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People

- About 6,800 year-around residents of Prince William Sound
 - Valdez (60% of the Unit 6 population)
 - Cordova (34% of the Unit 6 population)
 - Tatitlek
 - Chenega Bay
 - Whittier

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Economy

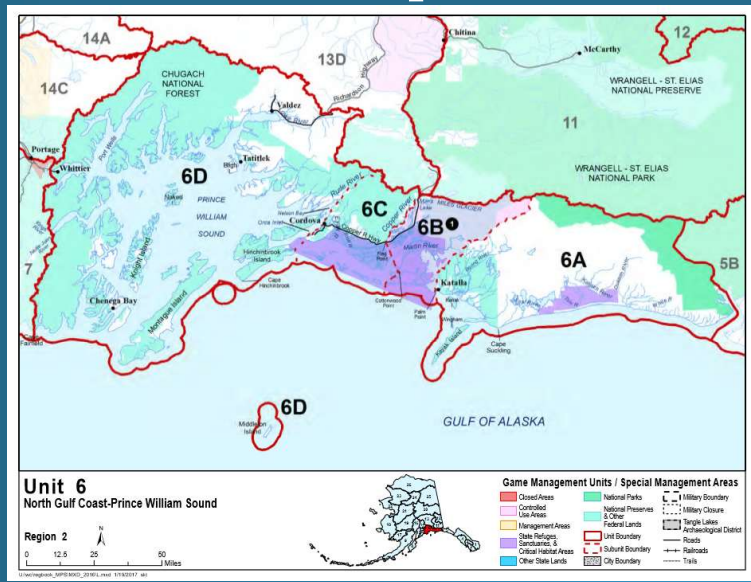
- Tourism
 - Whittier —“Gateway” to Prince William Sound
 - \$7 million+ spent on wildlife viewing and hunting
- Fisheries, aquaculture, and mariculture
- Guiding
- Mining and logging



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Land Ownership



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Sitka Black-tailed Deer

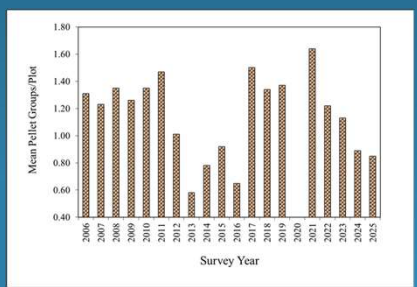


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Sitka Black-tailed Deer

- Indices returned to pre-crash (RY11) levels
- Fell after another hard winter (RY21)
- Severe winters high harvest and high winter kill
- Mild winters low harvest and low winter kill



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Sitka Black-tailed Deer

Hunt Information:

- Average harvest (RY15–RY24) approximately 2,000 deer
- Harvest ranged from almost 3,000 deer in RY21 to nearly 1,500 deer in RY22
- Buck harvest has been 57–69% with the average of 64%
- Emergency order authority

Two proposals related to deer in PWS.

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Mountain Goats

- Aerial surveys
- Managed with Maximum Allowable Harvest (MAH) and goat points
- Mandatory goat orientation in road system hunts
- Nanny harvest regulation since 2015
- Two goat proposals



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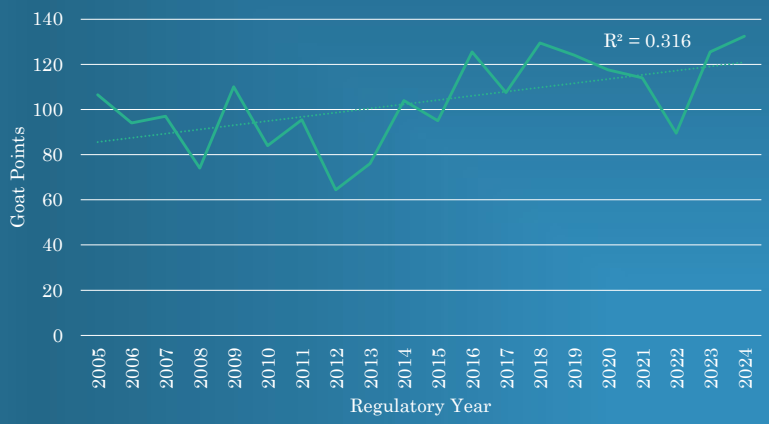
Mountain Goats



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Mountain Goats

Unit 6D Goat Harvest



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Cooperative Mountain Goat Study

Objectives:

- Assess populations with higher efficiency
- Evaluate sightability during surveys (winter and fall)
- Study habitat use and seasonal movements
- Determine parturition rates, kid survival, and adult mortality rates for mountain goats.



