



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



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## WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

### SUBSISTENCE AND ANTHROPOLOGY REPORT

#### FALL 2024

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### **Federal subsistence hunting permits issued for Wrangell-St. Elias in 2024**

Table 1 lists the preliminary numbers of caribou, goat, moose, and sheep permits issued by park and Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge staff for 2024 federal subsistence hunts on Wrangell-St. Elias lands in Units 11 and 12. As of September 6, 203 permits had been issued for these hunts. Park staff had additionally issued 30 Unit 13 moose permits at the Slana Ranger Station and numerous joint state-federal permits (RM291) for the moose hunt in portions of Units 11 and 12 in the northern part of the park.

**What is next?** Harvest information will be provided in the Spring 2025 report.

### **Upper Copper River communities surveyed about subsistence harvests**

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game Division of Subsistence, the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission, and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve staff completed comprehensive harvest assessments in Mentasta, Chistochina, Slana, and along the Nabesna Road in 2023-2024. Community data review meetings were held in Mentasta in 2023 and in Chistochina in 2024. A data review meeting will be held in Slana in late fall/early winter 2024. Staff have been working on a technical paper, which is scheduled for completion in 2025.

### **Community outreach meetings held for funding opportunity to address subsistence food security needs**

The National Park Service Alaska Region has been awarded approximately \$6.2 million in Inflation Reduction Act funding for a project that aims to mitigate environmental uncertainties and improve subsistence food security. Approximately \$1.3 million has been allocated to Wrangell-St. Elias, with about half going towards enhancing community subsistence food security resilience. During spring and summer 2024, Wrangell-St. Elias staff met with eleven tribal councils and six communities to introduce the funding opportunity and discuss project ideas. Proposals were accepted through September 30, 2024, and funded projects will start in 2025.

**Table 1. Federal Subsistence Registration Permits in Wrangell-St. Elias NPP, 2014-2024**

**Unit 11 Goat (FG1101)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Permits Issued	31	29	22	26	30	27	27	20	8	6	22
Individuals Hunting	10	6	4	3	8	8	4	2	1	2	
Animals Harvested	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
Success Rate (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

**Unit 11 Remainder Moose -- Fall Hunt in part of unit outside of the RM291 hunt area (FM1106)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Permits Issued	123	128	138	132	144	107	156	140	139	140	132
Individuals Hunting	70	70	75	72	85	45	68	71	66	59	
Animals Harvested	10	13	16	13	12	10	15	11	15	10	
Success Rate (%)	14.3	18.6	21.3	18.1	14.1	22.2	22.1	15.5	22.7	16.9	

**Unit 11 Moose -- Winter Hunt in southern part of unit (FM1107)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Permits Issued	32	17	20	14	11	8	8	7	10	21	10
Individuals Hunting	3	3	4	4	2	2	1	2	4	1	
Animals Harvested	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	
Success Rate (%)	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0	25.0	100.0	

**Unit 11 Elder Sheep (FS1104)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Permits Issued	25	25	32	34	38	34	38	26	25	22	30
Individuals Hunting	10	8	12	13	18	14	12	12	10	11	
Animals Harvested	1	3	3	4	1	1	1	3	2	3	
Success Rate (%)	10.0	37.5	25.0	30.8	5.6	7.1	8.3	25.0	20.0	27.3	

**Unit 11 Elder/Junior Sheep (FS1103)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Permits Issued	0	0	1	2	1	0	1	1	2	1	0
Individuals Hunting	-	-	1	2	0	-	0	0	0	0	
Animals Harvested	-	-	0	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Success Rate (%)	-	-	0.0	0.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	

**Unit 12 Caribou -- Chisana (FC1205)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022**	2023	2024*
Permits Issued	11	11	8	8	6	4	7	5	n/a	6	8
Individuals Hunting	8	7	8	3	3	3	4	1	n/a	4	
Animals Harvested	2	0	1	0	2	1	3	0	n/a	2	
Success Rate (%)	25.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	66.7	33.3	75.0	0.0	n/a	50.0	

\*\* Closed in 2022 due to conservation concerns.

