AERIAL GOAT CENSUS

OCTOBER 11 to 15, 1983

KOOTENAY NATIONAL PARK

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Park Warden
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Abstract:

In accordance with the Wildlife Monitoring Program, a fall (October 11 to 15, 1983) Mountain Goat (Oreamnos americanus) census was flown of all alpine ecoregions within Kootenay National Park. A total of 439 wildlife observations were recorded with the minimum Mountain Goat population being 300 animals. The Vermilion, Stanford and Ball Ranges accounted for the majority of goat observations; however, goats were noted on all ranges. Five other wildlife species were recorded of which Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos) and Big Horn Sheep (Ovis canadensis) were of special note.

1.0 Introduction:

Mountain Goats (Oreamnos americanus) within Kootenay National Park inhabit every major mountain range (Brown 1977; Gibbons 1978) and appear to be one of the most numerous of the large ungulates present (Brown 1977; Gibbons 1978; Poll Et al 1982.)

Although not designated as goat surveys, helicopter flights were conducted in 1968 and 1969 to inventory all large mammals (Brown 1977). A limited helicopter census for the Bow and Vermilion Ranges was flown in April 1977 (Warden Wildlife Card Records), however, it was not until Gibbons (1978) that a census specifically designed for goat was flown. Gibbons (1978) flew all the mountain ranges within the park and obtained a count of 231 goats and an estimated minimum population figure of 305 animals.

The Park Conservation Plan (1983) for Kootenay identified resource monitoring as one of the major resource related problems. Funding was made available in 1983 to implement the Wildlife Monitoring Program of which, the Mountain Goat census is a sub program.

2.0 Goals and Objectives:

2.1 Goal:

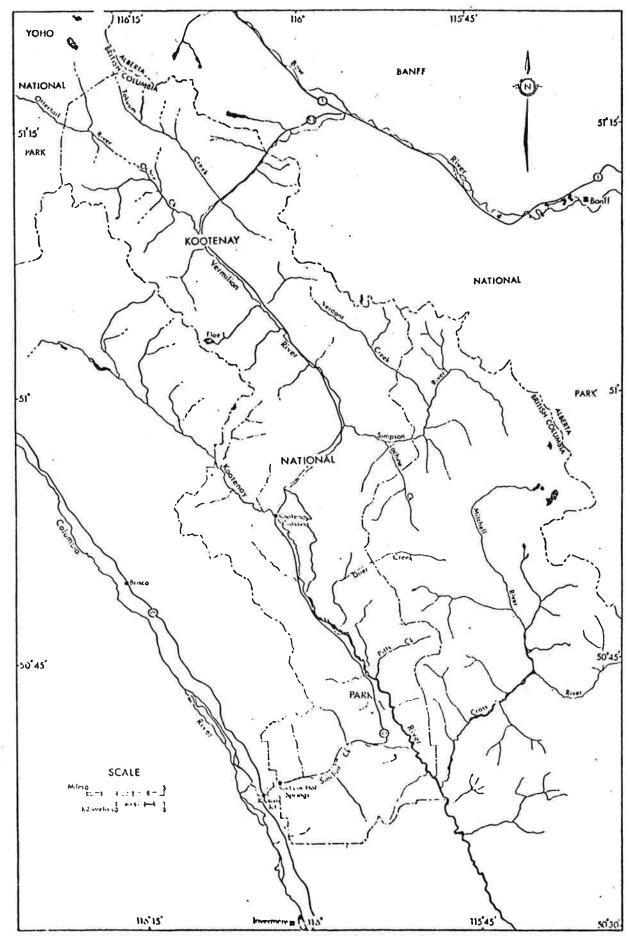
To obtain a minimum population estimate for Mountain Goats within Kootenay National Park.

2.2 Objectives:

To conduct an aerial goat census of all alpine ecoregions recording numbers and locations.

To record other wildlife encountered during the flights as to species, numbers and locations.

Map 1: Location of Kootenay National Park.



To identify the major fall Mountain Goat ranges within the park.

To test the aerial Mountain Goat Monitoring Program as to its methodology and effectiveness in observing animals.

