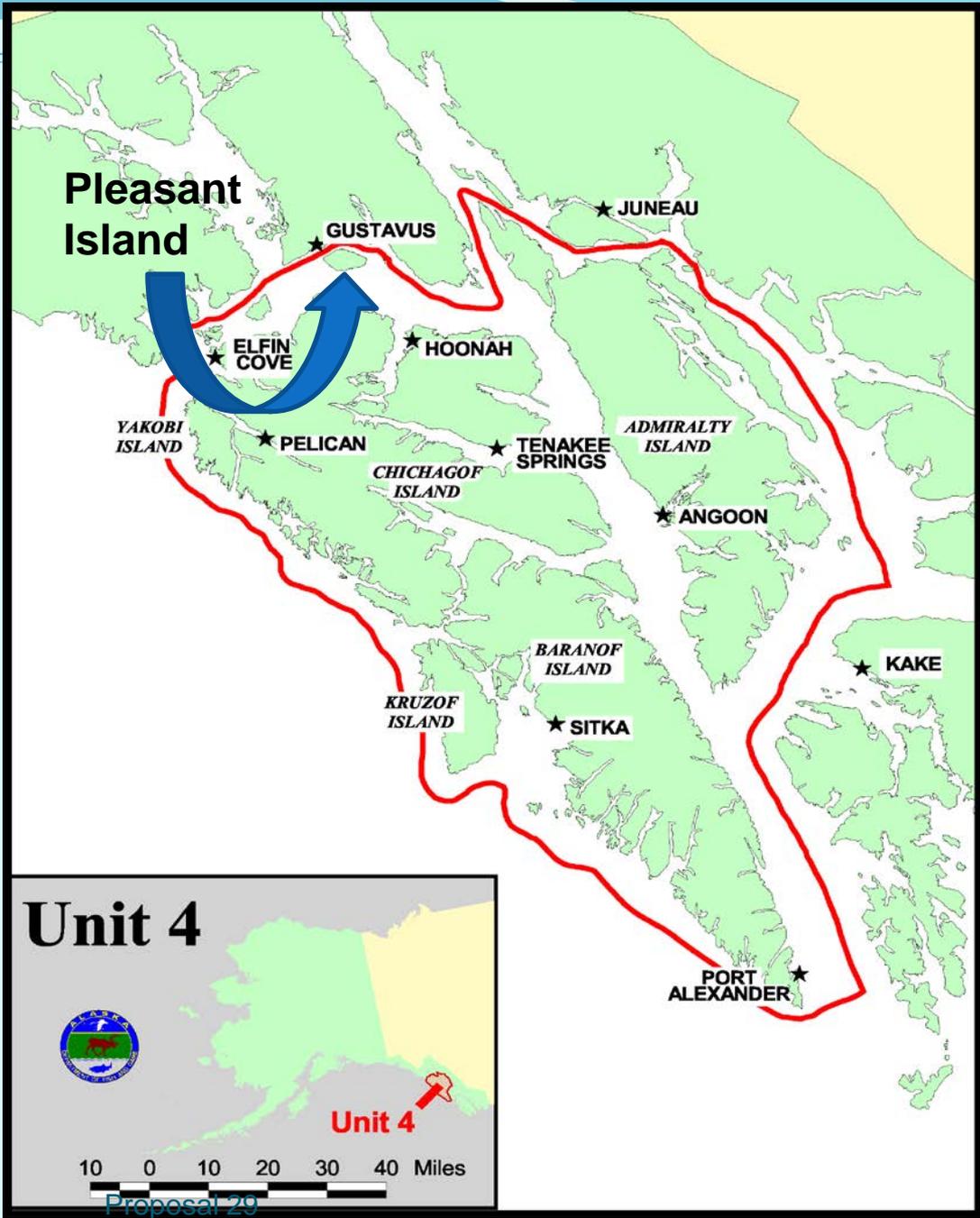


Proposal 29

- This proposal would allow hunters to harvest only one antlerless deer per season on Pleasant Island in Unit 4
- Current bag limit is 4 deer
- Icy Straits Advisory Committee proposal
- Department Recommendation:
Do Not Adopt

Proposal 29

- The proponents of this proposal suggest that deer are being harvested at an unsustainable rate on Pleasant Island



Pleasant Island Features

- Shoreline perimeter: 18 miles
- Area: 19 square miles
- 7 mile long, 4 miles wide
- Highest point: 500 ft
- 1.4 miles from Gustavus by boat

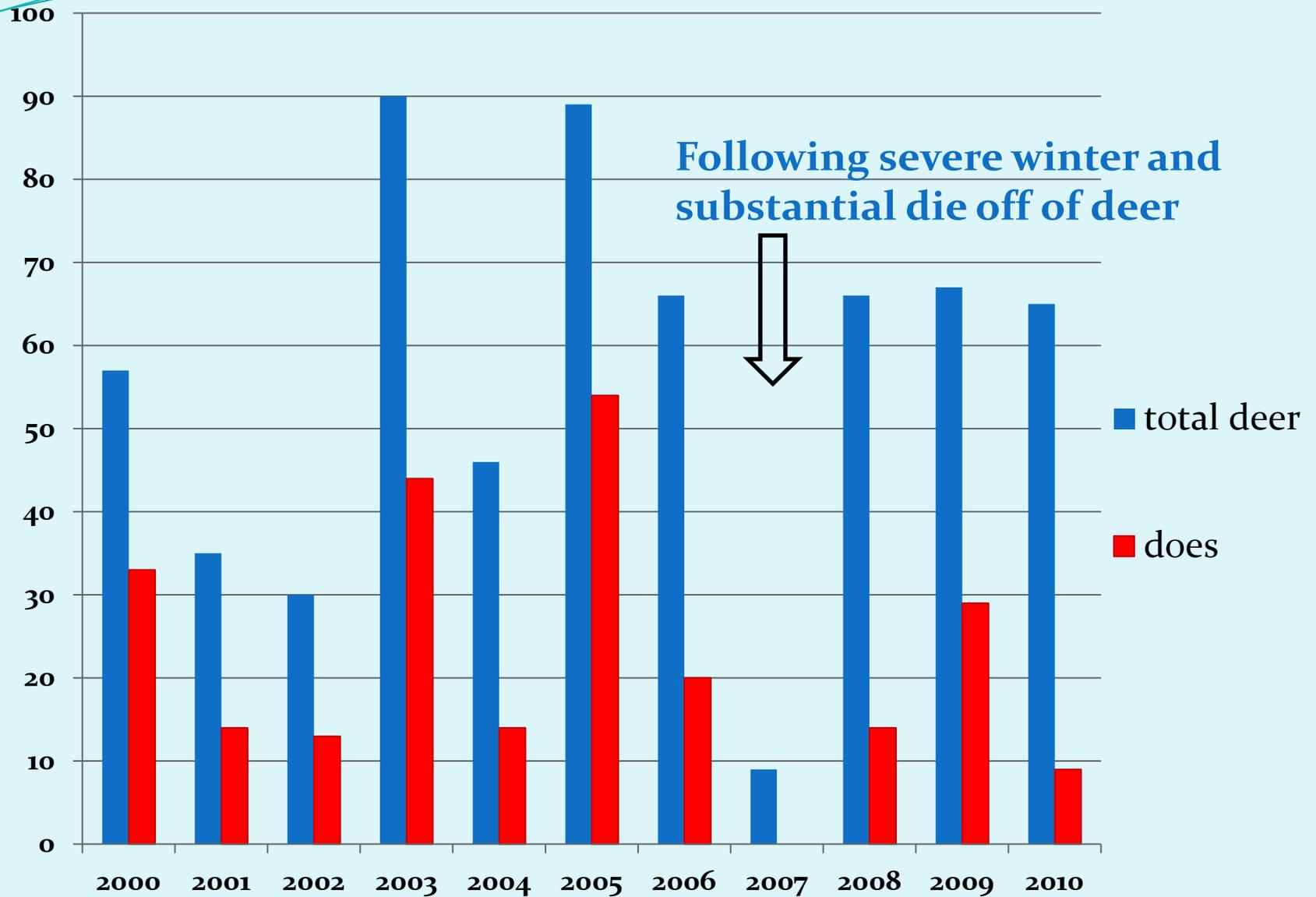


Pleasant/Lemesurier Islands

Deer Harvest



Pleasant/Lemesurier Island Deer Harvest



Pleasant Island Deer Abundance

- Deer pellet surveys: indication of deer population trends
- Deer density measured by pellet groups/1 meter x 20 meter plot (1 group/plot = estimated 32 deer/mile²)
 - 2002 – 1.96 pellet groups/plot
 - 2005 – 1.34 pellet groups/plot
 - 2009 – 0.72 pellet groups/plot (46% decline from 2005)

