

GAME TRANSPLANTS IN ALASKA

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Restrictive regulations have been the forerunner of game conservation in most areas of the world. The second step in game conservation has often been the importation of exotic animals. In Alaska this order was probably reversed commencing with the early Russian introduction of foxes to the Aleutian Islands.

Transplants have continued up to the present as a prominent effort to manage game. Prior to 1916 relatively few game introductions or transplants were made in territorial Alaska with the exception of intentional and unintentional releases of both domestic and wild foxes. In 1916, the Cordova Chamber of Commerce arranged a transplant of black-tail deer to Hinchinbrook and Hawkins Islands. The project was assumed by the governor's office with funds provided by the Territorial Legislature in 1917 and a third planting was made in 1923. Other transplants were conducted on a similar basis until 1925, when the Alaska Game Commission was established.

Under the provisions of Chapter 51, Sessions Laws of 1925 of the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska, \$10,000.00 was appropriated to accomplish specific transplants. Under the provision of the Acts, the Alaska Game Commission selected four of the projects and allotted the entire appropriation of \$10,000.00 to their accomplishment. At each subsequent meeting of the legislature additional money would be appropriated and the list of approved projects was amended to include additional transplants from which the Alaska Game Commission could establish their transplant program.

The first specific deviation from this system occurred in 1933. A program of employment for the native Indians and Eskimos of Alaska was proposed by the Commission through the Bureau of Biological Survey and the Civil Works Administration Agency. The FERA (Federal Emergency Relief Agency) provided the allotment of funds to the office of the Governor.

A total of thirty-five thousand eight hundred man hours of work was provided under this program with a total expenditure of \$24,314.40. This effort alone, in terms of man approaches half of the effort of the present Game Division of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, and that amount does not include the effort expended under the regular territorial projects. Federal funds were also available from 1935 to 1937 via the Bureau of Biological Survey. No funds were appropriated by the Territorial Legislature in 1935 therefore, little was accomplished on the territorial projects.

The total of 32 separate projects had been approved by the Territorial Legislature and 13 of the projects had been completed. Two of the 13 projects were completed under the Civil Works Administration program in 1934. Transplants efforts after 1937 were limited primarily to exotic pheasants.

An active transplant program was resumed in 1948 by the Fish and Wildlife Service under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Program. Activities were initially conducted under the investigational project but

in 1951 they were shifted to a separate development project. A large variety of transplants were conducted under this program until 1959. As a result of statehood, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game assumed the responsibility for game management and the Federal Aid projects in Alaska.

Transplants continued under statehood, some being conducted once again under the investigational program and others being conducted entirely with State funds. In 1963, the transplant activities of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game were changed from the investigational projects to a separate development and stocking project. Last week (July 1, 1965), as a result of a re-organization of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, the transplant projects were returned once again to the supervision of the investigatioaal projects. Sea otter transplants were attempted in the 1950's by the Fish and Wildlife Refuges and a few minor transplants were made by private persons.

To present an idea of the magnitude of the program in the interest of the public and the legislature, I have included a memorandum on transplants by Clarence J. Rhode, Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, December 18, 1950. Mr. Rhode had listed 88 proposed transplants with priorities for the more meritorious proposals. Indicated in the right hand column are 15 of the transplants that have been conducted.

Also included in this presentation is a copy of the portion of the Alaska Statutes which still pertain to the stocking of public land. This is a carryover of the program originally initiated by the Legislature of the Territory of Alaska in 1925. Projects, or portions of projects, which have been completed are enclosed in brackets. Some projects will probably never be completed; such as project No. 28 which indicates that Siberian Blue Squirrels should be introduced to the Seward Peninsula I suspect that it might be difficult at this time to locate a source of Siberian Blue Squirrels.

Transplanting game animals is probably one of the most speculative forms of game management. A game transplant cannot be considered a success unless it fulfills at least three requirements. Primarily it must accomplish the objectives of the transplant by providing meat for the subsistence hunter, furs for the commercial trapper, or recreation for the sportsman. To accomplish the primary objective it is necessary to establish a population capable of supporting a significant annual sustained yield. To fulfill the third requirement the resultant population must not be established by sacrificing other valuable resources.

It takes five to ten years with most transplants to establish a population capable of supporting a significant annual sustained yield. The outcome of several of the transplants in Alaska is still uncertain even after 10 to 12 years. The entire situation can change by the time the transplant can support a harvest. Even though many transplants of fur animals have thrived and could now support a substantial harvest, the transplants cannot be considered a success because they no longer accomplish the original objectives. Current low fur values and an increased standard of living have made it impractical for persons to trap extensively;

therefore, the transplants are of little economic value to the State or the individual.

