

**Wildlife Restoration OPERATING GRANT
FINAL
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 115526
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Wildlife Restoration Grant**

GRANT NUMBER: AKW-B-R2-2020 Amendment #1

PROJECT NUMBER: 12.0

PROJECT TITLE: Region 2 Mountain Goat S&I program: Mountain Goat Populations and Factors Influencing Their Status

PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2021

PERFORMANCE YEAR: July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021; year 2 of a 2-year grant

REPORT DUE DATE: Submit to FAC August 28, 2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Cynthia Wardlow

COOPERATORS: Jeff Selinger, Nick Fowler, Jason Herreman, Dave Battle, Charlotte Westing, Nate Svoboda

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR

Objective 1: Population Size, Status, and Trend. Assess the size and status of each mountain goat population to determine the 5-year trend.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Regionwide

- Conduct aerial population composition surveys to determine status, trend, productivity, and mortality.
 - Goat surveys were completed in Unit 6 during Mid-September. Surveys were performed in the following hunt areas: RG248 (6D) and RG231 (6C). Goat densities ranged from 0.56-4.61 goats/square mile. Data for specific hunt areas relative to previous minimum counts showed goat numbers within the normal range for each area.

- In 2020, due to budget restrictions, a limited number of management areas were surveyed in Units 7 and 15 during September. Surveys were completed in 6 count areas during optimum survey conditions for mountain goats on the Kenai Peninsula. Overall goat numbers in Units 7 and 15 appear to remain stable.
- Mountain goat surveys in Unit 8 were conducted during July 2020 in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. Surveys comprised approximately 65-75% of known goat habitat on Kodiak Island and included all or portions of all hunt areas. Survey conditions were good to excellent during most surveys and visibility was clear to partly clouds with light to moderate winds. A total of 2,394 goats were observed of which 524 (22%) were kids and 1,868 (78%) were classified as adults and 2 were of unknown age class. The island-wide goat population is estimated to be approximately 3,000 goats.
- Surveys were not conducted in Unit 14C during this reporting period. Funding restrictions occurred just prior to favorable weather conditions.

Unit 8

- Develop an aerial survey sightability model that estimates detection probabilities, population sizes, and biases with aerial surveys.
 - A literature review of techniques was completed during this reporting period and further technique development, including the radio-collaring of individuals, will be required to estimate sightability characteristics.

Objective 2: Mortality/Harvest Monitoring and Regulations. Assess the number of mountain goats harvested by hunters and other sources of mortality that might have an impact on each population.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Region 2

- Monitor hunter effort and harvest from the registration and draw permit hunts and analyze the data, and collect additional goat harvest information through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters. Monitor cases of contagious ecthyma (ORF) and other diseases that might affect goat populations.
 - There were 566 goat registration permits issued in Unit 6. Harvest quotas were set at sustainable levels and harvest was 101 males, and 8 females (15%) for a total of 109 goats.
 - In Units 7 and 15, 98 goats were harvested during the reporting period (83 males, 29 females, and 2 unknowns). Four hundred and thirteen permits were issued, of which 210 were hunted.
 - During this reporting period all goat hunting in Unit 8 was administered by

issuing a drawing or registration permit. We issued 1534 permits in 2020–21 and 382 goats (242 males, 140 females) were harvested.

- In Unit 14C, goat harvest was monitored through harvest reports and contacts with hunters. Hunts are typically administered through drawing or registration permits, and recently we have allowed the Governor's permit to come from Unit 14C. We issued 201 permits, and 24 goats were harvested (16 male and 8 female).
- ADF&G staff were available in each of the 5 offices to talk to hunters and others to collect anecdotal information from field observations.
- No cases of contagious ecthyma were noted, but nasal swabbing for *M. ovi* was conducted in fall of 2020.

Objective 3: Habitat Enhancement /Assessment. Assess mountain goat habitat availability directly or indirectly in select areas of Region 2 and perform habitat enhancement where it is feasible.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Unit 7 and 15:

- Monitor collared goats for dispersal and movement patterns.
 - Resight data was collected in 1 area where collars were previously deployed in conjunction with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This data may eventually be used to develop a sightability correction factor for Kenai Peninsula mountain goat surveys.

Unit 8:

- No current collaring or monitoring of radiocollared goats is underway at this time.

Unit 14C:

- Work with relevant agencies (DNR) and helicopter operators to address concerns about helicopter tourism and remote operations in goat habitat.
 - Responses were drafted to DNR permit requests to reflect ADF&G concerns about increasing levels of ecotourism in potentially sensitive areas of mountain goat habitat. Additional literature reviews were conducted for information on disturbance to nursery areas.

Objective 4: Mountain Goat Management with Public Participation and Outreach. Manage each mountain goat population with an emphasis on engaging the public in management goals and objectives through public meetings, working groups, educational materials, and incentive programs.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Regionwide

- Prepare Mountain Goat Management Operational Reports and Plans every 5 years.
 - Information was compiled and data prepared to write 4 five-year mountain goat

Management Reports and Operational Plan for Units 6, 7 and 15, 8, and 14C. This report includes historical and current data, management directions, methods, Board of Game actions, harvests and natural mortality, habitat assessments, and local and statewide non-regulatory issues. They will be available at the following URL once published:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&species=Mountain+Goat&submit=Search>

- Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on mountain goat management.
 - We communicated with and attended meetings of local Fish and Game Advisory Committees, the Alaska Board of Game, Federal Regional Advisory Councils, the Federal Subsistence Board, Office of Subsistence Management, numerous local village councils and Native corporations about deer management and to review and analyze regulation proposals for the Alaska Board of Game and the Federal Subsistence Board.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

This project is ongoing. Summaries of past data trends are published at the following url:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&species=Mountain+Goat&submit=Search>

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

Project number 12.0 was underspent in Personal Services during the reporting period due to restrictions on travel due to COVID-19, and an overall budget shortage. Personal services were allocated to projects that did not require travel. Some goat surveys were not flown resulted in reduced spending to preserve Fish & Game matching funds, and additional commodities were not purchased due to limited need for the reduced activities.

IV. PUBLICATIONS

Project publications for previous years are available at the following url:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=librarypublications.wildlifepublications&sort=all&species=Mountain+Goat&submit=Search>

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

We recommend continued funding for this project to effectively manage mountain goat populations in Southcentral Alaska.

Prepared by: Cynthia Wardlow

Date: October 2021