

**FEDERAL AID  
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
PO Box 115526  
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**Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

**GRANT NUMBER:** AKW-10 Wildlife Restoration FY2016

**PROJECT NUMBER:** 12.0

**PROJECT TITLE:** The Status of Mountain Goat and Factors Influencing Their Populations

**REPORT PERIOD:** July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2016

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Statewide

**REPORT DESCRIPTION:** This performance report describes mountain goat survey and inventory activities. Activities are listed by game management unit.

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**The Status of Mountain Goats and Factors Influencing Their Populations in  
Region I**

**Region I:** Units 1, 4, and 5

**Region-wide:**

**Activity 1:** Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on mountain goat management.

**Accomplishments:** Information on mountain goat harvest and management was provided to state and federal regulatory bodies as requested.

**Activity 2:** Survey goat populations including adult/kid composition in key management areas within the region.

**Accomplishments:** We flew annual population surveys including adult/kid composition in key management areas.

**Activity 3:** Monitor results from the registration and draw permit hunts and analyze the data.

**Accomplishments:** All mountain goat hunts in Region I require hunters to obtain a registration or draw permit. We monitored hunter interest through issuing permits and documented hunter effort and harvest through the required permit reporting process.

**Activity 4:** Update guideline harvest level objectives for selected goat populations based on a review of long-term harvests of goats in these areas.

**Accomplishments:** Region I management biologists reviewed findings of aerial surveys against current guideline harvest levels for selected mountain goat populations and where deemed necessary to maintain a sustainable harvest or allow additional hunter opportunity, adjusted guideline harvest levels.

**Activity 5:** Monitor cases of contagious ecthyma (ORF) and other diseases in goat populations.

**Accomplishments:** Region I managers monitored for contagious ecthyma (ORF) and other diseases in goat populations through reports from hunters and mountain goat researchers and through observations during aerial surveys.

**Activity 6:** Work with relevant agencies (USFS and BLM), community leaders and helicopter operators to address concerns about helicopter tourism on mountain goats.

**Accomplishments:** Region I managers continued ongoing efforts to minimize disturbance of mountain goats by helicopters primarily through federal and borough permitting processes. Habitat use data gathered by ADF&G researchers informed comments on helicopter access to flightseeing, skiing, and mining activities.

### **Activities by Unit:**

#### **Unit 1A**

**Activity 1:** Recover remaining mountain goat collars on the Cleveland Peninsula and assist in data analysis and management recommendations.

**Accomplishments:** The Ketchikan management biologist coordinated with the research biologist to recover collars and analyze data for the purpose of informing management.

#### **Unit 1B**

**Activity 1:** Conduct aerial surveys to establish the minimum number of goats needed to maintain harvest opportunities for the LeConte Bay management area.

**Accomplishments:** Surveys were completed and the harvest limit was set at a sustainable level.

**Activity 2:** Conduct aerial surveys to establish the minimum number of goats needed to maintain harvest opportunities for the Thomas Bay management area.

**Accomplishments:** Surveys were completed and the harvest limit was set at a sustainable level.

**Activity 3:** Conduct aerial surveys to establish the minimum number of goats needed to maintain harvest opportunities for the Cleveland Peninsula management area.

**Accomplishments:** Surveys were completed and the harvest limit was set at a sustainable level.

### Unit 1C

**Activity 1:** Monitor, the potential impact of sightseeing helicopter flights on selected populations, through aerial survey trend counts as well as taking into account observations from members of the public that suggest goats are being disturbed by helicopter activity.

**Accomplishments:** Management biologists completed trend counts in areas with high potential for helicopter disturbance and reviewed findings against previous counts and other information to assess effects of helicopters on mountain goat populations.

**Activity 2:** Monitor populations through aerial surveys in areas where road construction, mining, or hydroelectric development may occur.

**Accomplishments:** Management biologists continued to monitor goat populations in areas potentially affected by development projects and to make recommendations based on those observations.

### Unit 1D

**Activity 1:** Conduct aerial surveys throughout the unit to compile data on population trends as well as adult/kid composition for long term monitoring; use this data to adjust guideline harvest levels in discrete management areas.

**Accomplishments:** Surveys were completed and the harvest limit was set at a sustainable level.

**Activity 2:** Assist in the capture and radio-collaring of mountain goats in Unit 1D to assess population sightability, habitat use, and survival.

**Accomplishments:** Management biologists continued to collaborate with research biologists on goat collaring projects.

### Unit 4

**Activity 1:** Assist in the capture and radio-collaring of mountain goats on Baranof Island to study movements and habitat utilization.

**Accomplishments:** Management biologists continued to collaborate with research biologists on goat collaring projects.

**Activity 2:** Continue to work closely with the hunting community to address high female harvest.

**Accomplishments:** The Sitka management biologist in cooperation with the US Forest Service held public meetings and published news releases to inform hunters about the most recent information on mountain goat population levels and sustainable harvest levels.

**Activity 3:** Conduct aerial surveys throughout the unit to compile data on population trends as well as adult/kid composition for long term monitoring; use this data to adjust guideline harvest levels in discrete management areas. Monitor habitat change in high concentration goat areas, as funding and staffing permit

**Accomplishments:** Surveys were completed and harvest limits for each management area were set at sustainable levels.

## **Unit 5**

**Activity 1:** Continue to survey goats in the Nunatak Glacier and Harlequin Lakes area annually to monitor these depleted goat populations.

