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National Park Service
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Federal Subsistence Board News Release



Forest Service

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Under the Authority of:

36 CFR Part 242.10 and .19
50 CFR Part 100.10 and .19

BLUE LAKE, MEDVEJIE LAKE AND THE SOUTHERN HALF OF THE KATLIAN RIVER DRAINAGES ARE CLOSED TO THE HARVEST OF MOUNTAIN GOAT BY ALL USERS IN UNIT 4 (Baranof Island)

The Sitka District Ranger, under authority delegated by the Federal Subsistence Board, is taking action to close the watersheds of Blue Lake, Medvejie Lake and the southern half of the Katlian River drainage to the harvest of mountain goats by all users. The closure will be effective at 12:01 a.m., Wednesday, August 1, 2012 and will remain in effect for the remainder of the season which runs through December 31, 2012. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) will issue a closure in the same watersheds, effective from August 1, 2012 to the close of the season on December 31, 2012.

An overall decline in the goat population has occurred since the extreme winter weather of 2006-07. Aerial survey data indicates a 21% decline in the multi-year average and a 42% decline since the high census in 2004. The number of kids per adult goats has declined 62%. From 1976-2000 the average age of nannies harvested was 3 years old. In 2001, it was 4.88 years old and in 2010 it was 6.10 years old. The trend indicates that too many nannies that comprise the reproductive component of the population are being harvested. Hunt effort and success has been concentrated in the principal watersheds of Blue Lake –Medvejie Lake, and Katlian River. Additionally, approximately 66% of Baranof Island's goat population occurs from the Green Lake watershed to the north, which concentrates hunters in a smaller geographical area. Even though ADF&G has made an effort to inform hunters about the effects of harvesting nannies that precedes 1992, and a concerted effort was undertaken in 2008 to persuade hunters to forego nanny harvest; the last 6 seasons have had an average harvest of 41.56% nannies with a low of 30% in 2007 and high of 61.2% in 2009.

A recent July 15 aerial survey of 18 collared adult goats revealed all had survived the winter, however of the 5 collared nannies observed only one had a kid accompanying it. Other un-collared goats had few kids with them as well indicating good adult winter survival but poor kid recruitment.

A public hearing was held on July 16, 2012 in Sitka, Alaska. The ability to teleconference was provided so residents of affected communities could participate. In addition to discussions about this special action, a management plan for the 2012 hunting season was also discussed. The management plan would establish smaller management units with distinct male and female goat harvest caps on Baranof Island. As harvest caps in each of the sub-management areas are reached, those areas would be closed to mountain goat harvest. Members of the public who attended this public hearing expressed support for conservation of mountain goats in the Sitka area through the proposed closure and application of the smaller geographic harvest point caps. Managers stated that four years of increasing population trend data would likely be necessary for the proposed closed watersheds to be re-opened.

The majority of Baranof Island will remain open for goat hunting but will be managed, as in the past 5 years, with a maximum point total as a guideline harvest cap. As in prior seasons, nanny harvest will be more restrictive than billy harvest when applied to the point total. If and when point totals are met, special actions will be issued to close additional watersheds and zones to prevent over harvest of goats. A map and description of the closed areas are available from the Sitka Ranger District Office and the Sitka area office of ADFG. Information on Federal subsistence management special actions for the Tongass National Forest can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/subsistence/subsistence.shtml>. For additional information, contact Sitka Ranger District Subsistence Biologist Justin Koller at 907-747-4297, Perry Edwards at 907-747-4220 or by email at jpkoller@fs.fed.us or pedwards@fs.fed.us.

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Information on the Federal Subsistence Management Program can be found at <http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/home.html>.

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