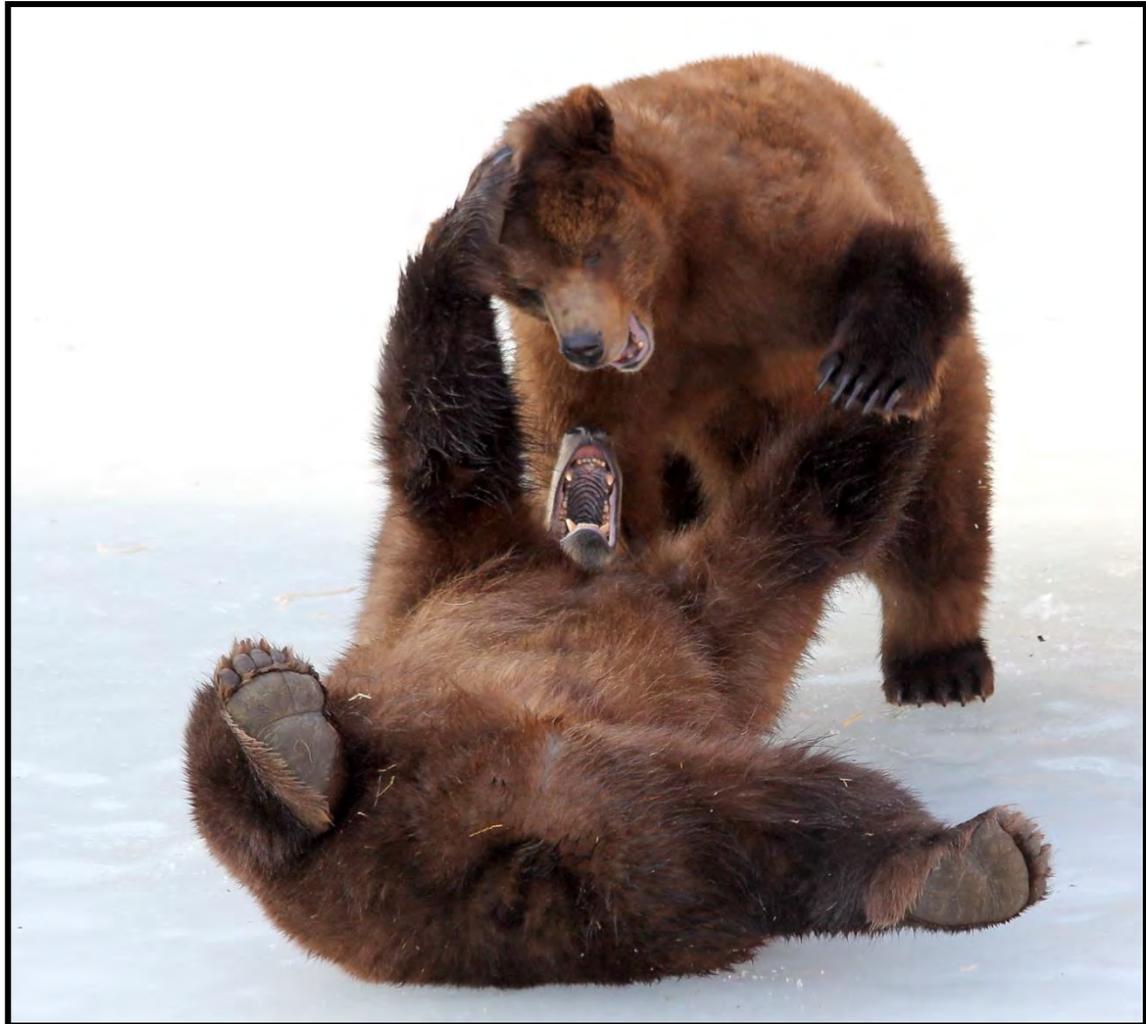


SITKA AREA OVERVIEW

GMU 4

BOARD OF GAME

JANUARY 2015 - JUNE 2015



GAME MANAGEMENT UNIT

4

- 5,800 square miles
- 5,000 miles of coastline
- Population ~11,500.
- 3 major islands; Admiralty, Baranof, and Chichagof Is.
- Fishing and seafood processing, healthcare, government services, education and tourism remain the major forces in the economy.





Sitka 2015

- ~ 9050 residents; 12th largest US seafood port value; 3 large processing plants and 19% of population directly involved; 631 vessels. Healthcare largest sector for payroll employment ~14%; USCG > 200 personnel.

DWC PERSONNEL

- **Area Biologist**

- Phil Mooney



- **Program Technician**

- Holley Dennison



Sitka Area Office

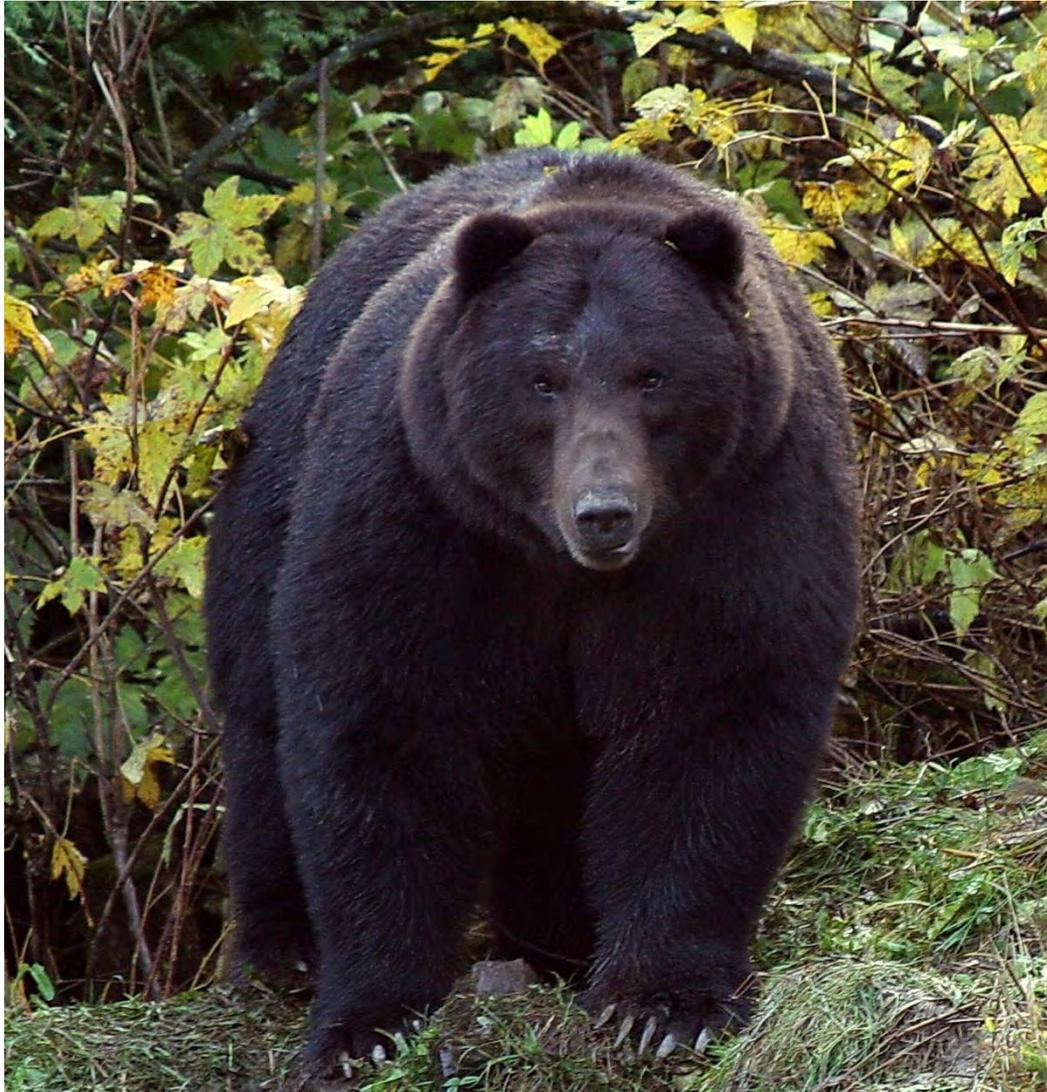


Sport Fish: Monica Matz, Commercial Fisheries: Lyndsey Jensen

Wildlife Conservation: Holley Dennison

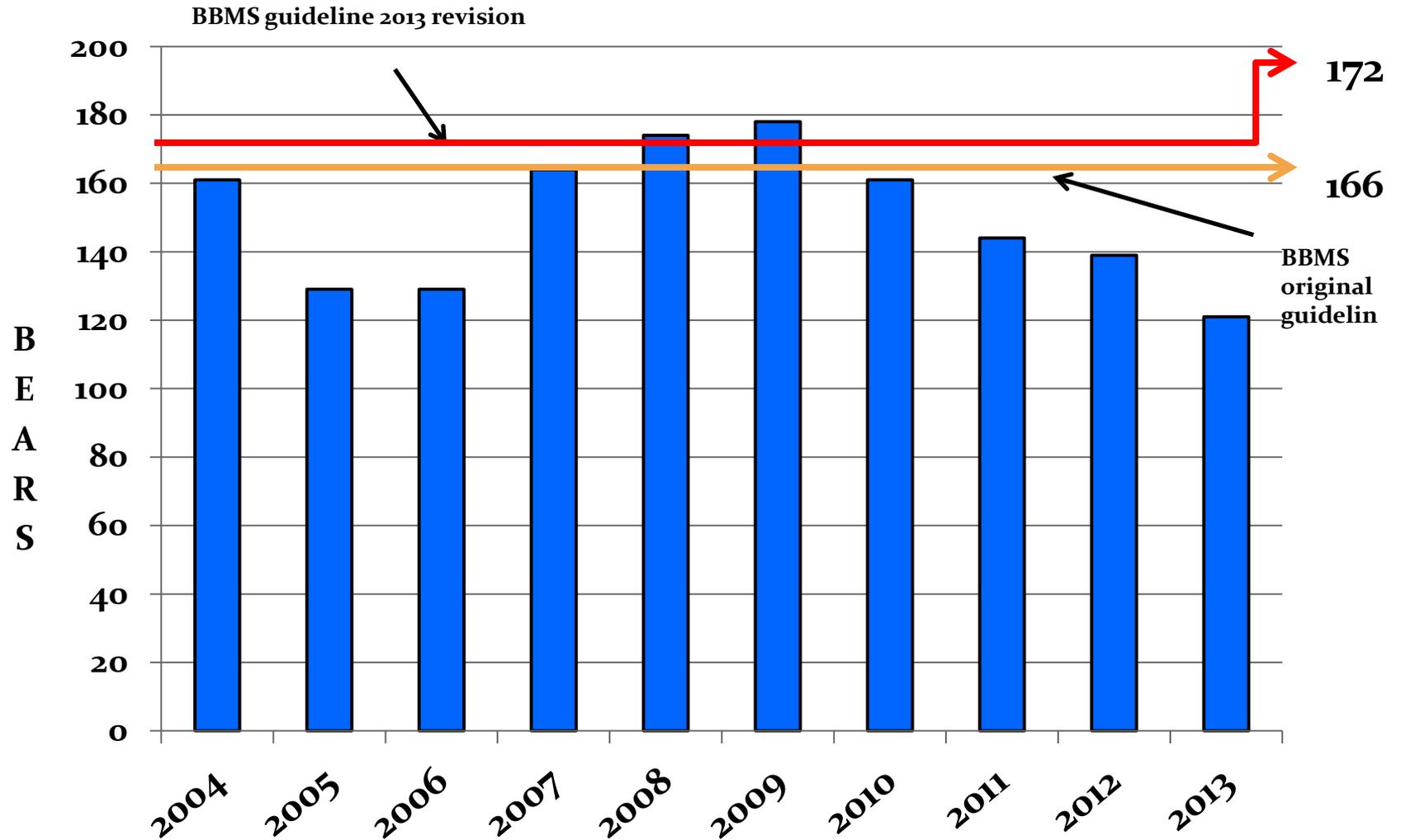
Cross-trained across divisions to assist the public at the front counters and handle ~7800 contacts annually.

