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Department of
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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Additional Deer Released on Kenai Peninsula; Fawns Produced from 2025 Effort

September 29, 2026 (Soldotna) — In late September, the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) moved nine Sitka black-tailed deer, seven does and two bucks, from Kodiak to the southern Kenai Peninsula. This is the second year of the project, intended to supplement the deer population on the Kenai Peninsula which includes previously translocated deer and those moving to the Kenai Peninsula naturally. Biologists will evaluate the success of the introduced deer population, track their expansion and survival, document reproduction, and potentially add another big game species on the Kenai Peninsula for future harvest.

“We have had deer sightings on the Kenai Peninsula for many years from the public and our biologists, but we haven’t had documentation that they have been able to establish a persistent population and reproduce,” said Regional Supervisor Cyndi Wardlow. “Part of this project is trying to answer the question of if the translocated deer can reproduce successfully in the new area and hopefully add to the deer that are naturally moving in.”

Similarly to last year, a team of biologists, veterinarians, technicians, and helicopter crews captured and moved deer from state lands on Sitkinak Island at the south end of the Kodiak Archipelago. Deer were caught using a netgun, sedated, and transported to the release site near Port Chatham. Deer were marked with ear tags, fitted with GPS collars, sampled for health surveillance, and held for monitoring while they recovered from the sedation. When they were alert and mobile the pen was opened and they were released. One doe was euthanized during the operation after lesions from an unknown cause were found; samples were collected for additional disease testing.

The nine deer moved this year will join the animals moved in 2025, bringing the total to nine does and five bucks with active GPS collars on the Kenai Peninsula. To evaluate success of the project, the

translocated deer have been monitored daily for dispersal and survival since release through their collars. Most of the deer moved in 2025 were within five miles of each other during the last rutting season, increasing the chances of successful breeding. In June and early July, each of the does were located using a fixed-wing aircraft in hopes of spotting fawns with them. With their small size and cryptic coloration, fawns are difficult to see even in ideal conditions. No fawns were observed during the flights but may have been present and obscured by vegetation. In early August, however, pictures of a collared doe accompanied by two fawns were captured on an ADF&G trail camera. This is the first record of successful reproduction in the translocated deer population.

Inclement weather with high winds and fog created a limiting factor for the 2026 operational period. One transport flight enroute to Port Chatham with an additional five does was aborted due to quickly deteriorating weather conditions. Deer from that flight were safely released on Afognak Island and are marked with yellow and blue ear tags that say “Do Not Consume” due to their recent sedation. Hunters should avoid harvesting these animals. If a marked or tagged animal is taken, contact the nearest ADF&G office for more information.

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

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Photo 1. Collared doe with two fawns on the Kenai Peninsula. Photo credit ADF&G.



Photo 2. Collared doe with two fawns on the Kenai Peninsula. Photo credit ADF&G.

