

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

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

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO. W-33-6

PROJECT NO. 12.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

PROJECT LOCATION: Statewide

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

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

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

Regionwide Activities:

ACTIVITY 1: Provide biennial management report.

Goat 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 FY 2008.

ACTIVITY 2: Survey goat populations including sex and age composition in key management areas within the region.

Unit 1B: Due to inclement fall weather and limited aircraft availability no goat population surveys were conducted in Unit 1B.

Unit 1C: Staff conducted aerial surveys of the Port Houghton area south of Endicott Arm (316 goats: 268 adults and 48 kids); and a portion on the north side of Endicott Arm (113 goats: 107 adults and 6 kids).

Unit 1D: beginning at Eldred Rock, north to and including Mt. Villard (348 goats: 287 adults and 61 kids).

Unit 5: Beginning at Harlequin Lake, north to the East Nunatak Glacier (66 goats: 57 adults and 9 kids) and the area from East Nunatak Glacier to the Hubbard Glacier (23 goats: 17 adults and 6 kids).

The Sitka staff conducted only a couple of aerial surveys due to poor weather in the north central portion of Baranof Island. Two established grid areas used in the surveys tallied 144 goats in 2 hours during late July and early August surveys. Poor weather conditions

prevented extensive aerial surveys over much of the goat habitat on Baranof Island during the reporting period.

ACTIVITY 3: Monitor results from registration permit hunts and analyze the data.

Unit 1A: 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 x of x goats harvested.

Unit 1B: Petersburg Area staff collected hunter information from goat hunters via a mandatory registration permit reporting requirement. The mandatory hunt reports include information on successful and/or unsuccessful hunt locations, method of transportation, days of effort and commercial services used.

Units 1C, 1D & 5: The Douglas Area office collected hunter information through a mandatory registration permit report. Hunt report data included location of hunt, mode of access used, days hunted, and commercial services used. If the hunter was successful the report also queried the location of the kill. In both Unit 5 and Unit 1D hunters are required to bring in horns for aging and sex identification. From the horns, we collected data on length, base circumference, length of growth during each year, sex of goat, and age of goat. We examined 3 and 43 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 approximately 50% of the 40 goats taken.

Unit 4: The Sitka Area staff collected horn measurements and growth characteristics on x of the x goats harvested. Hunt report data included location of hunt, mode of access used, days hunted, and commercial services used. If the hunter was successful the report also queried the location of the kill. Within-unit hunters were asked to voluntarily to bring in horns for aging and sex identification. From the horns, we collected data on length, base circumference, length of growth during each year, sex of goat, and age of goat.

ACTIVITY 4: Update guideline harvest level objectives for selected goat herd based on a review of long-term harvests on the herds.

Harvest guidelines were discussed among staff, with Forest Service personnel, and guides during the year. Units 1A, 1B, 1C, and 4 have all experienced a rising interest in goat hunting especially by commercial guides. This has intensified the department's efforts to minimize the harvest of females in order to avoid population level concerns due to loss in productivity.

The Petersburg, harvest guidelines were adjusted for each discrete goat population in accordance with long-term harvest levels and the number of goats observed during aerial counts. In order to minimize potential conflicts between State and Federally qualified subsistence hunters, the area biologist cooperated with the Petersburg Ranger District to restrict guided nonresident goat hunting activity in the Horn Cliff, Thunder Mountain and LeConte Bay drainages. This restriction on guided nonresident hunt activity in the Horn Cliff and LeConte Bay drainages was eased during the late-season when it became apparent that the goat population could withstand additional harvest without compromising subsistence opportunity or exceeding the harvest guideline.

Unit 4: Extensive work was done with Forest Service staff and registered guides to make sure the harvest guidelines were understood and observed. High quality photos of billies and nannies were obtained and posted at the front counter to enable hunters to better identify differences between the sexes in the field. The management guideline of 78 points was exceeded by 1 point due to an illegal kill.

Unit 1C:

ACTIVITY 1: Monitor the impact of sightseeing helicopter flights on selected populations.

No work was done on this activity because of limitations of staff time and expense of surveys.

Activity 2: Monitor, as information becomes available the course of contagious ecthyma (CE) in northern southeast populations in case we want to develop a separate research study.

Staff inquired of all hunters their observations of possible CE cases witnessed while hunting.

Unit 1C and 1D:

ACTIVITY 1: Capture, radio-collar, and monitor some goats in areas where road construction or mining development may occur. The bulk of the capture costs will be paid by third parties. Up to 20 mountain goats total will be captured.

Staff participated in the capture and radio-collaring of approximately 25 goats to monitor the populations in the area between Berners Bay (1C) and the Katzehin River (1D).

Submitted by: Neil Barten, Region I Management Coordinator

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

Regionwide Activities:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare biennial regional mountain goat management report.

Mountain Goat management reports were produced and completed for all units with mountain goats.

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

Unit 6: Extremely poor weather precluded goat surveys during the reporting period.

Units 7 & 15: Thirteen areas were surveyed with 604 adult goats and 163 kids counted.

Unit 8: In August 2007, we surveyed about 80% of the goat habitat on Kodiak Island counting 1,674 goats (1,390 adults, 284 kids). The kid:adult ratio (20:100) decreased from the average ratio noted during the previous five years (24:100). These data suggest the island-wide goat productivity was stable, with localized fluctuations. The estimated island-wide goat population was 1,910 during this reporting period, up from the 2006 estimate of 1,780 goats.

Unit 11: Count area 21, June 2007: 49 adults, 20 (29%) kids

Unit 13D:

Count area	Adults	Kids
1	0	0
2	3	0
16	0	0
17	0	0
18	21	6 (22%)

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

	Permits	Hunters	Male	Female	Unknown	Total
<i>Unit 6</i>			59	12		73
<i>Unit 7 & 15:</i>						76
<i>Unit 8:</i>	678	262	101	46	1	148
<i>Unit 11 (RG580):</i>	79	40	9	1		10
<i>Unit 13D (DG718)</i>	10	6	1	1		2
<i>Unit 13D (DG719)</i>	25	13	3	1		4

Unit 8: Expansion of goat populations into all available habitats on Kodiak Island allowed us to increase hunter opportunity. We issued 500 drawing permits during the 2007/08 season. Registration hunts were conducted after the drawing hunts in the nine

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hunt areas where an allowable surplus remained. Harvest was down from the 2006/07 harvest of 172 goats, and above the 5-year average of 140.8 goats. There were 262 hunters that went into the field during the drawing hunts, and hunter success was 50%. During the registration hunt, we issued 178 permits and 34 hunters went into the field, and hunter success was 32%. The harvest ranged from 3-38 goats for each of the nine permit hunt areas.

Activities by Unit:

Unit 7& 15:

ACTIVITY 1: In cooperation with the US Forest Service Chugach National Forest capture and radio collar up to 10 mountain goats to determine habitat use and movements.

Four goats were captured and radio collared during the reporting period.

Submitted by: Bruce Bartley