Kyle Smith
Sheep and Goat
Research Biologist

Charlotte Westing
Cordova Area
Wildlife Biologist

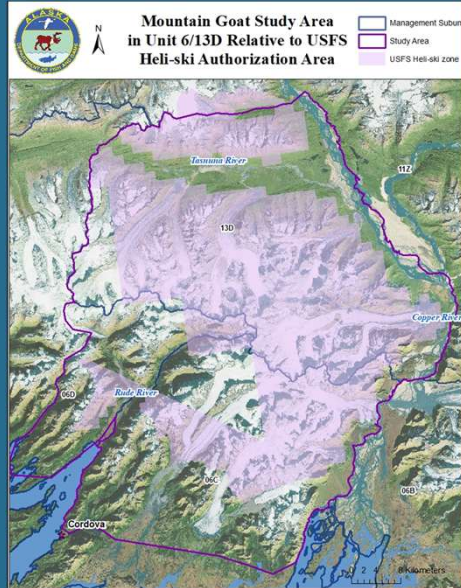
Heidi Hatcher
Glennallen Area
Wildlife Biologist



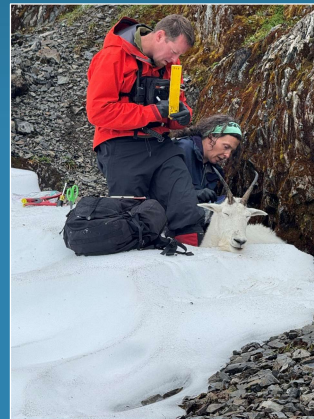
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Cooperative Mountain Goat Study



- Deployed 50 USFS purchased gps goat collars
(41 Females/9 Males)
- All collars drop 8/1/2028

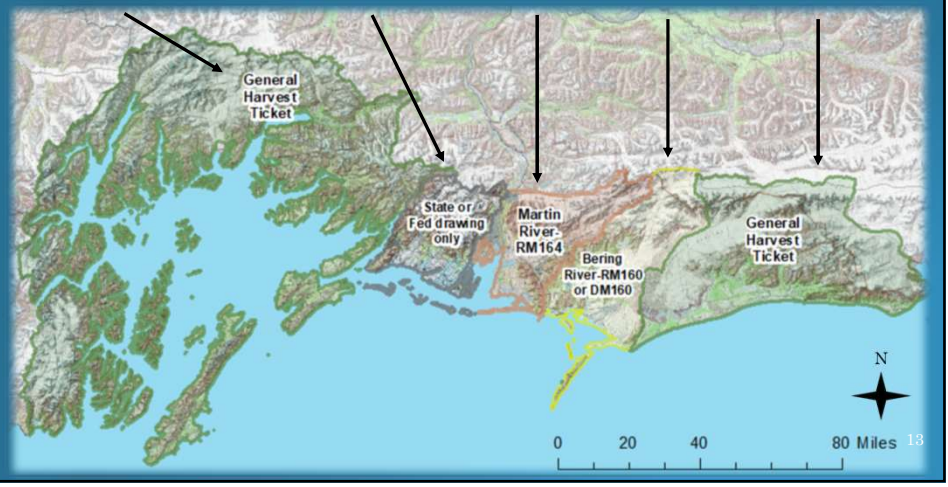


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Moose

	Unit 6D	Unit 6C	Unit 6B	Unit 6A West	Unit 6A East
Permit	Harvest Ticket	Drawing (25%Bull) and Federal (75% Bull 100% Cow)	Registration	Registration (Res)/ Drawing (Nonres)	Harvest Ticket
Regulations	Any Bull	Any Bull or Cow (Federal)	Any Bull	Any Bull	Antler Restricted
Population	Unknown	500 (RY23)	260 (RY23)	204 (RY19)	316 (RY19)
Objective	None	600-800	300-350	300-350	300-350
Harvest	Average of 8	Average 41 Bulls 30 Cows	25 Bulls	Up to 15 Bulls	Less than 20