Habitat Characteristics



Discussion

- A higher summer deer population may be possible but a paucity of winter habitat limits deer numbers
- Predation on deer is thought to be minimal: wolves, black bears and brown bears are infrequent visitors to Pleasant Island
- Weather related winter kill noted on Pleasant Island following winters of 2005 and 2009

Winter Mortality



Summary

- A larger population of deer on Pleasant Island is not believed to be sustainable and may be counterproductive to maintaining the deer habitat quality that currently exists
- The department has a greater concern about overutilization of habitat by deer than about excessive deer harvests
- Presence of winter killed deer along pellet transects in 2005 and 2009 suggests winter habitat may be a limiting factor for deer

Conclusion

- With the change to a deer harvest ticket report in 2011, we will be able to record deer harvest and hunter effort for Pleasant Island specifically
- This data will provide us with a better basis for considering changes to deer management on Pleasant Island in the future

Advisory Committee Votes

- Icy Straits AC- adopt as proposed (proponent)
- Sitka AC – no action
- Juneau AC- no action

Department Recommendation

Do Not Adopt

Subsistence

- The Board has determined that the deer population in Unit 4 supports customary and traditional subsistence uses. The Board has set the amounts reasonably necessary for subsistence uses (ANS) at 5,200–6,000 deer in Unit 4 (5 AAC 99.025 (a) (5)).
- The estimated annual harvest of deer on Pleasant Island has been < 50 animals, so this harvest represents very little of Unit 4's overall take. Prior to adopting any changes to regulations in this unit, the Board should determine if the proposed change will provide reasonable opportunities for subsistence hunting.

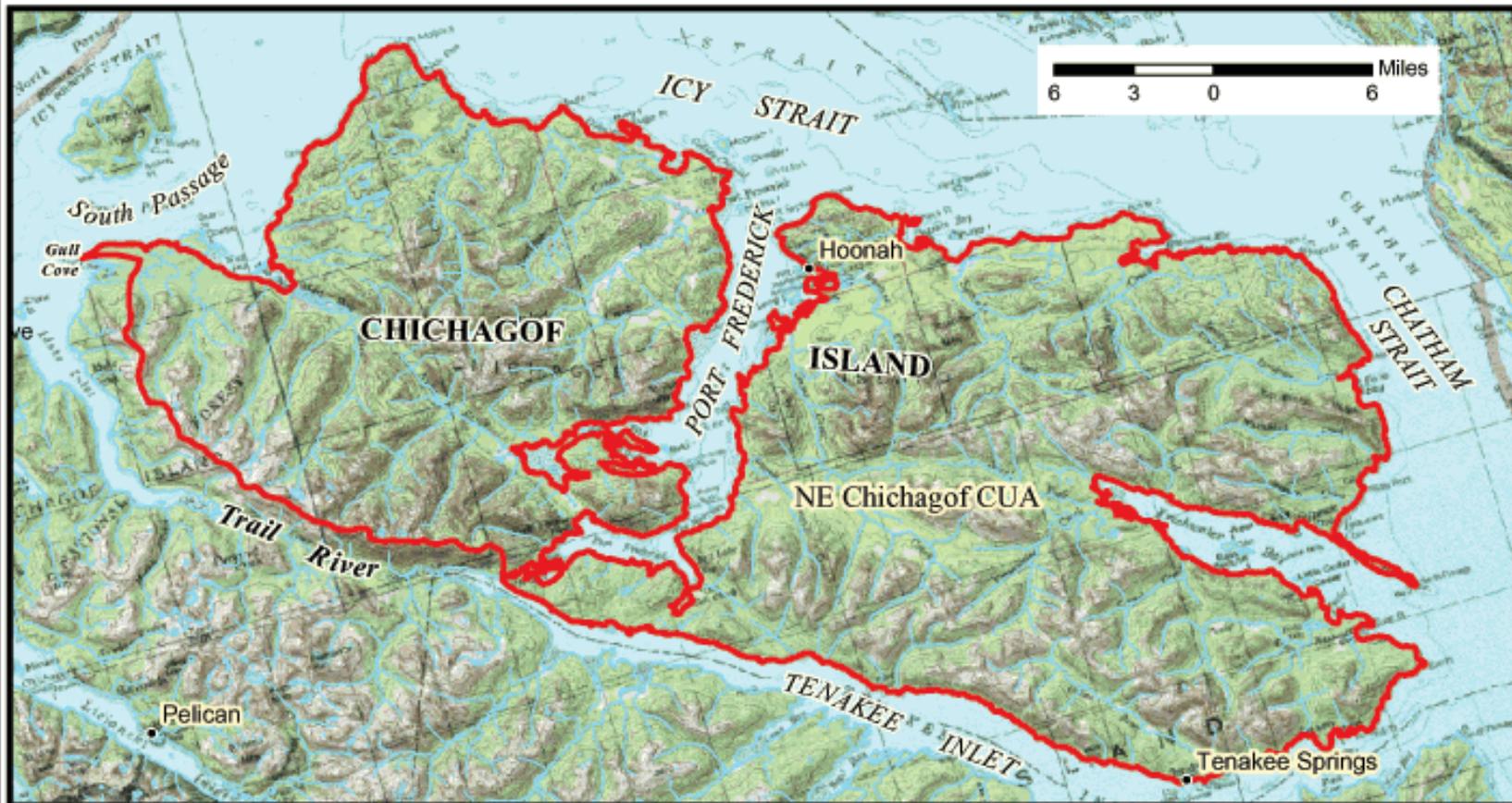
Proposal 30

- This proposal would establish a 3-day doe season for those hunters residing within the NECCUA area
 - However, this proposed season would only go into effect if the regular season doe hunt is closed by emergency order in this same area
- Proposal submitted by Icy Straits Advisory Committee
- Department Recommendation:
Do Not Adopt





Northeast Chichagof Controlled Use Area



Area Description

Northeast Chichagof Controlled Use Area consists of that portion of Unit 4 on Chichagof Island north of Tenakee Inlet and east of the drainage divide from the northwest point of Gull Cove to the Port Frederick Portage, including all drainages into Port Frederick and Mud Bay. The area is closed to the use of any motorized land vehicle for brown bear hunting, including the transportation of brown bear hunters, their hunting gear, or parts of brown bears, except as provided under terms of a registration hunt permit.



Discussion

- This proposal is allocative, and would result in more liberal deer hunting allowances for residents residing within NECCUA than those residing outside the area
- Given the dept's use of EOs to maintain sustainable populations, implementing this proposal could negate the intended effect and result in higher than desired harvests

Discussion

- The severe winter of 2006-2007, compounded by late, cold springs, reduced the deer population within NECCUA
- Since 2007:
 - Six consecutive seasons with doe closures, 2007 – 2012
 - Cooperation between agency managers to close both state and federal seasons
- Fall, 2012: state and federal doe season opened Sept 15, with the intent to limit doe harvests in the recovering population
 - State season closed Oct. 25
 - Federal season closed Dec. 13

Discussion

- Barring a severe 2012-2013 winter/spring, a doe season is anticipated for NECCUA in fall 2013
- All hunters were equally restricted from harvesting doe deer during 2007-2011 while the deer population recovered
- All hunters will ultimately benefit from higher deer numbers and associated liberalized harvest

Summary

- This proposal would provide local resident preference over non local residents
- The proposal would negate the effectiveness of EO actions, if deemed necessary to sustain the deer population

Advisory Committee Votes

- No action recommended by any of the 3 local ACs; Icy Straits, Juneau, Sitka

Department Recommendation:

Do Not Adopt

Proposal 31

This proposal would penalize hunters who harvest a nanny (female goat), in that they would be prohibited from hunting mountain goats in Unit 4 for 5 regulatory years

Public Proposal

**Department Recommendation:
No Recommendation**

Discussion

- **Proponent submitted proposal for 2 reasons:**
 - 1. Discourage harvest of female goats**
 - 2. Impose penalty on hunters who repeatedly harvest female goats, which results in less opportunity for other hunters**

RG150 - Mountain Goat Registration Permit Hunt



AREA DESCRIPTION FOR RG150 - Mountain Goat Registration Permit Hunt

Hunt Area: Unit 4, Baranof Island.

