

Statewide Small Game Program



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Overview

1. History - How we got here...
2. Core Components of the Program
 - a. Education
 - b. Research
 - c. Management
3. Proposal 88 – Unit 13B ptarmigan



History

1. 1960s and 70s:

R. Weeden – rock and willow ptarmigan in Interior

2. Late 1980s:

Ruffed grouse transplant (Mat-Su and Kenai)

3. Mid-1990s – 2011:

- Research – sharp-tailed grouse (Delta Junction)

- Springtime abundance surveys

4. August 2011:

Begin current program

Education



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Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Home Fishing Hunting Viewing Education Species Lands & Waters Regulations

General Information Licenses & Permits Fish Hunt Reports Game Species Maps Shooting Ranges Hunter Education Trapping

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Small Game Hunting in Alaska Overview

Overview Getting Started Preparing/Cooking Regulations Small Game Species Research & Reports

Small game hunting provides a wonderful opportunity to introduce young and new hunters to the heritage of hunting. It offers an easy, cost effective, and accessible opportunity to begin a friendship, tradition, and outdoor activity that can last a lifetime. Small game hunting tends to be much more casual than big game hunting, does not require special permits, tags, or stamps, and a group can enjoy a midday hunt and be home for dinner. A child introduced to hunting through flushing hares out of a local willow draw or walking a gravel road for spruce grouse will become hooked on the tradition and friendship that going outdoors with friends and family provides. Small game hunting in Alaska offers abundant opportunities to work with or train a hunting dog and experience the thrill of watching your dog hold a point on a resting grouse.

In Alaska, small game includes hares, grouse and ptarmigan. We are extremely fortunate to have diverse and abundant small game populations throughout the state. Alaska has four species of grouse ([ruffed](#), [sharp-tailed](#), [spruce](#), and [sooty](#)), all three world-wide species of ptarmigan ([willow](#), [rock](#), and [white-tailed](#)), and two species of hare ([snowshoe](#) and [Alaska](#)). All of these species are native to Alaska and can be legally hunted by both residents and non-residents under liberal season dates and bag limits. A hunter can travel anywhere in the state and have an opportunity to observe and harvest at least one if not four or five of these species in one location.

ADF&G Small Game Program

The Department's Small Game Program was created to promote the conservation of Alaska's small game resources for future generations. Biologists are not only working to study and understand the grouse, ptarmigan, and hares of Alaska but also develop educational opportunities through courses and seminars for interested individuals to become better informed on the hunting opportunities that are available. There are also numerous handouts and even a poster to help identify and understand these dynamic animals.

Get Involved

Are you interested in getting involved and helping small game biologists? Here are some ways you can help:

Alaska's Grouse & Ptarmigan

Spruce Grouse
The spruce grouse is a large grouse that is found in the forested areas of Alaska. It is a year-round resident in the mountains and subarctic regions of the state. It is a monogamous species and breeds in the spring. The male has a distinctive black and white pattern on its back and neck.

Sharp-tailed Grouse
The sharp-tailed grouse is a medium-sized grouse that is found in the tundra and subarctic regions of Alaska. It is a year-round resident in the mountains and subarctic regions of the state. It is a monogamous species and breeds in the spring. The male has a distinctive black and white pattern on its back and neck.

Sooty Grouse
The sooty grouse is a medium-sized grouse that is found in the tundra and subarctic regions of Alaska. It is a year-round resident in the mountains and subarctic regions of the state. It is a monogamous species and breeds in the spring. The male has a distinctive black and white pattern on its back and neck.

Ruffed Grouse
The ruffed grouse is a medium-sized grouse that is found in the tundra and subarctic regions of Alaska. It is a year-round resident in the mountains and subarctic regions of the state. It is a monogamous species and breeds in the spring. The male has a distinctive black and white pattern on its back and neck.

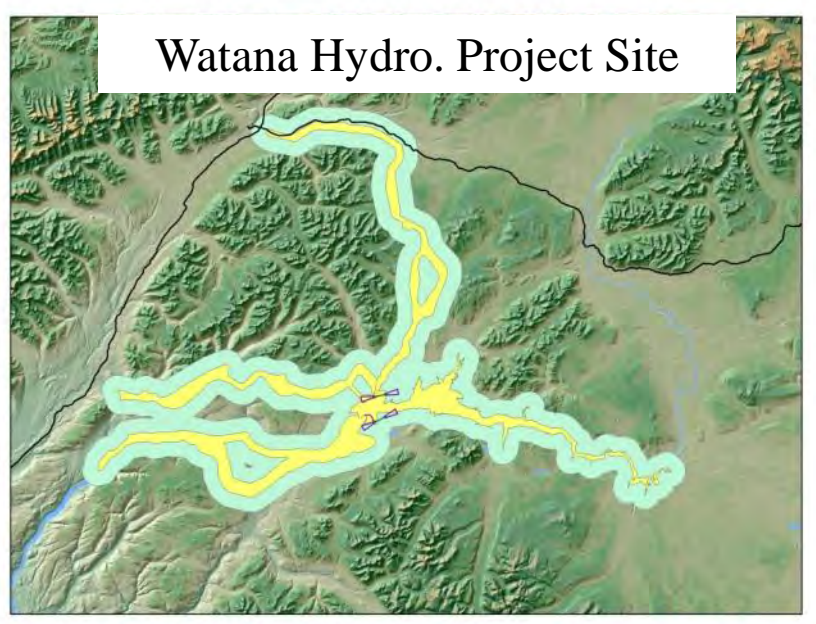
White-tailed Ptarmigan
The white-tailed ptarmigan is a small ptarmigan that is found in the tundra and subarctic regions of Alaska. It is a year-round resident in the mountains and subarctic regions of the state. It is a monogamous species and breeds in the spring. The male has a distinctive black and white pattern on its back and neck.