3.0 Methodology:

- 3.1 A systematic series of aerial flights will be conducted to survey all mountain ranges within Kootenay National Park.
 - 3.1.1 Four days (12 hours) will be required to survey the entire park (map 2).
 - 3.1.2 The aircraft required for the census is a Bell 206B helicopter.
 - 3.1.3 The flight lines will be flown at 7,500 feet (alpine ecoregion) (map 3).
 - 3.1.4 The helicopter will be flown between 60 80 miles per hour.
- 3.2 Where feasible, flights will survey alpine areas adjacent to the park boundary.
- 3.3 All wildlife observed during the census will be recorded on N.T.S.

 1:50,000 map sheets and the appropriate Can.S.I.S. Wildlife Aerial Census Forms.
 - 3.3.1 Three park wardens will be required for the aerial flights.
 - 3.3.2 One park warden will act as a navigator and recorder of observations.
 - 3.3.3 The other two park wardens will act as observers.



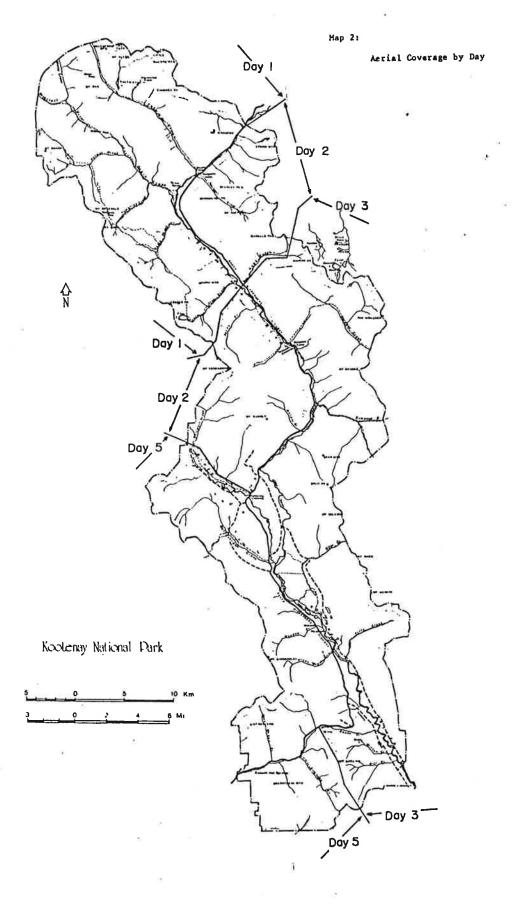


TABLE 1

SPECIES

MOUNTAIN RANGE	MOUNTAIN GOAT	BIGHORN SHEEP	GRIZZLY BEAR	MULE DEER	ELK	COYOTE
Bow Range	33	-	_	=	-	_
Ball Range	60	-	-	=	=	-
Vermilion Range	133		4	- 1	21	1
Mitchell Range	17	11	-	2	-	-
Brisco Range	12	61	5	11	-	-
Stanford Range	45	18	-	5	-	-
TOTAL	300	90	9	18	21	1

SUMMARY MOUNTAIN GOAT AERIAL CENSUS FLIGHTS
October 11 - 15, 1983

4.0 Results:

A total of fourteen point six helicopter hours (14.6) flown over five days (October 11 - 15, 1983) were required to survey the alpine ecoregions within the park. During this period 300 Mountain Goats were recorded. Goats were observed on all ranges (Table 1) but were most numerous on the Vermilion Range (133) especially the Mount Wardle/Mount Verendrye complex (99). Similiar areas of concentration were noted on the Stanford Range - Mount Sinclair (38) and Ball Range - Hawk Ridge (22) and Mount Haffner (17). Refer to Map 3 for individual locations. The average group size sighted was two to three goats, with several single observations on the exposed habitats. The largest groups recorded were on Mount Wardle and Mount Sinclair (11 and 10 respectively), both areas also had a group of 9 goats. Observations ranged between 6,000 feet (Mount Wardle) and 8,900 (Mount Oke) in elevation with the average being approximately 7,500 feet.

Five additional wildlife species were observed and recorded during the flights: Bighorn Sheep (Ovis canadensis), Grizzly Bear (Ursus arctos), Mule Deer (Odocoileus hemionus), Elk (Cervus elaphus) and Coyote (Canis latrans). Refer to Table 1 for species, distribution and numbers.

Bighorn Sheep were observed on three ranges - the Brisco, Stanford and Mitchell, particulary the Brisco Range (Mount Kindersley) with 61 sightings. The majority of sheep observations were in the upper subalpine ecoregion.

Two family groups of Grizzly Bears and two lone bears were also noted.