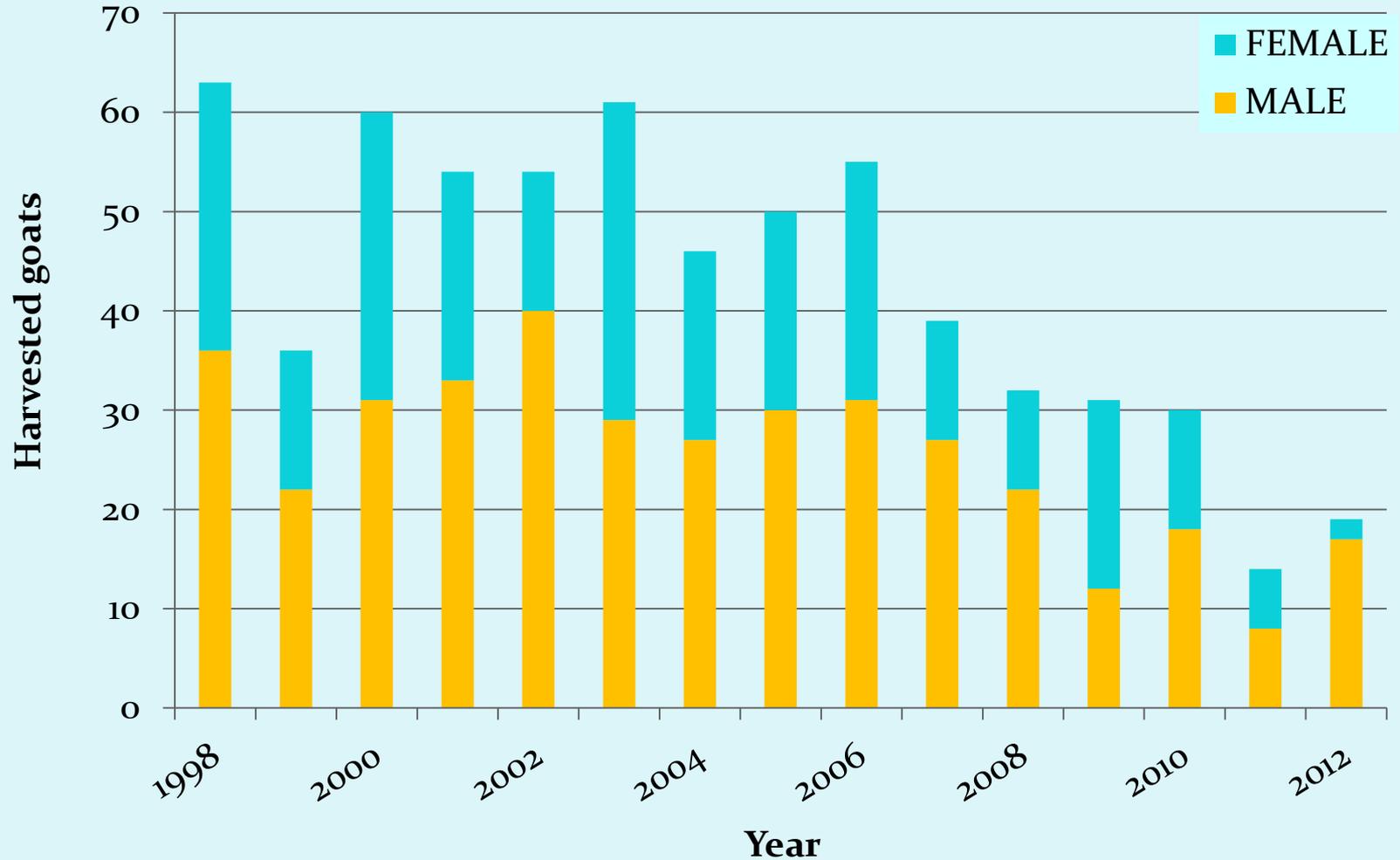
Source maps: USGS 1:63,360 Sitka, Port Alexander

Discussion

- Registration hunt (RG150): Aug 1-December 31; bag limit = 1 1 goat
- Management Objectives:
 - Maintain an island-wide population in excess of 1,000 goats
 - Maintain harvest sex ratios commensurate with survey observations
 - Manage harvest at a rate of 6 points per 100 goats observed during aerial surveys within discrete survey areas
 - Weighted harvest point system (males = 1 point, females = 2 points)

Harvest History

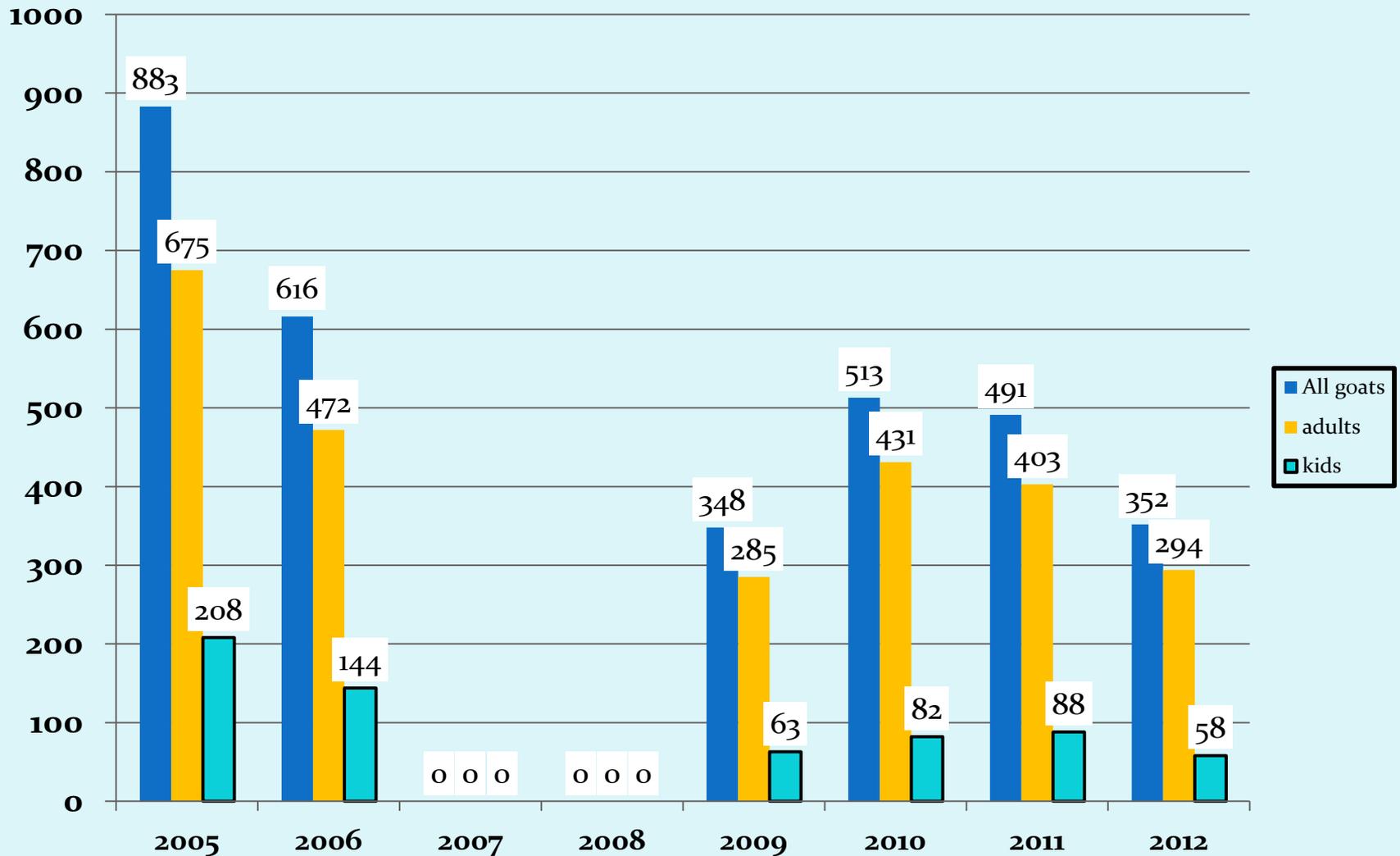
Mountain Goat Harvest 1998-2012



SURVEY TRENDS

- Aerial survey routes established in the 1950s
- Baranof Island aerial survey, 2004: 1300 goats (last island wide survey)
- Surveys completed in key established survey areas (zones 1-3), 2005-2012
 - Adults declined 43.5%
 - Kids declined 29%