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Moose



There are three moose proposals

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Black Bear

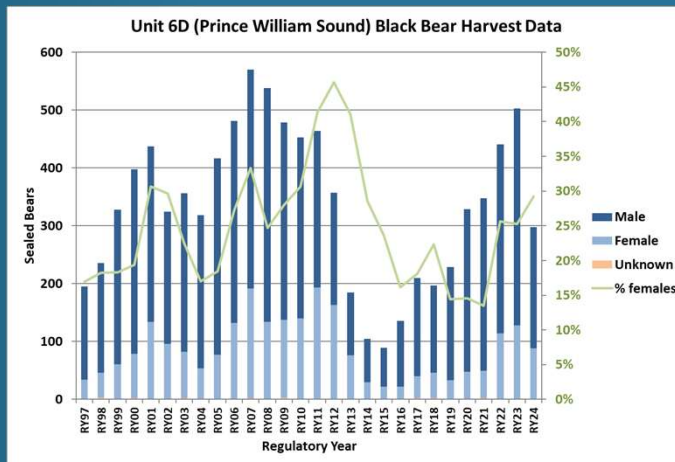
Background: Value of Black Bears

- ⌘ Black bears in Unit 6D are important to other users of Prince William Sound
- ⌘ An estimated 600–700 visitors per day during peak season for wildlife viewing

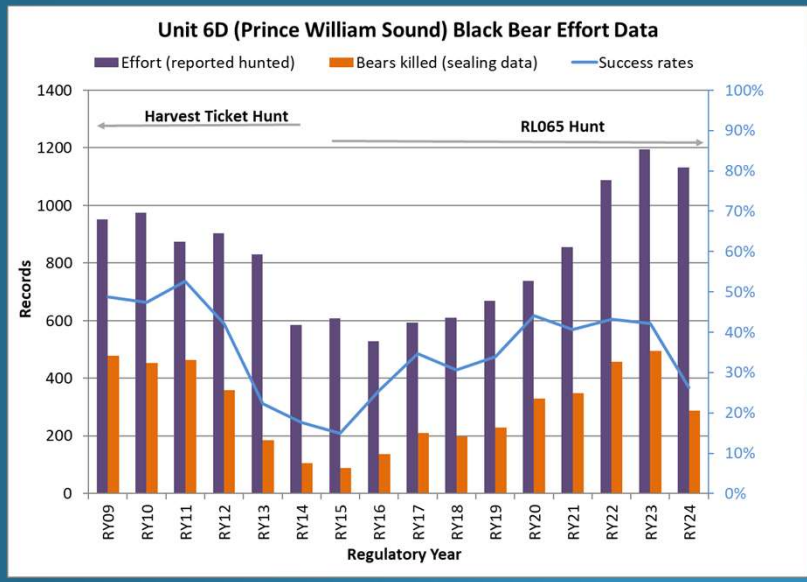


Black Bears

- Harvest increases, followed by declines
- Increasing take of females may also foretell decline



Black Bears



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Cooperative Black Bear Study



30.08 inHg 54°F 06/27/2016 04:52PM BB7

Charlotte Westing
Area Wildlife Biologist

Milo Burcham
Wildlife Biologist (now retired)
Chugach National Forest

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Summer work

- The captures were conducted during the summers of 2016-2018
 - 96 Bears were handled on Esther and Knight Island
 - 53 collars were deployed, each lasting about 3 years



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Winter work

- Spring den work
 - Photograph emergence
 - Replaced malfunctioning collars
 - Remove collars (5) that did not release by Sep 2021



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What we've learned. . . so far.

- We learned how to capture bears well!
- Efficacy of Ground-based Trapping of Coastal American Black Bears in Prince William Sound, Alaska

Westing, Skinner, and Burcham 2022
Wildlife Society Bulletin



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What we've learned. . . so far.

- **Second paper-**
Identifying stages of denning behavior and factors contributing to initiation and duration of each stage.
Westing and Skinner 2026 Animal Behavior (in review)
- Bears spend time in “transitional states”
- Temperature was an important behavior determinant
- Other studies found food abundance to be important
- Salmon abundance did not have much impact on the timing of denning.

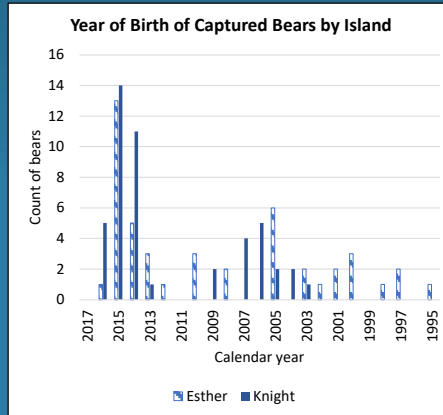


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What we've learned. . . so far.

