

Doug Vincent-Lang  
*Commissioner*

[www.ADFG.Alaska.Gov](http://www.ADFG.Alaska.Gov)



Department of  
Fish and Game

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**

## **Deer Transplant Plans Underway for Southern Kenai Peninsula**

**June 3, 2025 (Soldotna)** – Plans for a transplant of Sitka black-tailed deer to the southern end of the Kenai Peninsula are taking shape. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game, in response to a public proposal introduced during the March 2023 Board of Game meeting in Soldotna, has been developing a strategy to capture and translocate animals to an area currently uninhabited by black-tailed deer. While proposals for the introduction or translocation of species are outside the purview of the Board of Game, the board and the department chose to discuss the proposal in a public forum, receiving comments from members of the public and advisory committees. Commissioner Vincent-Lang directed ADF&G to begin the scoping process at that time. The department has focused on identifying ways to maintain and increase food security throughout Alaska, specifically through the harvest of wild game animals. The goal of the translocation project is to evaluate the success of an introduced deer population, track their expansion and survival in a new area, and potentially add another big game species to the Kenai Peninsula for future harvest.

Sitka black-tailed deer are native to the wet coastal rain forests of Southeast Alaska and British Columbia. However, deer have had some help moving farther north. Deer already inhabit neighboring lands in Prince William Sound and Kodiak thanks to previous translocation efforts. In 1916, the Cordova Chamber of Commerce arranged to have eight deer from Sitka transplanted to Hinchinbrook and Hawkins islands in Prince William Sound. Between 1917 and 1923, 16 more deer were introduced to the islands. Those original 24 animals survived and flourished. Deer are good swimmers and spread to the mainland and to other islands in Prince William Sound. Legal hunting began in 1935, and now the annual harvest averages around 2,000 deer. Likewise, deer were transplanted to the Kodiak Archipelago in 1924 and 1930 where they have persisted and expanded. Separate from translocation efforts, deer have been occasionally sighted in Seward and as far north as Anchorage. A single male black-tailed deer was killed in a vehicle collision near Quartz Creek on May 29, 2025. While it may be decades before a Kenai Peninsula deer population is robust enough to be harvested, this is the first step toward that goal.

The initial strategy includes the capture of up to 25 deer from the Kodiak Archipelago between September and October of 2025. Exact capture sites have not been finalized; however, operations on Sitkinak Island are being considered along with other accessible state lands. Deer will be captured primarily from helicopters using net guns and will be sampled for health surveillance and outfitted with GPS collars. Animals selected for translocation will be adult bucks and does without fawns at the time of capture. Deer

will be transported by aircraft either through Homer or directly to their destination, depending on weather limitations. Based on habitat considerations and weather patterns, areas of coastal land south of Kachemak Bay are being identified for possible release sites. Capture operations are challenging even under perfect conditions; plans will remain adaptable to ensure the safety of ADF&G staff and the animals being handled.

Once the deer are released, they will be monitored through GPS collars to evaluate their dispersal from the initial site and survival. Additional transplants to supplement the new population may occur in future years depending on the success of the initial translocation. As a reminder, there is currently no hunting season for deer anywhere on the Kenai Peninsula (Units 7 and 15), and you are encouraged to report any deer sightings to the Soldotna (907-262-9368) or Homer ADF&G office (907-235-1725).

To learn more about the history of game transplants in Alaska, visit:

[https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/home/library/pdfs/wildlife/research\\_pdfs/game\\_transplants\\_alaska.pdf](https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/static/home/library/pdfs/wildlife/research_pdfs/game_transplants_alaska.pdf)

**Media Contact:** For more information contact Regional Supervisor Cynthia Wardlow at [cynthia.wardlow@alaska.gov](mailto:cynthia.wardlow@alaska.gov), 907-267-2529; or Director Ryan Scott at [ryan.scott@alaska.gov](mailto:ryan.scott@alaska.gov), 907-465-