

Making a Difference for Wildlife

Hundreds of local conservation projects are undertaken annually by SCI Chapters. They are reinforced by many notable conservation initiatives funded by the SCI Foundation.



Sheep and Deer Drinkers
Southern California, USA
Total Funds: \$30,000

THE WILD SPACES near San Diego are some of the driest in America. Rainfall of one to two inches per year is not unusual, and some locations have as little as $\frac{1}{8}$ inch in 31 months. These are extreme conditions even for deer and desert sheep adapted to dry conditions. Carrying capacities for these desirable species can be raised by providing water, and *SCI San Diego* has donated partial funding for a half dozen drinkers in these arid, low-elevation deserts.

Drinkers are constructed from 10,000-gallon fiberglass tanks, placed in the ground in strategic locations that collect natural runoff from rare rainfalls. When properly placed, a quarter inch of rainfall can deliver a full tank. A chute leads thirsty ungulates to the water. Other wildlife, such as bats, kit foxes and roadrunners, benefit too.

Drinkers provide a unique opportunity for California Fish and Game to monitor the herds. As thirsty deer break the beam on each side of the water source, the animals are captured on film.



Fish and Game gets information on numbers and demographics of animals observed. Behavioral information is obtained too.

According to California Fish and Game Scientific Aide, Desert Wildlife Unlimited founder and *SCI San Diego* member Leon Lesicka, "Drinker projects are successful. The design is simple and low maintenance, and they get the job done. *SCI San Diego* has provided us a lot."