All sightings were in the upper subalpine ecoregion, southerly facing

slopes and at approximately 7,300 feet in elevation. One family group, a sow and three cubs were observed on the provincial side of Luxor Pass, while the other group, a sow and two cubs, were noted in the Floe Lake area, refer to Map #3 for specific locations. Individual sightings were made on the Wardle and Nixon Creek drainages.

5.0 Discussion:

Five days were required to fly the goat census instead of the predicted four. Only 1.5 hours were flown on October 14th, as the cloud ceiling closed in to 7,200 feet after the flight had commenced.

Ground observation conditions for the first three days were excellent with all but the northern slopes being snow free. Snow fell and conditions deteriorated during the night of October 13th making observations very difficult. Many of the goats recorded on the final flight (October 15th) were in the upper subalpine - alpine ecoregions amongst the trees.

It was noted after the first few sightings (October 11th) that the majority of goats were in the 7,500 foot elevation range (alpine ecoregion). Time, costs and effeciency of sightings have to be taken into consideration for the census planning. Similar flights in future years should also follow this flight line. The only deviations from this height were for the lower slopes of Mount Wardle, sections of the Stanford and Brisco Ranges and closer looks at specific groups to facilitate easier counting.

Although a little more costly, air speed was kept at 60 - 80 m.p.h..

The resultant blade slap started the goats moving and made observations much easier.

TABLE 2

MOUNTAIN RANGE	ACTUAL COUNT	REVISED COUNT*
		26
Ball Range	42	60
Vermilion Range	106	130
Mitchell Range	17	30
Brisco Range	10	25
Stanford Range	56	60
TOTAL	231	305

SUMMARY MOUNTAIN GOAT AERIAL CENSUS FLIGHTS

September 25 - October 16, 1978

*"Revised population data is based on this fall's aerial survey, plus ground observations made by Park Wardens over the past five years." (Gibbons 1978).

Table 2 depicts the results of the 1978 census flown by Gibbons. The 231 figure of actual goat sightings differs significantly from the results of the 1983 census by 69 animals. Gibbons revised count of 305 goats tallies with the results of the 1983 census (300 goats); however, the method used to calculate this number makes the results questionable.

Several interelated factors may explain the difference in actual counts between the Gibbons (1978) census and the 1983 census. First, the air speed of the helicopter was faster on the 1978 census. This fact is not noted in the Gibbons (1978) report; however, personal communication with Park Warden, Hans Fuhrer (observer 1978 and 1983) confirmed this assumption. Second, as reported in the Gibbons (1978) report, ground observation was hampered by snow cover during the majority of the census. Third, the goats may have moved out of the alpine area at the time Gibbons flew due to the snow conditions. Fourth, the flights may have been flown at different elevations thereby sampling separate habitats. Finally, natural population fluctuations over the five year period between censusing will have contributed to the count differences.

Results of the two aerial censuses initially indicate that the Vermilion Range maybe the most important area for goats at this time of year, with the Stanford, Ball and Bow Ranges next in importance. Gibbons (1978) did not indicate the numbers observed on the Bow Range; it is assumed however, that they were included within the Vermilion totals. Less favorable ranges appear to be Bow, Mitchell and Brisco respectfully. Further aerial flights at specific times of the year will be required to verify the seasonal importance of these ranges.

Time and low fuel made it impossible to fly the alpine areas on the provincial side of the Brisco Range. As there are major alpine areas here, these should be included in future flights.

It was decided to refly the eastern slopes of Mount Sinclair as a period of over forty hours had elapsed between flights and it was assumed that the goats may have moved over to the western slopes. On the initial flight, thirty goats were observed, while on the second only two goats were noted, however, no large groups were located on the western slopes. The goats could have been missed during the second flight due to the inclement weather on the night of October 13th that may have moved them out of the alpine into the trees or they may have moved out of the survey area altogether. In future, more specific cut off points should be utilized where a possible overlap of observations will not occur.

No accurate conclusions as to goat population trends may be made at this time. It would appear that the population is stable if not increasing slightly, however, another two consecutive years of data is required for conclusions to be arrived at with any degree of credibility.

With the exception of a few Bighorn Sheep on the Mitchell Range, the Mount Kindersley - Mount Sinclair complexes accounted for 88% of the total sheep observations. Consideration should be afforded these two areas for future monitoring programs.