BROWN BEAR



- High density
- Nonconsumptive uses very important
- BBMS – adopted 2000
- Average 663 permits annually
- DLP kills average 7-10 bears/yr
- One proposal (#11) for this BOG session

Unit 4 Human-Caused Bear Mortality



Average Annual Brown Bear Mortality (2004-2013)

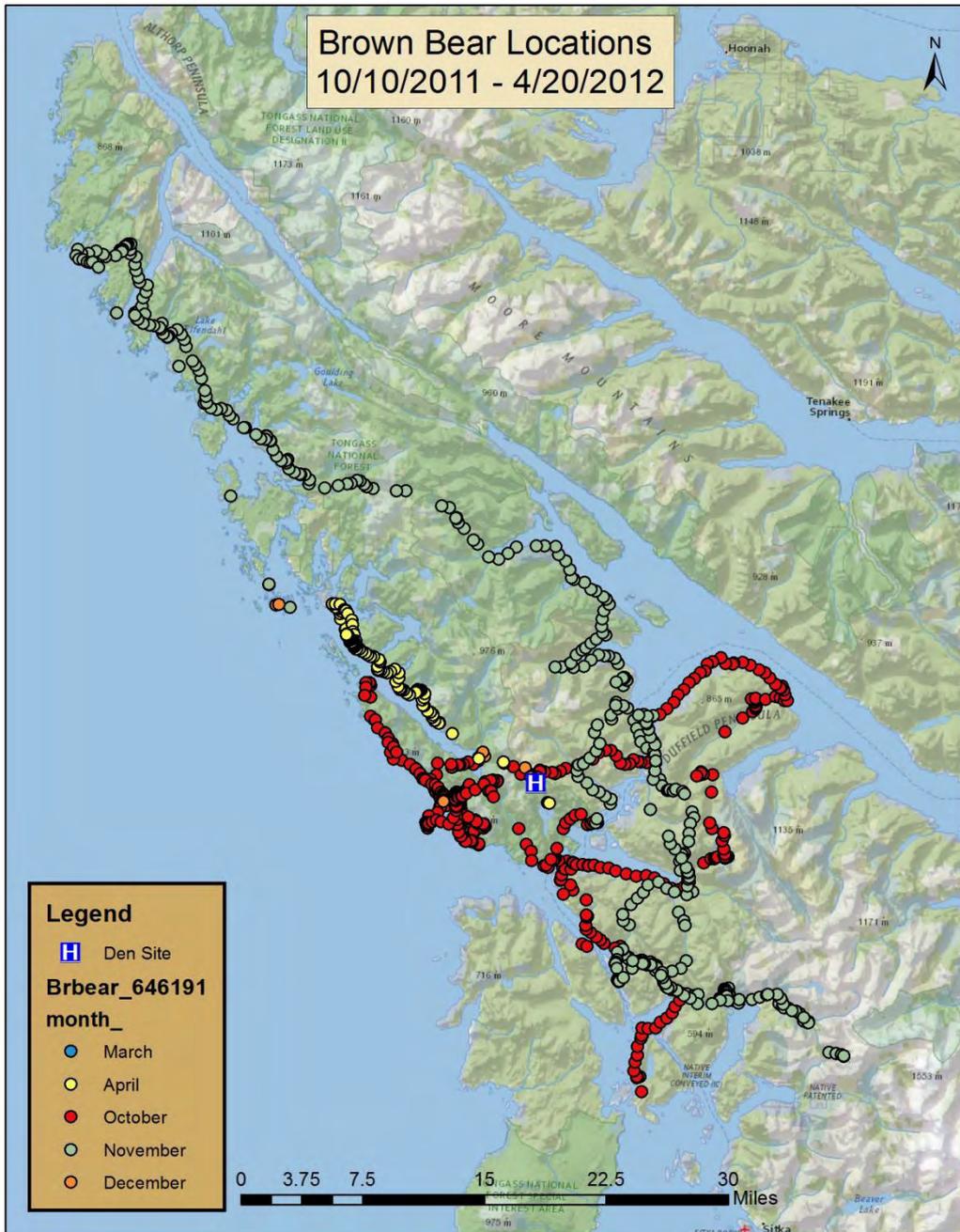
- **Local resident harvest 16 bears (~10%)**
- **Non-local resident harvest 30 bears (~19%)**
- **Nonresident harvest 102 bears (~64%)**
- **Other mortality (illegal, DLP, research losses, vehicle collisions, etc.)11 bears (7%)**

Bear Education and Safety

- Bear safety, behavior presentations (~20 /yr) schools, daycare/preschools
- Hazing/safety protocols/wounding training with PDs, USFS remote fish weir operations, VPSO cadets, USCG personnel, Search and Rescue
- Fortress of the Bear facility - 25,000 visitors



Urban Bear Capture

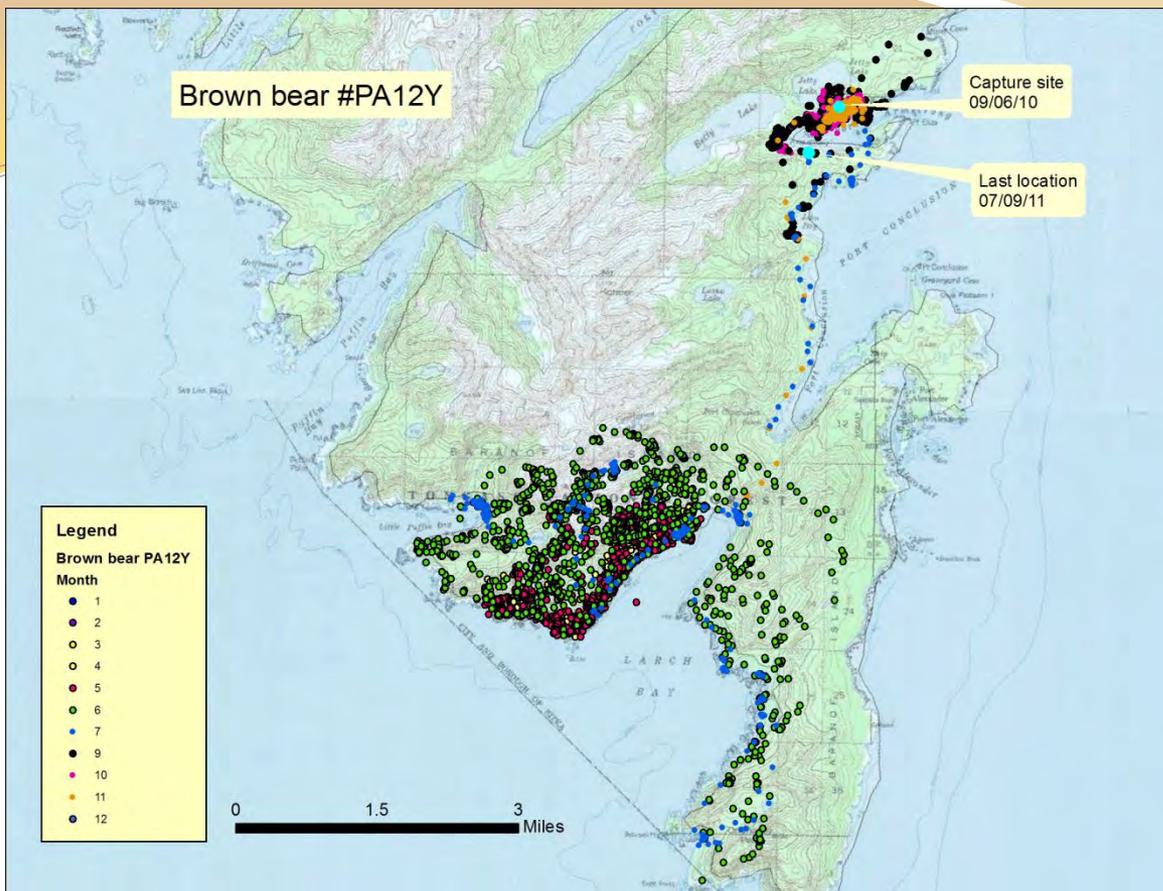


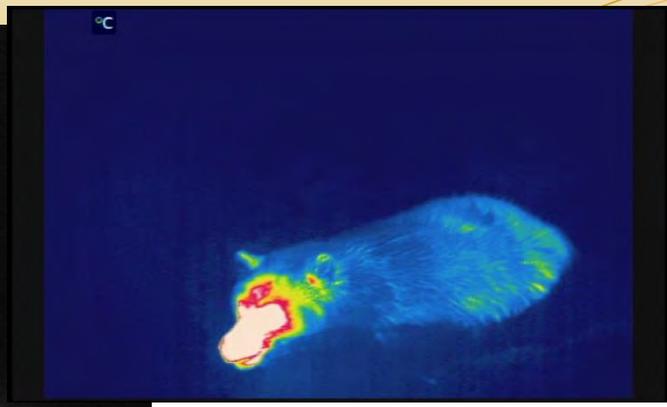
June 13, 2012 – Olga Strait

Taser Project Port Armstrong

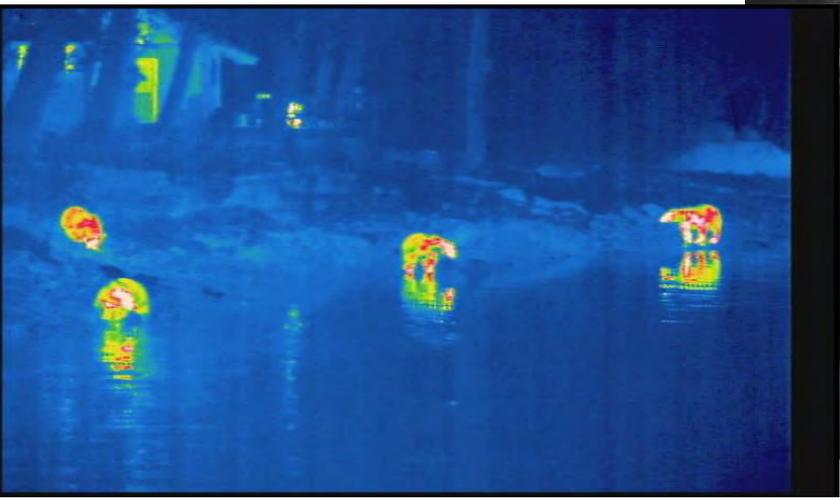
Bear capture,
collaring/markings

Taser – ECD exposures
under field conditions
exceed 200 with 100%
flight response.





**~65% of the work
is at night.**



Port Armstrong ECD Permit

- **Three Armstrong staff, under a DFG permit, met department requirements for use of the Taser X3W for hazing bears in 2013.**
- **They deployed it successfully 12 times this summer, primarily on sows/cubs and subadults to keep them out of work and residential areas.**



ECD Research – UAF - LARS

- Compare drug and ECD blood chemistry changes during capture and recovery periods on 15 captive female reindeer.



Status of Bear Items From Last BOG

- Base the bear population estimate on NE Chichagof Island on the most recent research data. **ACCOMPLISHED**
- Obtain a population estimate on South Admiralty Island. **DELAYED**
- Wounding loss will not be included in the harvest mortality guidelines or calculations. **ACCOMPLISHED**
- Defense of Life and Property kills will be included in the estimate of total mortality and an effort to minimize these losses will be maintained. **ACCOMPLISHED -ONGOING**
- The department will develop minimum skull size for harvested females for use as a future tool to restrict guided hunter harvest of female brown bears, if and when necessary. The board intends for the department to inform the board of the department's intent to implement skull size guidelines before implementing them. **REVIEWED WITH GUIDE INPUT AND CURRENTLY ON HOLD AND IN RESERVE AS NEEDED.**

SITKA BLACK-TAILED DEER

- **High subsistence value**
- **Very important for recreation (averages~60% of SE harvest)**
- **~5436 harvested in 2013**
- **Weather/winter habitat are population's limiting factors**
- **High populations can exceed carrying capacity – habitat damage**





- Winter of 2006-07 had record for snow depth. March 2007 snowfall cut the population 45-85%
- Doe closures for NE Chichagof area issued 2007 – 2012. Population has recovered.

- NE Chichagof deer collaring project completed in 2013.
- All areas of the Unit have good recruitment and increasing numbers.
- Two proposals (#9 and #10) related to deer will be addressed at this session.



MOUNTAIN GOAT



- Baranof Island - transplanted population (1923 – 18 animals)
- Important local species; estimated population <800
- Efforts to reduce the female harvest beginning to stabilize decline
- Annual harvest range of 14- 31 over the last 5 years

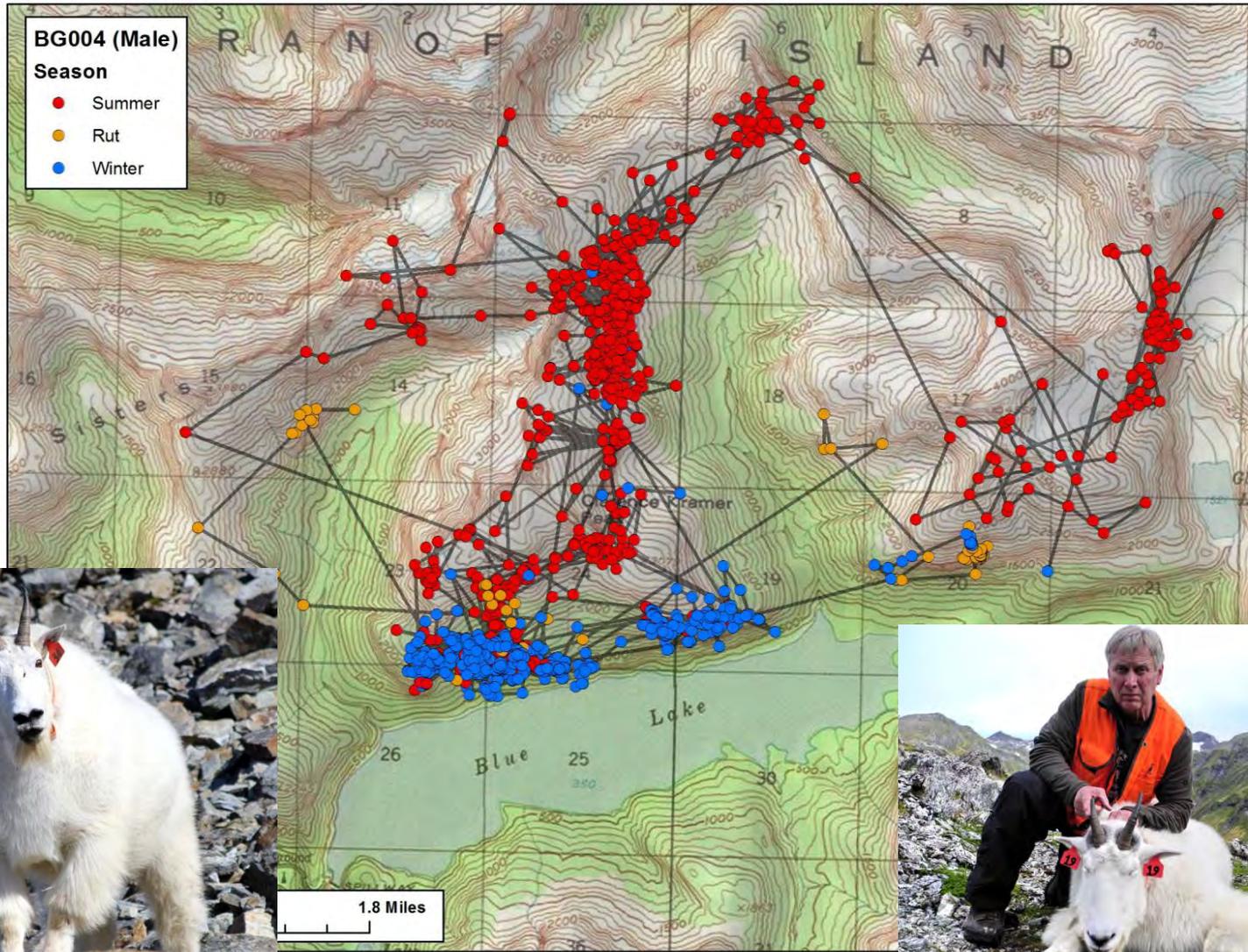


Partnered with Sitka C&B, USFS to collar 38 goats in 2010-14 as part of the Blue Lake Dam and Takatz Lake hydroelectric project analysis.

