration provides a "listing" for your goat, herd, and genetics which potential buyers can find. Read more about "Why Registration Matters" in this [article](#) by Dr Allison Martin, the executive director of The Livestock Conservancy.

In the first two months, we have helped 7 members and completed 30 transactions with at least 30 more in the pipeline. We understand there may be hesitation in trusting an unproven registry. We hope during the upcoming year to squash those doubts with a proven record of service, performance, and transparency. We are here to help and look forward to the future.

BY THE BREEDERS. FOR THE BREEDERS. FOR OUR GOATS

Registry Update Cont...

Please visit the [registry webpages](#). Here you can find an overview of the process, the Rules of Registration, the forms needed, and flowchart to help you through the process. If you have any questions or need help, please contact Registry Coordinator, Laurel Sherrie at SCIGBAAssoc@gmail.com Attn: Registry

WELCOME TO THE HERD!

New SCIGBA Members: Gypsy Soul Farm

- Liz Weber
- Evie Weber - our first junior member



FYI: As part of their "Cultivating Leadership Initiative", The Livestock Conservancy is offering monthly training geared towards helping breed associations build and strengthen. The SCIGBA is proud to be taking part in this education which will help prepare us for applying for bronze level accreditation. Paid SCIGBA members can attend the monthly leadership training modules for free. They are held the 3rd Thur of every month at 6:30pm eastern. To learn more about the initiative, check out the conservancy's [website](#). Please contact Pres Sarah if you are interested in attending.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED:

Help the SCIGBA better serve the community and our goats. Volunteer to help make this happen. We have a variety of positions and tasks available to fit all types of time commitments (1 and done, short term, long term) and play to your strengths. The association is only as strong as its members and their commitment. Volunteers do not need to be paid SCIGBA members or even own SCIGs. Please consider volunteering today!

Some of the positions available:

- Researchers
- Content producers (newsletter, website, blog, social media, YouTube)
- Brainstormers
- Canadian Services Chair
- Non-Traditional Breeder Services Chair
- "The Island Goat" editor
- Committee Members

Please visit our [volunteer page](#) for additional details. Visit often as this page will be updated as positions are taken and new ones pop up.



NOTE:

Starting the week of October 10th, only paid members of the SCIGBA will have access to the following benefits:

- Listing in the online directory
- Classified Ads
- Promotion on all SCIGBA social media feeds

If you don't wish to lose out of these benefits, please [join the SCIGBA Today!](#)

CALENDAR

Goatober (October)

- 8 - Goat-Palooza
- 20 - TLC Module 2 - Managing Membership (6:30pm ET)
- 26 - SCI Happy Hour - Types of Herd Management (7pm ET)

November

- 17 - Module 3 - Developing a Board of Directors Part 1 (6:30pm ET)
- 23 NO SCI Happy Hour

December

- 5 - Quarterly Board & Committee Reports Due
- 8 - Meeting of SCIGBA BoD (7:30pm ET)
- 15 - Module 4 - Developing a Board of Directors Part 2 (6:30pm ET)
- 18 - Deadline for submissions to "The Island Goat"
- 28 - NO SCI Happy Hour

January

- 19 - Module 5 - Ensuring Accountability and Transparency (6:30pm ET)
- 25 - SCI Happy Hour - topic TBD (7pm ET)

Please visit the [events tab](#) on our Facebook page or the [calendar on our website](#) for additional details.

Courtesy of SCIGBA member Temple Hill Farm (VA)

CONTACT US

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- Find us on Facebook, Instagram, & YouTube
- <https://linktr.ee/scigba>

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Committees

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Want to be featured on
our social media feeds?
Contact us!



OUR MISSION

The mission of the SCIGBA is to promote the San Clemente Island Goat as a viable multipurpose goat while preserving the historical traits of the island goat and the unique genetic diversity. This includes but is not limited to:

- Guarding the purity of the San Clemente Goat breed
- Retaining pedigree records of all animals that qualify as San Clemente Island Goats under the Association's set of guidelines
- Providing technical support and opportunity for collaboration to San Clemente Island Goat growers and breeders to further the breed's purity, conservation, and attract new breeders
- Exhibiting livestock and educating the public in order to promote interest in the San Clemente Island Goat

"THE ISLAND GOAT"

The "The Island Goat" is the official quarterly newsletter of the SCIGBA. Articles, photographs, and business cards that relate to San Clemente Island Goats are welcome. Submit your contributions to SCIGBAassoc@gmail.com Attn: Newsletter. Publication of articles or advertisements does not necessarily constitute an endorsement by SCIGBA.

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