

To: Greg Encelewski, Southcentral Regional Advisory Council Chair  
Subject: **Chugach National Forest update for Southcentral Regional Advisory Council; Winter 2025**

**Staff**

**Darin Watschke** – Forest Resources & Planning Staff Officer; Anchorage  
**Andrew Sanders** – Forest Subsistence Biologist; Cordova  
**Dan Schmalzer** –Prince William Sound Zone Subsistence Technician; Cordova  
**Heather Thamm** –Kenai Peninsula Zone Subsistence Biologist; Moose Pass  
**Steve Namitz** – District Ranger, In-season manager; Cordova  
**Ruth DAmico** – District Ranger, In-season manager; Moose Pass  
**Andy Morse** – Chugach NF Law Enforcement Officer, Cordova  
**Vacant** - Chugach NF Law Enforcement Officer, Moose Pass

**Special actions**

None

**Cost Share with Alaska Department of Fish and Game**

The Chugach National Forest Subsistence Program is continuing to support wildlife in Units 6 and 7 through a cost share agreement with ADFG. This continues ongoing cooperative monitoring projects.

**Cost Share with Chugach Regional Resources Commission (CRRC)**

The Chugach National Forest Subsistence Program continues to work with CRRC to perform surveys for fish and wildlife populations important to subsistence users in CRRC member communities within the exterior boundaries of the CNF (Chenega, Tatitlek, and Cordova) through an ANILCA cost share agreement. We are still working to carry out moose surveys in Kings Bay, but have not had good survey weather.

**Prince William Sound Zone**

**6C Moose**

A public open house was held on the evening of August 15<sup>th</sup> to answer questions, and issue permits to moose hunters who are not available during normal business hours.

**FM0601 (Bulls)**

- Season: September 1 - December 31

Year	Applications	Issued	Hunted	Harvest	Did Not Report
2020	836	40	29	26	11
2021	1006	35	33	27	2
2022	762	30	28	25	1
2023	851	24	24	22	0
2024	841	24	24	24	0

### FM0603 (Anterless)

- Season: September 1 – October 31

Year	Applications	Issued	Hunted	Harvest	Did Not Report
2020	822	42	39	39	3
2021	991	35	32	30	0
2022	735	32	29	29	3
2023	834	20	20	19	0
2024	823	20	20	18	0

Native Village of Eyak Memorial and Sobriety Day Moose Harvest (FM0607, no season)

- 1/1 moose harvested

### Deer

Season: August 1 - January 31. In Unit 6, 5 deer may be taken, but only 1 can be harvested in January. Does may be taken between October 1 and January 31. Winter conditions were cold and snowy. Pellet surveys in the spring suggested that the PWS deer population suffered low-moderate winter mortality and are at moderate density levels.

No ceremonial deer permits were issued to Native Village of Chenega or Tatitlek IRA Council in 2024

### Black Bear

Work has continued with ADF&G on the cooperative Prince William Sound Black Bear project. ADF&G and the Forest Service are currently analyzing data and completing reports. Tissue samples have been analyzed for stable isotope content to determine each bear's food sources.

### Unit 6D Mountain Goat (FG0604):

- Season: Aug.20 – Feb. 28
- 2 permits issued, 1 goat harvested as of 01/16/2024
  - In 2023, 3 permits were issued and 1 goat was harvested.

### Salmon

- Freshwaters of the Chugach NF, outside the Copper River (FFPW01)
  - 110 permits issued in 2024
    - 249 Coho
    - 99 Sockeye
  - In 2023 102 permits were issued
    - 439 Coho were harvested
    - 43 Sockeye were harvested
    - 2 Dolly Varden
- Lower Copper River Dipnet Fishery (FFPW05)

- 88 permits issued in 2024
  - See NPS agency report for harvest data
- In 2022 71 permits were issued
  - See NPS agency report for harvest data

## **Kenai Peninsula Zone**

Six community meetings were host by the CNF from May through early August to issue fishing and hunting permits in person to residents of Cooper Landing, Moose Pass, and Hope.

- May 16<sup>th</sup> –Fish permit meeting in Hope at Bear Creek Lodge
- May 21<sup>st</sup> – Fish permit meeting at the Moose Pass at the Community Hall
- June 8<sup>th</sup> – Fish Permit Booth at Cooper Landing Softball Tournament
- July 30<sup>th</sup> – Hunting permit meeting in Hope at Bear Creek Lodge
- August 1<sup>st</sup> – Hunting permit meeting at the Cooper Landing Community Hall
- August 5<sup>th</sup> – Hunting permit meeting at Moose Pass Community Hall

### **Unit 7 Moose Registration Hunt (FM0004)**

- Season: Aug. 20 – Sept.25

Year	Issued	Hunted	Harvest	Did Not Report
2020	45	20	1	10
2021	54	24	1	1
2022*	98	49	0	2
2023	82	46	7	0
2024	78	39	4	1

\*2022 was the first year Moose Pass residents received C & T for Moose in Unit 7

### **Unit 7 Caribou Registration Hunt (FC0702)**

- Season: Aug.10 – Dec. 31

Year	Issued	Hunted	Harvest	Did Not Report
2020	41	13	0	11
2021	42	15	0	1
2022*	74	23	1	2
2023	54	19	0	1
2024	42	13	0	5

### **Unit 7 Mt Goat Drawing Hunt (DG0703)**

- Season: Aug.10 – Nov.14
- 3 permits drawn (DG338-Crescent, DG341-Cecil Rhodes, DG334-Mills Creek)
- 2 permits hunted
- No harvest

### **Unit 7 Dall Sheep Drawing Hunt (DS0704)**

- Season: Aug. 10 – Sept.20
- 1 permit drawn (Unit 7, excluding Cooper Landing Closed Area)
- 1 permit hunted
- No harvest

### **Monitoring and Collaboration**

The Dall sheep population on the Kenai Peninsula has declined by approximately 70% since the late 1990's (2023 BOG meeting) and similar trends have been observed in other regions of Alaska. Research suggests winter habitat may be a limiting factor, but drivers of sheep trends are poorly understood. The Chugach National Forest subsistence program initiated a small-scale lamb monitoring project within the Crescent Lake subunit (DG338). Recruitment of lambs is an important indicator of overall health of a population. The purpose of this project is to track recruitment within one of two State Drawing Hunt areas within the Chugach NF, and to supplement tri-annual aerial minimum count data conducted by ADF&G. Spring 2024 was our pilot year. Surveys were conducted once per week and focused on a known lambing area. A total of two lambs were consistently observed during the last 4 weeks of the seven-week study period between May 15 – July 2. The ratio of lambs to ewe-like sheep was very low, 13.3%. We hope to expand our survey area next summer to identify if any other lambing areas exist within the Crescent Lake subpopulation.

The Chugach National Forest collaborated with the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge in July 2024 to provide field support for a KWR led study examining Dall sheep response to natural wildfire. The study area includes the Mystery Hills and Round Mountain area that burned during the 2019 Swan Lake fire. The goal is to understand if fire disturbance can enhance Dall sheep habitat.