- Genetic analysis shows two distinct and separate DNA signatures.



Research

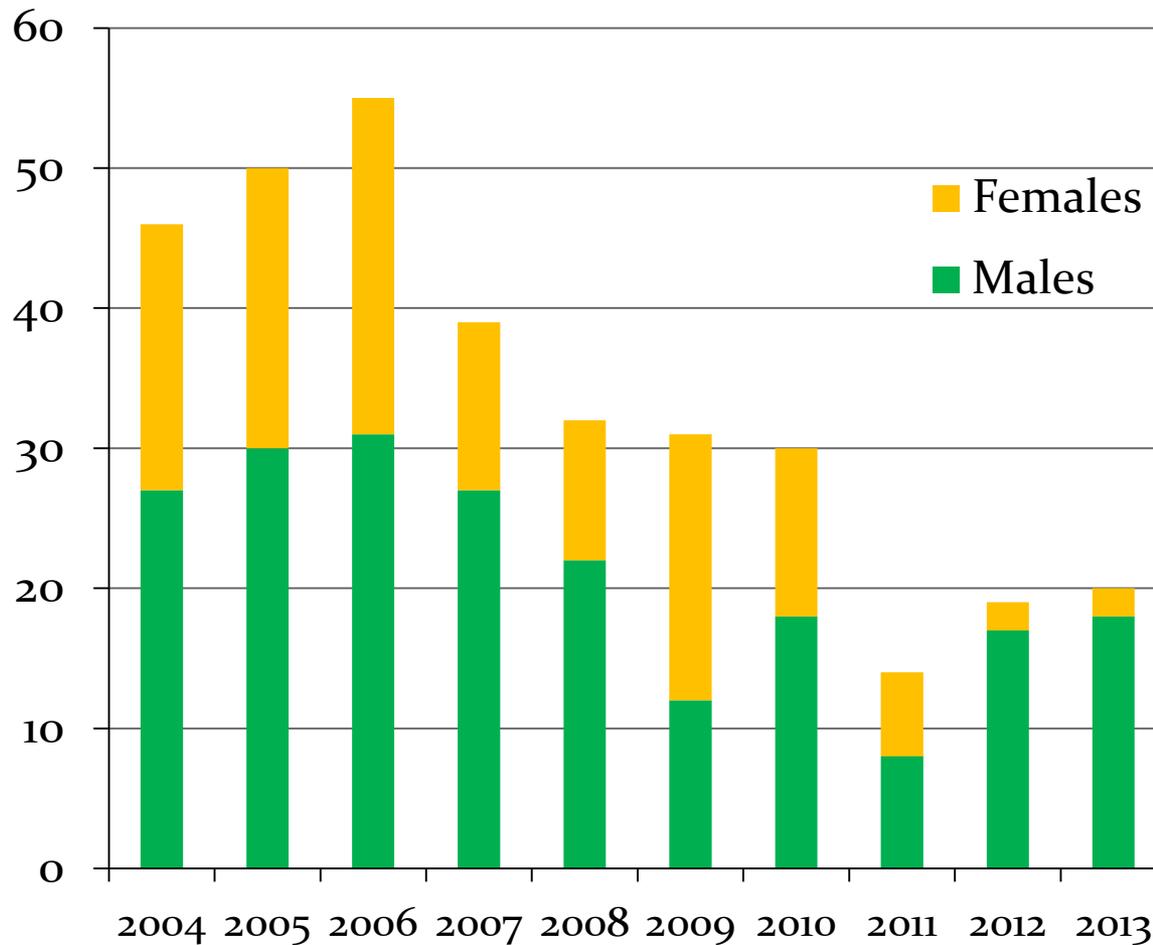


Education & Outreach

- **Videos**
- **Booklets**
- **Online Quiz**



Baranof Is Mtn Goat Harvest



- One BOG proposal (#8); drawing hunt for residents will be presented.

MARTEN

- Annual harvest 250 -2,357 animals (fur value in 2012 ~\$110 and 2013 ~\$110 to \$160)
- Populations were up in 2011 but have dropped off sharply. 2014-15 looks to be a very meager season.
- Habitat changes may reduce populations
- Harvests
 - RY 2011 - 1115
 - RY 2012 - 2357
 - RY 2013 - 495



RIVER OTTER



- **Harvest is variable**
- **Fur value has varied from \$80-\$200 in the last decade**
- **Harvests**
- **RY 2011 - 197**
- **RY 2012 - 163**
- **RY 2013 - 124**

Beaver

- **Season has reduced nuisance permits**
- **Harvests**
- **RY 2011 – 15**
- **RY 2012 – 26**
- **RY 2013 - 33**



MINK



- Previous low pelt prices have risen to >\$18
- No sealing required
- Population is considered stable

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS



- **Habitat alteration due to logging**
- **Amount and location of 2nd growth stands and their treatment**

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

Brown Bear/Human Interactions



Clean the Scene 2014

**53 locals
from ages 4 –
80 collected
3,264 pounds
of trash from
bear “caches”
located in
Sitka in an
effort to
reduce the
attraction to
brown bears.**



HE Programs



Sitka HE Aug 13, 2005

1-2 classes per year



Management Concerns



QUESTIONS?



Proposal 8

Establish a resident drawing permit hunt for mountain goats in the Sitka area (Unit 4)

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendation:

Sitka AC – Oppose 0-14

Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6

Issue Statement

- *Proponent believes a drawing permit hunt would allow some hunting in the currently closed areas on Baranof Is.*
- *Proponent believes a drawing permit limited to residents would offer opportunity and yet limit number of hunters.*

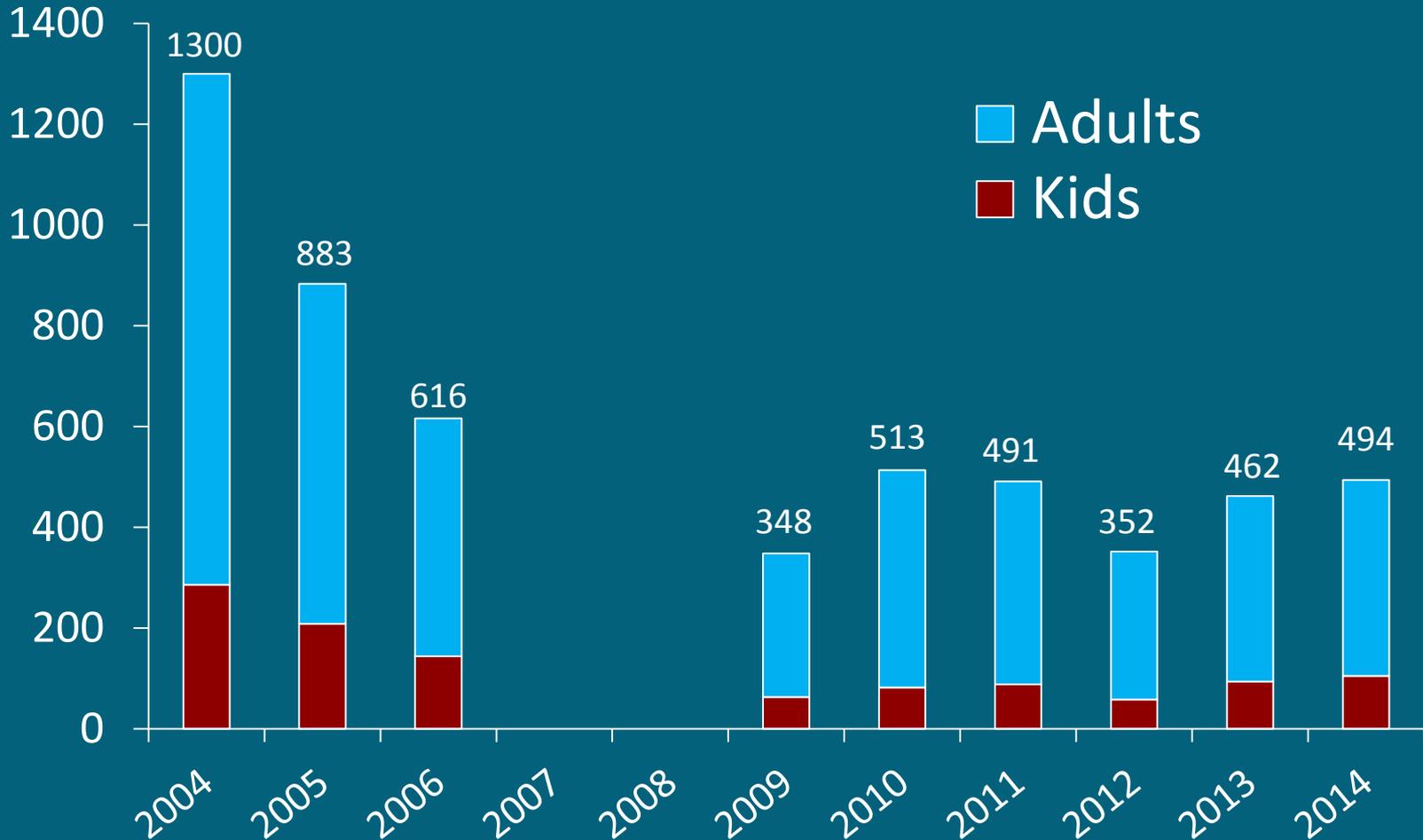
Background

- Baranof Is. goat population has declined since 2004
 - From 1500 to ~800 goats
- New mgmt. strategy implemented in 2006 and modified in 2010.
- 3 hunt areas near Sitka closed to goat hunting since 2011

Current Management Strategy

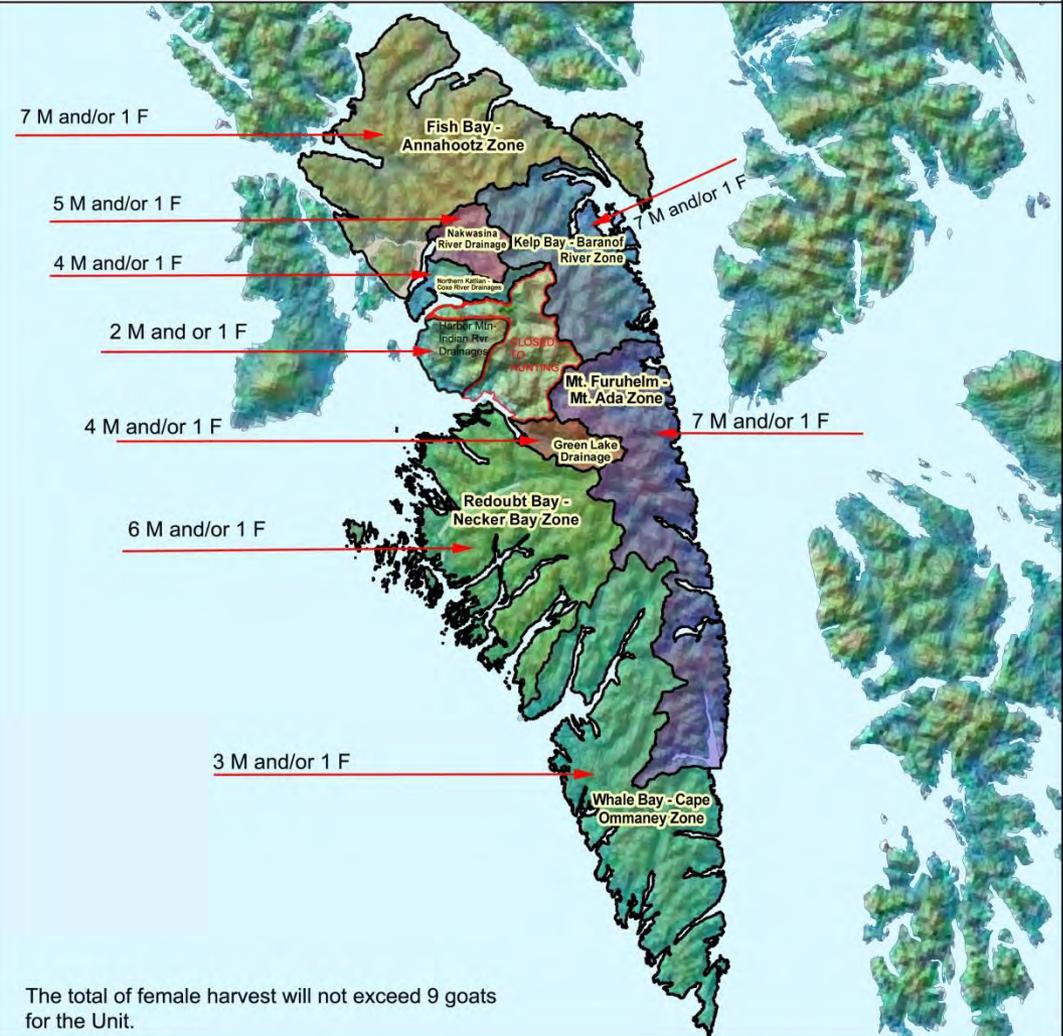
- Cap both male and female harvest in established watershed and zones
- Close zones to goat hunting when either quota is met
 - female harvest reduced from >40% to <12% annually
- Public education and outreach ongoing
- Research initiated in 2010
 - 36 goats collared to date

Baranof Island Goat Surveys 2005-2014



Baranof Is.
Watershed and
Zones map
with harvest
targets for
males and
females.

