

Small Game Update: Region IV



**Region IV – Board of Game
Dillingham, Alaska
16-23 February, 2018**



Rick Merizon
Small Game Program Coordinator

RC: X, Tab: X

Small Game Proposals

Ptarmigan:

Prop 119, 121 - Extend season to March 31, Unit 13B

Prop 120 - Align season dates, reduce bag limit, Units 13B and 13E

Prop 134 - Shorten season to March 1, reduce bag limit, Unit 9

Grouse:

Prop 117 - Reduce bag limit, Unit 11

Prop 118 - Change season start to September 1, reduce bag limit, Unit 11

Alaska Hare:

Prop 135 - Create season, bag limit, reporting for Alaska hare, Unit 9

Small Game Program

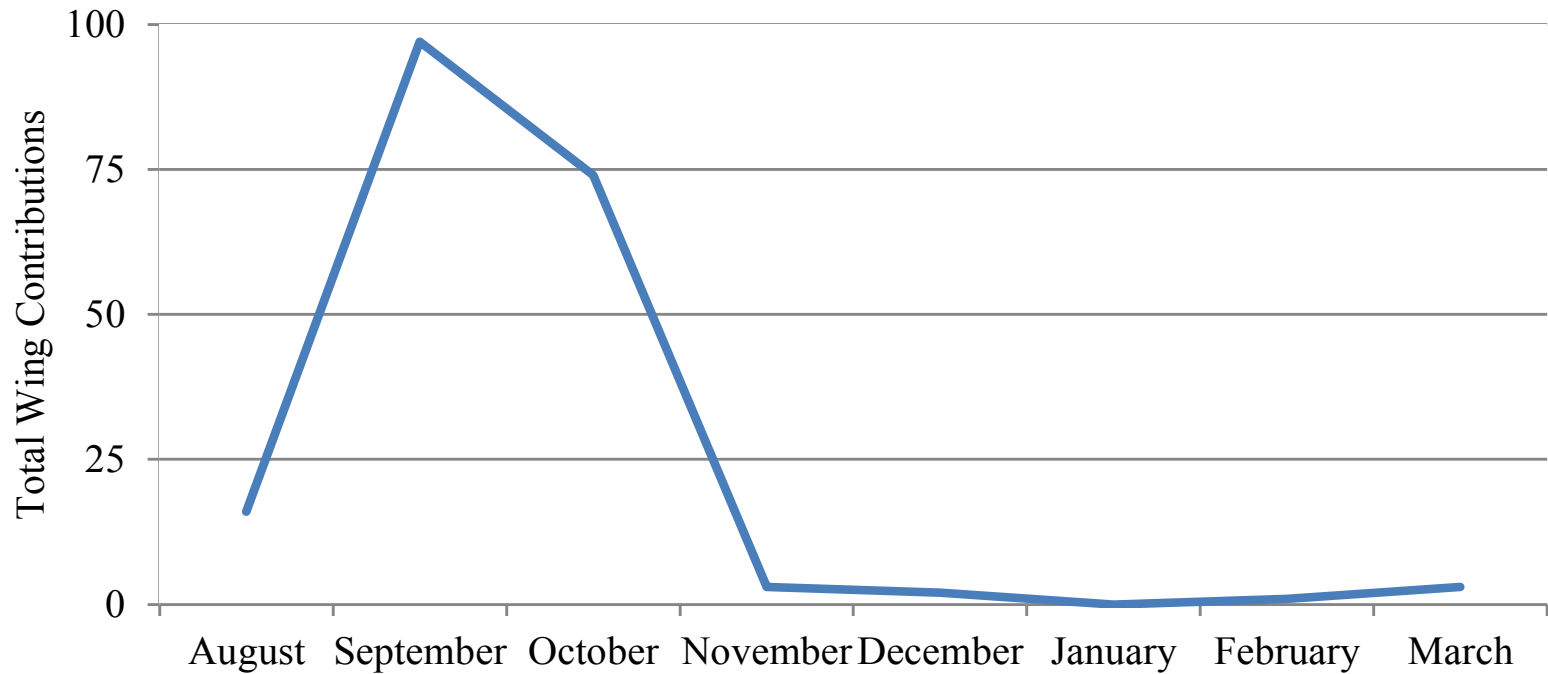
Program Goals in Region 4

1. Breeding Surveys
2. Brood Surveys
3. Hunter Surveys
4. Harvest Composition
5. Research



Grouse: Harvest Composition

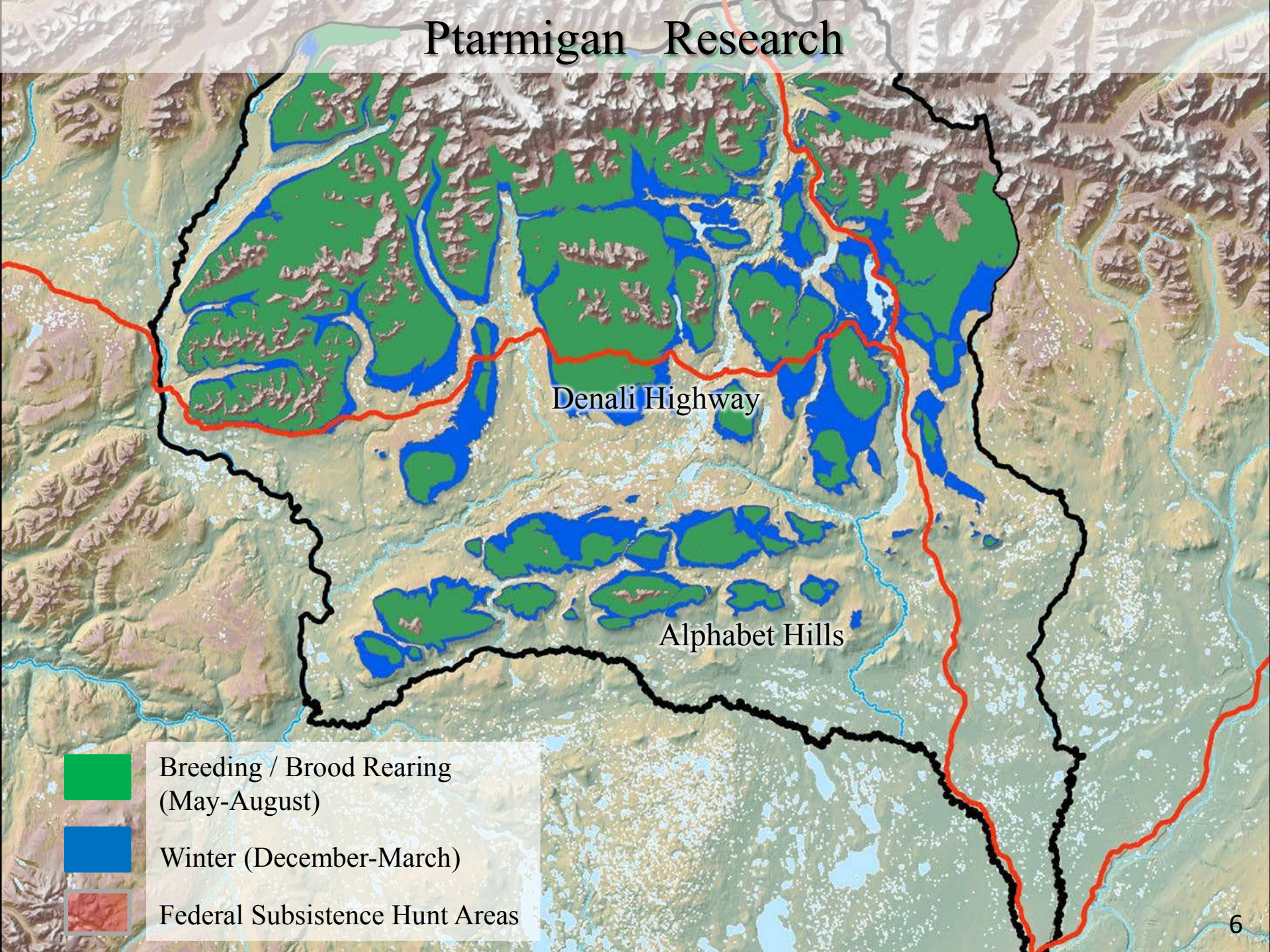
All Unit 11 ruffed, sharp-tailed, and spruce grouse wing samples,
RY11-16



Ptarmigan Research

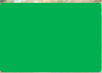
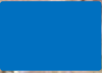