Baranof Is. Mtn Goat Aerial Survey Data 2005-2012



Management Issues

- Female harvest, 1998-2012 40% of total harvest
- Older age females have been shown to be most productive (5, 6, 7)
- Average age of harvested females is increasing
- Hunting opportunity limited by excessive female harvest
- Multi-year closure of 2 areas to goat hunting
- Multiple Emergency Orders to close goat hunt areas
- Educational efforts have been only moderately successful in limiting female harvest

Summary

- Harvest history is 40% females
 - Concern for high female harvest persists
 - Improvement seen in 2012 (17 males; 2 females)
- Aerial survey data (2005-2012) showed a decline in goat numbers
 - Adults 43.5%
 - Kids 29%
- Primarily a resident hunt
 - Small subset of resident hunters repeatedly harvest nannies, resulting in hunt closures
 - This results in less hunting opportunity
- Female goat harvest limits population productivity

Recommendation

- Sitka AC supported proposal with idea of limiting the penalty period (3-5 years) and including a sunset clause
- Department Recommendation:

No Recommendation

Proposals 32 – 36

- **32** – Alternate spring/fall seasons for NRs
- **33** – Change and shorten the fall season
- **34** – Restrict bag limit based on harvest of female skull size
- **35** – Modify harvest allocation above 4% level for residents
- **36** – Exclude wounding loss from counting as a mortality factor

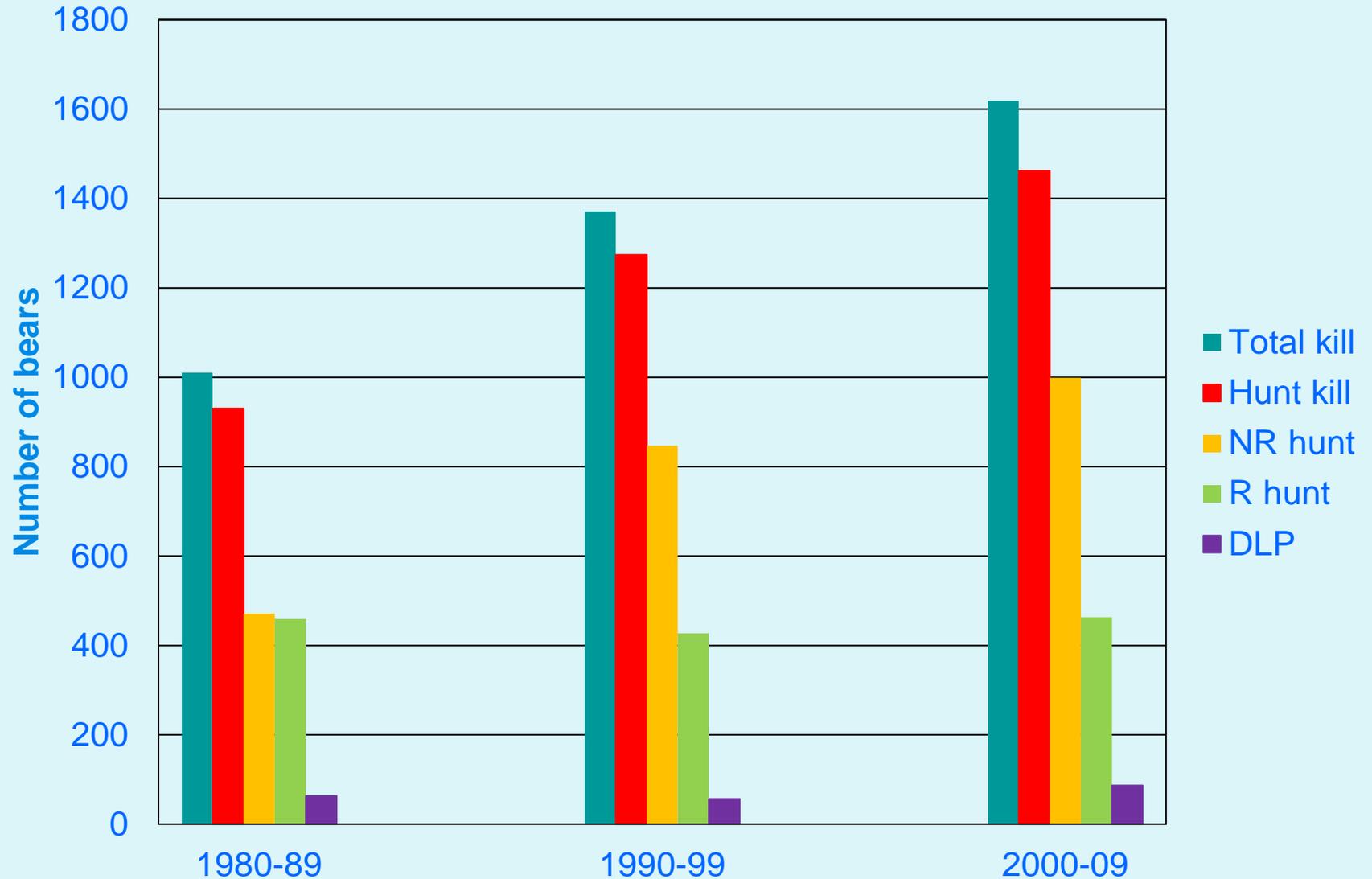
Discussion

- All 5 proposals recommend regulatory changes to address increasing brown bear harvest and mortality in Unit 4
- The Unit 4 Brown Bear Management Strategy (BBMS) contains specific recommendations for addressing harvest and other human-caused mortality
- Recommended actions for addressing human-caused mortality in excess of guidelines established in BBMS:
 - Mandatory adjustment of number of guided hunters
 - Season adjustments (implemented in RY 2011 by EO)
 - Institution of drawing permits