Of special note were the nine Grizzly Bear observations. All sightings were in the upper subalpine, southerly facing slopes at approximately 7,300 feet in elevation. Although not meeting all the criteria for den sites, i.e. aspects from N.N.E. to E.S.E., average mean altitude of 2,280 m (7,500 feet) and average slopes of 33° (Vroom Et all 1977), these four sites are excellent indicators that the bears may be hibernating in the general vicinity.

6.0 Conclusions:

- 6.1 A minimum of fourteen hours over four consecutive days will be required to fly an effective Mountain Goat census.
- 6.2 Ground conditions during the census should be free of snow.
- 6.3 Only the alpine ecoregion should be concentrated upon during the census.
- 6.4 Helicopter air speed is most effective between 60 80 miles per hour.
- 6.5 Where possible the provincial side of the Mitchell, Stanford and Brisco Ranges should be surveyed for Mountain Goats.
- 6.6 Kootenay National Park has a minimum Mountain Goat population of 300 animals and they may be considered one of the most numerous large mammals in the park.
- 6.7 The Vermilion, Stanford and Ball complexes appear to be the main mountain ranges for goat within the park during the fall period.

7.0 Financial/Manpower:

7.1 Financial:

The total cost for the Mountain Goat aerial census was \$7,354.77.

Refer to Table 3 for financial summary. It should be noted that these costs do not include man-hours during the flight, report writing, production (typing and drafting.)

7.2 Manpower:

A total of 87.5 man-hours were required for the census flights. On the last flight a non warden staff member acted as the third observer.

TABLE 3

Company - Okanagan Helicopters Ltd.

Aircraft - Bell 206 B Helicopter

Rate - \$450.00 per hour plus fuel

DATES	HOURS*	SUBTOTAL	FUEL	OIL	COST \$
11/10/83	3.7	\$1665.00	\$195.18	\$ 3.70	\$1863.88
12/10/83	3.0	1350.00	158.25	3.00	1511.25
13/10/83	3.1	1395.00	163.53	3.10	1561.63
14/10/83	1.5	675.00	79.13	1.50	755.63
15/10/83	3.3	1485.00	174.08	3.30	1662.38
TOTAL	14.6	\$6570.00	\$770.17	\$14.60	\$7354.77

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL BREAKDOWN

*Refer to Appendix A for flight reports.

TABLE 4

DATES	HELICOPTER HOURS	NUMBER WARDENS	MAN-HOURS*
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12/10/83	3.0	3	16.5
13/10/83	3.1	3	21.0
14/10/83	1.5	3	18.5
15/10/83	3.3	2	15.0
			07.5
TOTAL	14.6		87.5

SUMMARY OF MAN-HOURS

*Hours include travel to and from lift-off points, down time for refueling and poor visibility. Refer to Appendix B for occurrence reports.

8.0 References:

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- 8.2 Brown, W.A. 1977. The Status Of The Rocky Mountain Goat (Oream-nos americanus) in Kootenay National Park. Unpublished report.

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- 8.3 Gibbons, T.R. 1978. Goat Census Kootenay National Park. September 25 to October 16, 1978. Unpublished report. Kootenay National Park Warden File C9810-8/115/K2. 6 pp.
- 8.4 Poll, D.M., M.M. Porter, M.J. Hamilton. 1982. The Wildlife

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- 8.5 Vroom, G.W., S. Herrero and R.T. Ogilvie. 1977. The Ecology Of

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 Series, No. 3.
- 8.6 Warden Service. 1983. Kootenay National Park Interim Park Conservation Plan. Unpublished report. Resource Management. 57 pp.

9.0 Appendix:

- 9.1 Appendix A Flight Reports
- 9.2 Appendix B Occurrence Reports
- 9.3 Appendix C Financial Reports

APPENDIX A

FLIGHT REPORTS

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SUB. TOT.