RG150 - Mountain Goat



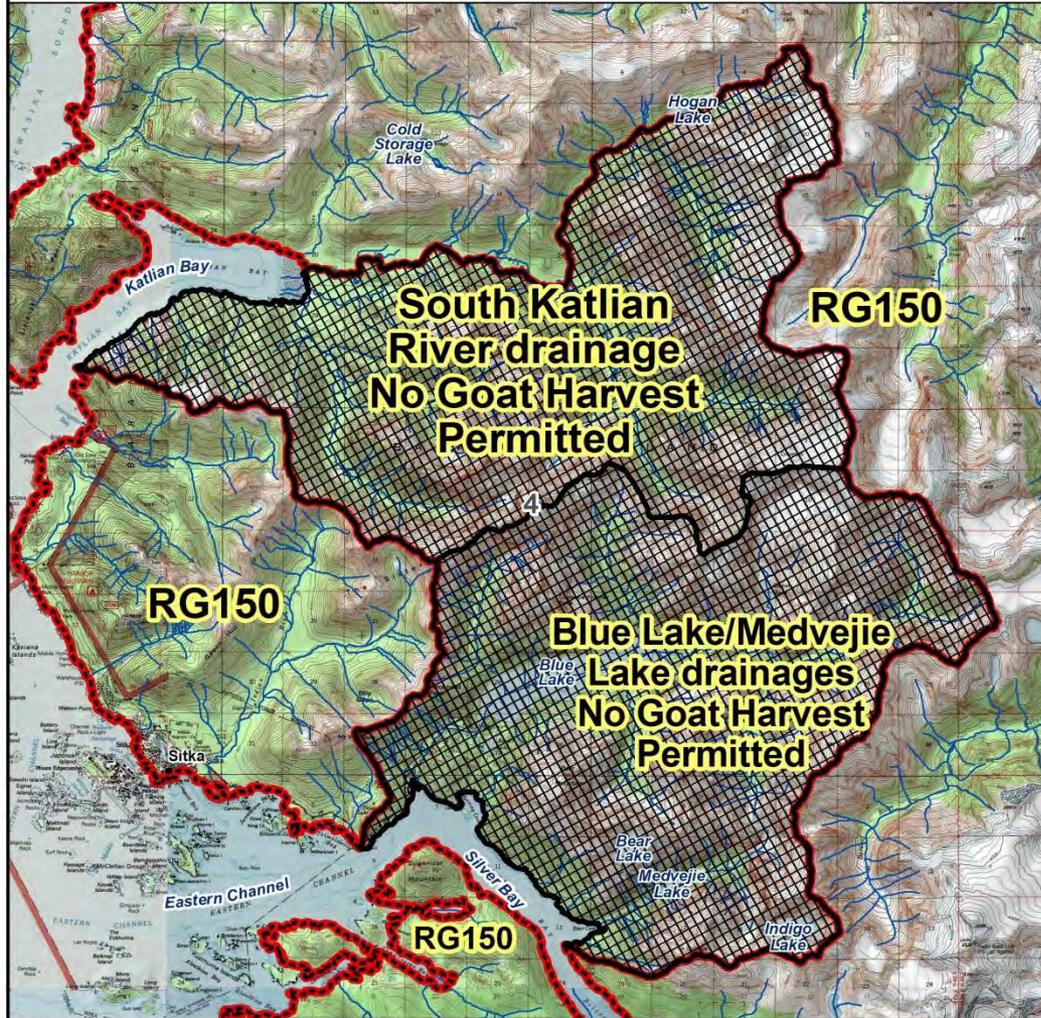
Unit 4, Baranof Island



RG150 - Mountain Goat

S. Katlian R. and Blue/Medvejie Lakes Drainages

NO GOAT HARVEST PERMITTED



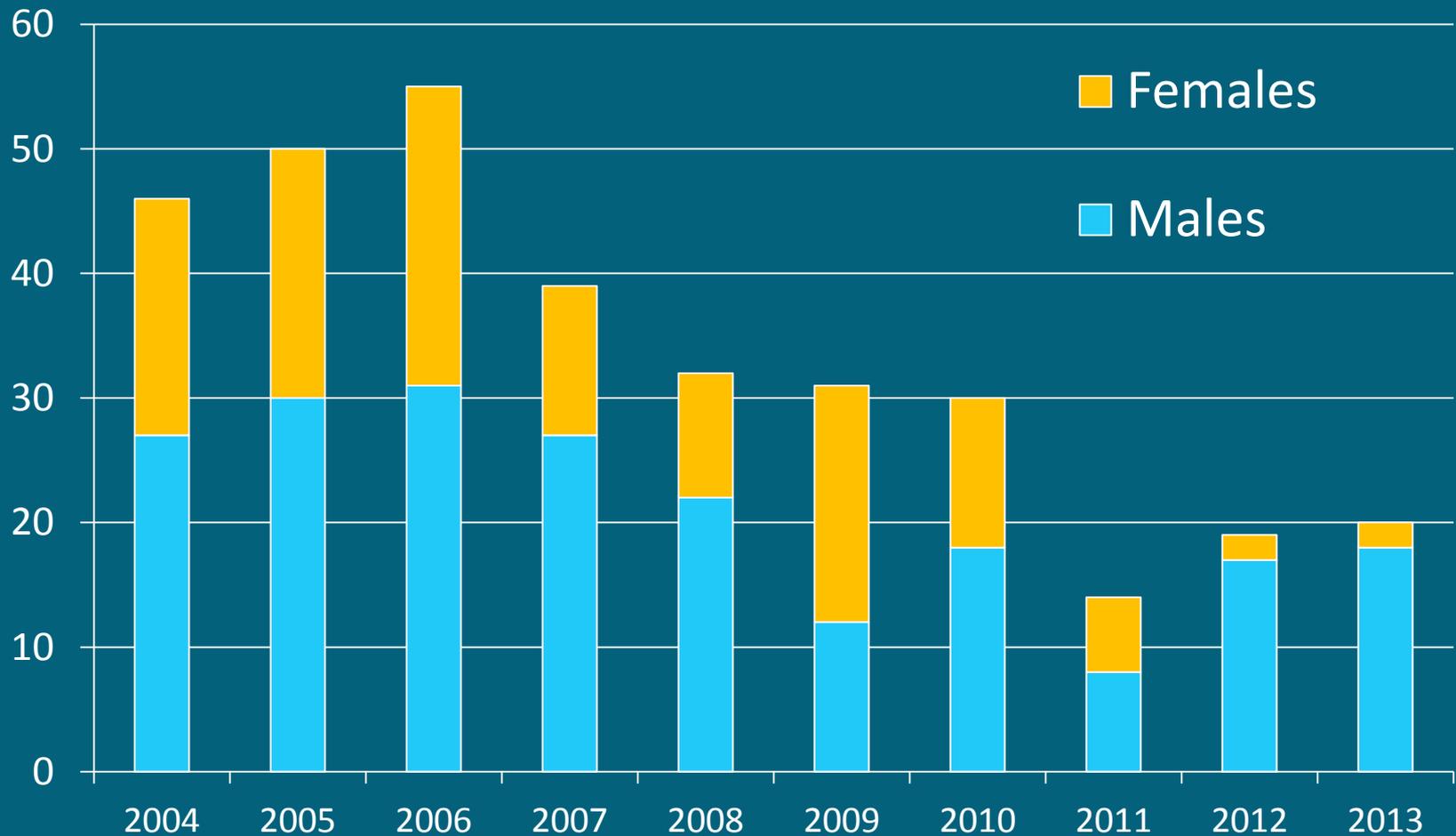
Unit 4, Baranof Island:

South Katlian River drainage - NO GOAT HARVEST PERMITTED

Blue Lake and Medvejie Lake drainages - NO GOAT HARVEST PERMITTED



Baranof Is Mtn Goat Harvest



Summary

- Current Mgmt. strategy allows appropriate level of harvest
- Female harvest greatly reduced
- Hunting pressure has been dispersed
- Closed areas starting to recover
- Currently, no advantage to a drawing permit hunt

Proposal 8

Establish a resident drawing permit hunt for mountain goats in the Sitka area (Unit 4)

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendation:

Sitka AC – Oppose 0-14

Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6

Proposal 9

Increase resident bag limit for deer in Unit 4 (remainder) to 6 deer, the last 2 must be bucks

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendations:

Sitka AC – Oppose 0-14

Petersburg AC – Oppose 0-10

Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6

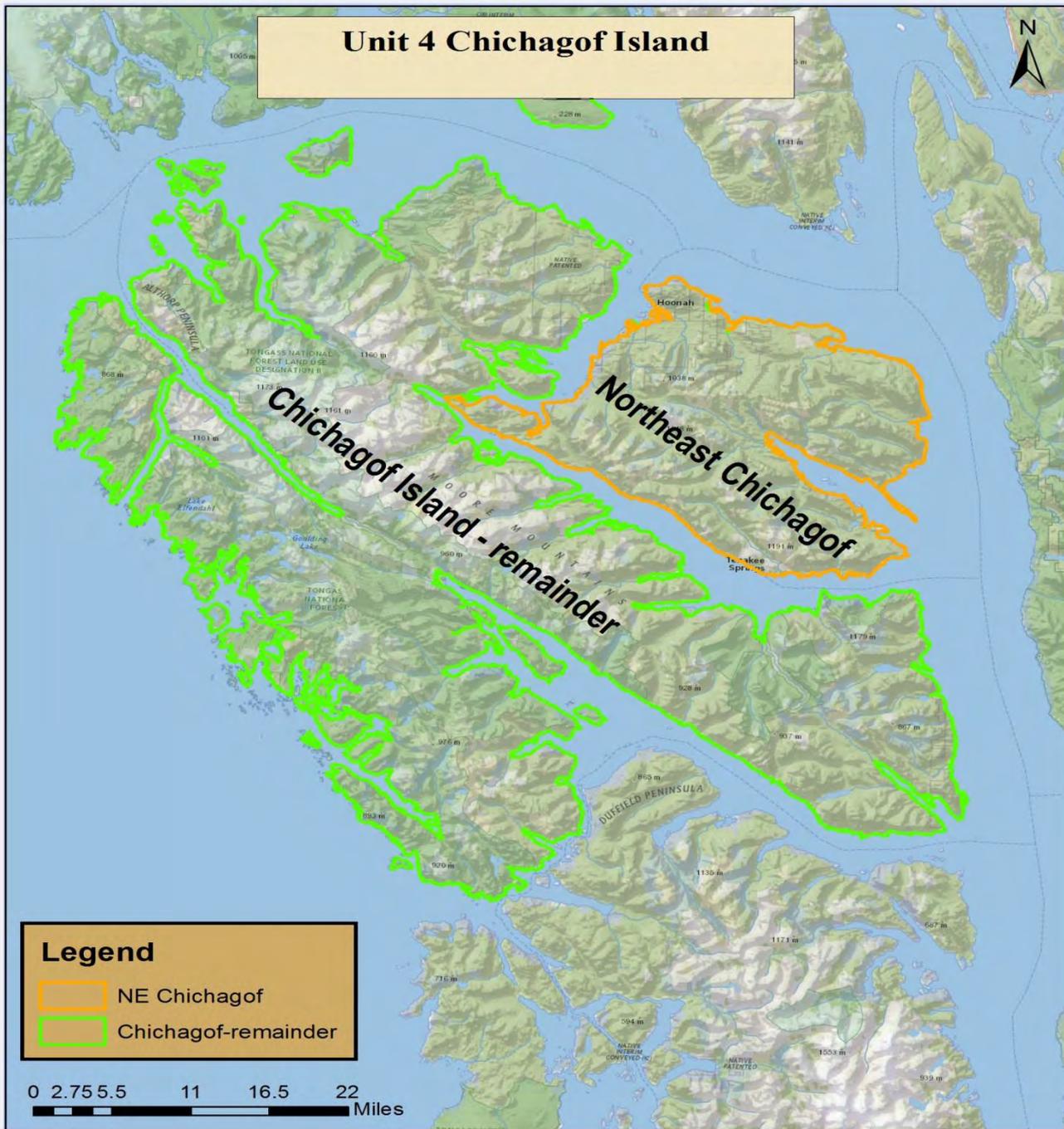
Existing Regulations

Unit 4 Deer

B	Chichagof Island east of Port Frederick and north of Tenakee Inlet including all drainages into Tenakee Inlet	3 deer Total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Sept 14
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Dec 31
B	Unit 4 -remainder	4 deer total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Sept 14
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Dec 31
	Federal Regulations	6 deer Total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Jan 31
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Jan 31