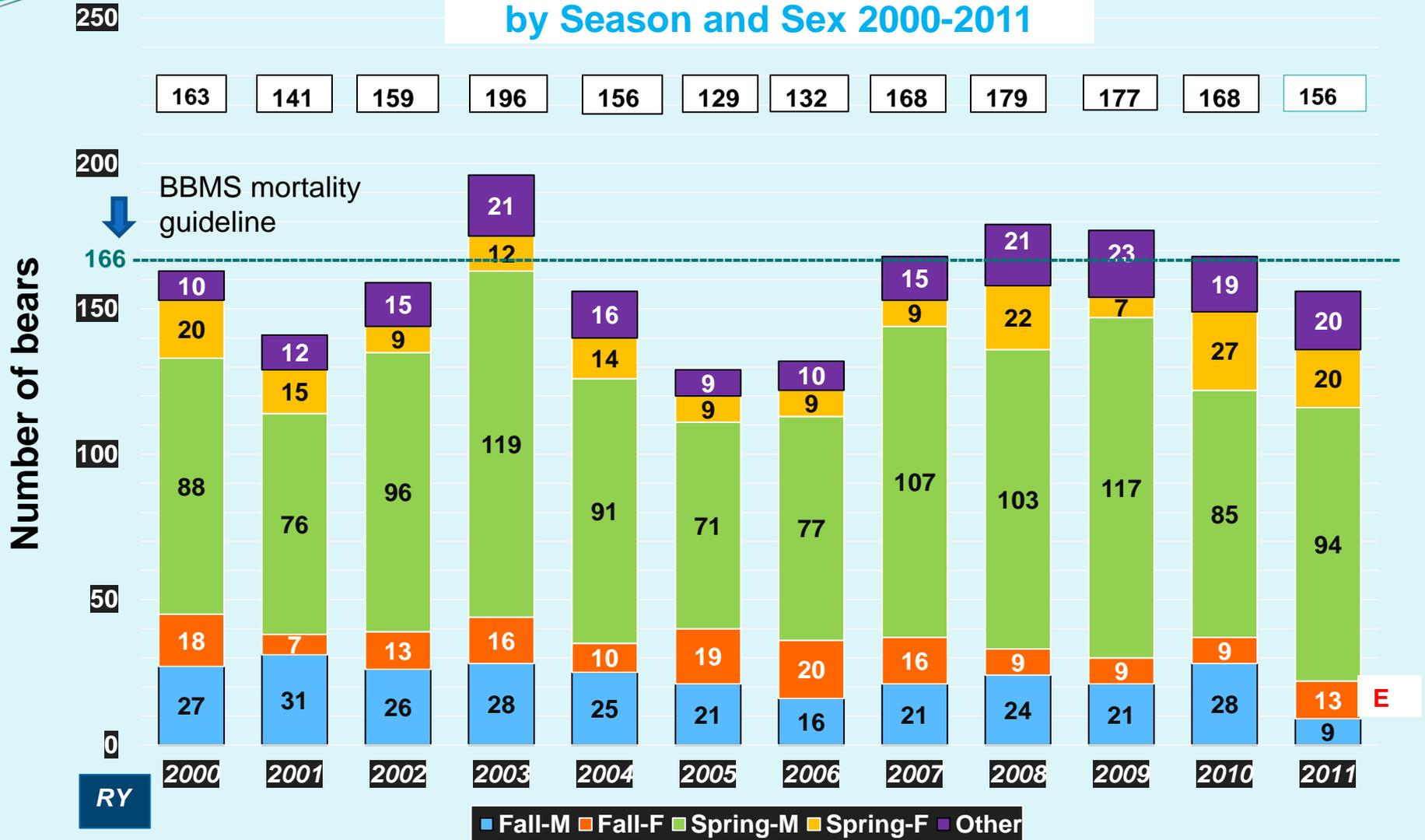
Proposals 32 – 36

The department has information to provide the Board on each of the proposals and how recommendations provided in the BBMS address the issues and concerns expressed in the proposals

Decadal Unit 4 Brown Bear Mortality: 1980 – 2009



GMU4 Brown Bear Mortality History by Season and Sex 2000-2011



Hunt mortality represents 90% of all human-caused mortality. NRs take 70% of all hunt mortality, 61% of fall females and 57% of all females.

BBMS Recommendations

- Recommended actions for addressing human-caused mortality in excess of guidelines established in BBMS:
 - Mandatory adjustment of number of guided hunters
 - Season adjustments (implemented in RY 2011 by EO)
 - Institution of drawing permits

Proposals 34 – 35

- Proposals 34 and 35 don't provide solutions suggested in the BBMS.
 - Skull size restrictions (proposal 34) are considered unnecessary, would be difficult for hunters to adhere to, and the associated penalties are inequitable between guided and unguided hunters
 - Increased harvest rates (proposal 35) could be accommodated from a biological/conservation standpoint; however, it would be out of step with what the BBMT agreed to in 2000

Proposal 32

(Alternating seasons for nonresident hunters)

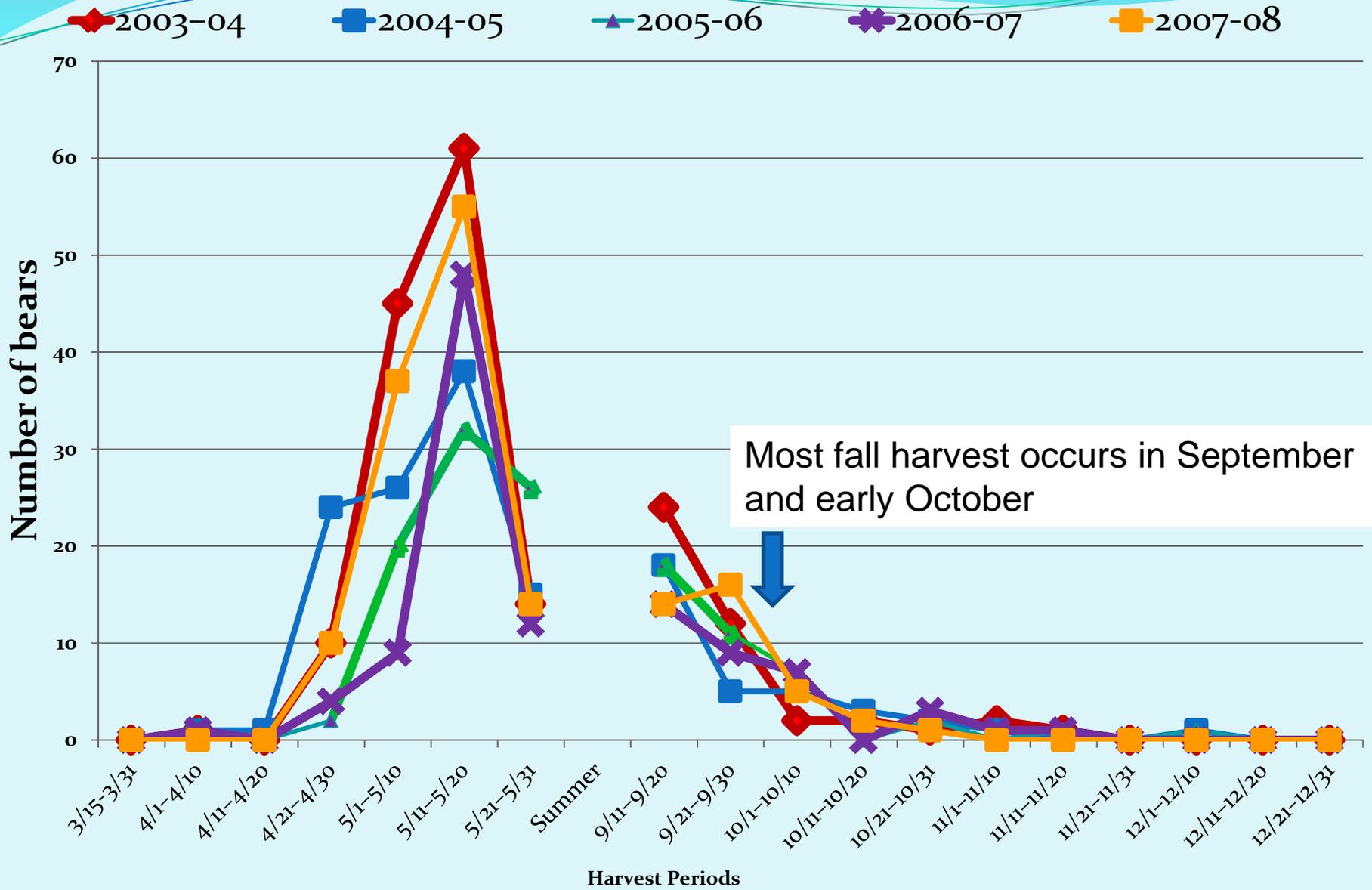
- Could reduce harvest, if USFS hunt permits remain static and guides are unable to accommodate additional hunters within each season
- Would have implications for guide industry and client bookings
- May increase spring harvests as guides stack hunts unused from the fall

Proposal 33

(Shorten fall season)

- This proposal would shorten the fall season by 11 weeks
 - From Sept. 15-Dec. 31 to Sept. 8-Sept 30
- It would open the season 1 week earlier when bears are more vulnerable to harvest
- Success rates for hunters would be expected to increase
- Fall harvests have higher percentages of females than spring, and the earlier season could increase the female harvest
- Late season is mostly utilized by resident hunters, while most nonresident hunters are done hunting by October 1

Unit 4 Brown Bear Harvest Chronology 2003 - 2007



Proposal 36

(Eliminate wounding loss as mortality factor)

- BBMT recognized the inevitability of wounding and losing bears, and expressed concern but offered no recommendation – 2000
- Board passed regulation that counts wounded bears against hunters' bag limits – 2004
- Department established and implemented a system for including wounding loss – 2007
 - Hunter defines extent of the wound/bullet impact, location/blood loss, whether or not the wound is believed to be mortal
 - Hunter identifies bear as male or female (if known)
 - If wound is considered mortal and identified as male, then count as dead male
 - If wound is considered mortal and identified as female or sex is unknown, count as dead female

