

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
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**MOUNTAIN GOAT
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO. W-33-12

PROJECT NO. 12.0

PERIOD: July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT TITLE: The Status of Alaska Mountain Goats and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Alaska

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes Mountain Goat survey and inventory activities. Activities are listed by game management unit.

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

Regionwide Activities

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

Data from goat harvest and survey information will be provided to the Alaska Board of Game and Regional Advisory Council at their next regularly scheduled meeting (winter 2015). Data was also provided to the federal managers during this reporting period to assist them with justification for goat season closures that we believed were important.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct mountain goat surveys, including sex and age composition in key management areas within the region.

Unit 1A: Ketchikan staff conducted several mountain goat surveys during fall 2014. Surveys were concentrated in areas that receive the highest levels of hunting pressure. Counts were highly variable between survey areas. The Deer Mountain permit hunt area had the highest survey count on record with 291 observed goats (192 adults and 99 kids). Goat numbers in Unit 1A appear stable overall though we have continued concerns for the Cleveland Peninsula and Yes Bay areas.

Unit 1B: The Petersburg staff conducted aerial surveys in 5 of 27 established trend-count areas during the report period. Fall aerial surveys were concentrated in those trend count

areas that typically receive the highest levels of hunting pressure. A total of 232 goats were observed, including 197 adults and 35 kids.

Unit 1C: Staff conducted aerial surveys in several areas:

Mendenhall Glacier to Herbert Glacier (45 goats: 41 adults and 4 kids),

Chilkat Peninsula (136 goats: 120 adults and 16 kids),

Sullivan to Endicott Rivers (66 goats: 62 adults and 4 kids),

Mount Klutchmen (22 goats: 19 adults and 3 kids),

Sweetheart Lake (9 goats: 6 adults and 3 kids),

Dorothy Lake (10 goats: 8 adults and 2 kids),

Border Lake (10 goats: 7 adults and 3 kids).

Unit 1D: Staff conducted aerial surveys in eleven count areas in this unit,

Dayebas Creek to Skagway Pie (106 goats: 99 adults and 7 kids).

Unit 4: The Sitka staff conducted limited aerial surveys in the northern half of the Baranof Island. Four hundred and sixty goats were observed with 366 adults and 94 kids. This represented a 10% increase in the number of kids observed from the previous year.

Unit 5: No surveys were conducted in this unit during this period.

ACTIVITY 3: Monitor results from registration permit hunts and analyze the data.

Unit 1A: The Ketchikan Area office collected hunter information through a mandatory registration permit report. Thirty-nine permittees participated in the hunt.

Unit 1A: 13 goats were harvested (10M, 3F) and most were sampled from hunt RG001

Unit 1A: 13 goats were harvested (9M, 4F) and most were sampled from hunts DG005-007.

A total of 16 harvested goats were sampled.

Unit 1B: Petersburg Area staff collected hunter information from goat hunters via a mandatory registration permit reporting requirement. The mandatory hunt reports include information on successful and/or unsuccessful hunt locations, method of transportation, days of effort and commercial services used. Thirty six permittees participated in the hunt.

Unit 1B: 22 goats were harvested and 6 were sampled.

Units 1C, 1D & 5: The Douglas Area office collected hunter information through a mandatory registration permit report. Hunt report data included location of hunt, mode of access used, days hunted, and commercial services used. If the hunter was successful the report also queried the location of the kill. One hundred forty-eight permittees participated in the hunts.

Unit 1C: 45 goats were harvested, and approximately 8 were sampled.

Unit 1D: 23 goats were harvested and 16 were sampled.

Unit 5: 1 goat was harvested and sampled.

Unit 4: Hunt report data included location of hunt, mode of access used, days hunted, and commercial services used. If the hunter was successful the report also queried the location of the kill. Fifty four permittees participated in the hunt.

Unit 4: 20 goats were harvested and all were sampled.

ACTIVITY 4: Update guideline harvest level objectives for selected goat herds based on a review of long-term harvest trends.

Efforts continue across the region to manage goats at finer scales dictated by hunter access. This has become necessary to prevent localized overharvest.

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

This was conducted in the process of talking to hunters about their goat hunts, and while measuring horns and aging goats. We also maintain dialog with a number of commercial guides who spend a great deal of time in goat country and keep a look out for any oddities with goats. No cases of contagious ecthyma were identified during this report period.

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

These efforts continued during this reporting period, in particular, in the Haines and Skagway areas, and with the community of Haines.

Unit Specific Activities

Unit 1B

ACTIVITY 1: Identify discrete geographic areas for use as goat trend count areas.

This effort had been accomplished during previous report periods.

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

Goat surveys were conducted in this area and sufficient goats were observed to maintain the present harvest opportunities.

ACTIVITY 3: Conduct aerial surveys to establish the minimum number of goats needed to maintain harvest opportunities for the Thomas Bay management area.

Goat surveys were conducted in this area and sufficient goats were observed to maintain the present harvest opportunities.

ACTIVITY 4: Conduct aerial surveys to establish the minimum number of goats needed to maintain harvest opportunities for the Cleveland Peninsula management area

Several goat surveys including sightability surveys were completed on the Cleveland Peninsula. During the most recent survey, 17 goats total were observed (14 adults, 3 kids). No harvest opportunities are warranted at this time.