Ptarmigan Research

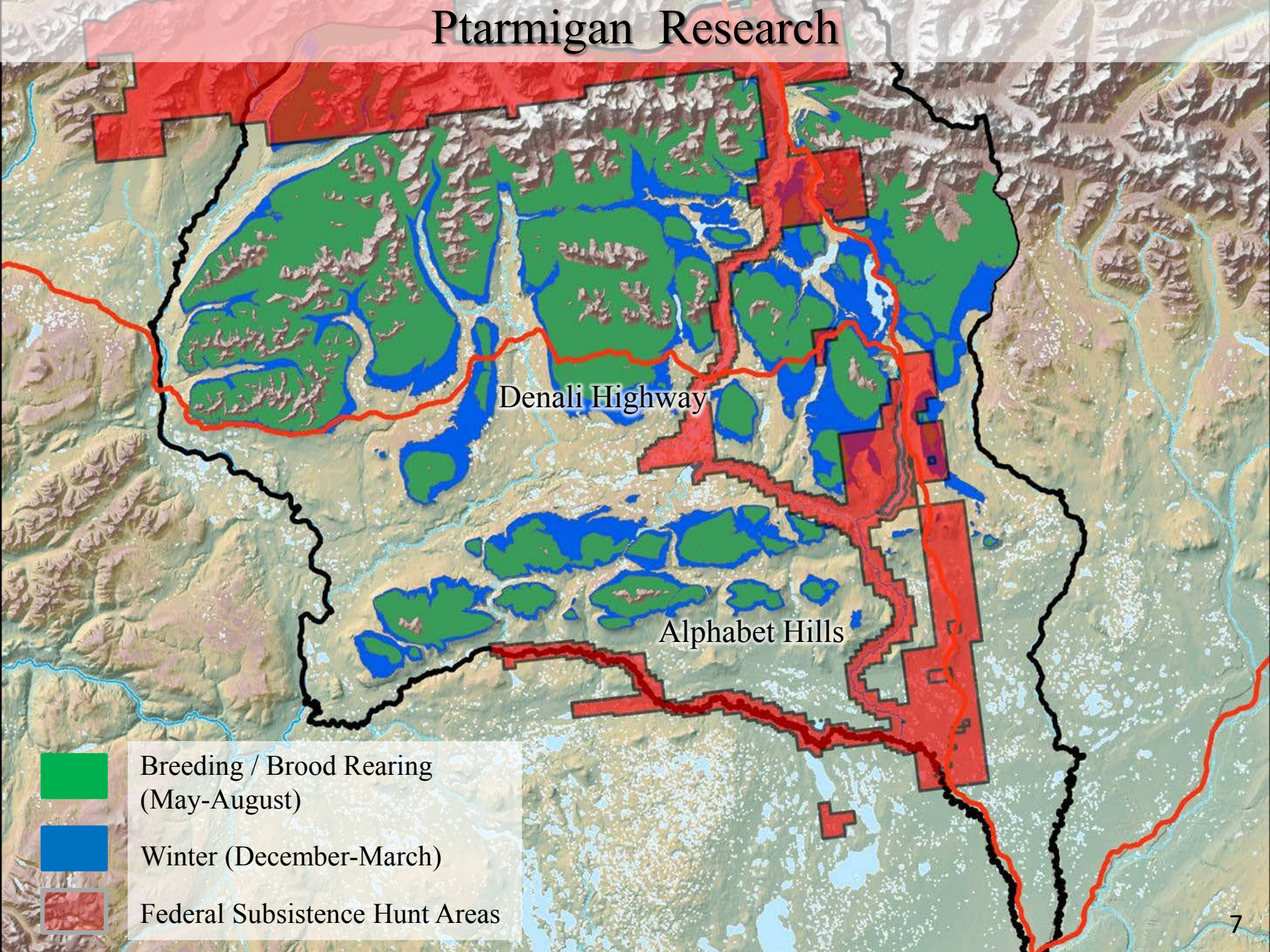


Denali Highway

Alphabet Hills

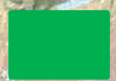
-  Breeding / Brood Rearing (May-August)
-  Winter (December-March)
-  Federal Subsistence Hunt Areas

Ptarmigan Research

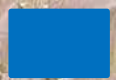


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Breeding / Brood Rearing
(May-August)

