

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation



Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration
Annual Performance Report of
Survey - Inventory Activities
1 July 1994 - 30 June 1995

ELK

Mary V. Hicks, Editor



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1994-95

Grant W-24-3
Study 13.0
December 1995

STATE OF ALASKA
Tony Knowles, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
Frank Rue, Commissioner

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
Wayne L. Regelin, Director

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Project Title: Southeast Alaska Elk Management

Project Location: Unit 3 (3,000 mi²)
All islands west of Subunit 1B, north of Unit 2, south of the centerline of Frederick Sound, and east of the centerline of Chatham Strait

Project Objectives and Activities: Project objectives have not been established.

Work Accomplished During the Project Segment Period: Using radiotelemetry, we conducted 4 aerial surveys to locate elk. Three elk and 2 radiocollared elk were "heard" in July and August surveys, respectively. We did not see elk due to heavy tree cover in the Mt. Shakes area. During surveys in May and June 1995, no radiocollared animals were located. We did observe 4 elk in the Mt. Shakes area. Evidently, no functioning transmitters are on collared elk.

Progress Meeting Project Objectives: The Etolin Island elk population has been growing slowly. Indications from aerial surveys of radiocollared animals, sightings from ADF&G and USFS biologists, hunters, loggers, and fishermen indicate recruitment is occurring in the population. Emigration has also occurred and a herd is established on Zarembo Island. We expect additional emigration as the population increases. The public reported elk from Wrangell, Mitkof, Kupreanof, and the Kashevaroff islands.

Segment Period Project Costs:

	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Operating</u>	<u>Total</u>
Planned	17.1	1.9	19.0
Actual	17.1	1.9	19.0
Difference	0	0	0

Submitted by:

Bruce Dinneford
Management Coordinator

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Project Title: Southcentral Alaska Elk Management

Project Location: Unit 8 (5,100 mi²)

Project Objectives:

- Maintain a minimum population of at least 1000 elk for all user groups.
- Maintain harvests within sustainable-yield levels of the elk population.
- Develop population objectives for each major subherd.

Work Accomplished During the Project Segment Period: We flew surveys in July and August to determine sex and age composition. We classified 799 elk; 158 elk (19 bulls, 99 cows, 40 calves) on Raspberry Island and 641 elk (17 bulls, 486 cows, and 138 calves) on Afognak Island. Calf:cow ratios were 22:100 on Afognak Island and 25:100 on Raspberry Island. The bull:cow ratios were 4:100 and 19:100 for Afognak and Raspberry islands, respectively. We estimated the prehunt population between 950 and 1050 elk.

Hunters' mandatory permit reports provided statistics on hunting effort and harvest. We issued 859 permits; 369 hunters reported going afield, taking 85 elk (58 males, 27 females). Hunter success was 23%. The harvest by permit hunt was as follows: Raspberry Island drawing permit hunt, 10 males, 4 females; southeastern Afognak drawing permit hunt, 36 males, 16 females; southeastern Afognak registration permit hunt, 4 males, 4 females; northern Afognak registration permit hunt, 8 males and 3 females.

We issued an emergency order shortening the registration permit hunt for Registration Hunt 754, southeastern Afognak Island. The registration hunt for Marka and Portage lakes and Duck Mountain was canceled because harvest objectives were achieved. A 6-day registration hunt was held in the Malina Lakes herd, and the registration hunt for the Seal Bay herd in northeastern Afognak Island proceeded as scheduled. Drawing permittees harvested 52 of the 71 elk taken on Afognak Island. Harvest by herd was as follows: Malina Lakes-21, Marka Lake-5; Duck Mountain-19; Portage Lake-13; Seal Bay-3, Waterfall Lake-6.

Progress Meeting Project Objectives: The elk population was near the objective of 1000 elk and was stable to slightly increasing. The bull:cow ratio increased to 6 bulls:100 cows in 1994. The harvest in the road-accessible ranges of the Marka Lake, Duck Mountain, and Portage Lake herds more than doubled from 14 in 1993 to 37 elk in 1994. If the increasing trend in harvest from these herds continues, we will recommend further limitation of permits and season length.

Unusually high winds in October and November caused frequent delays in air and boat transportation which may explain the decline from 428 hunters afield in 1993 to 369 hunters in 1994. The 85 elk harvested was 9% of the minimum population estimate. A modest

increase in the percentage of bulls in the harvest from 55% in 1993 to 68% in 1994 correlated with a small increase in the bull:cow ratio in composition counts.

Low recruitment of mature bulls since 1989 correlated with increased winter mortality and hunters' continued high selectivity for bulls. Although calf production did not decline, hunters expressed concern that bull numbers were low. The Board of Game adopted a staff recommendation to reduce the bull harvest in the Raspberry Island herd by establishing separate permit hunts for bulls and cows.

