

Wildlife Restoration MULTI-YEAR GRANT INTERIM 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-R4-2020 Amendment #1

PROJECT NUMBER: 6.0

PROJECT TITLE: Region IV Dall Sheep S&I program: The Status of Dall Sheep Populations and Factors Influencing Their Status in Central/Southwest Alaska

PERFORMANCE YEAR: July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021

REPORT DUE DATE: September 2021

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Todd A. Rinaldi, RIV Management Coordinator

COOPERATORS: Tim Peltier, Palmer Area Biologist & Heidi Hatcher, Glennallen Area Biologist.

Authorities: 2 CFR 200.328
2 CFR 200.301
50 CFR 80.90

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

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

Objective 3: Dall Sheep Management with Public Participation and Outreach. Manage each Dall sheep population with an emphasis on engaging the public in management goals and objectives through public meetings, working groups, educational materials, and incentive programs.

I. PROGRESS ON PROJECT OBJECTIVES DURING PERFORMANCE YEAR

OBJECTIVE 1: Population Size, Status, and Trend. Assess the size and status of each Dall sheep population to determine the 5-year trend.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Conduct summer aerial surveys in select areas to determine status, trend, productivity,

age, sex, and mortality of sheep.

Chugach Mountains (Units 13D and 14A):

During this reporting period 7 count areas were surveyed in the Chugach Mountains portion of Unit 13D which required a total of 33 hours of fixed-wing survey flight time from 3 pilots. Unit 13D is surveyed every other year. Six hundred and forty-two sheep were classified in 5 survey areas of Unit 14A which is similar to previous years (given variability in area access, etc.)

Talkeetna Mountains (Units 13A&E and 14A&B):

During this reporting period 7 count areas were surveyed in Unit 13A, 14A and 14B in the Talkeetna Mountains in July which required 45.5 hours of fixed-wing time. 771 sheep were classified.

Wrangell Mountains:

Surveys in Unit 11 were completed by federal staff using federal money under the guidance of DWC staff in Glenallen.

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

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Regionwide (Units 11, 13, 14A&B, and 16)

- Monitor the sheep harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters.

In Unit 11, 175 hunters under general season reported taking 60 sheep. A total of 27 draw sheep permits were issued in Unit 13 and 73 in Unit 14A. Of these permits 71 hunters went into the field and 32 rams were harvested.

There were 470 general season sheep hunters who harvested 51 sheep in the Talkeetna Mountains portion of Units 13A, 13E, 14A & 14B which is a decline in harvest from previous years.

In the Unit 16 portion of the Alaska range 35 hunters reported harvesting 7 sheep. Both areas have seen an increase in sheep hunting activity in recent years but this harvest is a decline from previous years.

- Collect harvest, age, and condition data from sheep presented for sealing by hunters

Staff sealed and collected information and measurements from 156 sheep presented for sealing in Palmer and Glennallen combined. This provides an opportunity to get detailed information on hunt conditions, animal condition, and horn growth.

- Opportunistically test for the presence of potentially population-regulating disease

Region IV collected samples from 6 harvested Dall sheep for disease and pathogen screening.

OBJECTIVE 3: Habitat Enhancement /Assessment. Assess Dall sheep habitat availability directly or indirectly in specified areas of the state and perform habitat enhancement in areas where it is feasible.

Regionwide (Units 11, 13, 14A&B, and 16)

- Record observations by biologists, hunters and other members of the public that relate to sheep distribution, habitat use and sheep body condition.

Observations of sheep distribution, habitat use, and body condition were recorded and evaluated through Unit 13&14 population surveys, discussions with hunters, and harvest locations.

OBJECTIVE 4: Dall Sheep Management with Public Participation and Outreach.

Manage each Dall sheep 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 (Units 11, 13, 14A&B, and 16)

- Provide information to state and federal regulatory processes on Dall sheep management.

All information collected is used inform state and federal regulatory processes. Outside of common communication with our federal counterparts There were no direct or substantial requests for information during this reporting period. Nine regulatory changes were proposed for the state Board of Game and one for the Federal Subsistence Board. Information on Dall sheep is readily available on our website.

- Convey information on population status, welfare, and developments to members of the public through public meetings and other public venues.

Region IV provided information to the public through State Advisory Committees and Federal Subsistence Regional Advisory Councils, Subsistence Resource Commission meetings to inform state and federal regulatory processes as requested although no regulatory changes were requested. Information on Dall sheep is readily available on our website.

II. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON PROJECT TO DATE.

All Dall Sheep Management Reports and Plans (SMRPs) for the 1 July 2011–30 June 2016 reporting period and 1 July 2016–30 June 2021 planning period have been published and can be found here:
https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=wildliferesearch.smrallsheep2011_2021

III. SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT REPORTS AND/OR AMENDMENTS.

None during this reporting period (see above).

IV. PUBLICATIONS

None during this reporting period.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THIS PROJECT

We recommend continued funding for this project in order to effectively manage Dall sheep in central and east-central Alaska.

Prepared by: Todd A. Rinaldi, Region IV Management Coordinator

Date: 8/16/2021