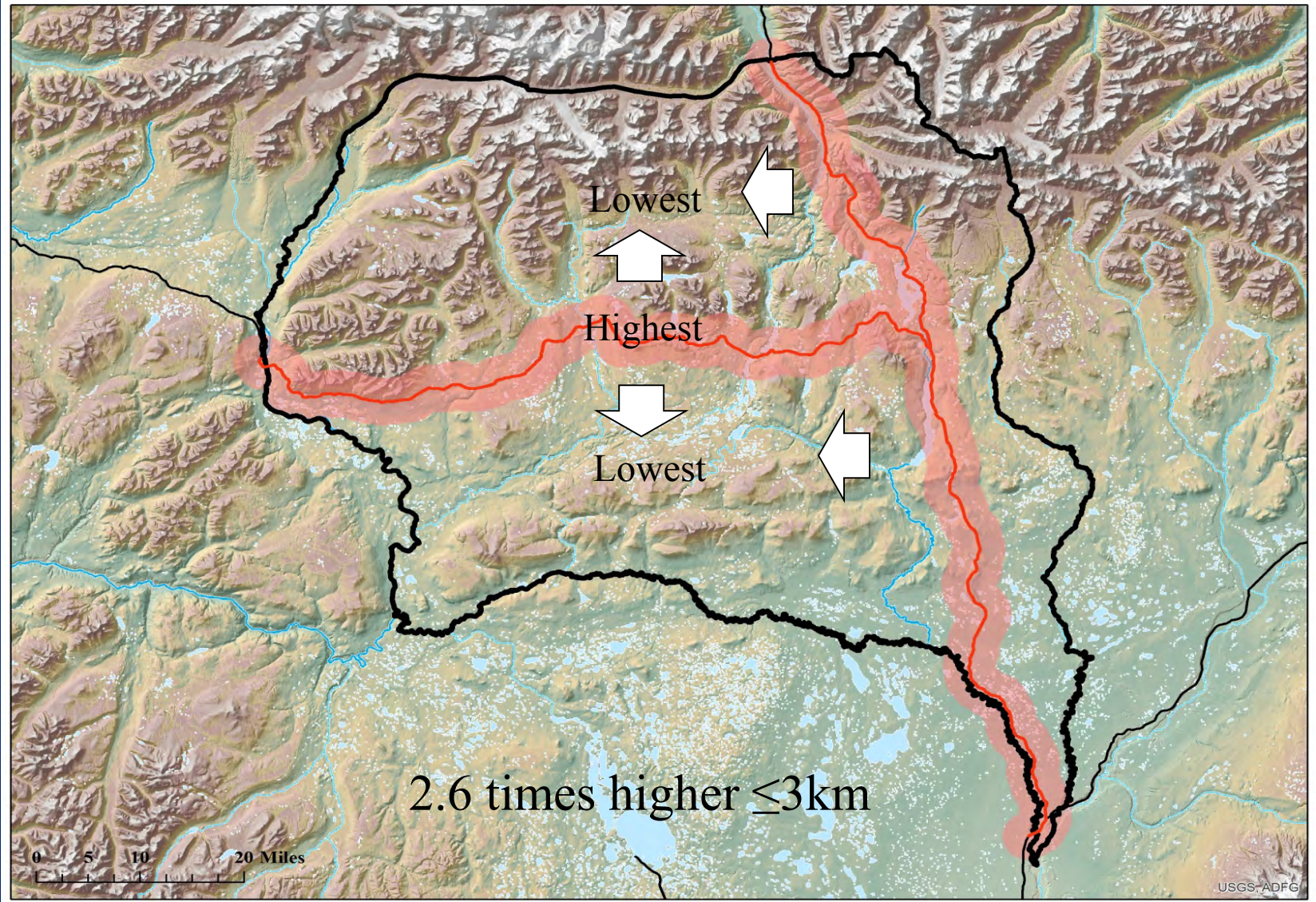


Winter (December-March)



