

THE GOATS OF GOAT MOUNTAIN: EVALUATION OF A PROPOSAL

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ABSTRACT

Most studies reported in the first two symposia on goat management deal with heavily exploited or reintroduced populations. Many researchers lamented aloud that they would never know the status and composition of their respective population in pristine times, nor would they be able to determine precisely how declines had occurred. Some have suspected that hunting may precipitate population losses at rates greater than simple subtraction of the kill would indicate. It is widely agreed that there is much yet to be learned about management of mountain goats for hunting. Due to limited access, there are a number of unexploited goat populations in Northwestern British Columbia. This paper describes a potential study situation on two such populations. One population, which numbers approximately 65 animals, occupies a small, isolated mountain block with an alpine area (above 4,500 feet) of about 6.5 mi.². A forestry development road, now within 10 miles of this block, will pass within two miles by the early 1980's, thus providing potentially easy access for hunters. However, this area has been closed to hunting in anticipation of its value as a study area. The second population, approximately 120 animals, occurs on another somewhat larger (25 m.² above 4,500 feet) mountain block which is also relatively isolated from other goat ranges. This area is still open to hunting but, although a new access road is now within three miles of timberline, hunters have

not yet discovered it. The two areas are logistically practical, occurring less than 20 miles apart and within 35 miles of Smithers to the nearest population center. I believe that a comparative study of the two areas could provide excellent data on the effects of hunting on mountain goats, and the purpose of this paper is to solicit funds, students, and/or ideas to get such a study underway.