Unit 4 Chichagof Island



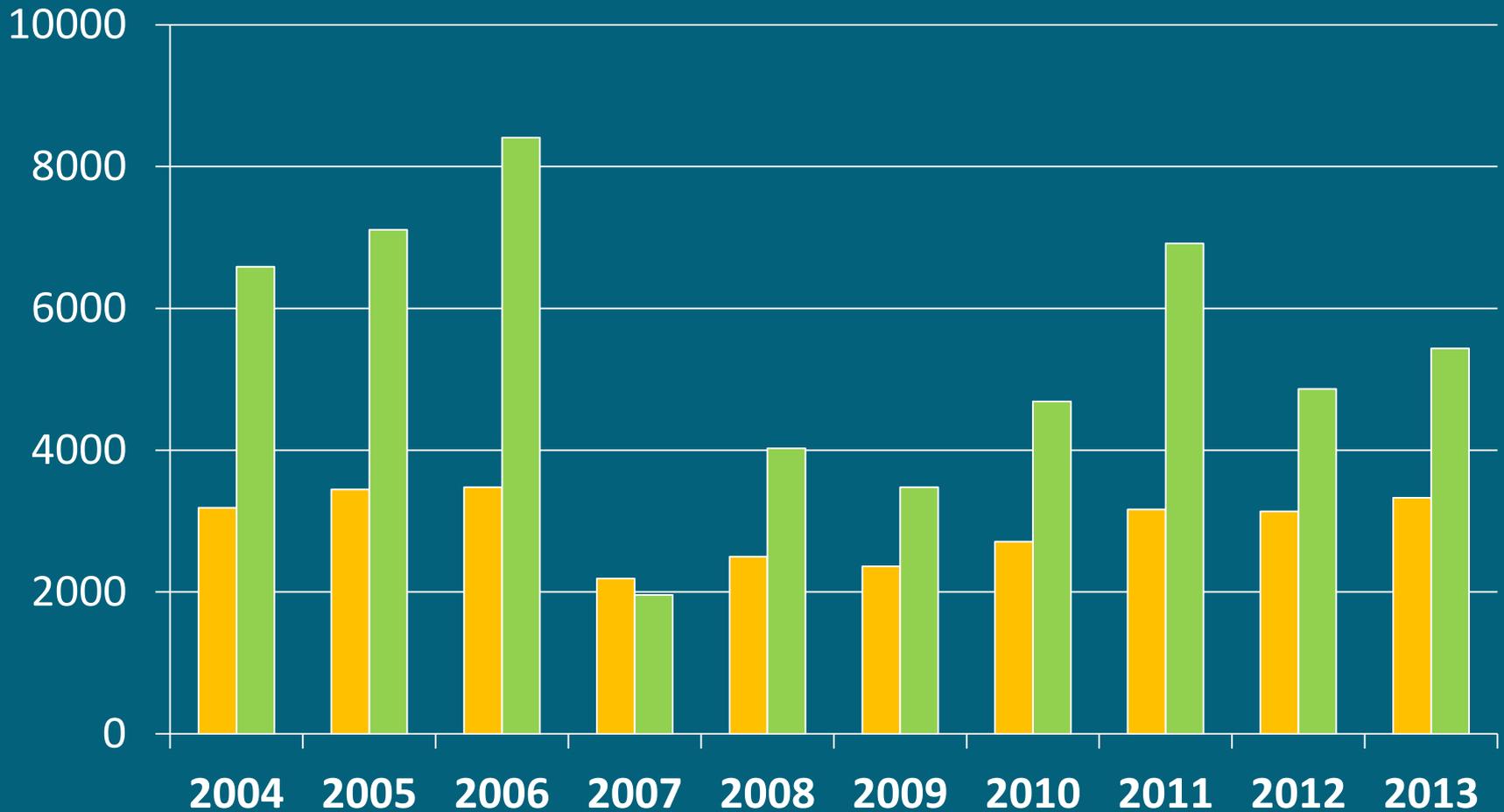
Legend

- NE Chichagof
- Chichagof-remainder

0 2.75 5.5 11 16.5 22 Miles

Unit 4 Total Deer Hunters & Harvest

hunters total harvest



Harvest info

Average annual harvest (2004-2013)

~5300 deer/year (76% bucks and 24% does)



Summary

- Current regulations in effect since 1994
- ~ 90% of the Unit is Federal land
- Residents of Unit 4 and surrounding area are federally qualified; can already harvest 6 deer and hunt until Jan. 31
- Most harvest occurs along shoreline-beach fringe
- Federal Designated Hunter and State proxy systems contribute to additional harvest
- Successful hunters average 2.5 deer per season, so opportunity remains for most hunters to harvest additional deer under existing regulations

Proposal 9

Increase resident bag limit for deer in Unit 4 (remainder) to 6 deer, the last 2 must be bucks

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendations:

Sitka AC – Oppose 0-14

Petersburg AC – Oppose 0-10

Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6

Proposal 10

Change resident “any deer” season to
October 15-December 31 in Unit 4 and
portions of Unit 1C

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendations:

Sitka AC - Oppose 1-13 Petersburg AC – Oppose 0-10

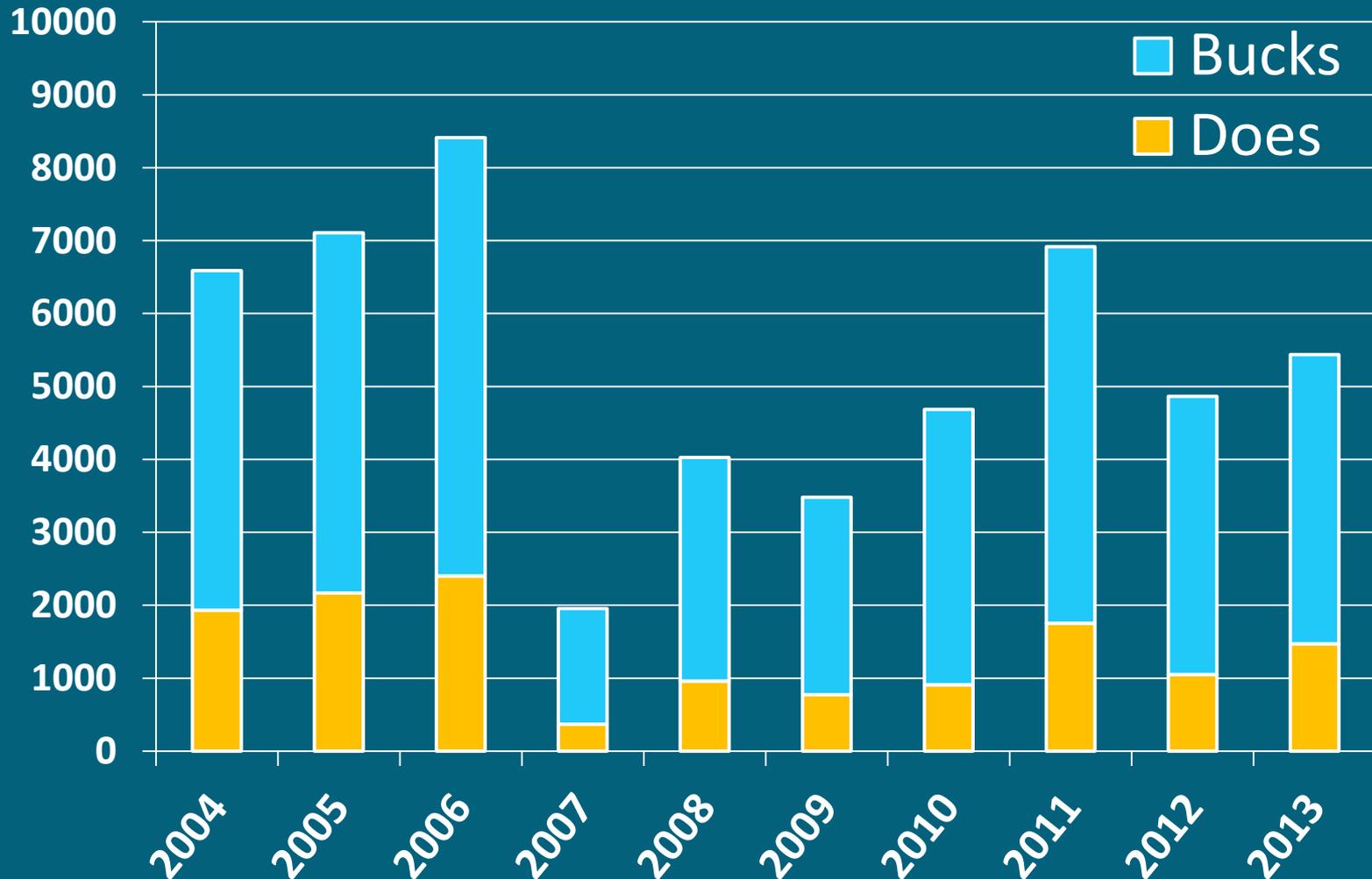
Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6



Existing Unit 4 Deer Regulations

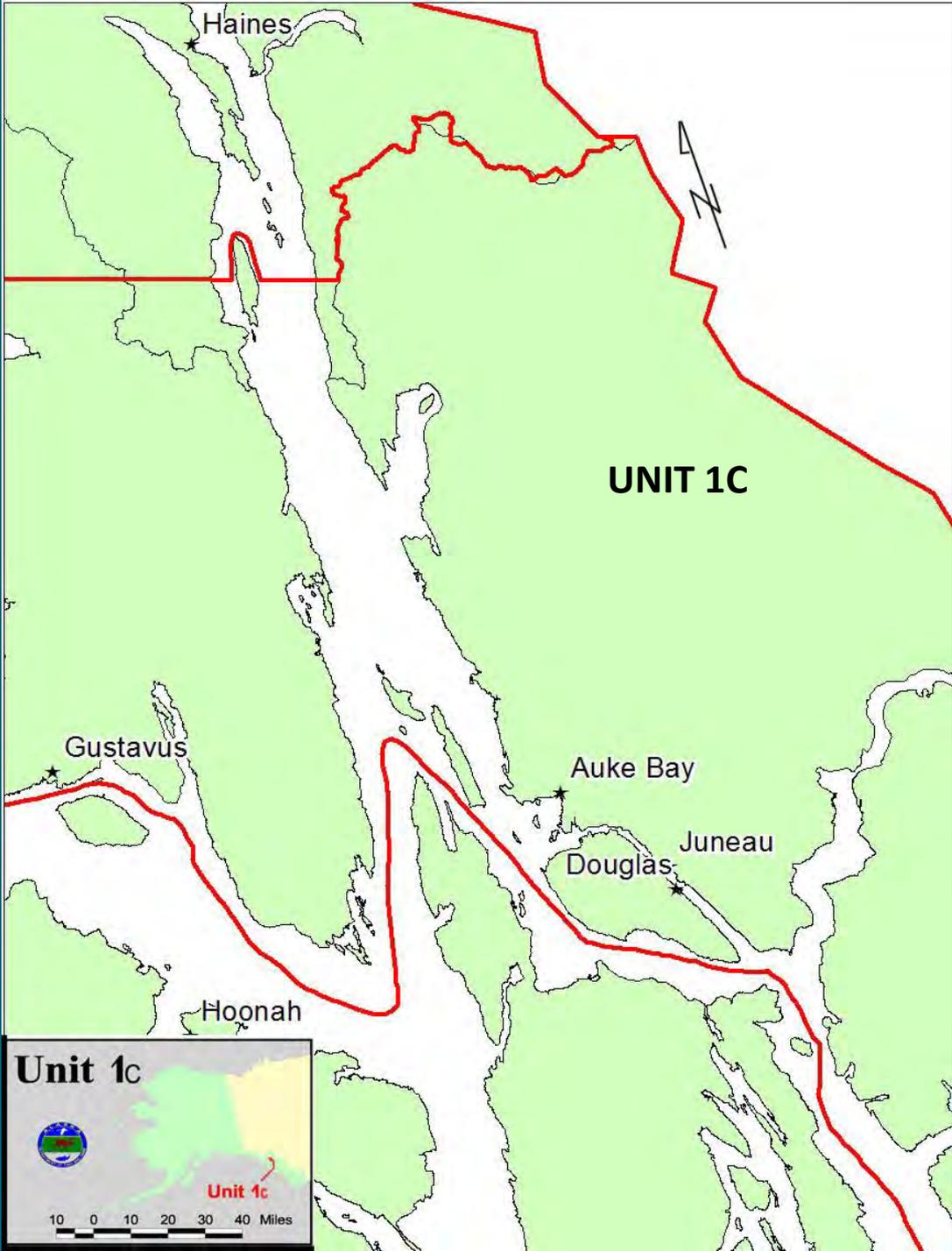
Unit 4 Deer				
B	Chichagof Island east of Port Frederick and north of Tenakee Inlet including all drainages into Tenakee Inlet	3 deer Total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Sept 14
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Dec 31
B	Unit 4 -remainder	4 deer total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Sept 14
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Dec 31
	Federal Regulations	6 deer Total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Jan 31
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Jan 31

