

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
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**DEER
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NO. W-33-7

PROJECT NO. 2.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2008 – 30 June 2009

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.

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

Regionwide Activities:

ACTIVITY 1: Prepare regional biennial deer management reports.

Deer management reports were written and submitted for each unit and sub-unit within the region where deer occur. These reports provide updated harvest and management information through RY 2008.

ACTIVITY 2: Determine harvest and population trends using a mail survey of deer hunters.

Mail-out harvest survey procedures changed last year because of a cooperative agreement with the Forest Service to require all deer hunters in Unit 2 to submit harvest reports. As a result, 2,697 hunters from Southeast (excluding those that hunted in Unit 2) were randomly selected. An additional 2,491 hunters were included in the required reporting for Unit 2. Information from these reports was data-entered and summary reports were produced.

ACTIVITY 3: Conduct spring pellet-group surveys at selected locations throughout the region.

Pellet-group surveys were conducted in April - June 2009. Despite unusually severe winter conditions in many parts of the region field crews were able to complete 17 VCUs during this period.

ACTIVITY 4: Analyze historical pellet survey data to examine correlates of deer-pellet density.

No work was done on this activity due to staff efforts being placed on other priorities.

ACTIVITY 5: Conduct mortality transects in key areas as needed and budgets allow.

Because of the severe winter weather in northern Southeast Alaska, mortality surveys were focused on Unit 4, on north Baranof Island and the south and eastern sides of Chichigof Island. Sixteen mortality transects were investigated, leading to the discovery of 17 dead deer. In addition more than 350 miles of beach were surveyed by boat and aircraft to assess winter mortality.

ACTIVITY 6: Monitor the harvest by communicating with hunters on an opportunistic basis.

Staffs noted anecdotal information from discussions with hunters throughout the RY 2008 deer hunting season.

Activities by Unit:

Unit 4

ACTIVITY 1: Collar up to 6 deer with GPS radio telemetry to collect information on habitat preferences and seasonal movement patterns.

Two deer were collared on Northeast Chichigof Island in approximately 2 weeks of effort.

Submitted by: Neil L. 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 harvest of 1,900 deer.

Unit 8: Preliminary extrapolated results indicated the 2008/09 harvest was 3,715 deer, including 75% males (5-year average = 4,725 deer; 84.8% males). Seventeen percent of the harvest was from Afognak, Raspberry, and Shuyak islands; 83% of the harvest was from Kodiak and small adjacent islands. Hunter residency was: Kodiak Island residents (46%), non-local Alaska residents (41%) and, non-residents (13%).

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

Staff routinely interacts with the hunting public with information about their areas hunting prospects and post hunt reports. In addition staff opportunistically interacts with hunters in the field while conducting surveys or when afield.

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.

We conducted annual pellet group surveys on 24 transects. Surveys indicated decreased populations in western part of the range and stable in eastern area.

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

New Snotel stations installed in Prince William Sound do not collect snow depth data required for snow index. We will purchase the required sonic probe and have it installed.

Unit 8

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

During the winter of 2008-09 there was moderate-high mortality of fawns. Adult deer seemed to fair much better than the fawns. Reports from the public and data from deer mortality transects indicated deer on the southern portion of the Kodiak Island experienced the lowest mortality rates in the archipelago.

ACTIVITY 2: Evaluate improved procedures for assessing population status.

A unit-wide effort to assess the presence of deer with chronic wasting disease was initiated in the fall 2003 and continues through this reporting period. To date, we have collected and analyzed 1,301 samples, most of which were obtained from hunters. None of the samples has been found to be positive for chronic wasting disease.

ACTIVITY 3: Assist Chronic Wasting Disease surveillance program.

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