Transplants of edible game animals are not as risky as transplants of fur animals. Trophy value, recreational hunting, and the demand for meat are not likely to decrease. Obviously a big game transplant producing only one trophy type animal each year cannot be considered a successful transplant. A transplant of bison, which increased to five thousand and supported an annual harvest of one thousand would just as obviously be considered a success. When the expectations were for thousands and the population is only a few hundred, with a potential sustained harvest of 25 to 75 per year, plus some agricultural and property damage, can the transplant still be considered a success? Because any interpretation of success is subjective unless it is strictly interpreted in accordance with the stated objectives, and only rarely are the objectives stated.

Precious few of the many transplants which have been conducted in this State have contributed significantly to the resource wealth of the State. The Department of Fish and Game has planned transplants which should add significantly to our resources if they are successful. The department hopes to re-establish both Muskoxen and Sea Otter to their former ranges within Alaska.

The numerous transplants which I have been able to identify are listed in the table at the rear of this paper.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT MEMORANDUM

To: All Field Stations

WMM 7

From: Regional Director,
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Juneau, Alaska

December 18, 1950

Subject: Stocking, Restocking, Introduction of Game Birds
and Mammals, Alaska

Since its origin, the Alaska Game Commission has received numerous suggestions, requests, and demands for stocking, restocking, and introducing a long list of game animals, game birds, and fur bearing animals in various parts of Alaska. Additional proposals are being made each year and the matter will not rest. That many of these proposals have merit can be shown in the success of the work in Alaska with the black-tail deer, elk, bison, and hare but the story is not complete without a review of the failures with hare, muskrat, beaver, deer, pheasant, and many others. So far, Alaska has escaped problems such as those of the rabbit in Australia, the muskrat in Holland, and the starling in the United States. The Fish and Wildlife Service should take every precaution to avoid questionable recommendations to the Commission on any proposals for stocking, restocking, or introductions.

Under the recent increase in Federal Aid Funds for Alaska, a start can be made on a limited number of these proposals. Consideration is now being given to all proposals and we request that all personnel at field stations review the attached list and give us your recommendations, suggestions, or comments.

It shall be the policy of Fish and Wildlife Service employees in Alaska to refrain from public comment, other than on published facts for information purposes and on approved proposals, which will encourage the public to request or sponsor the introduction of exotic species in Alaska.

The following policy will be our guide for establishing priority in the undertaking of any proposal for stocking, restocking, or introduction of birds or mammals in Alaska.

First Priority

Restocking native species on range formerly occupied where no known factors would prevent re-establishment of the species. Example: Sea otter to other Aleutian Islands.

Second Priority

Extension of the range of native species by stocking where natural barriers or other factors have prevented natural extension of the range. Example: Deer to Hawkins Island.

Third Priority

Movement of species already introduced and established in Alaska into new areas where competition with native species will not result. Example: Bison from Big Delta to Copper River.

Fourth Priority

Introduction of species indigenous to North America but not native to Alaska, in areas where competition with native species will not develop.

Fifth Priority

Introduction of exotics, only where such introduction will not conflict or compete with native species and only after research has shown that the native range, climate, food and other factors are similar to Alaska.

Proposals Made for Stocking, Restocking, or Introduction of Game or Fur Animals and Game Birds in Alaska

Symbols:

A-1 Approved proposals--believed to be sound and are proposed for immediate action during the next year.

A-2 Approved proposals believed to be sound and will be considered whenever funds and stock become available.

D Doubtful proposals under consideration, require further investigation.

N.G. Proposals of doubtful value, species already established, will compete with resident species, habitat not suitable, or otherwise not desirable and not being given further consideration.

<u>Native Species</u>	<u>Proposed Site for Stocking, Restocking or Introduction</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Mt. Sheep	Restocking Seward Peninsula	D	
	Stocking Kodiak Island	D	1965
Caribou	Shumigan Islands	D	
Mt. Goat	Stocking Kodiak Island	A-1	1953
	" Chichagof Island	A-1	
	" Hinchinbrook Island	D	
	" Admiralty Island	A-2	
	" Douglas Island	N.G.	
	" Revilla Island	D	
Moose	Prince of Wales Island	D	
	Copper River Flats	A-1	1958
	Thorne River, Pr. of Wales Island	D	
	Admiralty Island	N.G.	
Kodiak-Afognak	D		
Sitka Black-tail Deer	Taiya Valley	A-1	1956
	Sullivan Island	A-1	1956
	Kenai Peninsula	D	
	Resurrection Bay	D	
	Shumigan Island	D	
	Tanana Valley	N.G.	
Mink	Kodiak-Afognak Islands	A-2	1952
	Montague Island	A-1	1951
	Green Island	D	
Beaver	Tehini Valley, Lituya Bay, Zarembo Is.	N.G.	
	Nellie Juan, Chilkat Valley	N.G.	
	Yakutat Coastal Plain	N.G.	
Muskrat	Seward Peninsula, Nunivak	D	
	Redoubt Bay-Baranof Island, Kruzof	D	
Marten	Chichagof Island	A-1	1952
	Kodiak Island	A-2	
	Afognak Island	A-2	1952

