

Summary of Mountain Goat Management Plan

In Alberta, mountain goats live in the mountains from Waterton Lakes National Park in the south to Willmore Wilderness Park north of Hinton. Mountain goats are associated with rough, rocky cliffs and ledges where they can escape danger. Estimates of numbers in the 1950s were 3000-4000. Mountain goat numbers were significantly reduced from Waterton Lakes National Park to the Athabasca River by the late 1960s and estimated to be about 1000 outside the national parks in the early 1970s.

The decline in numbers likely resulted from increased hunting harvest due to the development of many new roads and trails next to goat habitat. The 1960s included a series of very severe winters, which likely added to the problem. Management efforts increased (there were more goat counts done and hunting regulations became more and more restrictive). Numbers were not recovering by the late 1980s so the mountain goat hunting season was closed in Alberta in 1988.

Since 1988, there have been several mountain goat transplants to help increase numbers. As new and better information was gathered in the 1990s, biologists developed this plan for future management of mountain goats in Alberta. Key recommendations include better identification and protection of goat habitat, stricter rules about when and where there will be hunting seasons, and increased research to fill in knowledge gaps.

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