Unit 4 – Deer Harvest (2004-2013)



Unit 4 Deer Harvest (2004-2013)

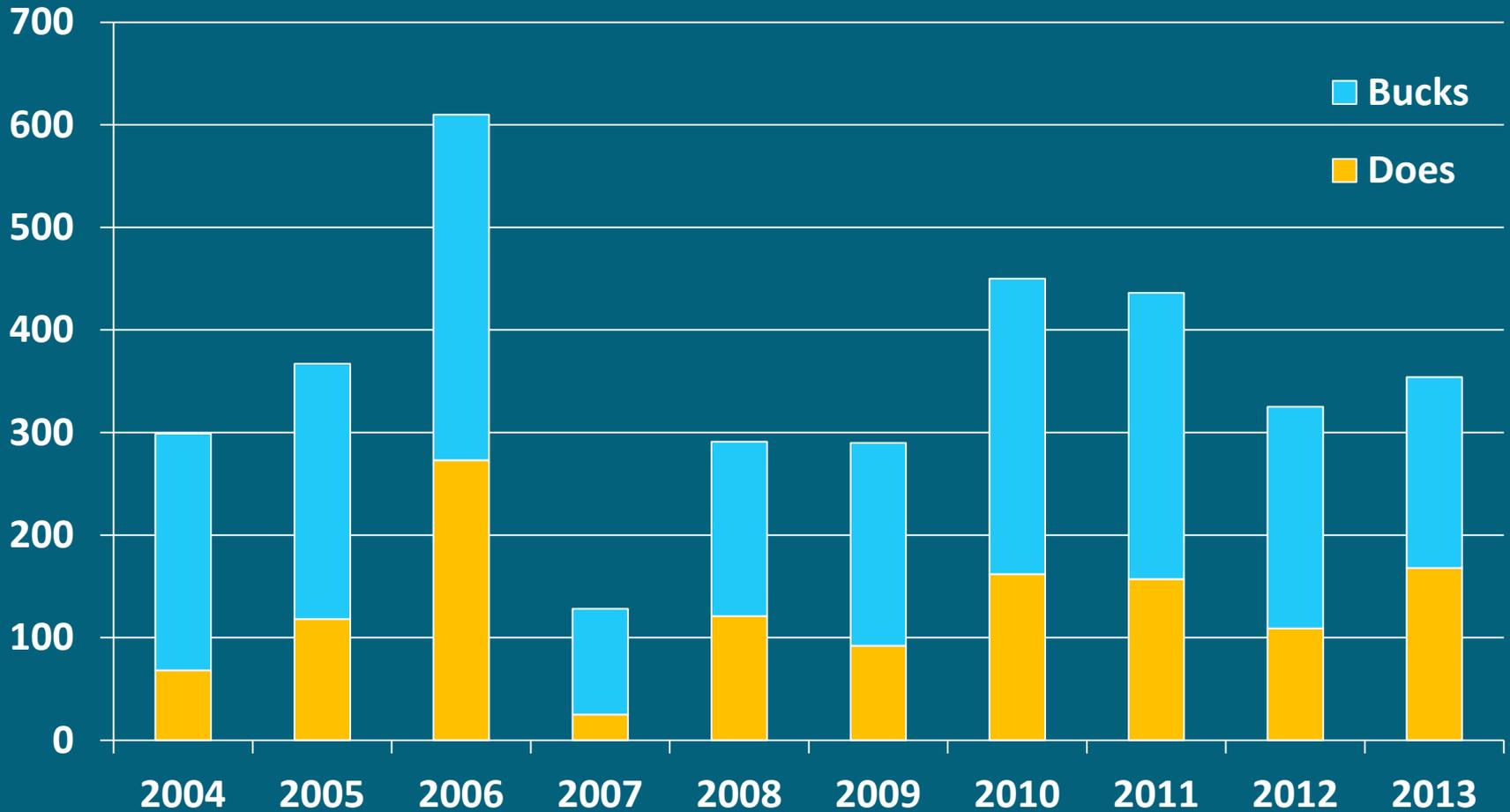
- Average # Hunters 2950
- Average Harvest 5347 deer/yr
 - Average # Bucks 3968 (74% bucks)
 - Average # Does 1380 (24% does)
- Deer /Succ. Hunter 2.5



Existing Unit 1C Deer Regulations

Unit 1C Deer				
B	Douglas, Lincoln, Shelter, Sullivan Islands	4 deer Total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Sept 14
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Dec 31
B	Unit 1C - remainder	2 Bucks	Bucks	Aug 1 – Dec 31
	Federal Regulations	4 deer Total	Bucks	Aug 1 – Dec 31
			Any Deer	Sept 15 – Dec 31

Unit 1C Islands – Deer Harvest (2004-2013)



Unit 1C Islands Deer Harvest (2004-2013)

- Average # Hunters 796
- Average Harvest 355 deer/yr
 - Average # Bucks 226 (59% bucks)
 - Average # Does 129 (41% does)
- Deer /Succ. Hunter 1.2

Discussion

- The current timing of “any deer” season does result in some fawn mortality.
- Fawns have relatively high natural mortality even under non-hunting scenarios (range of 31%-65%) and fawn mortality may be compensatory rather than additive.
- Although unpopular with some, hunter harvest of does and/or fawns has little impact on population.

Discussion

- Weather, in particular mid-late winter storms and deep snowpack, can significantly impact deer survival.
- In Unit 4, the absence of wolves allows deer populations to increase rapidly to the point of doing damage to winter range habitat.

Discussion

- Existing regulations have provided sustainable deer populations and harvests for 2 decades
- Any loss of fawns resulting from doe harvest does not represent a conservation concern



Proposal 10

Change resident “any deer” season to
October 15-December 31 in Unit 4 and
portions of Unit 1C

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendations:

Sitka AC - Oppose 1-13 Petersburg AC - Oppose 0-10

Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6

Proposal 11

Establish separate brown bear registration hunts in
Unit 4 for nonresident relatives within
2nd degree of kindred

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendations:

Sitka AC – Support 8-0,

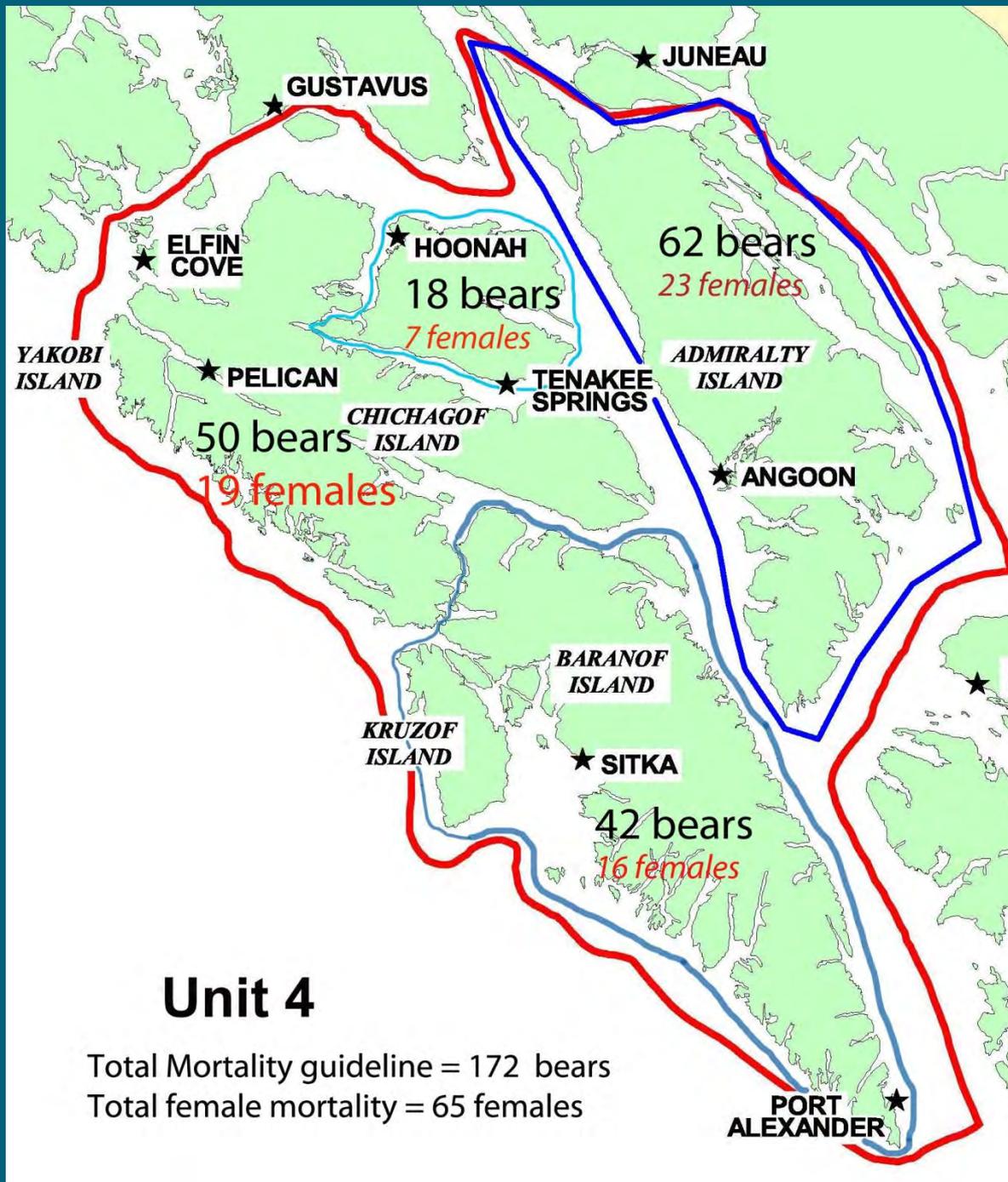
Petersburg AC- Support 9-1

Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6

Background

- Unit 4 Brown Bear Management Strategy recommended 4 nonresident 2DK hunts each year.
- BBMS recommendations were by island and GUAs, based on historical hunt pressure and population objectives.
- The 2DK component is the only non-resident group not currently governed.