<u>Native Species</u>	<u>Proposed Site for Stocking, Restocking or Introduction</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Completed</u>
Marten (con't)	Zarembo Island Prince William Sound Islands	A-2 A-2	
Marmots and Ground Squirrels	(Should probably be considered on islands for marten food where marten are proposed)	D	
Tree Squirrels	Zarembo Island Admiralty Island Prince of Wales Island Afogank Island Kodiak Island	A-2 A-2 A-2 A-1 A-1	1952 1952
Arctic Hare	Shumigan Islands (Popof and Unga)	A-1	
Snowshoe Hare	Klawak, Biorka Is., Baranof Is., Gravina Is. Prince William Sound Islands Shumigan Islands	D D A-2	1955
Sea Otter	Aleutian Islands Pribilof Islands Icy Strait Baranof Island Other coastal islands, S.E. Alaska	A-1 A-1 A-2 A-2 A-2	1956 1959
Ruffed Grouse	Kodiak Island	D	
Spruce or Sooty Grouse	Kodiak Island	A-2	1965
<u>Introduced Species</u>			
Roosevelt Elk	Hinchinbrook Island Kodiak Island Taiya Valley Admiralty Island Kupreanof Island Copper River Valley Kruzof Island Tanana Valley Kenai Peninsula	D D N.G. D D N.G. D N.G. N.G.	
Musk Oxen	Big Gerstle River Hagemeister Island W. & N. coast, Alaska	N.G. A-2 A-2	
Bison	Beaver Creek, Chisana Northway No. Fork Kuskokwim Kodiak Island	A-2 A-2 A-2 D	

<u>Exotics</u>	<u>Proposed Site for Stocking, Restocking or Introduction</u>	<u>Action</u>
White-tailed Deer	Chena River-Tanana Valley Kenai Peninsula Matanuska Valley Kodiak Island	N.G. N.G. N.G. N.G.
Mule Deer	Tanana Valley	N.G.
Nutria	Ketchikan Tanana Valley	N.G. N.G.
Siberian Blue Squirrel	Seward Peninsula, Nunivak	D
W. Cottontail Rabbit	Sitka	D
Gray Squirrel	Baranof Island	N.G.
Mt. Beaver	Craig	D
Capercaillie	Kenai, Kodiak, Craig Haines, Sitka, Matanuska Valley	N.G. N.G.
European Black Cock	Kenai Kodiak Tanana Valley Seward, Haines, Matanuska Valley Islands of S.E. Alaska Prince William Sound	A-2 A-2 D D N.G. N.G.
Chukar & Hungar- ian Partridge	Matanuska, Anchorage	N.G.
Ring-neck Pheasant	S.E. Alaska, Matanuska, Tanana	N.G.
Golden, Reeves, Mongolian Pheasant	S.E. Alaska, Anchorage	N.G.

Proposals for National Wildlife Refuges must first be cleared with the Refuge Manager and later by both Regional and Central Offices. Proposals for National Forests must first be coordinated with the local Ranger or Supervisor and will then be cleared with the Forest Service Regional Office here. It is not expected that proposals will be advanced for stocking in National Parks or Monuments since these are set aside for preservation of existing flora and fauna.

Importation of fur animals, game birds, or game fishes is controlled under the provisions of Section 46.72 of the Alaska Game Regulations.

/s/ Clarence J. Rhode, Reg. Dir.

Chapter 25. Stocking of Public Lands.

