

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 25526
Juneau, AK 99802-5526

**MOUNTAIN GOAT
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR: W-33-3

PROJECT NR: 12.0

WORK LOCATION: Statewide

PERIOD: 1 July 2004–30 June 2005

PROJECT LOCATIONS: Game Management Regions 1 and 2

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

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This statewide performance report includes the two regions involved in mountain goat survey and inventory activities. Statewide and regional activities are listed before specific activities by herd and game management unit.

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

Regionwide Activities

Activity: Provide information to the Board of Game on goat management.

The Board of Game met in Juneau during November 2004. Staff prepared background material on goat management within each unit where this species occurs and provided recommendations to the Board for 4 proposals from the public to change harvest regulations.

Activity: Survey goat populations including sex and age composition in key management areas within the region.

The Petersburg Area Biologist conducted aerial surveys in all 27 established trend count areas during 6 days in mid August. A total of 730 goats were counted, including 574 adults and 156 kids. The Ketchikan Area Biologist conducted aerial surveys in only one established trend area due to poor fall weather conditions. The one hour survey resulted in a composition of 56 adults and 20 kids observed. The Sitka Area Biologist conducted aerial surveys in all established trend areas on Baranof Island and extended the survey to the southernmost area beyond Whale Bay during August to survey 100% of the island. A total of 1300 goats were counted, including 1007 adults and 293 kids. A two day effort to break out adult goats by sex along with kid classifications yielded a total of 450 goats. These were classified as 127 billies, 211 nannies, and 112 kids. The Douglas Area Biologist conducted aerial surveys in specific areas of concern in Unit 5 (20 % of goat habitat), Unit 1D (10% of goat habitat), and Unit 1C (5% of goat habitat). These are areas of high hunter use due to easy access, or as in the case of Unit

1D, there is concern due to helicopter skiing activity. Douglas staff continues to cooperate with BLM biologists on survey data sharing in Unit 1D to allow for a more comprehensive interpretation of goat population status in that area.

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

The Ketchikan Area office collected hunter information through a mandatory registration permit report. Staff continues to monitor horn growth characteristics through a voluntary hunter system. Annual growth patterns were measured on 12 of 18 goats harvested. The Sitka office collected measurements on 39 of the 47 goats harvested. The Douglas Area office collected hunter information through a mandatory registration permit report in Units 1C, 1D, and 5. In both Unit 5 and Unit 1D hunters are required to bring in horns for aging and sex identification. We therefore collected data on 2 and 39 sets of goat horns for Unit 5 and Unit 1D respectively. In Unit 1C the presentation of horns is voluntary, so we were able to inspect only 5 sets of goat horns.

Activity: Update guideline harvest level objectives for selected goat herd based on a review of long-term harvests on the herds.

Discussion on harvest guidelines occurred during the year, but no changes were made to the current objectives.

Activities by Unit

Unit 1C

Activity: Monitor the impact of sightseeing helicopter flights on selected populations.

Areas staff continue to gather information on impacts of sightseeing and other human activities in goat habitat.

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

ADF&G biologists conducted numerous interviews with goat hunters inquiring about any evidence of ORF in goat populations being hunted. All indications are that ORF is rare but occasionally observed in southeast Alaska.

Unit 5

Activity: Work on developing harvest objectives.

Efforts have continued in Unit 5 to develop harvest objectives by continuing to gather population numbers through aerial surveys. Approximately 20% of unit 5A goat habitat was surveyed in fall 2004.

Other activities funded by Federal Aid on this project: None

Stewardship Investment items purchased: None

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$58.4

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

The Status of Alaska Mountain Goats and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II

Regionwide Activities

Activity 1: Prepare a biennial regional mountain goat management report

Management reports were prepared for all Region II units where goats are present.

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

See individual unit reports below.

Activity 3: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters.

See individual unit reports below.

Activity 4: Provide information to the Board of Game on mountain goat management.

Specific reports on management of goats were provided to the Board of Game at its spring 2005 meeting in response to proposals that would have changed goat hunting seasons and/or bag limits. In addition, overviews of goat management in all units where goats are present were provided to the Board in preparation to the meeting.

Activities by Unit

Unit 6

Activity 1: Conduct summer aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trend, productivity and mortality.

ADF&G and the U.S. Forest Service Cordova Ranger District conducted surveys in 3 of 16 active hunt areas during August and September 2004. Estimated number of goats in Unit 6 was 4100 with 14% kids.

Activity 2: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters.

Hunters killed 76 goats including 56 males, 15 females and 5 unrecovered for a total of 94 goat units. Total allowable harvest was 158 goat units.

Units 7 and 15

Activity 1: Conduct summer aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trend, productivity, and mortality.

Eleven count areas were surveyed, resulting in the classification of 651 goats. The composition was 540 adults/subadults, and 111 kids. Kids totaled 17 % of the surveyed goats.

Activity 2: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports, and contact with hunters.

The preliminary 2004–05 harvest for all permit hunts was:
Billies–36 Nannies–23 Total–59

Unit 8

Activity 1: Conduct summer aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trend, productivity, and mortality.

During August 2004, we surveyed about 35% of the goat habitat on Kodiak Island. We counted 644 goats, all of which were classified (519 adults, 125 kids). The kid:adult ratio (24:100) was higher than the average ratio noted during the previous 5 years (20:100). These data suggest the islandwide goat population was stable to increasing during this reporting period, with localized fluctuations.

Activity 2: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports, and contact with hunters.

Results: Expansion of goat populations into virtually all available habitat around Kodiak Island allowed us to increase hunter opportunity. Preliminary data indicate that in 2004–05 hunters harvested 148 goats (97 males, 49 females, 1 unknown and 1 illegal female), up from the 2003–04 harvest of 142 goats, and above the 5-year average of 84.4 goats. Two-hundred hunters went into the field for the drawing hunt, and hunter success was 65%. During the registration hunt 61 hunters went into the field, and hunter success was 26%. The harvest ranged from 4 to 48 goats for each of the 9 permit hunt areas.

Units 11 and 13

Activity: Conduct summer aerial sex and age population surveys on established trend count areas to determine status, trend, and productivity.

Results:

GMU 11

Count area 21, July 2004

37 adults 13 (26%) kids.

(Incomplete survey in 2005)

GMU 13

No surveys conducted

Activity: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters.

Preliminary harvest:

GMU 11

Total harvest: 6 (Males 5, Females 1)

Number of hunters = 24

GMU 13

Total harvest: 10 (Males 5, Females 5)

Number of hunters = 20

Unit 14C

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

No aerial surveys were conducted because of budget constraints.

Activity: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters.

Analyzed harvest records for 13 drawing and 37 registration hunt permits. All 4 registration goat hunts were closed by emergency order when the harvest quotas were met. The preliminary Unit 14C 2004–05 harvest was:

Billies 19 Nannies 4 Total 23

Activity: Provide information to the Board of Game on mountain goat management.

At the spring 2005 meeting we briefed the Board of Game on goat management activities in 14C and commented on one public proposal that would have changed goat hunts in Unit 14C. We also attended three public meetings sponsored by the Anchorage Fish and Game Advisory Committee to discuss goat proposals.

Stewardship Investment items purchased: None.

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$35.9

Submitted by: Gino Del Frate
Regional Management Coordinator

Statewide Project Costs (in thousands):

State Share = \$23.58 Federal share = \$70.73 Total costs = \$94.3