ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
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DEER
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO.: W-33-8

PROJECT NO.: 2.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2009 – 30 June 2010

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide

PROJECT TITLE: Deer S&I

The Status of Deer and Factors Influencing Their Populations

Region 1:

Regionwide Activities:

ACTIVITY 1: Determine harvest and population trends using a mail survey of deer hunters.

Mail-out harvest survey procedures changed in 2006 because of a cooperative agreement with the Forest Service to require all deer hunters in Unit 2 to submit harvest reports. Because of this, the USFS has invested hundreds of hours each year, trying to tally the harvest of as close to 100% of the hunters as they can.

Approximately 33% of all deer harvest ticket holders from Southeast (excluding those that hunted in Unit 2) were mailed a deer harvest survey under the state program. Information from these reports was data-entered and summary reports were produced.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct spring pellet-group surveys at selected locations throughout the region.

Pellet-group surveys were conducted in April - June 2010. The winter was relatively mild, allowing staff to access deer pellet transect sites earlier than any of the previous three springs.

Additionally, staff embarked on a new method of estimating deer density using pellets, by collecting pellets and analyzing them using DNA. We can then use DNA as a mark/recapture tool in estimating deer density.

ACTIVITY 3: Analyze historical pellet survey data to examine correlates of deer-pellet density.

No work was done on this activity.

ACTIVITY 4: Conduct mortality transects in key areas as needed and budgets allow.

Deer mortality transects were conducted in portions of Unit 4, but because the winter was so mild, and likely due to the low deer densities already, only a few deer carcasses were discovered. The mild winter probably allowed for a high survival of deer.

ACTIVITY 5: Monitor the harvest by communicating with hunters on an opportunistic basis.

Staffs noted anecdotal information from discussions with hunters throughout the RY 2009 deer hunting season.

Activities by Unit:
Unit 4:
ACTIVITY 1: Collar up to 6 deer with GPS radio telemetry to collect information on habitat preferences and seasonal movement patterns.

Four deer were collared on Northeast Chichigof Island in approximately 2 weeks of effort.

Submitted by: Neil L. Barten, Region I Management Coordinator

Region II: Game Management Unit 8 – Kodiak Archipelago

Regionwide Activities:
Activity: Determine harvest and population trends using a mail questionnaire.

Unit 6: Mail questionnaire survey indicated a harvest of 1,600 deer by about 1,800 hunters.

Unit 8: Preliminary extrapolated results indicated the 2009/10 harvest was 4,088 deer, including 75% males. Twenty percent of the harvest was from Afognak, Raspberry, and Shuyak islands; 80% of the harvest was from Kodiak and small adjacent islands. Hunter residency was: Kodiak Island residents (38%), non-local Alaska residents (48%) and, non-residents (14%).

Activity: Monitor the deer harvest through field observations and contacts with hunters.

Monitored hunting activities and harvest primarily by a mail questionnaire.

Activities by Unit:

Unit 6:
Activity: Conduct aerial survey of Prince William Sound shoreline in spring to assess deer over-winter survival.

Spring shoreline survey indicated moderate snow conditions on islands except for Montague Is., was had heavy snow.

Activity: Conduct annual pellet group surveys in selected areas.

Surveys indicated stable populations in most of the range.

Unit 8:

Activity 1: Assess winter mortality in standardized mortality count areas.

Results: The winter of 2009/10 had a moderate-low loss of deer. Reports from the public and deer mortality transects indicated a lower rate of deer mortality on the northern portion of the Kodiak Archipelago than had been noted in the previous 3 years.

Activity 2: Evaluate improved procedures for assessing population status.

Results: No activity during this reporting period

Activity 3: Assist Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

This activity ended in 2008.

Submitted by: Mark Burch

Date: September 8, 2010