

**DEER  
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY  
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

**STATE:** Alaska

**GRANT AND SEGMENT NR:** W-33-4

**PROJECT NR:** 2.0

**WORK LOCATION:** Statewide

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Game Management Regions 1 and 2

**PERIOD:** 1 July 2005–June 2006

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

**REPORT DESCRIPTION:** This performance report describes deer survey and inventory activities. Regionwide activities are listed before specific activities by herd and game management unit.

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

**Regionwide Activities**

**Activity:** Determine harvest and population trends using a mail survey of deer hunters.

Mail-out harvest survey procedures changed this year because of a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to require all deer hunters in Unit 2 to submit harvest reports. As a result, 3037 hunters from Southeast (excluding those that hunted in Unit 2) were randomly selected. An additional 2750 hunters were included in the required reporting for Unit 2. Information from these reports was data-entered and summary reports were produced.

**Activity:** Conduct spring pellet-group surveys at selected locations throughout the region.

Pellet-group surveys were conducted in April and May 2006. Despite unusually inclement weather, field crews were able to complete 12 value comparison units (VCUs) during this period.

**Activity:** Conduct mortality transects in key areas as needed and budgets allow.

Due to poor weather conditions, only 5 mortality transects were conducted in Unit 4 this spring.

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

Ketchikan Area office staff collected anecdotal information from local hunters regarding deer numbers and habitat while collecting 65 Sitka black-tailed deer heads for chronic wasting disease testing. Douglas area office personnel collected anecdotal information concerning local deer numbers and habitat while collecting 18 Sitka black-tailed deer heads from hunters for chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance. Unit 4 collected 42 deer heads for CWD testing, enabling staff to gather hunter information from those participating in the program.

## **Unit 2**

Activity: Participate in interagency deer planning efforts related to Unit 2.

Regional staff participated in an annual review meeting on Unit 2 deer management with the USFS and members of the Regional Advisory Committee (RAC) to discuss program implementation over the past year and to share information on harvest data collection program. Staff also responded to several RAC proposals to change deer hunting regulations in Unit 2.

**Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$107.5**

**Submitted by:** Dale L. Rabe – Region I Management Coordinator

## The Status of Alaska Deer and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II

### Regionwide Activities

Activity: Prepare a biennial deer management report.

No work was accomplished on this activity because the management report was not due this year.

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

Harvest and population trends were estimated using a mail questionnaire, with the following results:

*Unit 6* — An estimated 2017 hunters killed 2684 deer during 2005–06.

*Unit 8* — Preliminary extrapolated results indicated the 2005–06 harvest was 6471 deer, 86% males. Twenty-three percent of the harvest was from Afognak, Raspberry, and Shuyak Islands; and 77% was from Kodiak and small adjacent islands. The breakdown on hunter residency was: Kodiak Island residents, 43%; nonlocal Alaska residents, 42%; and nonresidents, 15%.

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

Harvest was monitored through field observations and contacts with hunters.

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### Activities by Unit

#### Unit 6

Activity: Conduct aerial survey of Prince William Sound shoreline in spring to assess deer overwinter survival.

The absence of deer on beaches and little snow throughout most of the low-elevation range indicated good overwinter survival.

Activity: Conduct annual pellet group surveys in selected areas.

In cooperation with the USFS we conducted deer pellet surveys at 5 locations during 17 May–4 June.

Preliminary results indicate that density was 20% higher than last year at 1.3 pellet groups per plot.

Activity: Assess snow conditions and establish a severity index.

In general the winter was mild. I did not calculate a severity index because the snow data was not yet available.

## **Unit 8**

Activity: Assess winter mortality in standardized mortality count areas.

Results: The deer population continued to recover from the devastating winter mortality that occurred during the 1998–99 winter. The winter of 2005–06 was within normal parameters for snow and temperatures, and winter mortality was light.

Activity: Evaluate improved procedures for assessing population status.

Results: Winter mortality surveys and incidental observations continued to be the primary mode of collecting information on the population status. During this reporting period, we initiated discussions with the U.S. Coast Guard to explore the possibility of testing a new forward-looking infrared system to see if it is feasible to use for deer counts on the archipelago.

Activity: Conduct Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

A unitwide effort to assess the presence and distribution of deer with chronic wasting disease was initiated in the fall of 2003 and continues today. During the 2005–06 hunting season, 400 deer and 21 elk were sampled, with negative results.

**Total Regional Segment Period Project Cost (in thousands):** \$17.1

**Submitted by:** Gino Del Frate, Regional Management Coordinator