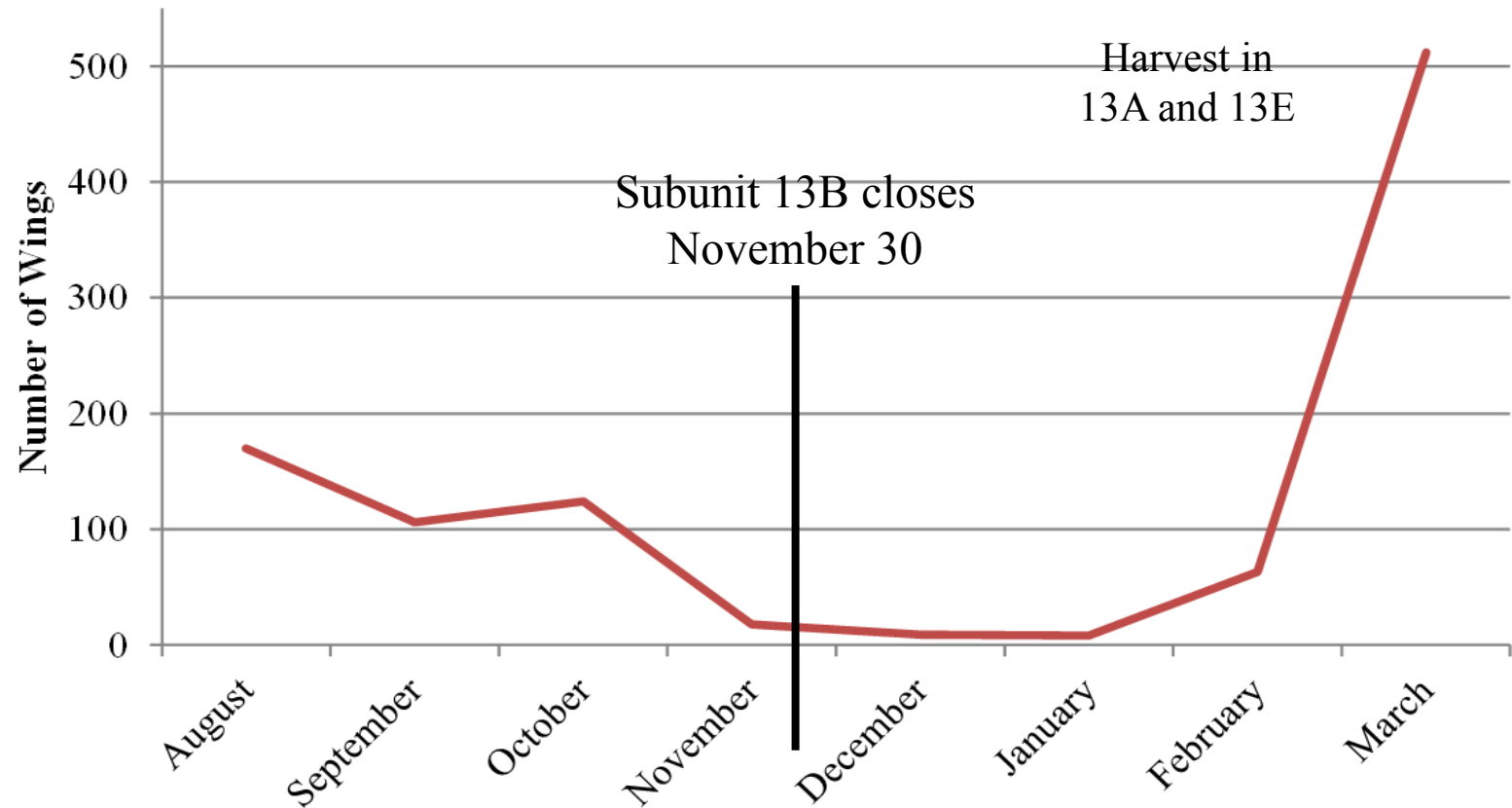
Federal Subsistence Hunt Areas

Ptarmigan Research: Mortality



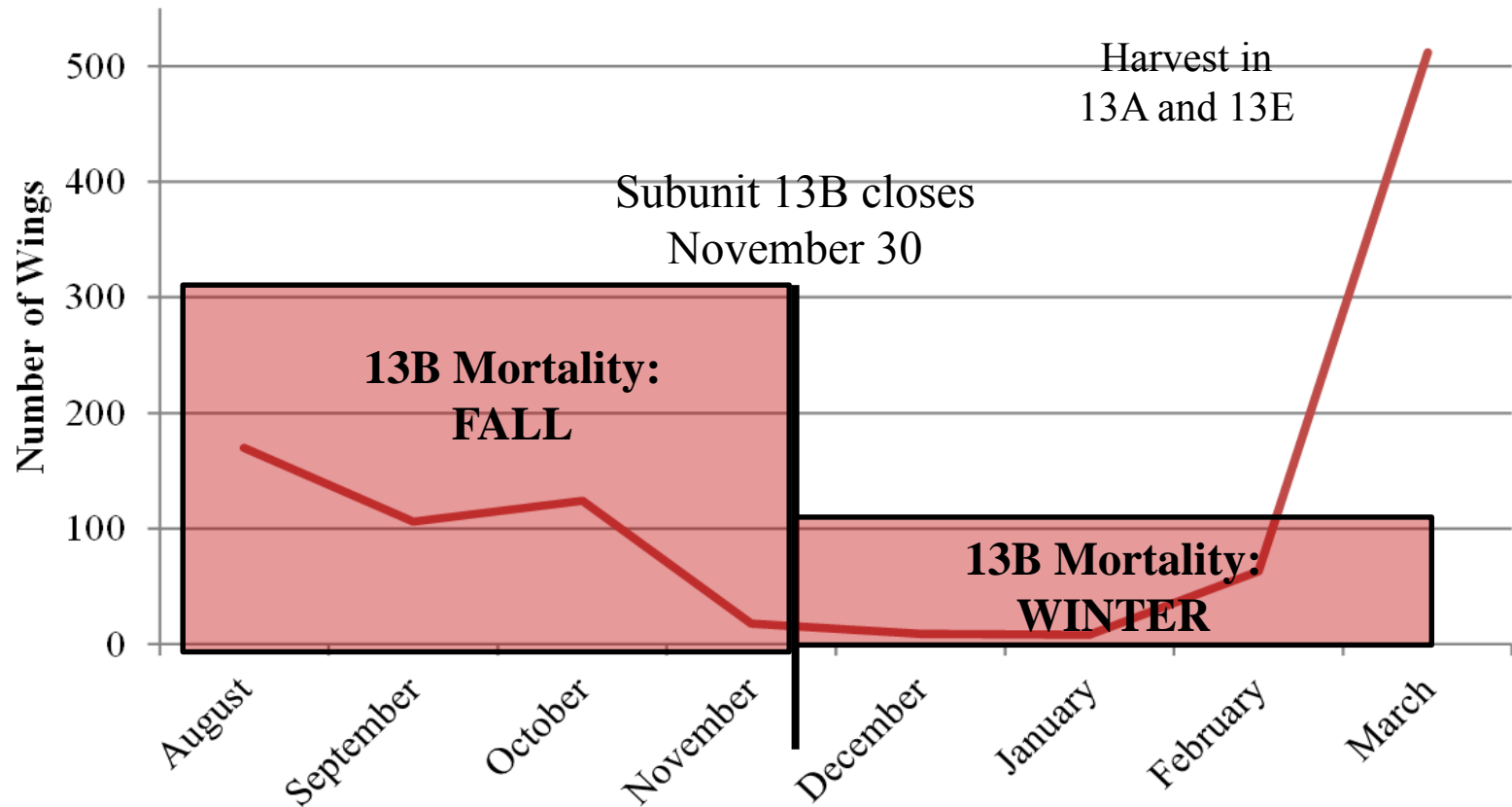