Section	Section
10. Program adopted	50. Unlawful taking
20. Projects enumerated	60. Penalty for violation of 50 of this chapter
30. Department to carry out program	
40. Stock and offspring property of state	

Sec. 16.25.010. Program adopted. There is adopted a program of stocking lands in the state with valuable game and fur-bearing animals which do not at present occur on these lands. (S 39-7-1 ACLA 1949)

Sec. 16.25.020. Projects enumerated. The stocking program is divided into the following projects:

- (1) Roosevelt elk to Kenai Peninsula, Hinchinbrook and /Kruzof Islands, and the Kodiak-Afognak Island group; /
- (2) elk to Copper River Valley region;
- (3) /muskrats to Kodiak-Afognak group; /
- (4) beaver to /Baranof/ and Chichagof Islands;
- (5) /beaver to Afognak and northeast portion of Kodiak; /
- (6) /deer to Afognak-Kodiak Island group; /
- (7) /spruce hens, / arctic hare, /snowshoe rabbits, / /mountain sheep, /
/mountain goat/ and /caribou/* to Kodiak-Afognak Island group;
- (8) /marten to Prince of Wales Island group, / and to Zarembo Island;
- (9) marten to Prince William Sound Islands;
- (10) beaver to Yakutat Coastal Plain Region, including Lituya Bay;
- (11) /marten to Afognak/ and northeast portion of Kodiak Island;
- (12) /muskrats to portions of southeastern Alaska/ and Seward Peninsula;
- (13) beaver to Chilkat Valley;
- (14) /varying hares to southeastern Alaska; /
- (15) moose to Kodiak-Afognak Island group;
- (16) beaver to Zarembo Island;
- (17) /varying hares to Kodiak-Afognak Island group; /
- (18) /marten to Baranof and Chichagof Islands; /
- (19) red squirrels to Zarembo, Admiralty, /Baranof, and Chichagof
Islands, and to the Prince of Wales Island group, / including Sitka Park;
- (20) /red squirrels to Afognak and northeast portion of Kodiak group; /
- (21) varying hares to Prince William Sound Islands;
- (22) mountain goats to Prince William Sound Islands;
- (23) /mountain goats to southeastern Alaska Islands; /
- (24) elk and deer from interior North America to the Tanana Valley;
- (25) mink to St. Lawrence Island;
- (26) /buffalo to interior Alaska; /
- (27) /marmot to Prince of Wales Island; /
- (28) Siberian blue squirrel to Seward Peninsula;
- ** (29) Aleutian Islands, reindeer to Unalaska Island;
- (30) blue grouse to Prince of Wales Island;
- ** (31) reindeer, between Yukon and Kuskokwim Deltas, commonly known as
Hooper Bay-Nelson Island District;

* Feral reindeer now are present on Kodiak.

** Reindeer are not game animals as defined in the statutes.

/ / Transplants enclosed by brackets have been accomplished.

(32) Chinese, ringneck or Mongolian pheasants to /Baranof/ or Kruzof Islands.
 (§ 39-7-7 ACLIA 1949)

Sec. 16.25.030. Department to carry out program. The department shall carry out the projects set forth in 10 and 20 of this chapter by obtaining the animals and placing them on the lands designated. At least one project shall be undertaken in each division every two years. The department shall establish the priority of the projects. (§ 39-7-2 ACLIA 1949)

Table 1

Summary of Game Transplants in Alaska

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Source of Stock</u>	<u>Location of Release</u>
BLACK-TAILED DEER			
1916	8	Sitka	Hinchinbrook & Hawkins Island
1917-23	16	Sitka	Hinchinbrook & Hawkins Island
1923	7	Sitka	Homer
1924	16	Sitka	Long Island, Kodiak Island Gr.
1930	2	Craig	Kodiak Island
1934	9	Craig	Kodiak Island
1934	12	Petersburg	Yakutat
1951-56	13	Southeastern Alaska	Taiya Valley
1951-56	7	Southeastern Alaska	Sullivan Island
MOUNTAIN GOAT			
1923	18	Tracy Arm	Baranof Island
1952-53	17	Anchorage & Kenai Pen.	Hidden Basin, Kodiak Island
1953-57	22	State	Basket Bay Area, Chichagof Island
ELK (ROOSEVELT)			
1926-37	8	Washington State	Kruzof Island
1926-37	3	Washington State	Revilla Island
1929	8	Washington State	Afognak Island
1962	8	Afognak	Gravina Island
1963-64	24	Afognak	Revilla Island
MOOSE			
1949-58	23	Kenai Pen., Anchorage, Susitna, Matanuska	Copper River Delta (Cordova)
1958-60	21	Chickaloon, Susitna & Matanuska Areas	Berner's Bay
1958-66	6	Anchorage	Kalgin Island (Cook Inlet)
1963-64	14	Chickaloon Flats	Chinkamin River