Summary

- Five proposals are offered as mechanisms for reducing Unit 4 bear harvests and keeping them within guidelines established by the BBMT
- Proposals 34 and 35 are outside the scope of the BBMT's recommendations
- Proposals 32, 33, and 36 are within the scope of the BBMT's recommendations; however:
 - Proposal 32 would be difficult for guide bookings and accommodations and could result in excessively reduced harvest levels
 - Proposal 33 would increase vulnerability of bears along streams, including females, and impacts would be disparate between resident and nonresident hunters
 - Proposal 36 would discount mortalities associated with wounding, which does impact the bear population

Proposals 32 – 36

- AC Votes:
 - Icy Straits
 - Sitka
 - Juneau Douglas

All 3 ACs voted Do Not Adopt and recommended use of the BBMS to address the issues

Proposals 32 – 36

- Department Position:

No Recommendation

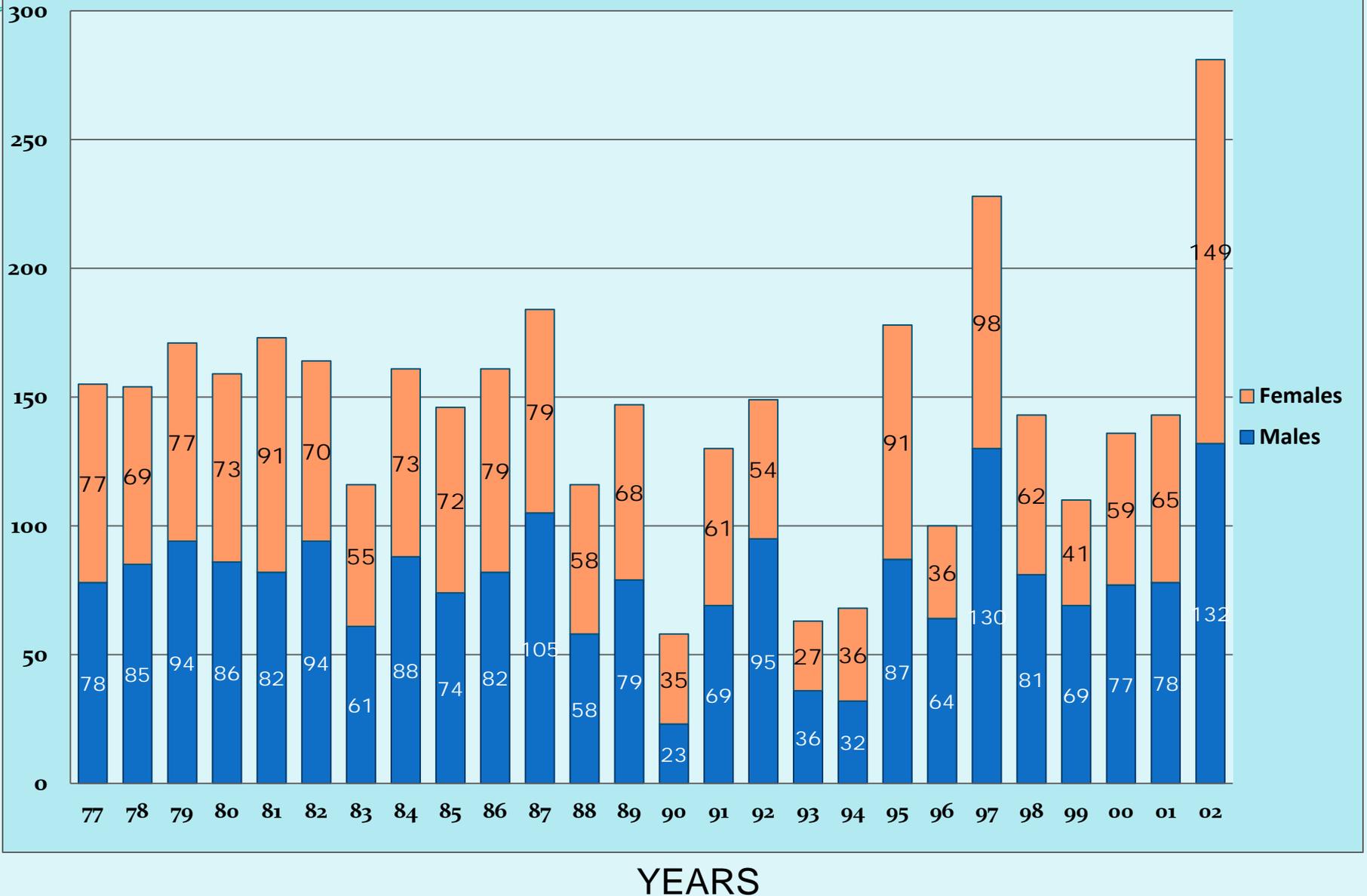
Proposal 37

- This proposal extends the otter trapping season in Unit 4, by changing it to November 10 – April 30.
- Currently the season is Dec 1-Feb 15
- Public proposal
- Department Recommendation:
No Recommendation

Discussion

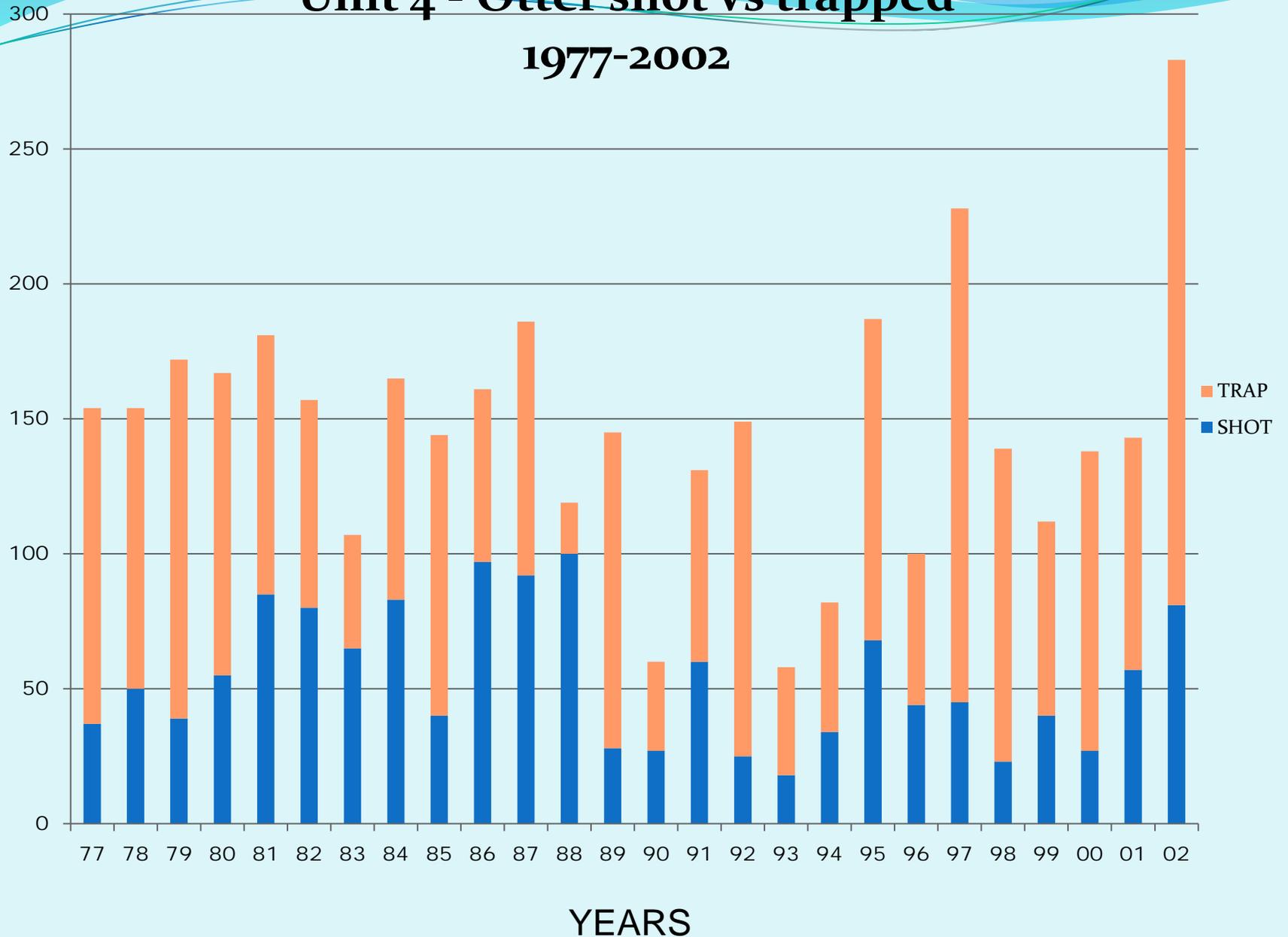
- Proponent of proposal cites two reasons for requesting this season change:
 1. Would allow the retention of otters caught incidentally while beaver trapping;
 2. Otters are found in high densities and the current seasons are too short to allow adequate harvest opportunity