Ptarmigan: Harvest Composition

Rock and Willow Ptarmigan wings contributed by hunters, RY11-16



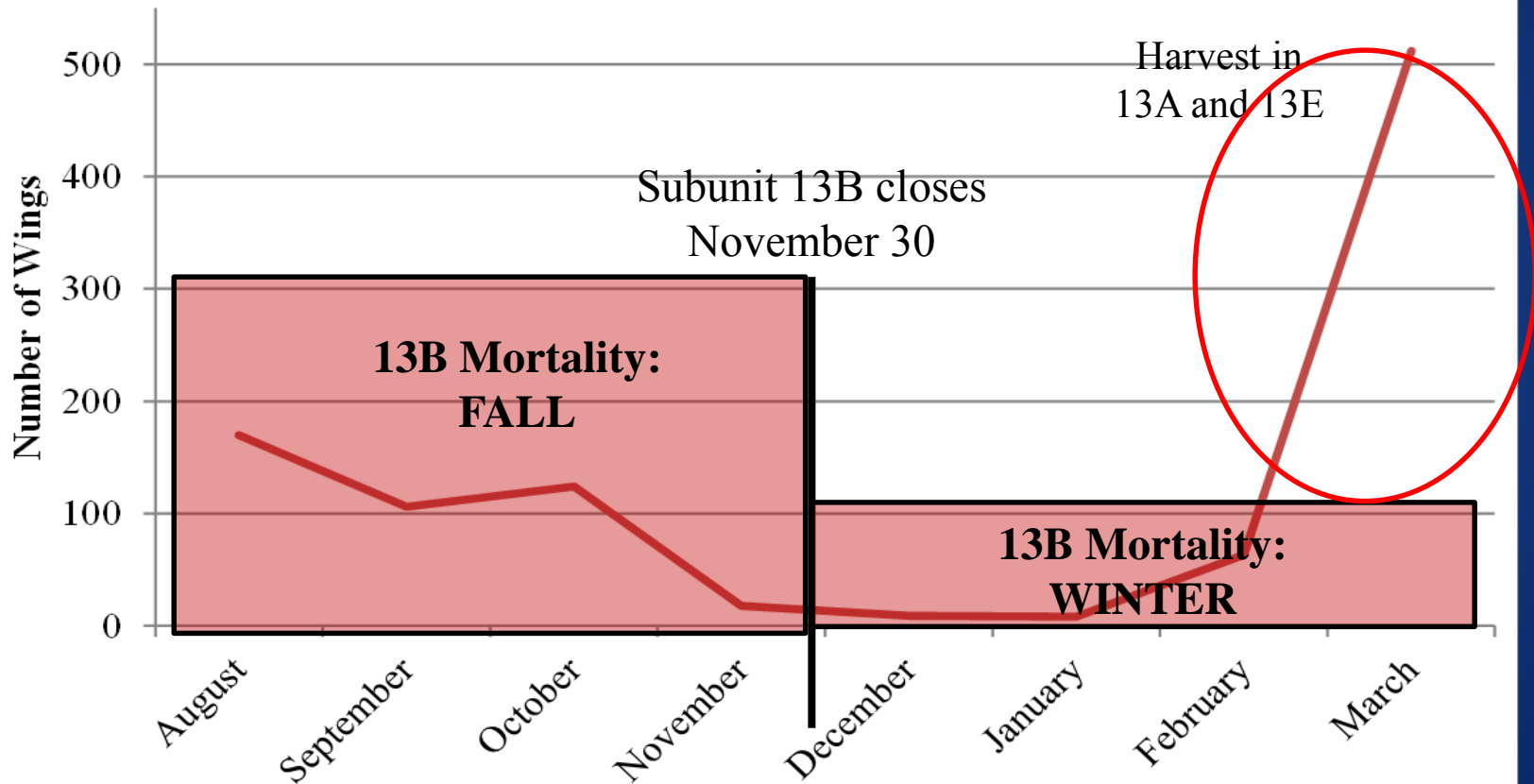