TOTAL

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APPENDIX B

OCCURRENCE REPORTS



		TO NOTE
SUBJECT WILDLIFE - AEI	RUL CEILSO - CORT	
DATE OCT 11/83	9:30 - 18:00 HRS.	
LOCATION OF INCIDENT NUCLT	HEWEST PERTICK - KRIP	©
PERSONS INVOLVED		
NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
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SUBJECT WINDLIFE - AERITH CENSUS - GEAT	
PERSONS INVOLVED	
NAME ADDRESS	PHONE
DETAILS ALTUM GULT CETUSIES - CKIM	Acom HELICOPTERS
BANK PASS MINETA TO SITTEM	

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URS INVOLVED FRICHT 3.0 HD / MM	2 Hectirs 16.5
INVESTIGATING WARDEN (S)	



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DATE	OCT 13/83	{{1}} 3∪ − /∠ √ HRS.	
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PERSON	IS INVOLVED		
	NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
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	ě	TO NOTE
SUBJECT WINDLIFE -	Atorum (Evisus - GRAT	
DATE 01 14 /65		:
LOCATION OF INCIDENTSTAIC	EOUSD EUROFR	
PERSONS INVOLVED		
NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
70.1W=		
DETAILS ANNUVEL (A)	CENUSCIS - CHHUNGA	L NEXILOPTENCY
	B SHENTLING PASS	PARION ((HOIGHU)
	It. FUHKEN	**************************************
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(2018년) 6월 1일		
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NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
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	A .	IO NOTE
SUBJECT LINIDLIFE - A	HERIM CENSUS - GYAT	£)
DATE COT 15/83	H30 - 15:00 HRS.	
LOCATION OF INCIDENT TAINE	end - Bruce PAULES	**************************************
PERSONS INVOLVED		
NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
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DETAILS		oxerio jauxice i ibios
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NOTES AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
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	3.3 HRS Win Here	
INVESTIGATING WARDEN (S)	P. A. Hickory	

APPENDIX C

FINANCIAL REPORTS



PARKS CANADA RUUTERAY NATIONAL FARK HO HOX 550 NADIUM, b.C. VUA 15.0

933 -H32612

27/10/83

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14-1-064568-0000-00

FLT RPT FLIGHT

TYPE OF AZC A/U

HUURS

REL

11-10-03 531774

BELL 206

GHHE

5.7

TUTAL HOURS

3.7 ======

ARIFF CHARGES

** TUTAL

5.7 OLLL 205

PRS & \$450.00/HR TARIFF RATE 5.7

1165 **

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GAS & WIL CHARGES

OIL

FUEL

DATE

3.7 HKS " 92.5 GALS 0

\$1.00/HK

\$3.70

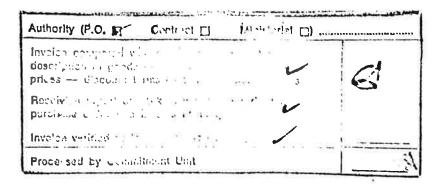
52.11/6AL

\$195.18

** THTAL GAS & UIL **

198.88

1,665.00



INVUICE TOTAL:

1,863.88 **

TERMS OF PAYHERT ARE NET 30 DAYS FRUM DATE OF INVUILE, INTEREST AT 2.0% PER MONTH (CUMPOUNDED ROWTHLY) WILL HE CHARGED ON UVERDUE INVOICES



PARKS CANADA KUUTEKAY NATIUNAL PARK 50 BOX 550 KADIUM B.C. VUA 1NO

H32613 933 -

> 27/10/83 DA - NONTH YEAR

> > 1

14-1-0645	68-0000-0	0	K3491-83-0653	
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TARIFF CHARGES

HRS a \$450.00/HR TARIFF RATE 13.5 BELL 506 13.5 HRS ** ** TUTAL

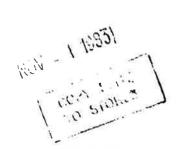
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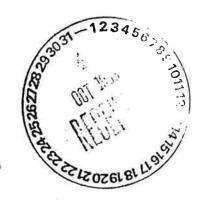
GAS & UIL CHARGES

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\$13.50 13,5 HR5 a \$1.00/HR UIL \$2.11/GAL 5712.14 337.5 GALS @ FUEL ** TOTAL GAS & UIL **

725.64





INVOICE TOTAL:

6,800.64

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Ministère	Transporteur			8	E	AL Y	G 1400
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Receipts to a	accompany invoice for all surch	narges (meals exc		reçus doivent accor es (sauf pour les repas		es pour tous les frais	4
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•	t ticket to substantiate charges; adrupticate with this form attached	d are to be forwar	ded to: Les	d'attente. factures (en quatre	exemplaires) et le	présente formule doiv	vent êti
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hereby given	for provision of the services specific	ed	servi	ces susmentionnés so			
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_/	/	- Date 07/10	1/83			Date 07/10	/B3
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Signature

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Date