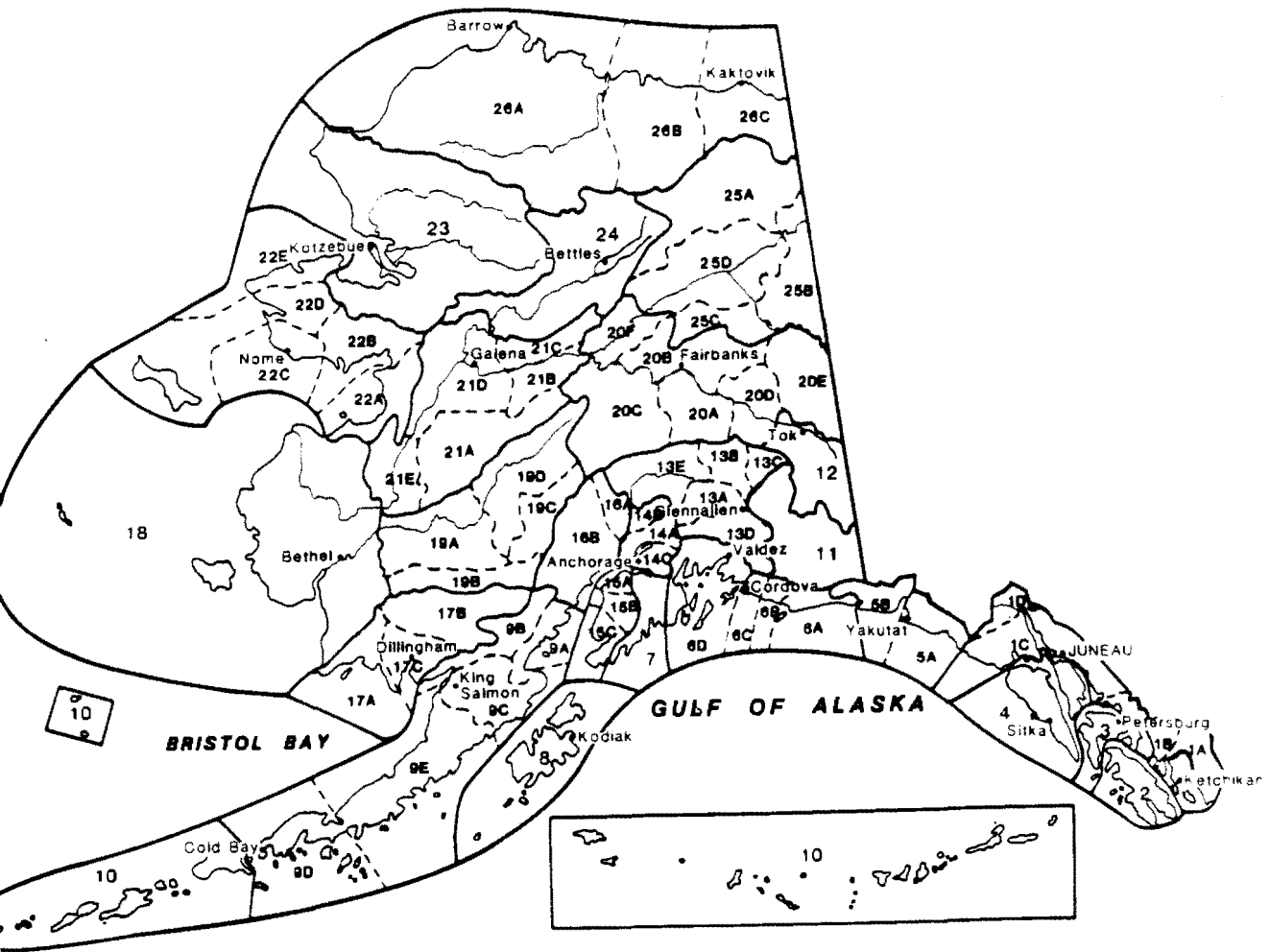
Segment Period Project Costs:

	<u>Personnel</u>	<u>Operating</u>	<u>Total</u>
Planned	15.1	6.5	21.6
Actual	15.1	6.5	21.6
Difference	0.0	0.0	0.0

Submitted by:

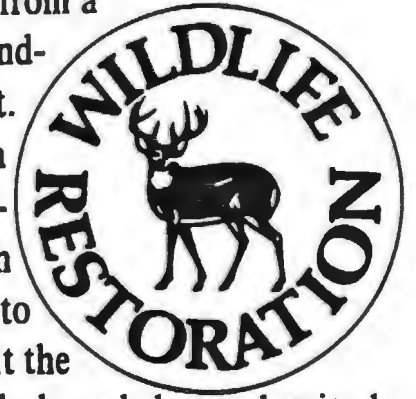
Jeff Hughes
Survey-Inventory Coordinator

Alaska's Game Management Units



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Anchorage, Alaska

The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program consists of funds from a 10% to 11% manufacturer's excise tax collected from the sales of handguns, sporting rifles, shotguns, ammunition, and archery equipment. The Federal Aid program allots funds back to states through a formula based on each state's geographic area and number of paid hunting license holders. Alaska receives a maximum 5% of revenues collected each year. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game uses federal aid funds to help restore, conserve, and manage wild birds and mammals to benefit the public. These funds are also used to educate hunters to develop the skills, knowledge, and attitudes for responsible hunting. Seventy-five percent of the funds for this report are from Federal Aid.



LEN RUE JR