Date	Number	Source of Stock	Location of Release
BISON			
1928	23	Montana	Delta River
1950	17	Delta River	Slana
1962	35	Delta River	Chitina River
CARIBOU			
1965	15	Chistochina	Chickaloon River (Kenai Pen.)
SHEEP			
1964-65	7	Kenai Peninsula	Kodiak Island
MUSKOX			
1936	31	Greenland	Nunivak Island
BEAVER			
1925	24	Copper River	Kodiak Island
1929	21	Copper River	Raspberry Island (Kodiak)
1927	10	Prince of Wales Is.	
MUSKRAT			
1913	--	Nushagak	Pribilof Islands (St. Georger St. Paul)
1925	70	Copper River	Kodiak Archipelago
1929	21	Long Island (Kodiak)	Afognak Lakes and Buskin River
1929	?	Chilkat River	Prince of Wales Island
1930	18	Haines	Prince of Wales Island
MARTEN			
1934	10	Behm Canal	Prince of Wales Island
1934	7	Cape Fanshaw	Baranof Island
?	?	Mainland	Koyak Island
1940	?	?	Patterson Island
1949	6	Baranof Island	Chichagof Island
1952	15	Southeastern Alaska	Chichagof Island
1952	20	Minchumina Lake	Afognak Island
MINK			
1951	24	Domestic	Montague Island
1952	24	Domestic	Kodiak Island
RED SQUIRREL			
1930-31	93	Juneau	Baranof Island
1930	52	Juneau	Chichagof Island
1948	6	Brooks Lake	Afognak Island

<u>Date</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Source of Stock</u>	<u>Location of Release</u>
RED SQUIRREL (Con't)			
1952	47	Anchorage	Afognak Island
1952	24	Anchorage	Kodiak Island
RACCOON			
1935	?	?	Long Island (Kodiak)
1941	8	Indiana	Singer Island
1950	?	?	Japonski
MARMOT			
1930-31	13	Juneau	Prince of Wales Island
1930	?	?	Shuyak
VARYING HARE			
1923	18	Washington State	Behm Canal
1924	20	Washington State	Admiralty Island, Pt. Retreat (Barlow Islands)
1924	20	Washington State	Otstoia Island (Peril Strait)
1924	24	Anchorage	Village Island (Zimovia Strait)
1934	558	Anchorage	Kodiak and Afognak Islands
1952	12	Olga Bay, Kodiak	Woody Island (Kodiak)
1952	6	Olga Bay, Kodiak	Long Island (Kodiak)
1955	15	Kodiak Island	Popof Island
SEA OTTER			
1955	19	Amchitka	Otter Island (Pribilof Group)
1956	5	Amchitka	Attu Island (Near Islands)
1959	7	Amchitka	St. Paul Island (Pribilof Group)
<u>GAME BIRD INTRODUCTIONS</u>			
PHEASANTS			
Ring-neck			
1934	225	Washington	Baranof Island, Sitka and Goddard Hot Springs
1936	100	Washington	Ketchikan
1936	?	Washington	Cordova
1938	?	?	Matanuska
Species Unknown			
1936	?	?	Fairbanks
1952	?	?	Fairbanks - Silver Fox Farm

Date	Number	Source of Stock	Location of Release
PHEASANTS (con't)			
Mongolian			
--	100	Washington	Wrangell
1938	500	Wisconsin	Matanuska
1939	12	Washington	Ketchikan
1939	75	Washington	Petersburg
1940	87	Washington	Kenai Lake
1940	60	Washington	Petersburg
1940	32	Washington	Wrangell
1942	46	Washington	Haines
Reeves			
1940-42	50	Wisconsin	Kenai Lake
Nepal, Kaleege			
1941	12	Wisconsin	Petersburg
Brown-eared			
1940	12	Wisconsin	Petersburg, Mitkof Island
Cheer			
1940	4	Wisconsin	Kenai-Cooper Landing
CHUKAR PARTRIDGE			
1938	17	Wisconsin	Matanuska Valley
SPRUCE GROUSE			
1957	14	Kenai Penn.	Woody Island (Kodiak)
1957	6	Kenai Penn.	Kodiak Island (Chiniak Penn.)
1959	10	Kenai Penn.	Kodiak Island (Chiniak Penn.)
1959	1	Kenai Penn.	Wood Island (Kodiak)
BLUE GROUSE			
1963	1	Petersburg	Kodiak (Chiniak Penn.)
1964	1	Southeastern Alaska	Woody Island (Kodiak)
1964	20	Southeastern Alaska	Kodiak (2 to Chiniak Penn.) (18 to Spruce Cape)

PROCEEDINGS
OF
FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE
OF
WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF
STATE GAME AND FISH COMMISSIONERS



ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

JULY 7-9, 1965