Unit 4 otter harvest 1977-2002

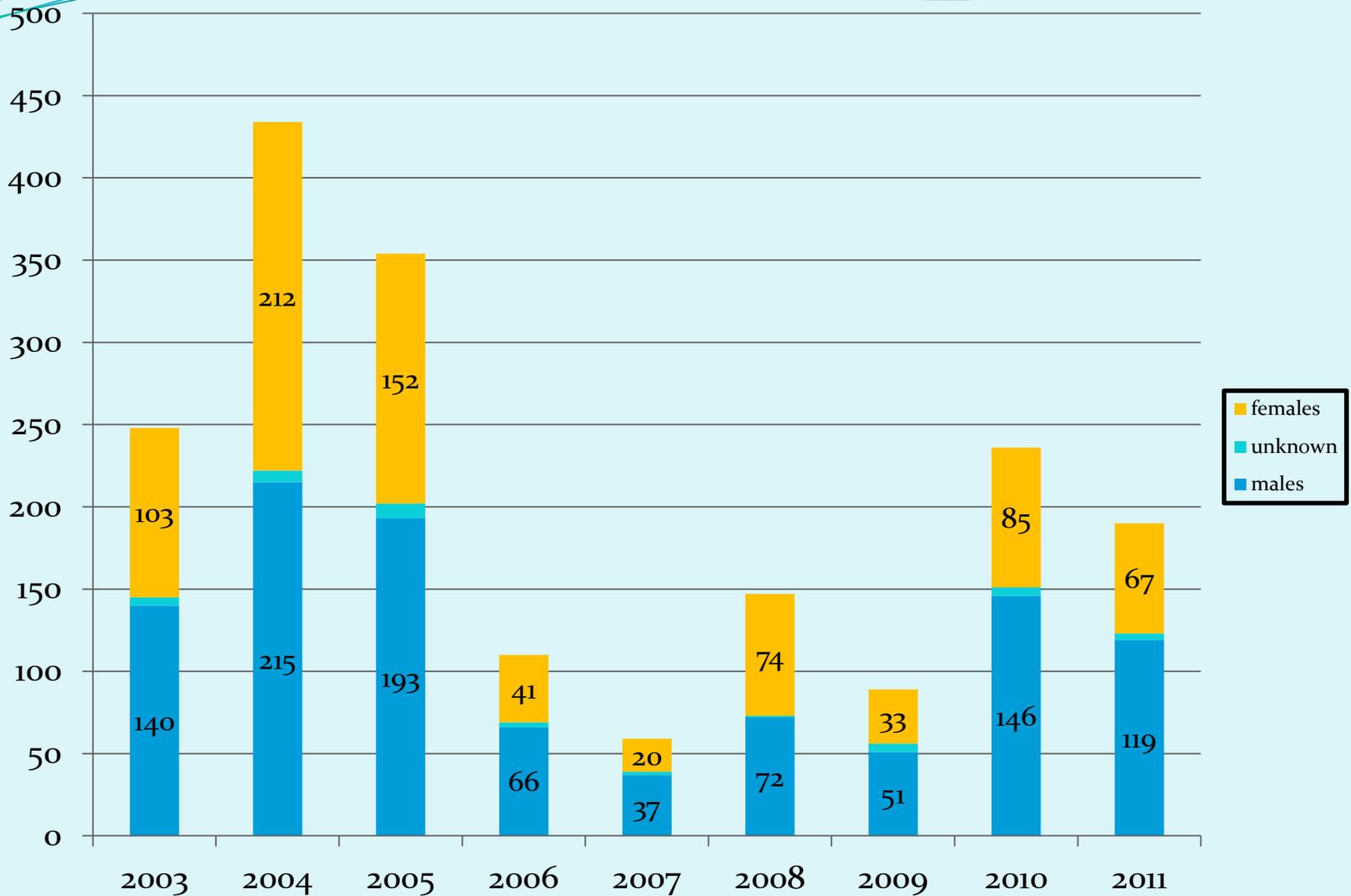


Unit 4 - Otter shot vs trapped

1977-2002



Unit 4 otter harvest 2003-2011



Discussion

- Data indicate substantial fluctuations in otter harvest in recent years under the present season lengths
- Raw otter fur prices have remained relatively high, varying between \$80 to \$200 over the last decade, creating incentive to maximize harvest
 - This suggests fluctuations in harvest may be due to real changes in otter availability rather than trapper effort

Discussion

Concerns with proposed season change:

- Extends season 13 weeks
 - This would more than double the present season length which could result in an unsustainable harvest
 - Delayed implantation results in Feb.-May pupping
 - Later season increases likelihood of catching females with dependent young
 - Latrine data – post-estrus activity at sites increases vulnerability of females
 - Boating weather and associated shooting of otters is much better in late winter

Summary

- Data from otter research studies suggest a longer season could increase female harvest including those with dependant young
 - Due to the vulnerability of otters (to both trapping and shooting), the longer season could lead to unsustainable harvests
- The present seasons have proven to provide both an opportunity for trappers while allowing for a relatively sustainable harvest over 30 years
- Few otters are turned in as incidental harvest (< 2 a year and this is usually nuisance situations)

Conclusion

- The Icy Straits AC originally voted to ADOPT but then dropped the recommendation to a Take No Action
- The Sitka AC opposed the action
- Department Recommendation:
No Recommendation

Proposal 38

- This proposal would extend the marten and mink trapping seasons in Unit 4 to Nov. 10-March 15
- Present seasons:
 - Dec. 1-Dec. 31 in NECCUA
 - Dec. 1-Feb. 15, remainder of Unit 4
- Public proposal
- Department Recommendation:
No Recommendation