**Table 1. Federal Subsistence Registration Permits in Wrangell-St. Elias NPP, 2014-2024 (cont.)**

**Unit 12 Elder Sheep (FS1201)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
<b>Permits Issued</b>	9	7	11	12	14	14	12	13	8	11	9
<b>Individuals Hunting</b>	5	3	6	4	8	6	4	6	4	5	
<b>Animals Harvested</b>	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	
<b>Success Rate (%)</b>	20.0	0.0	16.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

**Unit 12 Elder/Junior Sheep (FS1204)**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
<b>Permits Issued</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
<b>Individuals Hunting</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	0	
<b>Animals Harvested</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Success Rate (%)</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Source: Federal Subsistence Permit Database.

\* 2024 data are as of 9/11/2024.

Note: Success rate is calculated based on the number of individuals hunting, not total permits issued.

**Traditional Knowledge, Ethnographic, and Subsistence Projects:**

Work is underway on several traditional knowledge, ethnographic and subsistence projects, with most of the work being carried out by project partners through cooperative agreements.

**Ahtna and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve: An Ethnographic Overview and Assessment:** This overview of Alaska Native history and culture in the Ahtna Region of eastern interior Alaska focuses on the Ahtna communities associated with Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. It is based existing ethnographic and historical sources along with information from the authors’ own fieldwork and describes Ahtna culture as it existed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It also examines the longstanding relationships of Ahtna to lands in and near the park, primarily in the northern part of the Copper River Basin. Recommendations are made for future historical and ethnographic research to address identified data gaps. The Annotated Bibliography included in the report contains both the sources used in this report and other materials that can be consulted for further information about the culture and history of Ahtna. The report is illustrated with maps along with numerous historical photographs.

*Ahtna and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve* was written by William E. Simeone and Odin T.W. Miller and is the result of collaboration between Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve and the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission. This project was completed in September 2024, and the report will be available for download this fall from the park’s website

([www.nps.gov/wrst](http://www.nps.gov/wrst)) under the tab “Learn About the Park”/ “History and Culture”/ “People”/ “[Ahtna and Wrangell-St. Elias: An Ethnographic Overview and Assessment.](#)”

**Quantify Changing Environmental Conditions to Inform Decisions about Allowed Means of Winter Access to Subsistence Resources:** This project quantifies temporal and spatial patterns of river freeze-up, winter ice conditions, and break-up using remote sensing data and evaluates the implications of changing environmental conditions for temporal and spatial patterns of winter subsistence access in the park. The analysis focuses on the Copper and Chitina Rivers. In addition to a recently published peer-reviewed journal article, an outreach product for the general public will be produced. This project is being completed through a cooperative agreement with the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) and is scheduled for completion in 2024.

**Dall Sheep Local Knowledge Interviews:** Anthropology and wildlife staff at Wrangell-St. Elias conducted a series of local knowledge interviews about Dall sheep with eight long-time hunters and others with a long history of observing sheep in Wrangell-St. Elias. A summary report is being written. Funding for this work comes from the NPS Alaska Subsistence Advisory Council and Alaska Geographic.

**Outer Coast Ethnographic Landscape Study:** Beginning in fall 2024, a team of cultural anthropologists plus an archeologist will work closely with Eyak and Tlingit knowledge holders to gather information to complete an Ethnographic Landscape Study focusing on lands along the park's coastline to be used as baseline documentation for park management for coastal resources at risk of being lost due to climate warming and glacial melt. In addition to NPS staff and tribal partners, we anticipate working with Doug Deur, Portland State University, and possibly Thomas Thornton, University of Alaska Southeast and National Academy of Sciences.

**Copper River Salmon In-Season Teleconferences:** During summer 2024, weekly teleconferences hosted by the Ahtna Intertribal Resource Commission (AITRC) with funding from Wrangell-St. Elias provided a venue for Copper River subsistence fishers to share firsthand knowledge about Copper River salmon harvests and returns along with river conditions and other factors that may affect harvests and returns with one another as well as agency staff. Biologists and fisheries managers also shared information on run timing and strength, management strategies, and various Copper River fisheries research and monitoring projects. This multi-year project will continue in summer 2025, and people fishing on the Copper River are encouraged to participate. Call-in information for 2025 will be available in the spring.

Report updated 9/11/2024