**Accomplishments:** Surveys were completed.

**Submitted by:** Tom Schumacher, Management Coordinator

## **The Status of Alaska Mountain Goats and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II**

### **Regionwide:**

ACTIVITY : Prepare a biennial regional mountain goat management report.

Area staff prepared information and produced the 2014 management report and submitted for publication. The department is transitioning to a 5-year report and plan. The next report will be published in 2019.

ACTIVITY : Conduct summer aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trend, productivity and mortality.

Surveys were completed in selected hunt areas within individual GMUs. See area specific activities.

ACTIVITY : Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters.

These are standard activities accomplished in each office. See area specific activities.

ACTIVITY : Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on mountain goat management.

Staff routinely interact with federal staff and discuss management of mountain goats relative to the respective regulatory systems. Staff prepared and presented information on the status and management of mountain goats to the Board of Game at the most recent Region II meeting.

### **Activities by Unit:**

#### **Unit 6**

ACTIVITY 1: Surveys were performed in the following hunt areas: RG243, RG244, RG245, and RG212. These data represent minimum counts with no adjustments for sightability. Goat densities ranged from 0.5-5.29 goats/square mile. Data for specific hunt areas relative to previous minimum counts show an increase in two areas, and a decrease in two areas. Kid production has been high the last two years. Only one area had less than 20 kids observed per 100 adults.

ACTIVITY 2: We issued 374 goat hunt permits. Harvest was 71 males and 12 females (14%) for a total of 83 goats.

#### **Units 7&15**

ACTIVITY 1: Fifteen count areas were surveyed during the performance period. Within these areas a total of 1,430 goats were counted of which 1,167 were adults and 263 were kids. Overall goat numbers in Units 7 and 15 appear to be slightly increasing.

ACTIVITY 2: Seventy-six goats were harvested during the reporting period. Twelve percent of these were nannies, which is the lowest nanny harvest in recorded history. Three hundred and forty-three permits were issued of which 158 were hunted. Forty-eight percent of hunters were successful.

#### **Unit 8**

ACTIVITY 1: During July and August 2015, in cooperation with the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, aerial surveys were conducted on approximately 50% of known goat habitat on Kodiak Island yielding 1,013 goats including 777 adults and 236 kids. Surveys indicate a kid:adult ratio of 30 kids per 100 adults, a 7% increase compared to the 5-year average of 23 kids per 100 adults. The island-wide goat population is estimated to be approximately 2,800 goats. Despite localized declines and increases observed in certain hunt areas, these data suggest the island-wide goat population was stable during this reporting period.

ACTIVITY 2: Prior to the start of this reporting period, during its March 2013 meeting, the Board of game adopted a proposal extending the hunting season 95 days and increasing the bag limit from 1 to 2 goats in registration hunt area RG480. Season dates and the number of drawing permits remained the same for all drawing hunts.

During this reporting period all goat hunting in Unit 8 was administered by issuing a drawing or registration permit. We issued 294 drawing permits and 166 hunters reported hunting with a success rate of 63%. We issued 1,566 registration permits and 655 hunters reported hunting with a success of 42%. A total of 42 hunters successfully harvested 2 goats in registration hunt area

RG480. Overall, hunters harvested 383 goats (234 males, 149 females) in 2015–16, up considerably from 344 goats (203 males, 141 females) harvested during the 2014–15 season. The 2015–16 harvest was the highest on record and substantially higher than the 5-year average harvest of 212 goats. Mortality due to wounding loss and illegal harvest is estimated to be 10% of the reported harvest.

ACTIVITY 3: Thirty-one mountain goats (12 males, 19 females) were captured and radio collared on Kodiak Island from 20–26 July 2015. Radio collared goats are monitored regularly and location data downloaded opportunistically as time and weather permits. Mountain goat distribution, movements, and resource use will be analyzed periodically as location data is collected. Nine VHF radio collared goats are still active from the 2013 capture.

### **Unit 14C**

ACTIVITY 1: Goat surveys were flown for all goat hunt areas in 14C.

ACTIVITY 2 : Goat harvest was monitored through harvest reports and contacts with hunters.

Goats Harvested included 13 billies and 8 nannies.

**Submitted by:** Cynthia M. Wardlow

## **The Status of Mountain Goat and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region IV**

### **Region wide Activities:**

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare biennial regional mountain goat management report.

Biennial goat reports were not due during this reporting period.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct summer aerial sex and age composition surveys to determine status, trend, productivity, and mortality.

*Unit 11*(Count area 21): 47 adults, 4 kids

*Unit 14A&B* Talkeetna Mountains: 17 Adults, 5 kids

ACTIVITY 3: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports, and contact with hunters.

<i>Unit</i>	Male	Female	Unknown	Total Harvest
<i>11:</i>	5	1	0	6
<i>13D:</i>	7	3	0	10
<i>14A:</i>	4	3	0	7

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Annual Performance Report

**Submitted by:** Todd A. Rinaldi, Region IV Management Coordinator