

**FEDERAL AID
ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION
PO Box 25526
Juneau, AK 99802-5526

**MOUNTAIN GOAT
ANNUAL SURVEY AND INVENTORY
PERFORMANCE REPORT**

STATE: Alaska

GRANT AND SEGMENT NR: W-33-4

PROJECT NR: 12.0

PERIOD: 1 July 2005–30 June 2006

PROJECT LOCATION: Regions I and II

PROJECT TITLE: The Status of Mountain Goats and Factors Influencing Their Populations

REPORT DESCRIPTION: This performance report describes Region I and II mountain goat survey and inventory activities. Regionwide activities are listed before specific activities by game management unit.

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

Regionwide Activities

Activity: Prepare biennial management report.

A goat management report was written and submitted for each unit and subunit within the region where goats occur. These reports provide updated harvest and management information through the 2005 hunt.

Activity: Survey goat populations, including sex and age composition, in key management areas within the region.

Surveys were completed in Unit 1A, resulting in a count of 184 adults and 31 kids.

The Petersburg staff conducted aerial surveys in 19 of 27 established trend-count areas during 5 days in early to mid August. A total of 608 goats were counted, including 468 adults and 140 kids.

The Douglas staff conducted aerial surveys in portions of Unit 1C and Unit 5, but did not conduct any surveys in Unit 1D. In Unit 1C staff conducted surveys of the Upper and Lower Taku River, as well as the area between Berner's Bay and the Katzehin River. A total of 275 goats were counted, consisting of 236 adults and 39 kids. In Unit 5, surveys were conducted at the Chaix Hills in Unit 5B; 150 goats, consisting of 122 adults and 28 kids, were counted. In Unit 5A, Nunatak Bench was surveyed due to the concern there for the rapid decline in that goat population; 19 goats (15 adults/4 kids) were counted. Douglas staff cooperated with

federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) biologists on survey data sharing in Unit 1D to allow for a more comprehensive interpretation of goat population status in that area.

The Sitka staff conducted aerial surveys with the focus on transitional areas on the southern end of Baranof Island where goats continue to expand their range as far south as Port Herbert. This survey located goats 7 miles farther south than the previous year's survey. A total of 760 goats were tallied in 11 hours during the late July and early August surveys over approximately 50% of the island; 609 adults and 151 kids were counted.

Activity: Monitor results from registration permit hunts and analyze the data.

The Petersburg Area office collected information on hunter effort and success through a mandatory registration permit report. The data was analyzed and reviewed during a meeting between ADF&G staff, U.S. Forest Service (USFS) staff and goat guides to discuss guide use allocations for Unit 1B goats during the upcoming season.

The Ketchikan Area office collected hunter information through a mandatory registration permit report. Staff continues to monitor horn growth characteristics through a voluntary hunter system. Annual growth patterns were measured on 14 of 27 goats harvested from Unit 1A.

The Sitka office collected horn measurements and growth characteristics on 39 of the 53 goats harvested in Unit 4.

The Douglas Area office collected hunter information through a mandatory registration permit report in Units 1C, 1D, and 5. Hunt report data included location of hunt, mode of access used, days hunted, and commercial services used. If the hunter was successful, the report also queried the location of the kill. In both Unit 5 and Unit 1D hunters are required to bring in horns for aging and sex identification. From the horns, we collected data on length, base circumference, length of growth during each year, sex of goat, and age of goat. We examined 6 and 30 sets of goat horns for Unit 5 and Unit 1D respectively. In Unit 1C the presentation of horns is voluntary, so we were able to inspect only 6 sets of goat horns.

Activity: Update guideline harvest level objectives for selected goat herds based on a review of long-term harvests on the herds.

Discussion on harvest guidelines occurred during the year. Unit 4 has experienced an increase in guided goat hunts, which has resulted in efforts to control harvest of females and conversations with the USFS about limiting guiding permits.

Activities by Unit

Unit 1C

Activity: Monitor the impact of sightseeing helicopter flights on selected populations.

Area staffs continue to gather information on impacts of flightseeing and other human activities in goat habitat. Though previous work on this focused in Unit 1C, work over the past year extended into Unit 1D with the city of Haines, helicopter skiing companies, and BLM to arrive at a permit process that would allow ADF&G and the city of Haines to restrict helicopter skiing activities in areas of concern for mountain goats.