Rock Ptarmigan
The rock ptarmigan is a small ptarmigan that is found in the tundra and subarctic regions of Alaska. It is a year-round resident in the mountains and subarctic regions of the state. It is a monogamous species and breeds in the spring. The male has a distinctive black and white pattern on its back and neck.

Willow Ptarmigan
The willow ptarmigan is a small ptarmigan that is found in the tundra and subarctic regions of Alaska. It is a year-round resident in the mountains and subarctic regions of the state. It is a monogamous species and breeds in the spring. The male has a distinctive black and white pattern on its back and neck.



Research



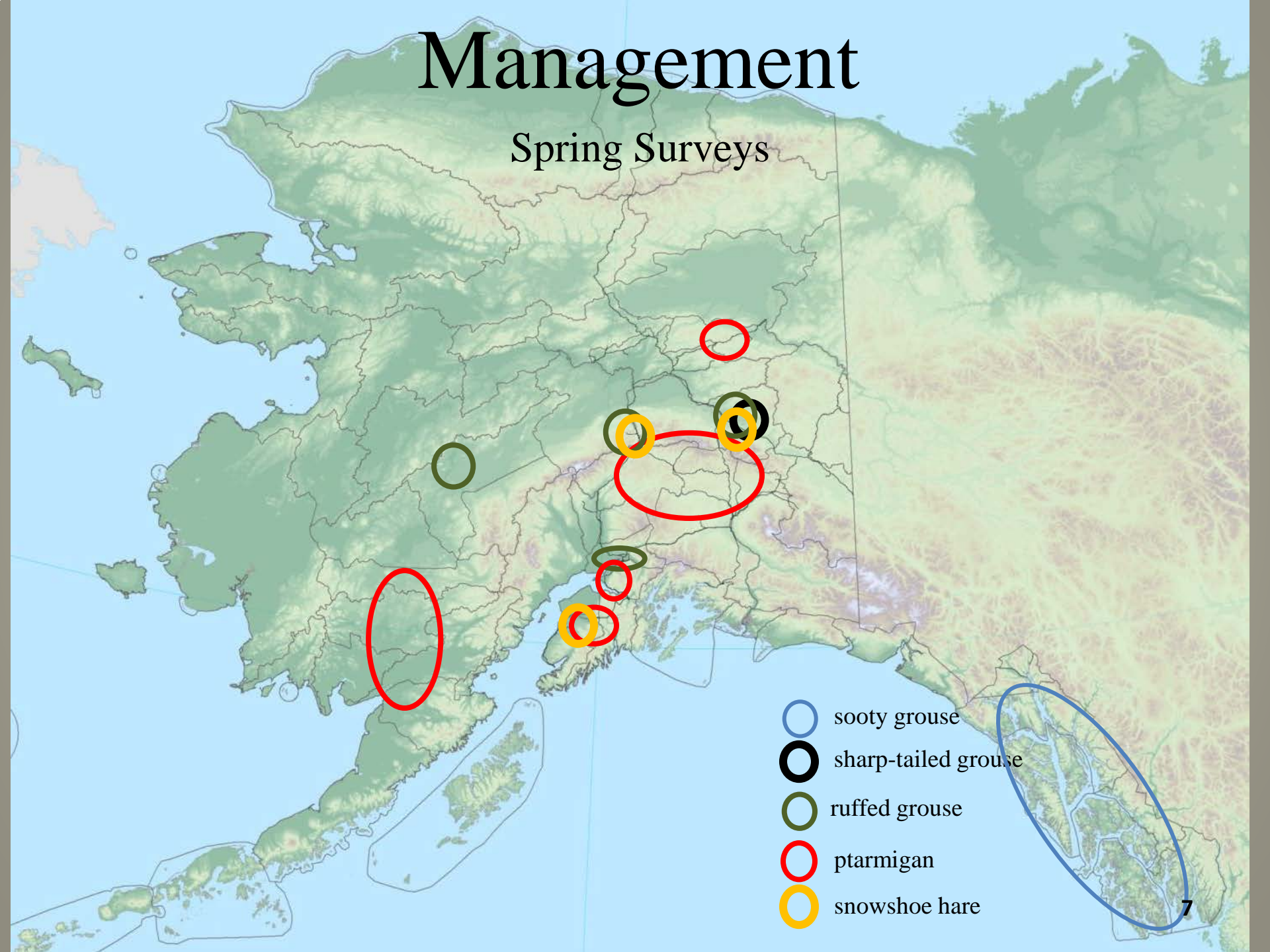
Management

1. Springtime abundance surveys
2. Statewide wing collections
3. Statewide small game hunter survey



Management

Spring Surveys



- sooty grouse
- sharp-tailed grouse
- ruffed grouse
- ptarmigan
- snowshoe hare

Management

Spring Surveys



Management

Grouse:

1. Ruffed Grouse:

- Increasing in Interior
- Low but stable in Mat-Su



2. Sharp-tailed Grouse:

- Low but stable in Delta Jct.

3. Spruce Grouse:

- Low near population centers

4. Sooty Grouse:

- Low near population centers

Management

Ptarmigan:

1. Willow Ptarmigan:

- Moderate abundance, generally stable
- Most popular small game species

2. Rock Ptarmigan:

- Less abundant statewide
- Low at monitored sites along road system

3. White-tailed Ptarmigan:

- Least abundant
- Low harvest pressure



Proposal 88

1. Effect of Proposal:
 - Reinstate the winter hunting season for ptarmigan
 - Reduce the bag limit
2. Wintertime harvest – additive mortality
3. Average Unit 13 ptarmigan harvest – 1-3 birds/day
4. Unrealistic to manage the species separately

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