- Age structure may provide population insights
- Underrepresented cohorts found in both captures (n=96) and harvest data

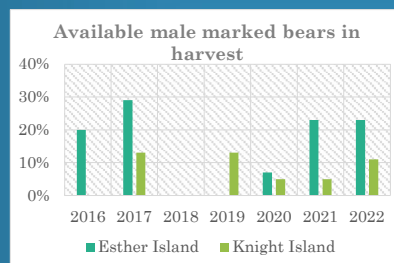
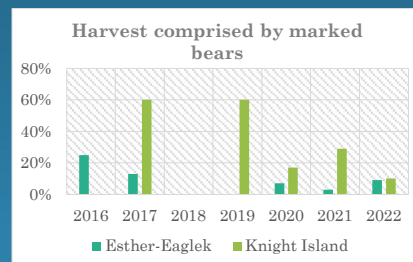


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What we've learned. . . so far.

- The vulnerability of bears to harvest may vary from year to year.
- Our final topic to investigate- where bears spend their time and what factors influence that.



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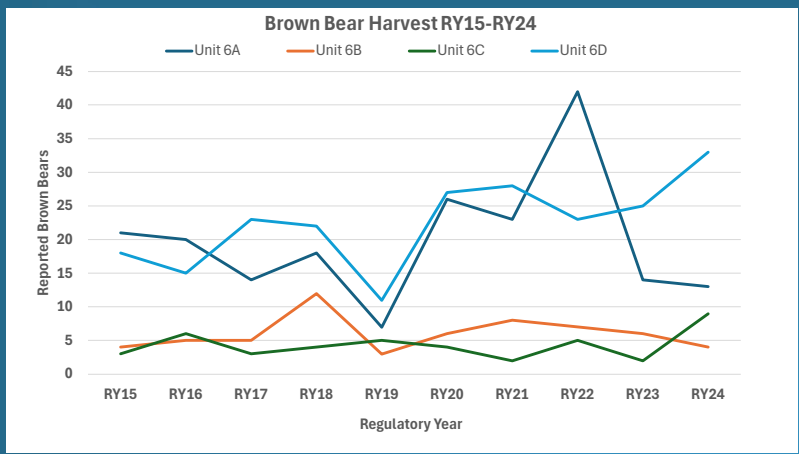
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Brown Bears

- Regulations:
 - Units 6ABC — one bear every regulatory year
 - Unit 6D— one bear every 4 years
 - Montague Island — Registration permit
- Managed by monitoring harvest
- No brown bear proposals



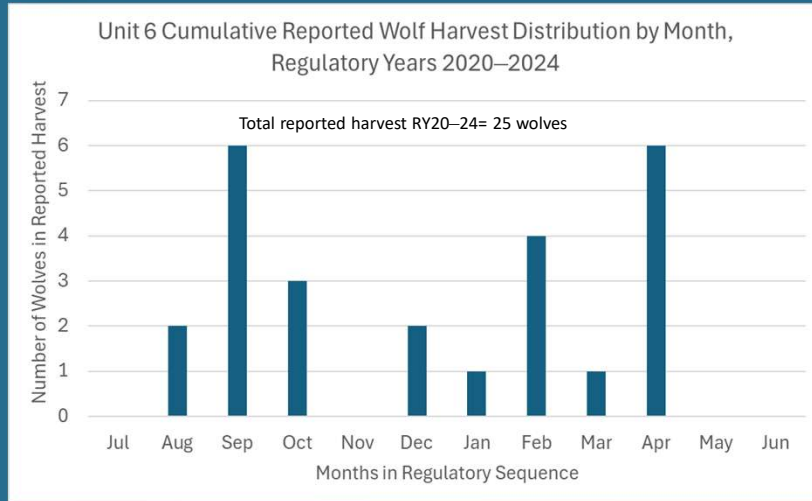
Brown Bears



Ten-year average bear harvest

- Unit 6A — 20
- Unit 6B — 6
- Unit 6C — 4
- Unit 6D — 23

Wolf



Hunting season— Aug 10 to Apr 30 Trapping season — Nov 10 to Mar 31
 Bag limit — 5 wolves No bag limit

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Other species of interest

- River Otters
- Marten
- Beaver
- Wolverine
- Lynx
- Coyotes
- Porcupines
- Snowshoe Hares
- Ptarmigan and grouse
- Muskrats
- Marmots
- Weasels
- Mink



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Special projects

- Dusky Canada Geese — ADFG Waterfowl program



- Red Knots —ADFG TED program



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Outreach

- Community presentations
 - Research updates
- School outreach
 - Hunter education
 - Guest lectures
 - Preschool activities
- Bear awareness
 - Public Service Announcements
 - Cordova Times articles
 - Electric fence loan program



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Questions?

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