We are continuing to monitor collared goats on the Cleveland and retrieve collars from mortalities. Currently there are 6 collared goats in this area.

Unit 1C

ACTIVITY 1: Identify discrete geographic areas for use as goat trend count areas.

This effort had been accomplished during previous report periods.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor, as information becomes available while talking to people traveling in goat habitat, the impact of sightseeing helicopter flights on selected populations.

This is an informal effort that takes place spontaneously during discussions with goat hunters, hikers, campers, etc.

ACTIVITY 3: Monitor, as information becomes available the course of contagious ecthyma (ORF) in northern southeast populations in case we want to develop a separate research study.

We talked to many goat hunters during the season about this disease, but did not have any positive observations.

ACTIVITY 4: Monitoring and of populations in areas where road construction, hydro projects or mining development may occur.

We continue to work with our research staff to monitor goats in areas in northern Southeast Alaska where there is mining activity underway and where road construction is a possibility in the near future.

Unit 1D

ACTIVITY 1: Identify discrete geographic areas for use as goat trend count areas.

This effort had been accomplished during previous report periods.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct aerial surveys to establish the minimum number of goats needed to provide harvest opportunities for the Skagway management area.

Dayebas Creek to Skagway Pie (106 goats: 99 adults and 7 kids).

ACTIVITY 3: Monitoring and some capturing and radio-collaring of populations in areas where road construction or mining development may occur.

Management staff did not assist research staff in the capture and radio collaring of goats during this fiscal year.

Unit 4

ACTIVITY 1: Capture and radio-collar up to six goats on Baranof Island to study movements and habitat utilization.

This was accomplished.

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.

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.

Activities by Unit:

Unit 6

ACTIVITY : Surveys were performed in the following hunt areas: RG242, RG248, RG230, and RG231. These data represent minimum counts with no adjustments for sightability. Goat densities ranged from 0.93-5.05 goats/sq. mile. Data for specific hunt areas relative to previous minimum counts show relative stability

ACTIVITY : We issued 308 goat hunt permits. Harvest was 54 males, 13 females (19.4%), and 0 unknown goats for a total of 67 goats.

Units 7&15

ACTIVITY : Fifteen areas were surveyed during the reporting period. Within these areas a total of 1,327 goats were counted, of which 272 were kids and 1,055 were adults. The overall population trend for mountain goats on the Kenai Peninsula is slightly increasing.

ACTIVITY : Sixty-six goats were harvested during the reporting period. Twenty-nine percent of these were nannies, which is slightly higher than the percentage of nannies in the harvest in the previous reporting period. Three hundred and fifty-eight permits were issued of which 152 were hunted. Forty-three percent of hunters were successful.

Unit 8

ACTIVITY : During August 2013, in cooperation with the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, we conducted aerial surveys on approximately 70% of known goat habitat on Kodiak Island yielding 1,973 goats including 1,544 adults and 429 kids. Surveys indicate a kid:adult ratio of 28 kids per 100 adults, a 6% increase compared to the 5-year average of 22 kids per 100 adults. The island-wide goat population is estimated between 2,500 and 2,600 goats currently, up slightly from the 2012 estimate of 2,390 goats. Despite localized declines and increases observed in certain hunt areas, these data suggest the island-wide goat population was stable to slightly increasing during this reporting period.

ACTIVITY : 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 either a drawing or registration permit. We issued 255 drawing permits and 124 hunters reported hunting with a success rate of 52%. We issued 1,126 registration permits and 509 hunters reported hunting with a success of 31%. A total of 34 hunters successfully harvested 2 goats in registration hunt area RG480. Overall, hunters harvested 255 goats (154 males, 100 females (39.4%), 1 unknown) in 2013–14, up considerably from 155 goats (105 males, 48 females (31.4%), 2 unknown) harvested during the 2012–13 season. The 2013–14 harvest was the highest on record and substantially higher than the 5-year average harvest of 162 goats. Mortality due to wounding loss and illegal harvest are estimated at 10% of the reported harvest.

Activity : Fifteen mountain goats (8 males, 7 females) were captured and radio collared on Kodiak Island from 28–30 June 2013. 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. One male goat was harvested by a hunter and 1 male goat has either died or slipped its collar. There are currently 13 radio-collared goats (6 males, 7 females) collecting GPS data.

Unit 14C

ACTIVITY : Goat surveys were conducted on 30 July, 1 August, and 12 August 2013 in the Lake George Area. A total of 415 goats (308 adults and 107 kids) were observed.

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

Goats Harvested included 22 billies and 2 nannies for 8.3 percent females.

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

Project Location: Game Management Units 11, 13, and 14A

Regionwide:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare biennial regional mountain goat management report.

Biennial goat reports were written and submitted to the region for review.

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

Unit 11: Count area 21: 31 adults, 8 kids

Unit 11: Count area 22: 25 adults, 7 kids

Unit 11: Count area 23: 14 adults, 2 kids

Unit 14A: Chugach Mountains: 170 adults, 45 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>	7	1	0	8
<i>13D:</i>	9	1	0	10
<i>14A:</i>	7	2	0	9