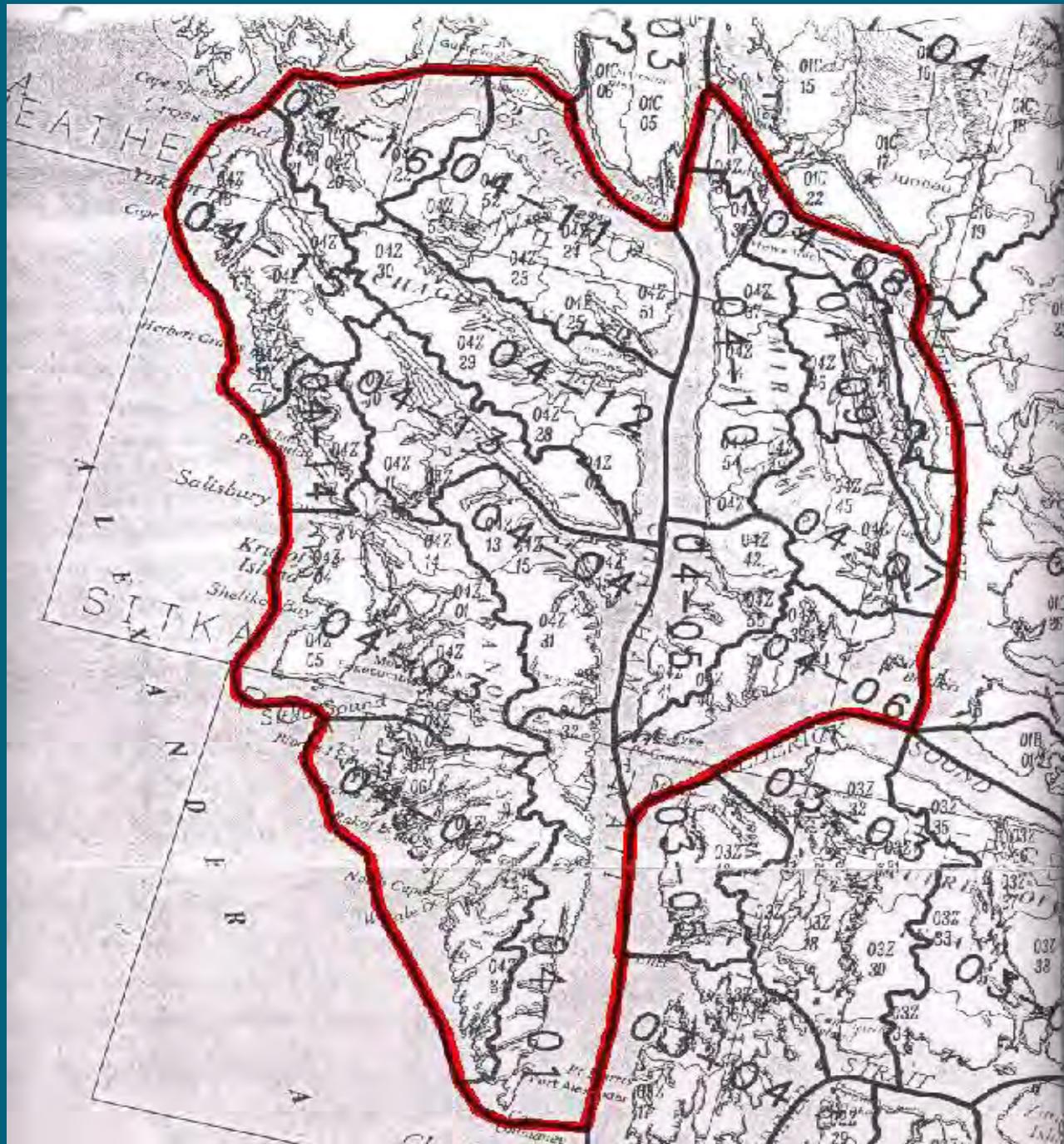




Unit 4 Chichagof Island Brown Bear Mortality Guidelines

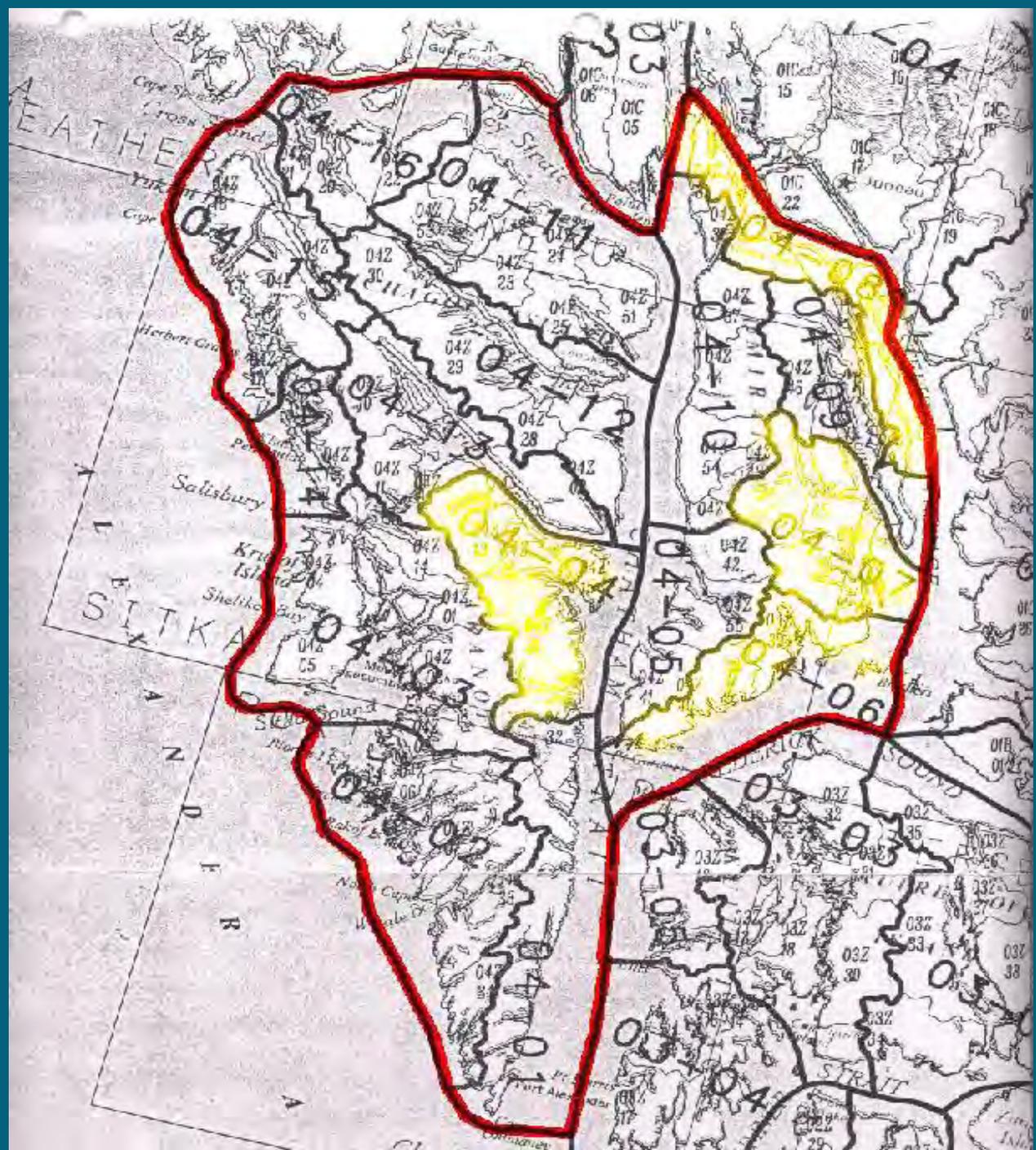


16 GUAs cover Unit 4 and form the basis for distributing guides and their hunters. A guide's selection of up to 3 GUAs is contingent on them having land use authorization from the upland owner. In this case, other than native corporation lands, the land owner is the Tongass National Forest.



Proposal 11

The BBMS recommended 4 2DK hunts in the following GUAs. Chichagof Is. was not included in the original work.



Current Regulations

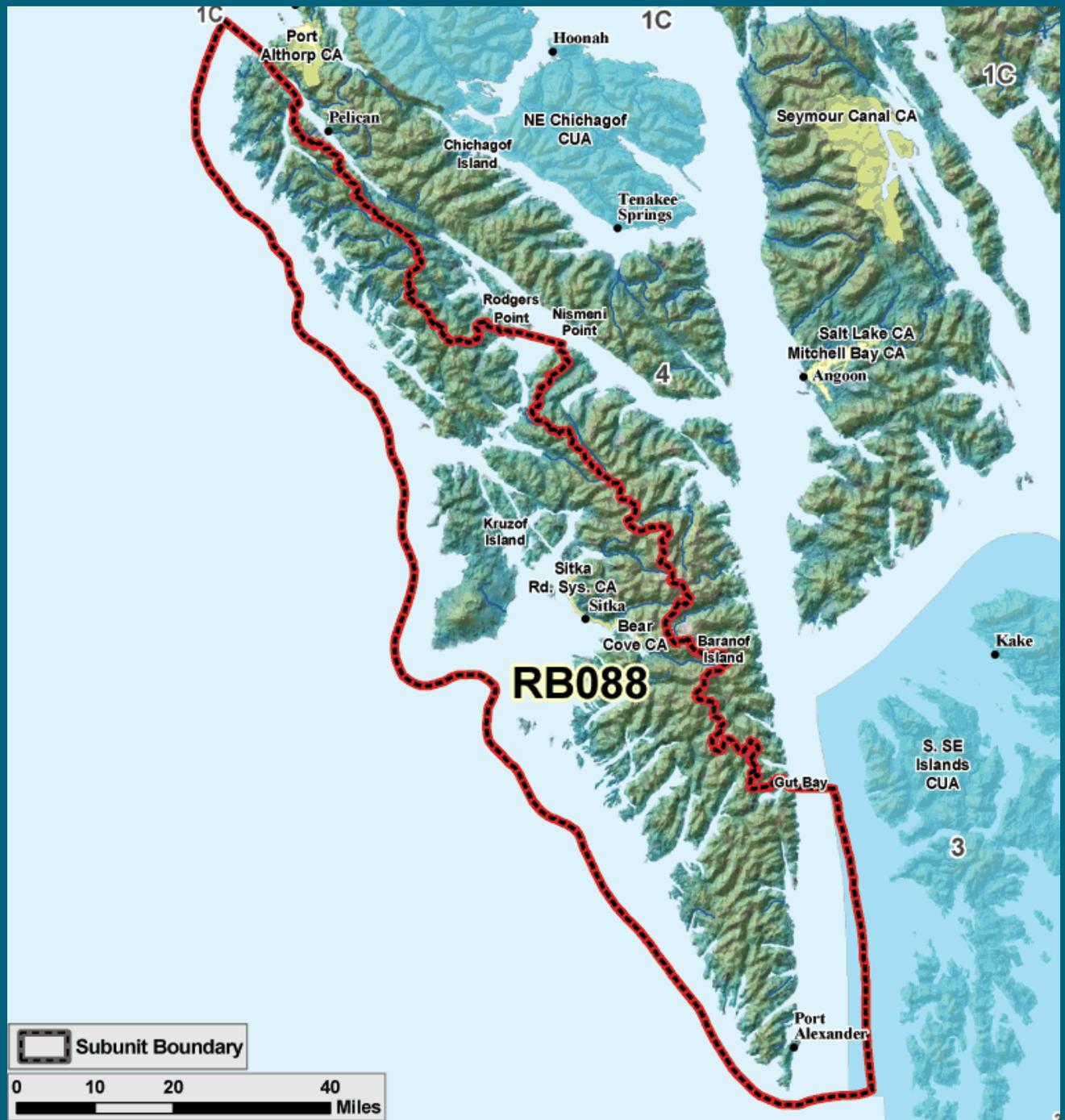
Unit 4 Brown Bear

B*	Outside Drainages of Chichagof and Baranof islands	1 bear every four reg. years by registration permit only	RB077	Sept 15 – Dec 31
			RB088	Mar 15 – May 31
B*	Unit 4 -remainder		RB077	Sept 15 – Dec 31
			RB089	Mar 15 – May 20