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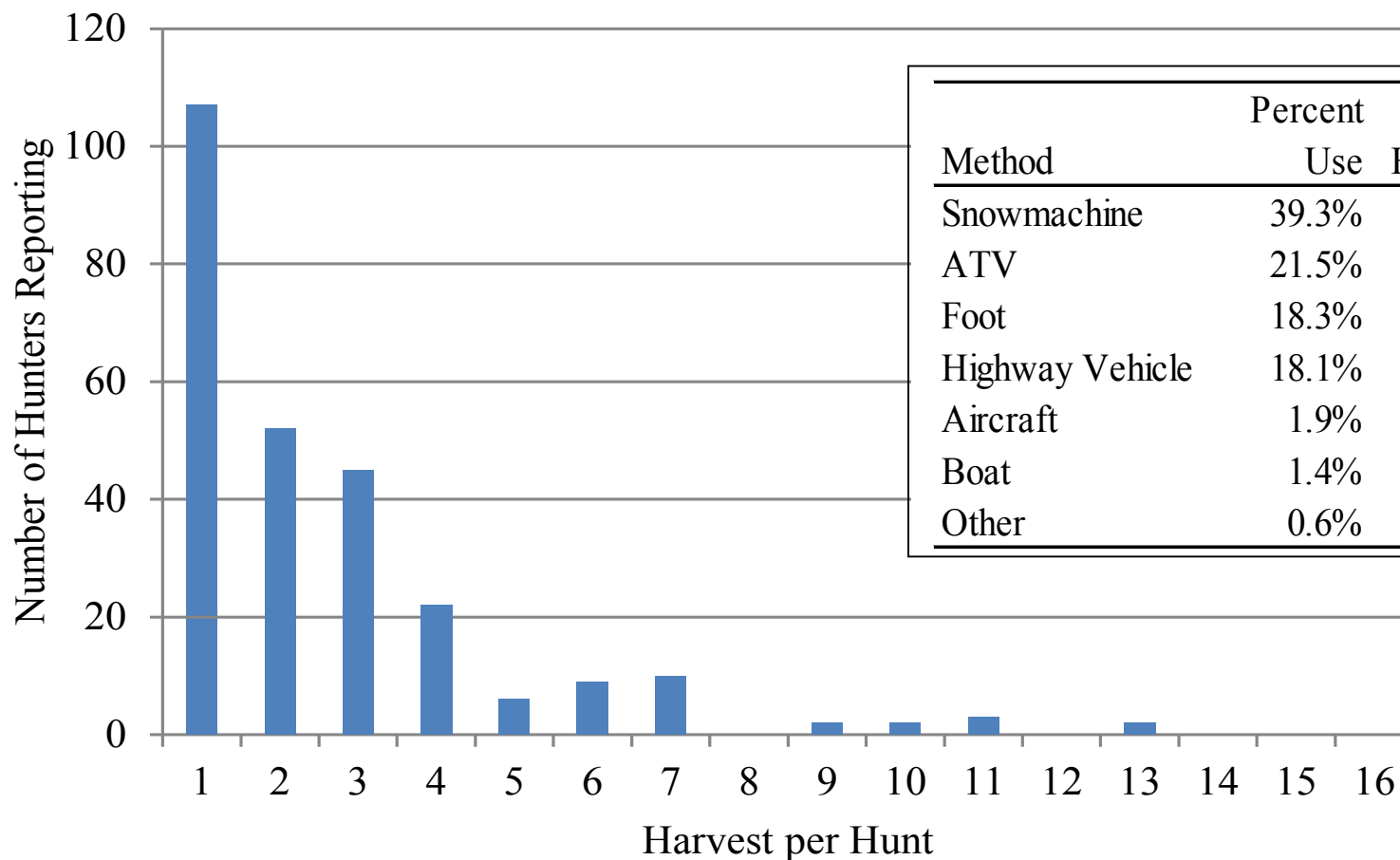
Ptarmigan: Climate Effects



