

## Peer Pressure as an Effective Tool for Reducing Harvest of Female Mountain Goats

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**ABSTRACT:** Wildlife managers across North America recognize the importance of minimizing harvest of female mountain goats (*Oreamnos Americanus*) to maintain sustainable hunting opportunities. Low reproductive rates put goat populations at risk of overharvest when even relatively few females are harvested. Minimal sexual dimorphism makes male only harvest strategies impractical. Managers have employed various techniques to reduce female harvest including educational requirements and penalizing individual hunters (disqualified from future hunts) when they harvest a nanny. A point system with a maximum harvest of 6 points (billy = 1 point, nanny = 2 points) per 100 goats observed during aerial surveys is used to manage most Alaskan goat hunts. This point system was initiated on Baranof Island in Southeast Alaska with the 2006 season. The point system had no impact on high female harvest (>40%). Declining populations resulting from three consecutive deep snow winters (2006–2009) and continued high female harvest prompted managers to devise a new strategy of collective punishment referred to as “one and done”. Beginning in 2011, Baranof Island was divided into nine hunt zones with a corresponding quota based on recent surveys. But instead of a point system, a hunt zone is closed by emergency order after the first female is harvested, regardless of the remaining quota. In 2017, Baranof Island was further divided into 34 zones, allowing for greater opportunity if one of the new smaller hunt areas is closed. This strategy has created collective peer pressure within the local goat hunting community to target males, which maintains opportunity for other hunters. Since “one and done” began in 2011, female harvest has declined to 18% of the overall harvest compared to 41% in the 15 seasons preceding this strategy and has been the most effective management tool for reducing female mountain goat harvest in Alaska to date.

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**KEYWORDS:** Alaska, Baranof Island, mountain goat (*Oreamnos Americanus*), harvest strategy, hunter education, nanny, one and done, peer pressure.