

To: Greg Encelewski, Southcentral Regional Advisory Council Chair

Subject: **Chugach National Forest update for Southcentral Regional Advisory Council; Fall 2025**

### **Staff**

**Samantha Carroll** – Forest Resources & Planning Staff Officer; Anchorage

**Andrew Sanders** – Forest Subsistence Biologist; Cordova

**Dan Schmalzer** – Prince William Sound Zone Subsistence Technician; Cordova

**Vacant** – 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

**Adam Dermish** - Chugach NF Law Enforcement Officer, Moose Pass

### **Special Actions**

SRD-2025-WSA-01 restricted the Unit 7 caribou hunt to bulls only by authority delegated to the Seward District Ranger. This action was based on minimum count data obtained from ADF&G indicating a conservation concern for the Kenai Mountains Caribou Herd.

### **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 ADF&G. This continues ongoing cooperative monitoring projects including a pilot project using game cameras to estimate the abundance of deer on Hawkins Island.

### **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.

## **Prince William Sound Zone**

### **6C Moose**

Season: September 1- October 31 (antlerless) / December 31 (Bulls)

826 applications received for 44 moose permits

24 bull permits and 20 antlerless permits issued for Unit 6C in 2025

- Public meeting held 20AUG to issue tags and provide information
- In 2024 847 applications were received for 44 permits
  - 24/24 bulls harvested
  - 18/20 antlerless 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 mild and wet, with early spring green-up. Pellet surveys in the spring were less conclusive than most years due to early spring conditions and heavy spring rain rapidly degrading pellets. Pellet data suggested that deer are at low-moderate density levels.

## **Black Bear**

Season: September 1 – June 30. In Unit 6, 1 bear may be taken. A state registration permit is required in Unit 6D. State harvest has continued to be high, with female bears exceeding the management objective of 25% of the harvest in 2022 and 2023. Federally qualified user participation is low in this hunt.

### **Unit 6D Mountain Goat:**

- Season: Aug.20 – Feb. 28
- 0 permits issued in 2025
  - In 2024, 4 permits were issued and 1 goat was harvested.

## **Salmon**

- Freshwaters of the Chugach NF, outside the Copper River
  - 128 permits issued
  - In 2024 110 permits were issued
    - 368 Coho were harvested
    - 99 Sockeye were harvested
- Lower Copper River Dipnet Fishery
  - 146 permits issued
  - Harvest data is due January 15, 2025, and still awaiting final numbers.
  - In 2024 88 permits were issued
    - See NPS agency report for harvest data

## **Kenai Peninsula Zone**

Six community meetings were held from May through early August to issue fishing and hunting permits in person to residents of Cooper Landing, Moose Pass, and Hope. A hunting permit meeting was not held in Cooper Landing this year due to lack of capacity. \* indicates meeting held by USFWS

- April 10<sup>th</sup> –Fish permit meeting in Cooper Landing at Cooper Landing Community Club\*
- April 30<sup>th</sup> – Fish permit meeting in Hope\*
- May 1<sup>st</sup> –Fish permit meeting in Cooper Landing at Cooper Landing Community Club\*
- May 6<sup>th</sup> – Fish Permit meeting in Moose Pass\*
- August 7<sup>th</sup> – Hunting permit meeting in Hope at Bear Creek Lodge
- August 8<sup>th</sup> – Hunting permit meeting in Moose Pass at USFS Kenai Lake Work Center

### **Unit 7 Dall Sheep:**

- Season: Aug.10 – Sept.20
- 1 permit was issued by drawing in April.
- None harvested in 2024, permittee hunted but was unsuccessful.
- Chugach National Forest has been collaborating with Kenai National Wildlife Refuge to study Dall Sheep habitat and populations in unit 7 and the impacts of the 2019 Swan Lake Fire.
- Chugach National Forest initiated a recruitment monitoring project within the Crescent Lake subunit in 2024 to supplement tri-annual aerial survey data collected by ADF&G. 2025 data has not yet been analyzed due to capacity issues. In 2024, two lambs were observed and the ratio of lambs to ewe-like sheep was very low, 13.3%.

### **Unit 7 Moose:**

- Season: Aug.20 – Sept. 25
- 57 permits issued
  - In 2024, 77 permits were issued and 4 moose were harvested

### **Unit 7 Caribou:**

- Season: Aug.10 – Dec.31
- 36 permits issued
  - Special action restricting harvest to bulls only
  - In 2024, 42 permits were issued and 0 caribou was harvested.

### **Unit 7 Mountain Goat:**

- Season: Aug.10 – Nov. 14
- The Federal subsistence Mountain Goat drawing for Unit 7 was held on April 21st, 2025. 30 applications were received for 3 permits.
  - DG339 (Grant Lake)
  - DG338 (Crescent Mountain)
  - DG334 (Mills Creek)
- In 2024 3 permits for the same areas were issued and no harvest was reported.

### **Salmon**

- Public meetings were held in Hope, Cooper Landing and Moose Pass prior to the beginning of the Russian River dipnet season. 181 permits were issued to residents of these communities. Harvest is tracked by the USFWS. 184 permits were issued to those communities in 2024.

### **Harvest Reporting**

- Online harvest reporting was disabled in January of 2024 due to OSM database upgrades. Online reporting has been our most effective tool for collecting harvest reports. Without this feature timely reporting has declined while increasing administrative work on our staff. We are excited for the new OSM database and hopeful the online reporting feature will also be available for reporting both fish and wildlife harvest in 2026