King Salmon – January 15, 2018

Ptarmigan: Hunter Harvest

Ptarmigan harvest per hunt as reported through statewide small game hunter survey, RY2013.



Method	Percent Use	Average Harvest/Hunt
Snowmachine	39.3%	2.2
ATV	21.5%	1.5
Foot	18.3%	1.3
Highway Vehicle	18.1%	1.5
Aircraft	1.9%	1.9
Boat	1.4%	1.3
Other	0.6%	0.1

Ptarmigan: Management Continuum

Shorter Seasons

Closure: **BEFORE** mid-February

Longer Seasons

Closure: **AFTER** mid-February



Higher Density

HIGHER

spring breeding abundance

Lower Density

LOWER

spring breeding abundance

Ptarmigan:
Management Continuum

Opportunity

vs.

Harvest

Alaska hares



Alaska hares

Lepus othus:

- 8-15 pounds,
- 1 litter per year,
- Western Alaska
- Currently: no abundance, or survival data, very limited harvest data



Alaska hares

ADF&G's Efforts

1. Education / Outreach

- PSAs
- Posters
- Web-portal
- Community Tour (Fall 2017)

2. Research

- Testing capture techniques
- Evaluating pellets (spring 2017)
- Developing Research Proposal
 - Evaluate abundance survey methods
 - Movement, mortality - GPS collars

Is that an Alaska hare?
Please report your sightings

Alaska has two hare species!
There are two species of hare in western Alaska, snowshoe hare and Alaska hare (also known as the tundra hare or jack rabbit). The Alaska hare is uncommon and we do not have a clear understanding of abundance, distribution, or habitat use. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game is looking for information from local residents to help fill these knowledge gaps.

Here's how to identify them:
Alaska hares are about double the size of snowshoe hares. Although both species turn white in the winter, Alaska hare's have distinct black ear tips. Alaska hares also have extremely large hind feet (up to 8 inches long), but they often walk on their toes leaving behind fox-like tracks.

Alaska hare
Length: 25 inches
Weight: 10 pounds

Snowshoe hare
Length: 18 inches
Weight: 3-4 pounds

Black ear tips
Fur all white even at roots

1/4 - 1/4 inch pellets

1/4 - 1/2 inch pellets
Fur dark at roots

Tell us when you see an Alaska hare!
We would like to know if you have seen Alaska hares recently. Please send Alaska hare photos to small game biologist, Rick Merzton at richard.merzton@alaska.gov

Have you noticed changes in Alaska hare populations?
We would like to hear about any changes in Alaska hare's distribution, abundance, or behavior that you have noticed during your lifetime.

To report: email, call, or use this postcard!
Fill out the backside of this postcard and drop it off at any mail collection location (postage is free). Or, contact Rick Merzton, richard.merzton@alaska.gov | (907) 748-8333.

