

**FEDERAL AID
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 25526
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**DEER
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR.: W-33-5

PROJECT NR.: 2.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2006 – 30 June 2007

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide

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

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes deer survey and inventory activities. Region-wide activities are listed before specific activities by game management unit.

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

Region-wide Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare regional biennial deer management reports.

Deer management reports were written and submitted for each unit and sub-unit within the region where deer occur. These reports provide updated harvest and management information through 2006.

ACTIVITY 2: Provide information to state and federal regulatory process on deer management.

Information on deer harvest and management was supplied to state and federal regulatory bodies in response to proposals to change regulations within the region. This included three proposals to the State Board of Game and two proposals to the Federal Subsistence Board.

ACTIVITY 3: Determine harvest and population trends using a mail survey of deer hunters.

Mail-out harvest survey procedures changed last year because of a cooperative agreement with the Forest Service to require all deer hunters in Unit 2 to submit harvest reports. As a result, 3,014 hunters from Southeast (excluding those that hunted in Unit 2) were randomly selected. An additional 2720 hunters were included in the required reporting for Unit 2. Information from these reports was data-entered and summary reports were produced.

ACTIVITY 4: Conduct spring pellet-group surveys at selected locations throughout the region.

Pellet-group surveys were conducted in April - June 2007. Despite unusually severe winter conditions in many parts of the region field crews were able to complete 20 VCUs during this period.

ACTIVITY 5: Conduct mortality transects in key areas as needed and budgets allow.

Because of the severe winter weather, mortality surveys were conducted throughout the region, including aerial surveys, boat surveys, and beach transects. More than 15 one-mile mortality transects were surveys in area considered worst hit by the severe winter. In addition more than 200 miles of beach were surveyed by boat and aircraft to assess winter mortality.

ACTIVITY 6: Monitor the harvest by communicating with hunters on an opportunistic basis.

Staffs noted anecdotal information from discussions with hunters throughout the 2006 deer hunting season. Due to the heavy November snowfall, numerous hunters visited with biologists to share their hunting experiences as they related to deer numbers and deer vulnerability due to deep snow. A total of 316 deer were collected from hunters and tested for chronic wasting disease.

Activities by Unit

Unit 2

ACTIVITY 1: Participate in interagency deer planning efforts related to Unit 2.

The interagency committee dealing with Unit 2 deer management issues did not meet this year, but there were several meetings with Forest Service personal to share information and evaluate the cooperative harvest reporting program.

Submitted by: Dale L. Rabe, Region I Management Coordinator

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

Region-wide Activities

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare a biennial deer management report

Unit 6 - Prepared a biennial deer management report.

ACTIVITY 2: Determine harvest and population trends using a mail questionnaire.

Unit 6 - Mail questionnaire survey was collected with analysis pending.

Unit 8 - We monitored hunting activities and harvest by a mail questionnaire. Preliminary extrapolated results indicated the 2006/07 harvest was 5,563 deer, 80% males. The harvest was lower than the 2005/06 estimate (6,571), but higher than the 5-year average (4,399.3). Nineteen percent of the harvest was from Afognak, Raspberry, and Shuyak islands; 81% of the harvest was from Kodiak and small adjacent islands. Hunter residency was: Kodiak Island residents (42%), non-local Alaska residents (40%) and, non-residents (18%).

ACTIVITY 3: Monitor the deer harvest through field observations and contacts with hunters.

Unit 6 - Monitored the deer harvest through field observations and contacts with hunters.

Activities by Unit

Unit 6:

ACTIVITY 1: Conduct aerial survey of Prince William Sound shoreline in spring to assess deer over-winter mortality.

Aerial survey of selected Prince William Sound shoreline conducted in early spring indicated good over-winter survival. Montague Island, which probably received the most snowfall, could not be surveyed because of poor flying conditions.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct annual pellet group surveys in selected areas.

Conducted annual pellet group surveys in selected areas. Preliminary analysis indicated increasing or stable populations on most islands.

ACTIVITY 3: Assess snow conditions and establish a severity index.

Snow conditions were more severe than normal, but deer apparently had adequate refugia within timbered areas to avoid the deepest snow. Snow data has been collected for half of the winter for the severity index. Analysis is pending while awaiting publication of the remaining months.

Unit 8

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

The winter of 2006/07 was the most severe since 1998/99 with colder than average temperatures and higher than normal snow levels. Although the winter kill was not as dramatic as noted in 1998/99, it was higher than any other year since that time. Deer

Project No. 2.0 – Deer S&I
FY07 Final Performance Report

mortality transects conducted by ADF&G and Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge staff and reports from the public indicated that deer on the south part of Kodiak Island had high survival rates, however deer in the northern portions of the island suffered winter mortality rates that were higher than usual.

ACTIVITY 2: Evaluate improved procedures for assessing population status.

No work accomplished during this reporting period due to a change in objectives. This activity will be removed from the next AWP.

ACTIVITY 3: Assist Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

A unit-wide effort to assess the presence and distribution of deer with chronic wasting disease was initiated in the fall of 2003 and continues today. A total of 1,118 samples have been collected from deer hunters since 2003. None of the samples analyzed have tested positive for chronic wasting disease.

Submitted by: Gino DeFrate, Region II Management Coordinator