

Survival of Mountain Goats in Coastal Alaska: Synthesis and Applications

KEVIN WHITE¹, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, PO Box 110010, Douglas, AK

GREY PENDLETON, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, PO Box 110020, Douglas, AK

DAVE CROWLEY, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, PO Box 669, Cordova, AK

HERMAN GRIESE, Elmendorf Wildlife Museum, 6326 Arctic Warrior Drive, Elmendorf Air Force Base, AK

KRIS HUNDERTMARK, University of Alaska, Institute of Arctic Biology, Fairbanks, AK

THOMAS MCDONOUGH, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, 3298 Douglas Place, Homer, AK

LYMAN NICHOLS, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, Cooper Landing, AK

BOYD PORTER, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, 2030 Sealevel Drive, Suite 205, Ketchikan, AK

MATT ROBUS, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Division of Wildlife Conservation, PO Box 115526, Juneau, AK

CHRISTIAN SMITH, Montana Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, 1420 E 6th Avenue, Helena, MT

JOHN SCHOEN, Audubon Alaska, 715 L Street, Suite 200, Anchorage, AK

Abstract: Estimating survival is critical for modeling population dynamics and, ultimately, conservation of free-ranging wildlife species. Mountain goats are among the least studied large mammals in North America and, with few key exceptions, knowledge about patterns of survival is limited. In this study, we use data collected from 264 radio-collared mountain goats (116 males, 148 females) in 8 separate study areas over a 30-year period to characterize patterns of mountain goat survival in coastal Alaska. Specifically, we use Kaplan-Meier survival analysis to derive generalized estimates of sex- and age-specific survival for mountain goats. In addition, we assess how regional geography and variation in winter severity influence mountain goat survival. We further describe seasonal patterns and causes of mortality. Our findings are discussed in the context of life-history theory and, in addition, we explore how these data can be used in conservation and management applications.

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¹*E-mail: kevin.white@alaska.gov*



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