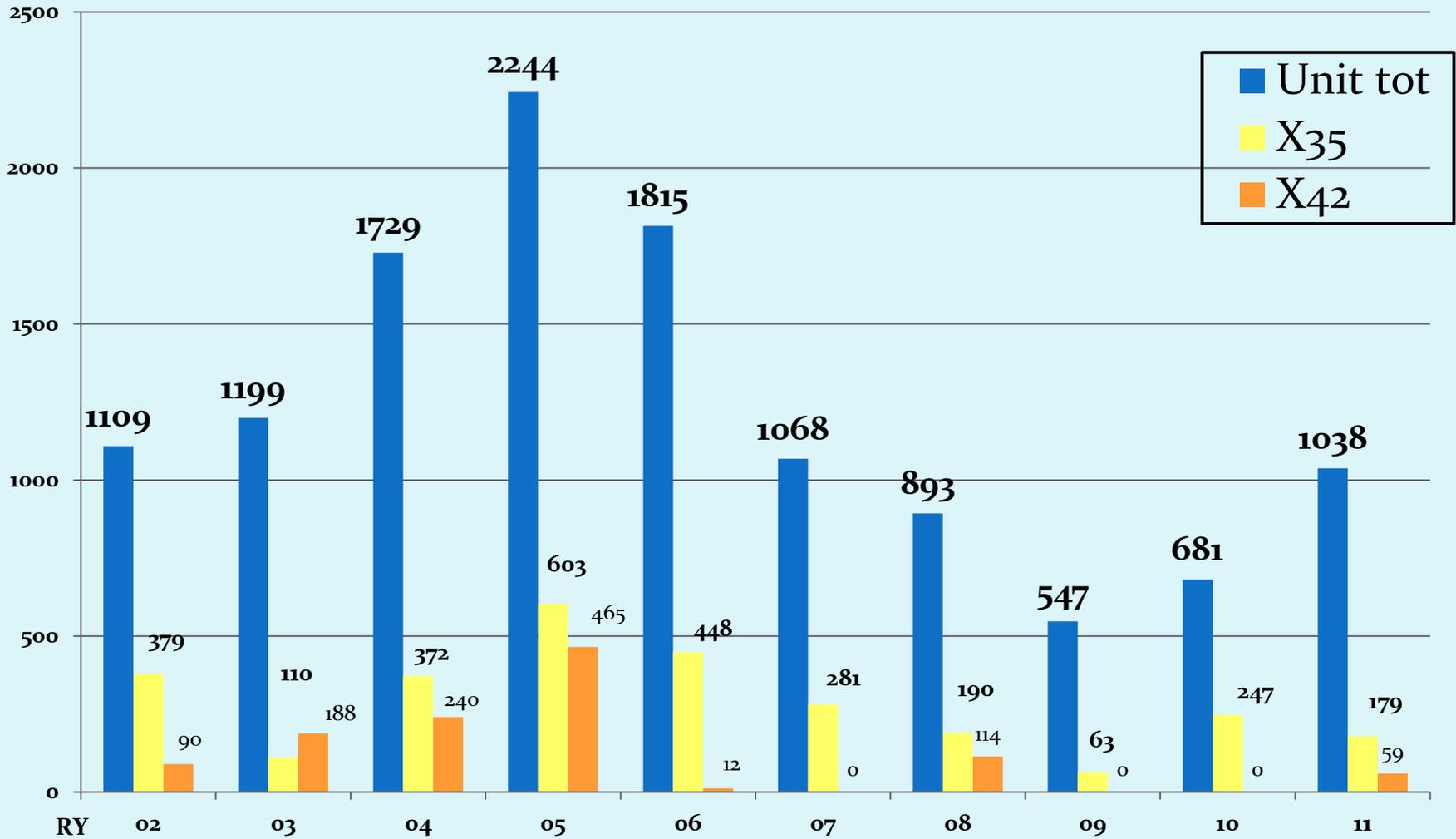
Discussion

- This proposal would extend the marten and mink trapping seasons in:
 - NECCUA: by 13 weeks
 - Remainder of Unit 4: by 7 weeks

Discussion

- Northeast Chichagof Controlled Use Area (NECCUA):
 - Season dates for marten and mink have been in place since 1992 (Dec. 1-Dec. 31)
 - Shortened to Dec. 1-31 from Dec. 1-Feb. 15
 - Due to conservation concerns with marten vulnerability near logging roads
- Remainder of Unit 4:
 - Season dates (Dec. 1-Feb. 15) for marten and mink have been in place since the 1970s

Unit 4 Marten Harvest Comparison to X35/X42 NECH 2002-11



Conclusion

- Present season (Dec. 1-31) for marten on NECCUA is supported by the department due to concerns with vulnerability of these furbearers to over harvest
- Seasons in remainder of Unit 4 are consistent with remainder of Units 1-4
- Icy Strait AC: “Support but a consensus that the current season structure had served the industry well for the recent past and should continue to do so going forward. The issue of loss of animals to bear, having happened several times locally this season even after the 1st of December, would only seem to be much more of an issue if seasons were moved to starting earlier in November when bears are still very active and hungry.”
- Sitka AC – Do not adopt

Recommendation

- Department Position:

No Recommendation

End of Slides



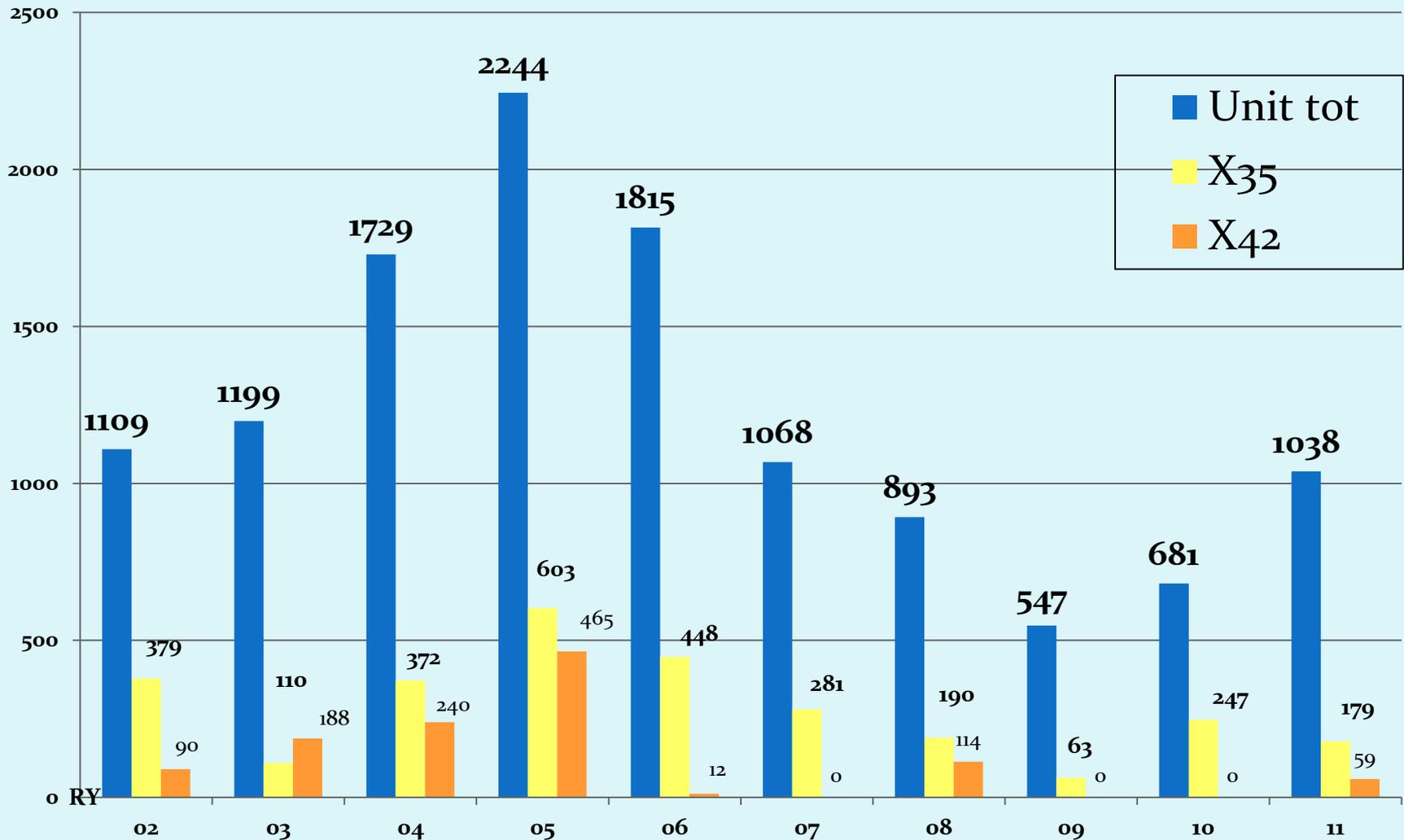
Proposal 39

- This proposal would extend the small furbearer season on Chichagof Is. by changing the starting date from December 1 to November 1
- **Department Recommendation:**
No Recommendation

Discussion

- Proposal extends small furbearer seasons by 4 weeks.
- Proponent targets marten as the species intended
- Result intended is to allow grouse and ptarmigan populations to recover

Unit 4 Marten Harvest Comparison to X35/X42 NECH 2002-11



Discussion

- Marten study indicated birds were a prey item, but the birds were not ID'd by species
- Amount of grouse/ptarmigan as prey items are unknown
- Other islands in Unit 4 and other parts of Southeast Alaska have small furbearer populations while still maintaining populations of grouse

Conclusions

- Present season (Dec. 1-31) for marten on NECCUA is supported by the department due to concerns with vulnerability of these furbearers to over harvest
- Seasons in remainder of Unit 4 are consistent with remainder of Units 1-4
- There is no evidence to suggest that grouse and ptarmigan would rebound with a higher marten harvest

Recommendation

- Department Position:

No Recommendation