Yes, I saw an Alaska hare!
Please send Alaska hare photos and additional observation details to small game biologist, Rick Merzton richard.merzton@alaska.gov | (907) 748-8333.

Date of hare observation: _____ Time of day: _____

Number of hares: _____

Behavior: _____

Type of habitat: _____

General location: _____

Yes, I observed changes in Alaska hare populations over my lifetime:
Please describe changes in Alaska hare distribution, abundance, or behavior here: _____

Your name: _____

Please or email: _____

Can we contact you about your observation? Yes No

Circle one: Yes, contact me! No, not at this time.

Rate your Alaska hare experience

1	2	3	4	5
Not familiar	Very familiar	Very familiar	Very familiar	Very familiar

Tear off & postcard to make an Alaska hare report.

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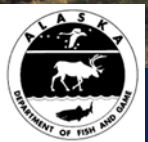
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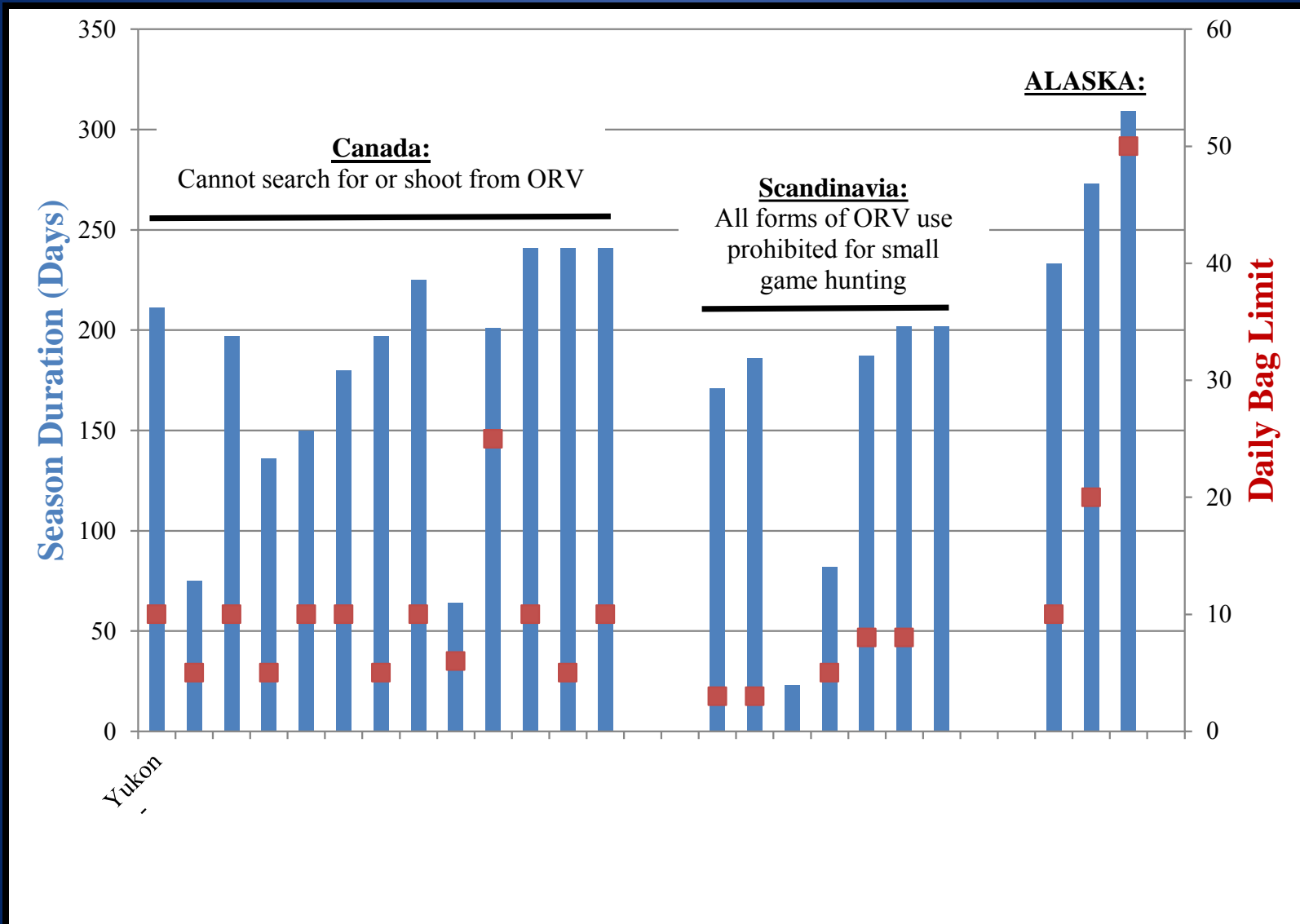
Questions?



Rick Merizon
Small Game Program Coordinator

RC: X, Tab: X

Ptarmigan: International Regulations



* Iceland and Finland utilize a point / quota system in place of bag limits.

Ptarmigan: Breeding Surveys