* Nonresidents must be accompanied by a guide

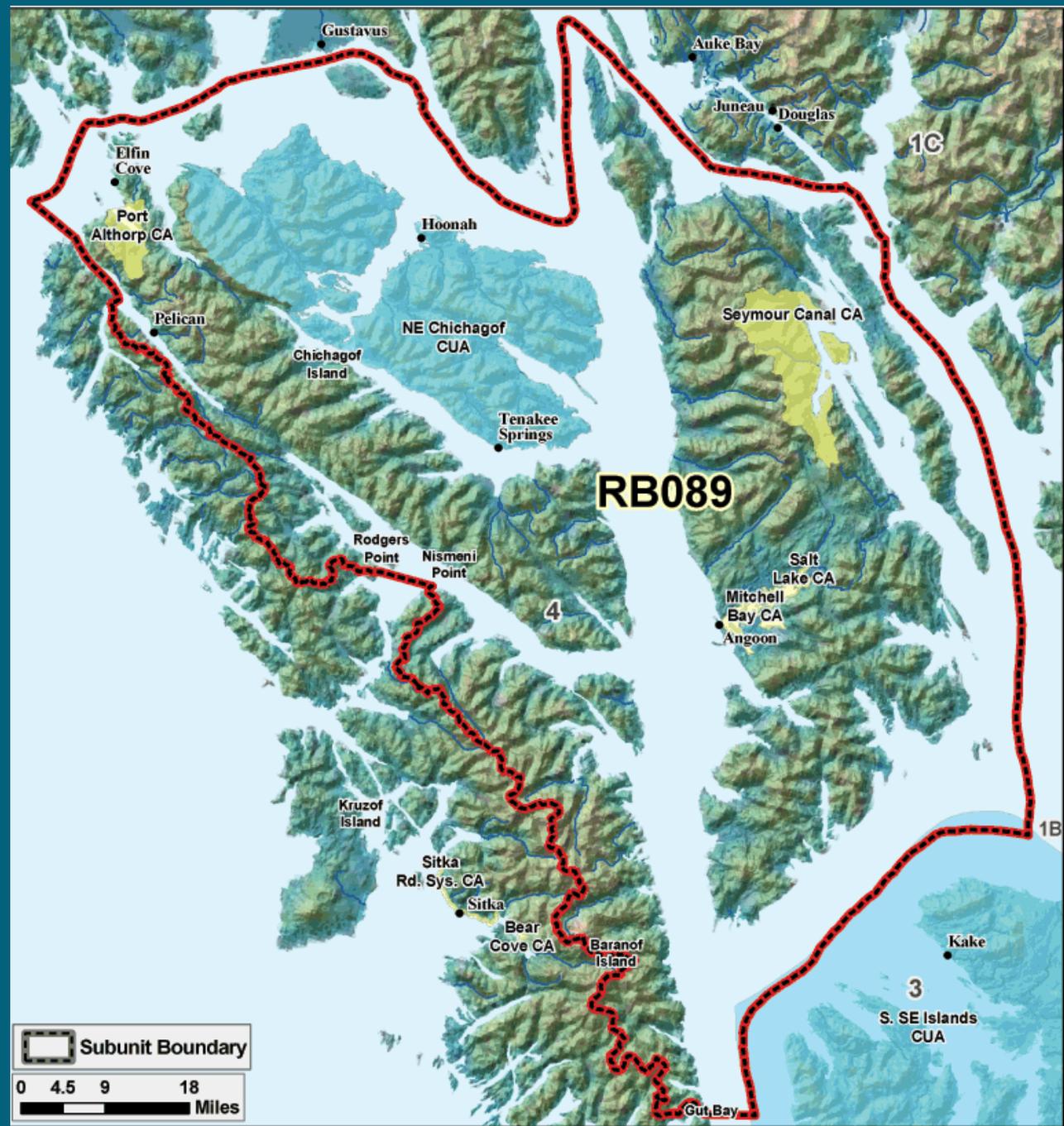
RB088 – Outside Waters

March
15 –
May 31



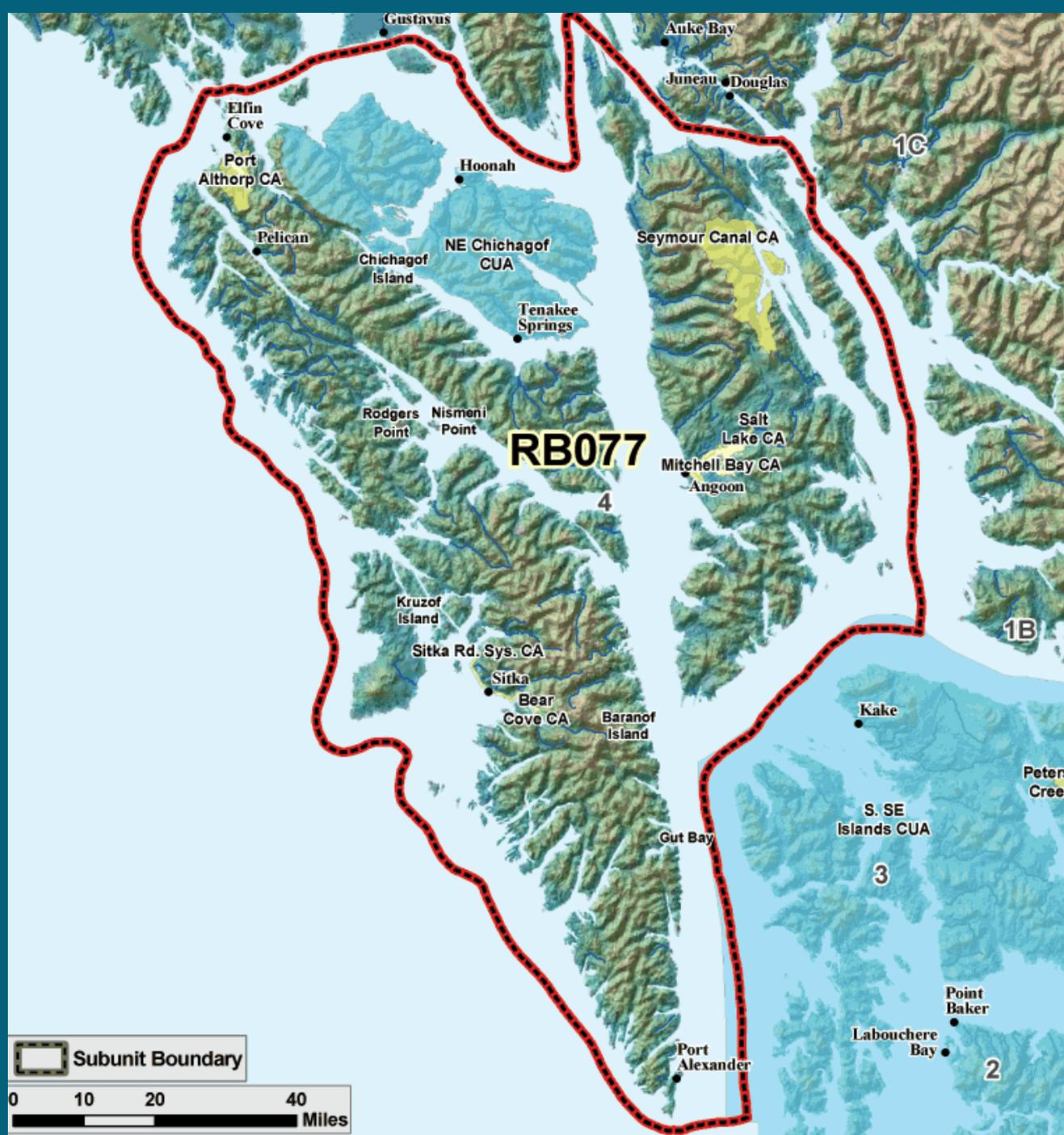
RB089 – Inside Waters

March 15
– May 20

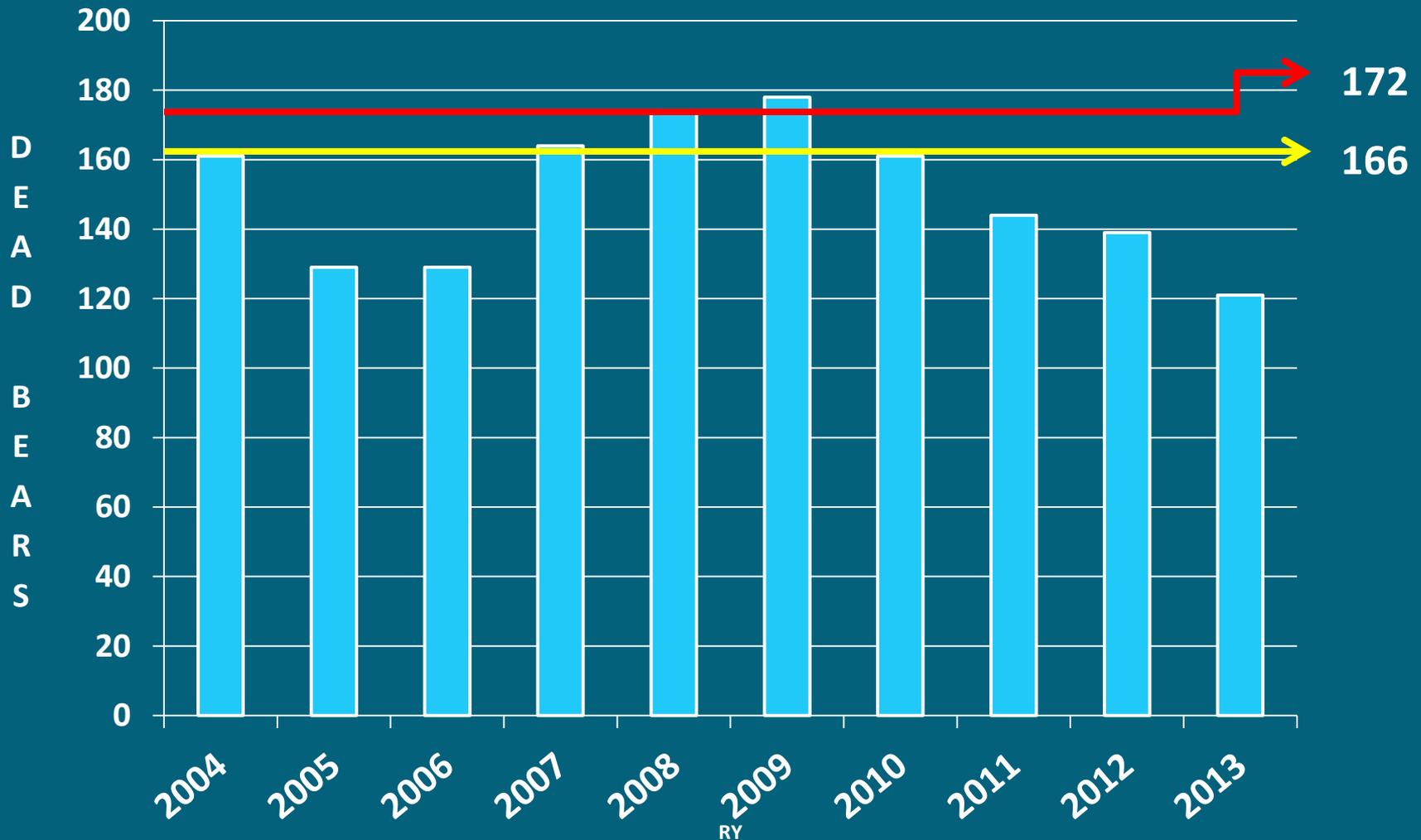


RB077 – Fall registration hunt

Sept. 15 – Dec. 31



Unit 4 Human-Caused Bear Mortality

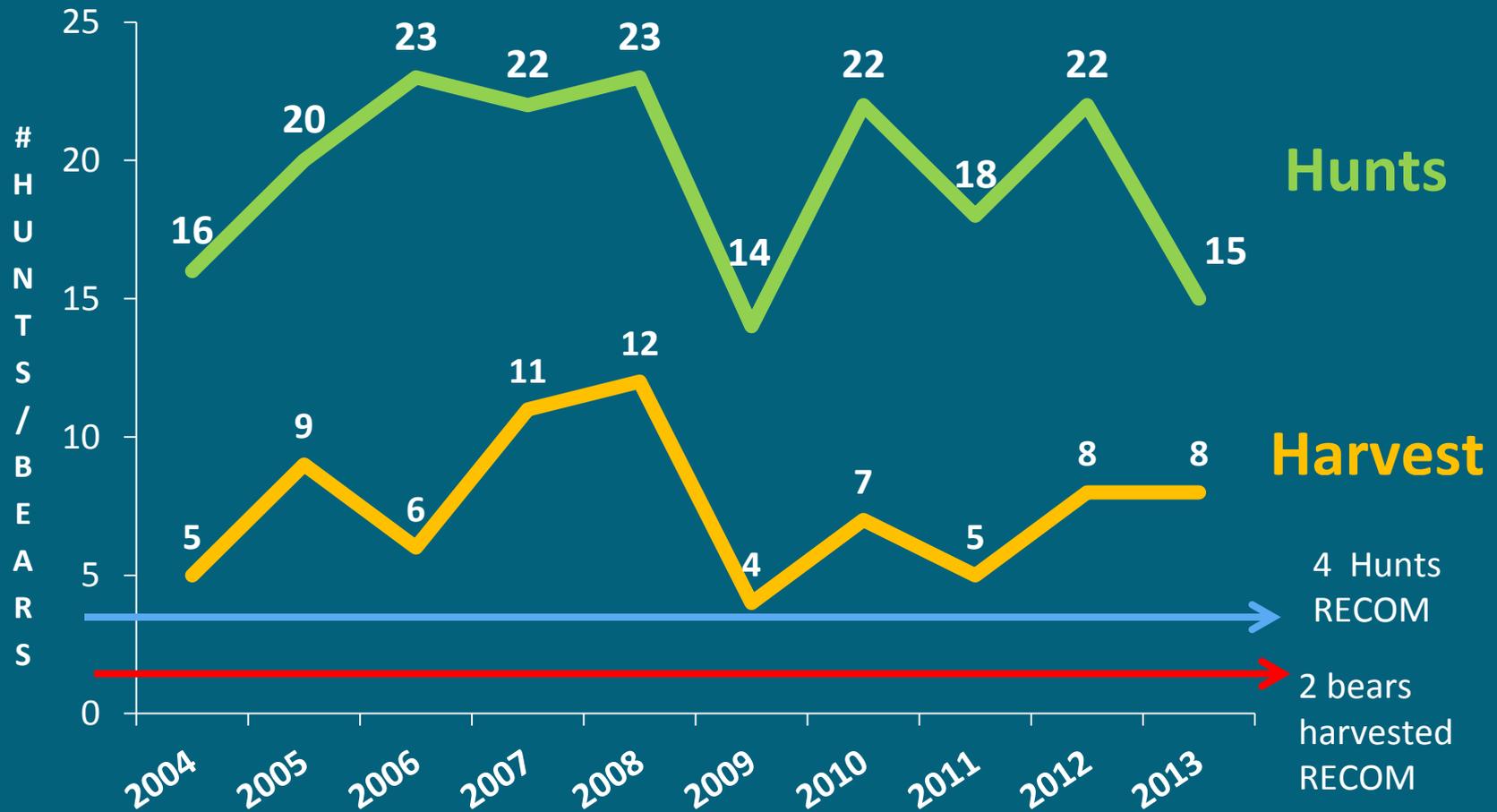


Discussion

Average Annual Mortality (2004-2013)

- Local resident harvest 16 bears (~10%)
- Non-local resident harvest 30 bears (~19%)
- Nonresident harvest 102 bears (~64%)
- Other mortality (illegal, DLP, research losses, vehicle collisions, etc.) 11 bears (7%)

2DK Hunts vs. Harvest



Discussion

For the 10 yr period, the recommended guidelines the BBMS envisioned ...

- 40 hunts; not 195 hunts
- 20 harvested bears; not 75 harvested bears

Discussion

- Since 2004, 2DK registrations ranged from 14-23 hunts per year. Brown bear harvest ranged from 4-12 with an average of 36% female harvest.
- Proponent suggests 4 spring permits and 3 fall permits annually.
- Additional hunts make allowance for Chichagof hunts not originally considered in the BBMS.

Discussion

- Proponent suggests online permit application so individuals have equal opportunity.
- No practicable way to distribute 2DK hunts by GUAs or islands; so use 3 current registration hunt boundaries.
- Using either a registration or drawing hunt process could provide framework at the Board's discretion.

Proposal 11

Establish separate brown bear registration hunts in
Unit 4 for nonresident relatives within
2nd degree of kindred

Public Proposal

Department Recommendation:

Neutral

AC Recommendations:

Sitka AC – Support 8-0,

Petersburg AC- Support 9-1

Icy Strait AC – Oppose 0-6