

B.C. Mountain Goat Workshop, Prince George, BC 2005

Project Title: Mountain goats and Stone's sheep in the Buckinghorse, Sikanni Chief and Boat drainages, Prophet River Territory

1. Project Leader(s): Kim Poole

2. Project Team Members: Darcy Fear

3. Project contact information: Phone: 2508254063 Fax: 2508254073

Email: klpool@shaw.ca

Web page:

4. Project location: Prophet River, northeastern BC

Coastal: Transition: Interior:

5. Project timeframe: Start (month/year): Sep 1997 End (month/year, or ongoing):

6. Project status: Data collection Analysis Write-up Publication

7. Project objectives: (briefly describe the primary objectives of your project)

The objectives of this study were to delineate goat and sheep range in the southeastern portion of the Prophet River Territory in northeastern British Columbia, and to identify characteristics of the habitat and terrain features used by these ungulates.

8. Project descriptors (select all that apply):

Research

Habitat Use:

Forestry Interactions:

Management

VHF collars:

Oil & Gas Interactions:

Inventory

GPS collars:

Mineral Exploration:

Predation:

Harvest:

Aerial Disturbance:

Habitat Modeling:

Population Dynamics:

Human Disturbance:

Other:

8. Project description (provide a brief description of your project including methods and main findings or results to date):

Relatively isolated populations of mountain goats (*Oreamnos americanus*) and Stone's sheep (*Ovis dalli stonei*) inhabit the cliffs along the forested lower sections of the Buckinghorse and Sikanni Chief rivers and the Boat Creek drainage in northeastern British Columbia. Aerial and ground surveys were conducted in late September 1997 to delineate goat and sheep range in this portion of the Prophet River Territory, and to identify characteristics of the habitat and terrain features used by these ungulates. The areas were surveyed for 5.3 hours using a Super Cub, 0.6 hours using a Cessna 206, and 0.4 hours using an A-star helicopter. One day was spent on the ground at each of five locations, accessed by helicopter. A minimum of 90 mountain goats and two Stone's sheep were observed during the study, mostly along lower portions of the Buckinghorse and Sikanni Chief rivers. Most goats were observed on southeast to west facing slopes on cliffs/banks, vegetated benches within the cliff complex, or in the immediately adjacent timber above the cliffs. Pellet transects in the mature coniferous forests back from the cliff top suggest limited foraging or bedding activity beyond 50 m from the cliff. Trails used by goats were observed through the mature timber

connecting adjacent cliff complexes. Commercial-grade mature timber was found immediately above most cliffs containing animals or tracks. Goats were observed in mature forests dominated by trembling aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) and lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) in the Boat Creek area and by white spruce (*Picea glauca*) and black spruce (*Picea mariana*) in the Buckinghorse/Sikanni area. Mature aspen and pine stands dominated forests directly above the cliffs in the Boat Creek area, and in the Buckinghorse/Sikanni area black spruce-dominated forests were most often found above cliffs, followed by white spruce and pine-dominated forests. These unique populations of ungulates are potentially vulnerable to habitat disturbance and harvesting because of the limited escape terrain and ease of access within each section of habitat. Management recommendations include restrictions on hunting and resource development activities in the vicinity of the cliffs. Further research should be directed at delineating seasonal habitat use and movements through aerial surveys and/or use of radio-collaring.

9. Project documentation (provide a list of citations for all progress, final, or published reports)

Poole, K.G., and D.A. Fear. 1998. Mountain goats and Stone's sheep in the Buckinghorse, Sikanni Chief and Boat drainages, Prophet River Territory. Prophet River Wildlife Inventory Report No. 3. Unpublished report for the Prophet River Indian Band, Fort Nelson.