

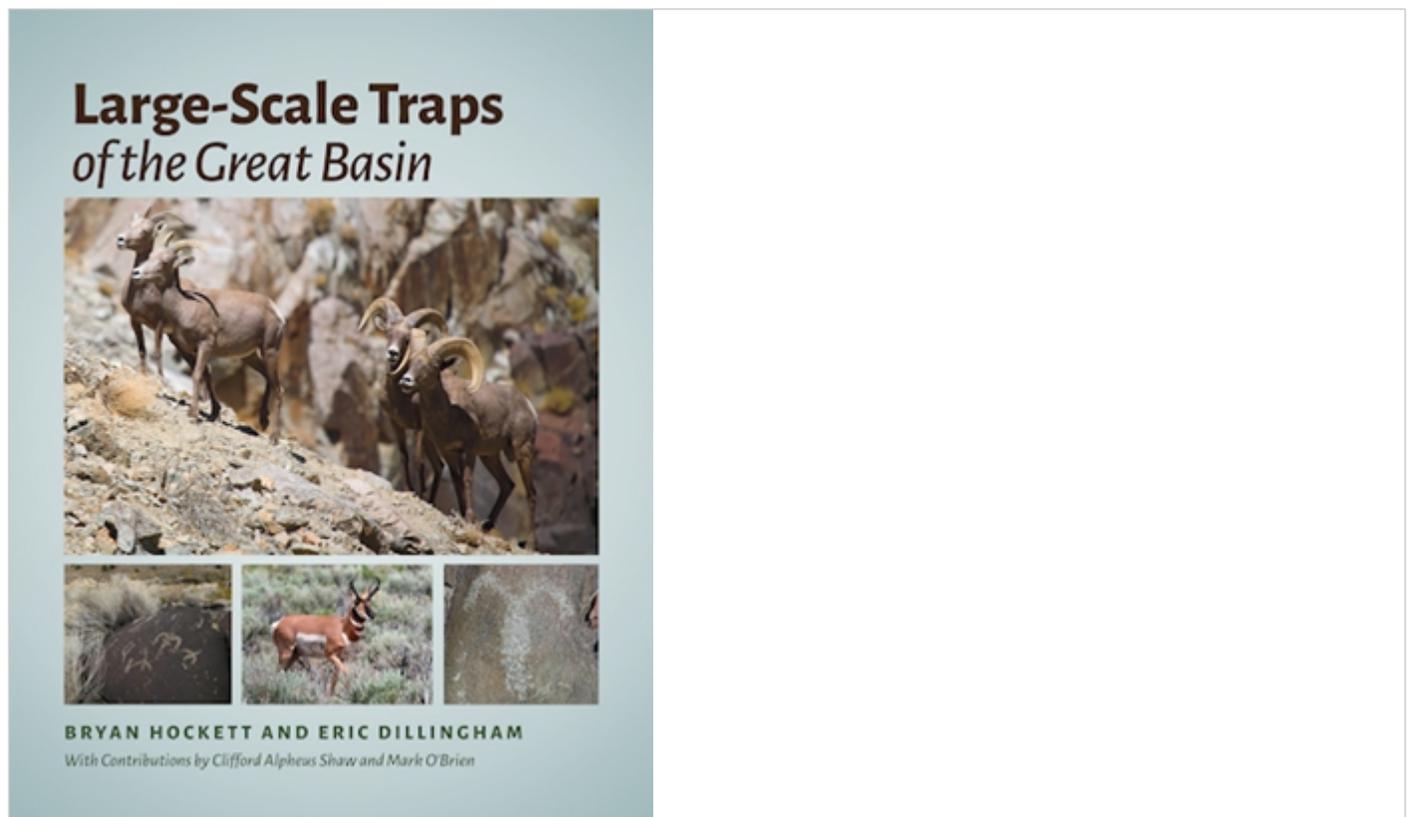
# Large Scale Traps of the Great Basin

March 23, 2025

## BOOK REVIEW

Bryan Hockett and Eric Dillingham (with contributions by Clifford Alpheus Shaw and Mark O'Brien). 2023. Texas A&M University Press, College Station, TX, USA. 160 pages (hardcover). \$85.00. ISBN: 978-1-64843-108-1

[www.doi.org/10.51492/cfwj.111.6](http://www.doi.org/10.51492/cfwj.111.6)



The authors of this work, Bryan Hockett and Eric Dillingham, are retired U.S. Government scientists with many years of experience serving the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, respectively. This book is a compendium of the knowledge they gained while exploring and protecting the archaeological and cultural histories of North America's Great Basin, discovering, and commenting upon the results of their efforts, and now have compiled into a single volume to share with interested members of the public, of which I am one.

I became aware of this work while preparing a chapter on methods used to capture mountain sheep that will appear in a forthcoming book being edited by Paul R. Krausman, a noted authority on the bighorn sheep of western North America. While writing the chapter, I became interested in the ways that early native peoples had captured or hunted those specialized ungulates—and other large herbivores including pronghorn, bison, and mule deer—that were important components of their diets. This book shed a great deal of light on those early methods, and upon which I built a description of the evolution of the complex

capture methods used by contemporary wildlife managers and biologists and will appear in the forthcoming book.

*Large Scale Traps of the Great Basin* consists of 7 chapters. Three of these provide information on the geography of the Great Basin in eastern California, Nevada, and western Utah. An historical summary of the archaeological and anthropological research in this region is provided in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, the authors define and describe the various types of traps used by these early Americans to capture large mammals, of which many were corrals and associated features such as V-shaped wings, fences, rock alignments or drivelines, flagstones, hunting blinds, and rock rings. In Chapter 3, the authors discuss the chronology of development of large-scale traps, and base that chronology primarily on the type of projectile points associated with the locations of the traps that were investigated and then conclude that chapter with a summary of the types of game associated with the various trap features and locations.

Following these short, introductory chapters, the authors explore in great detail a total of 8 large-scale individual, or concentrations of, traps located in the western Great Basin, beginning with a detailed geographic and chronological description of a complex of traps known formally as *Tunna' Nosi' Kaiva' Gwaa*, the most concentrated zone of prehistoric large mammal traps currently known. In Chapter 5, the authors explore the details of another complex of traps, located in the Pine Grove Hills of western Nevada, which represents the second greatest concentration of these archaeological features known to science. In Chapter 6, the authors describe in great detail 6 additional well-preserved traps at various sites across the western Great Basin. In Chapter 7, Hockett and Dillingham offer a synthesis of how 25 years of their own research, which when combined with that of numerous other authorities, informs the development of communally based large-scale trapping practiced by these early people, and its relationship to some of the prehistory as it currently is understood. This synthesis encompasses a period spanning nearly 8,000 years and clearly describes the cultural shifts and technological advances associated with the evolution of these archaeological features.

This book is well illustrated with a total of 76 detailed maps and figures, and photographs of the numerous sites described in the text. The authors also include 14 additional tables that provide detailed information to supplement the text. Further documentation exists in the form of a very robust list of citations (n = 158) that are referenced extensively throughout the various chapters. The book is very well-written, and anyone with an interest in the prehistory of the western Great Basin, even in the absence of formal training in archaeology or anthropology, will find this book to be informative and of particular interest. In addition, many of those having but a general curiosity about such will find it to be an easy and enjoyable read, as did I.

### **Vernon C. Bleich**

*Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Science, University of Nevada Reno, and Eastern Sierra Center for Applied Population Ecology, Bismarck, ND, USA*

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5016-1051>