

**DEER  
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

**STATE:** Alaska

**GRANT AND SEGMENT NO.** W-33-6

**PROJECT NO.** 2.0

**PERIOD:** 1 July 2007 – 30 June 2008

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Statewide

**PROJECT TITLE:** The Status of Deer and Factors Influencing Their Populations

**REPORT DESCRIPTION:** This performance report describes deer survey and inventory activities. Regionwide activities are listed before specific activities by game management unit.

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**The Status of Deer  
and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region I**

**Regionwide Activities:**

**ACTIVITY 1:** Determine harvest and population trends using a mail survey of deer hunters.

Mail-out harvest survey procedures changed in 2006 because of a cooperative agreement with the Forest Service to require all deer hunters in Unit 2 to submit harvest reports. As a result, 2614 hunters from Southeast (excluding those that hunted in Unit 2) were randomly selected. An additional 2754 hunters were included in the required reporting for Unit 2. Information from these reports was data-entered and summary reports were produced.

**ACTIVITY 2:** Conduct spring pellet-group surveys at selected locations throughout the region.

Pellet-group surveys were conducted in April - June 2008. Relatively deep snow at the mid to upper elevations of the deer pellet transects delayed many of the pellet surveys throughout the region; however, field crews were able to complete 24 VCUs during this period.

**ACTIVITY 3:** Conduct mortality transects in key areas as needed and budgets allow.

Because the winter wasn't as severe as the previous year, mortality surveys were limited to the northern portion of Unit 4, most specifically north Baranof and south Chichigof islands. More than 18 miles of beach transects were conducted along with 4 transects from sea level to 1,000 feet in elevation. Mortalities in other areas were recorded along deer pellet transects.

**ACTIVITY 4:** Monitor the harvest by communicating with hunters on an opportunistic basis.

Project No. 2.0 – Deer S&I  
FY08 Annual Performance Report

Staffs noted anecdotal information from discussions with hunters throughout the 2007 deer hunting season. Due to the previous year's heavy November snowfall, and a widespread interest and concern for deer numbers, numerous hunters visited with biologists to share their hunting experiences as they related to deer numbers and hunting success.

**Submitted by:** Neil Barten, Region I Management Coordinator

## **The Status of Deer and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II**

### **Regionwide Activities:**

ACTIVITY 1: Determine harvest and population trends using a mail questionnaire.

*Unit 6:* Mail questionnaire survey indicated a record low harvest of 1,200 deer.

*Unit 8:* Questionnaire was mailed to 3000 deer hunters and results will be published in a separate publication.

ACTIVITY 2: Monitor the deer harvest through field observations and contacts with hunters.

Contacts with hunters both in the field and over the counter confirmed the results of the questionnaire.

### **Activities by Unit:**

#### **Unit 6:**

ACTIVITY 1: Conduct aerial survey of Prince William Sound shoreline in spring to assess deer over-winter survival.

Spring aerial survey was not conducted in Prince William Sound because of limited flying conditions and pilot availability.

ACTIVITY 2: Conduct annual pellet group surveys in selected areas.

Conducted annual pellet group surveys on 22 transects. Preliminary analysis indicated decreased populations across the range.

ACTIVITY 3: Assess snow conditions and establish a severity index.

Snow conditions were more severe than normal and lasted well into the spring.

#### **Unit 8:**

ACTIVITY 1: Assess winter mortality in standardized mortality count areas.

During the winter of 2007/08 temperatures were within historic averages, but snowfall was greater than normal. Reports from the public and deer mortality transects indicated a loss of a substantial portion of fawns born in 2007, but lower than expected mortality of adult deer. Deer in northern portions of the Kodiak Archipelago experienced higher winter mortality rates than did those on the south part of Kodiak Island.

ACTIVITY 2: Evaluate improved procedures for assessing population status.

Worked with USFWS Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge to improve techniques for estimating deer numbers.

ACTIVITY 3: Assist Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

A unit-wide effort to assess the presence and distribution of deer with chronic wasting disease was initiated in the fall of 2003 and continues today. A total of 1,279 samples

Project No. 2.0 – Deer S&I  
FY08 Annual Performance Report

have been collected from deer hunters have been tested over the 5-year period. None of the samples analyzed has tested positive for chronic wasting disease.

**Submitted by:** Bruce Bartley