Activity: Monitor, as information becomes available, the course of contagious ecthyma (orf) in northern southeast populations in case we want develop a separate research study.

ADF&G biologists conducted numerous interviews with goat hunters inquiring about any evidence of orf in goat populations being hunted. All indications are that orf is rare but occasionally observed in Southeast Alaska. During fall 2005, two harvested goats from Unit 1C had orf-like symptoms, and a third goat was found dead in a Juneau resident's backyard with the same affliction.

Unit 1C and 1D

Activity: Monitoring and some capturing and radio collaring of populations in areas where road construction or mining development may occur. (The bulk of capture costs will be paid by third parties. Up to 60 mountain goats will be captured.)

ADF&G biologists captured 23 mountain goats in fall 2005 and fitted GPS radio collars to the animals for monitoring. There were no mortalities directly associated with capture operations. However, within a couple months of capture, one female was found dead having broken a leg bone. It is not known when the leg injury occurred. Also, several months after capture a male goat died when its collar became entangled in human debris that was left on a mountain top, associated with local mining operations. An additional 37 radio collars will be fitted to goats during fall 2006.

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$43.6

Submitted by: Dale L. Rabe – Region I Management Coordinator

The Status of Alaska Mountain Goats and Factors Influencing Their Populations in Region II

Regionwide Activities

Activity: Prepare a biennial regional mountain goat management report.

Biennial management reports were prepared for units and subunits in which mountain goats occur.

Activity: Conduct summer aerial sex and age population composition surveys to determine status, trend, productivity and mortality.

Composition surveys were conducted with the following results:

Unit 6 — ADF&G and the USFS Cordova Ranger District conducted surveys in 1 of 16 active hunt areas during August and September 2005. Estimated number of goats in Unit 6 was 4170 with 20% kids.

Units 7 and 15 — Four count areas were surveyed resulting in the classification of 537 goats. The composition was 444 adults/subadults and 93 kids.

Unit 8 — During July and August 2005, with the assistance of the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge personnel, we surveyed about 75% of the goat habitat on Kodiak Island. We counted 1686 goats, all of which were classified (1367 adults, 319 kids). The kid:adult ratio (23:100) was higher than the average ratio noted during the previous 5 years (21:100). These data suggest the islandwide goat population was stable to increasing during this reporting period, with localized declines and increases.

Unit 11 — Count area 21, June 2005
49 adults, 10 (17%) kids

Count area 22, July 2005
53 adults, 19 (26%) kids

Count area 21, May 2006
55 adults, 16 (23%) kids

Unit 13 — No surveys were conducted in FY 2006.

Unit 14 — No surveys for mountain goats were conducted during this reporting period due to time, budget, and staffing limitations.

Activity: Monitor the goat harvest through field observations, hunter harvest reports and contact with hunters.

Unit 6

Hunters killed 81 goats including 60 males, 18 females, and 3 unrecovered for a total of 101 goat units. Total allowable harvest was 177 goat units.

Unit 7&15

The preliminary 2005–06 harvest for all permit hunts was:

Billies = 61 Nannies = 31 Unknown = 0 Total = 92

Unit 8

The number of drawing permits remained stable at 340 during the 2005–06 season. Registration hunts occurred after the drawing hunt season in the 9 hunt areas where an allowable surplus remained. Preliminary data indicate that in 2005–06 hunters harvested 149 goats (90 males, 59 females), up from the 2004–05 harvest of 148 goats, and above the 5-year average of 101.2 goats. Of 340 drawing permits issued, 206 hunters went into the field, and hunter success was 67%. Of 175 registration permits issued, 58 hunters went into the field, and hunter success was 17%. The harvest ranged from 4-43 goats for each of the 9 permit hunt areas.

Unit 11

Preliminary harvest 2005–06:

Males 11	Females 1	Sex unk 1	Total harvest 13
Number of hunters = 33			

Unit 13

Preliminary harvest 2005–06:

Males 5	Females 1	Sex unk 0	Total harvest 6
Number of hunters = 17			

Unit 14

The preliminary 2005–06 harvest was:

14A	Males 7	Females 0	Unknown 0	Total 7
14B	No Open Season			
14C	Males 20	Females 5	Unknown 1	Total 26

Total Regional Segment Period Project Costs (in thousands): \$54.7

Submitted by: Gino Del Frate, Regional Management Coordinator