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SHEEP REPORT

by  
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Volume VIII  
Annual Project Segment Report  
Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration  
Project W-15-R-1 and 2, Work Plan N

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(Printed March 1967)

WORK PLAN SEGMENT REPORT  
FEDERAL AID IN WILDLIFE RESTORATION

STATE: Alaska

PROJECT NO.: W-15-R-1 and 2      TITLE: Big Game Investigations

WORK PLAN: N      TITLE: Dall Sheep

JOB NO.: 1      TITLE: Distribution, Abundance and Harvest

PERIOD COVERED: January 1, 1966 to December 31, 1966

ABSTRACT

The harvest of Dall sheep in Alaska in 1966 was 955 rams, an eight percent increase over that in 1965. Hunting success dropped slightly below that in 1965, with 23 percent of those who hunted successfully killing sheep. The number of hunters showed a 17 percent increase in 1966 over 1965, reaching a total of 4,143. As in 1965, half of all sheep killed were taken during the first two weeks of the statewide season.

A drop in harvest ticket returns occurred in 1966 with only 85.9 percent of the tickets being returned compared with a 97.4 percent return in 1965.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The harvest ticket requirement should be continued and analyzed on a drainage basis. Methods of transport should be considered in evaluating the harvest and percent successful hunters.

The 3/4 curl restriction assures more than adequate protection for sheep stocks. Manipulation of seasons or bag limits are not necessary unless selected areas should be considered for more intensive management by utilizing a portion of the surplus ewes.

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OBJECTIVES

To obtain and evaluate information on productivity, distribution, and harvest of Dall sheep.

TECHNIQUES

Each sheep hunter is required to obtain a sheep harvest ticket prior to going afield. Successful hunters must submit a report (ticket stub) within 15 days after killing a sheep. Hunters who hunted unsuccessfully or who did not hunt must submit the ticket stub within 30 days after the season closes. Hunters who fail to return tickets are sent reminder letters; a second reminder letter is sent to ticket holders who fail to respond to the first reminder. Kill data as presented on the returned cards is then coded and analyzed by I.B.M. computer.

FINDINGS

Analyses of the sheep harvest ticket returns for 1965 and 1966, and for 1962 through 1966, are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3. Trends in hunter success, numbers of sheep reported killed and numbers of hunters from 1962 to 1966, as reported by ticket returns, are shown graphically in Figure 1. Figure II illustrates the chronology of the reported 1966 sheep harvest, which is further broken down by game management units and listed in Table 4.

Only 85.9 percent of the sheep harvest tickets were returned with useful information in 1966, compared with 97.4 percent in 1965. It is probable that a large proportion of the unreturned tickets were held by persons who did not hunt and who either lost them or were not sufficiently interested to send them in. The drop in returns in 1966 is probably related to confusion in sending reminder letters due to machine-processing error.

The harvest of 955 rams is up approximately eight percent compared with that in 1965, but, as can be seen in Figure 1, has remained generally constant since 1963. The hunter success ratio of 23.1 percent of those who reported hunting in 1966, shows a drop of almost two percent from that in 1965, and, except for 1964, indicates a gradual downward trend since 1962. However, the number of hunters increased from 3,545 in 1965, to 4,143 in 1966, an increase of some 17 percent. As shown in Figure 1, there has been an erratic increase in sheep hunters since 1962.

It should be mentioned here that since 1962 was the first year of issuing harvest tickets, their distribution and use might not have been complete, thus leading to a possible error in interpretation of hunting results.

It is interesting to note that as numbers of sheep hunters increased over the past five years, their hunting success decreased. It can be seen in Figure 1 that as the number of hunters in 1963 increased over that in 1962, the success ratio dropped. Then, with a decrease in hunters in 1964, there was a rise in success, followed by a reduction in success over the next two years along with an increase in numbers of hunters. The significance of this apparent pattern is not presently understood.

Table 4. Chronology of 1966 Sheep Harvest by Game Management Unit

Game Mgt. Unit	No Date	AUGUST				SEPTEMBER			Total
		1-9	10-16	17-23	24-30	31-6	7-13	14-20	
7	1		9	1	3	3	0	1	18
11	21		46	15	11	11	11	10	125
12	13		54	28	19	14	28	24	180
13	18		54	18	24	17	13	10	154
14	3		16	7	2	2	11	8	49
15	5		22	5	6	4	5	1	48
16	0		3	1	1	0	1	0	6
17	2		2	2	3	0	0	0	9
19	12		14	10	7	9	8	6	66
20	9		62	21	18	8	17	13	148
21	0		0	0	0	0	1	0	1
23	1	3	3	2	4	0	0	0	13
24	5	8	7	3	9	7	6	2	47
25	0	17	4	7	6	4	0	0	38
26	4	7	8	5	7	2	2	0	35
?	1	1	4	1	2	1	2	6	18
Total	95	36	308	126	122	82	105	81	955

FIGURE I.  
 NUMBERS OF HUNTERS, SHEEP KILLED, AND  
 PERCENTAGE OF SUCCESSFUL HUNTERS FROM 1962 TO 1966

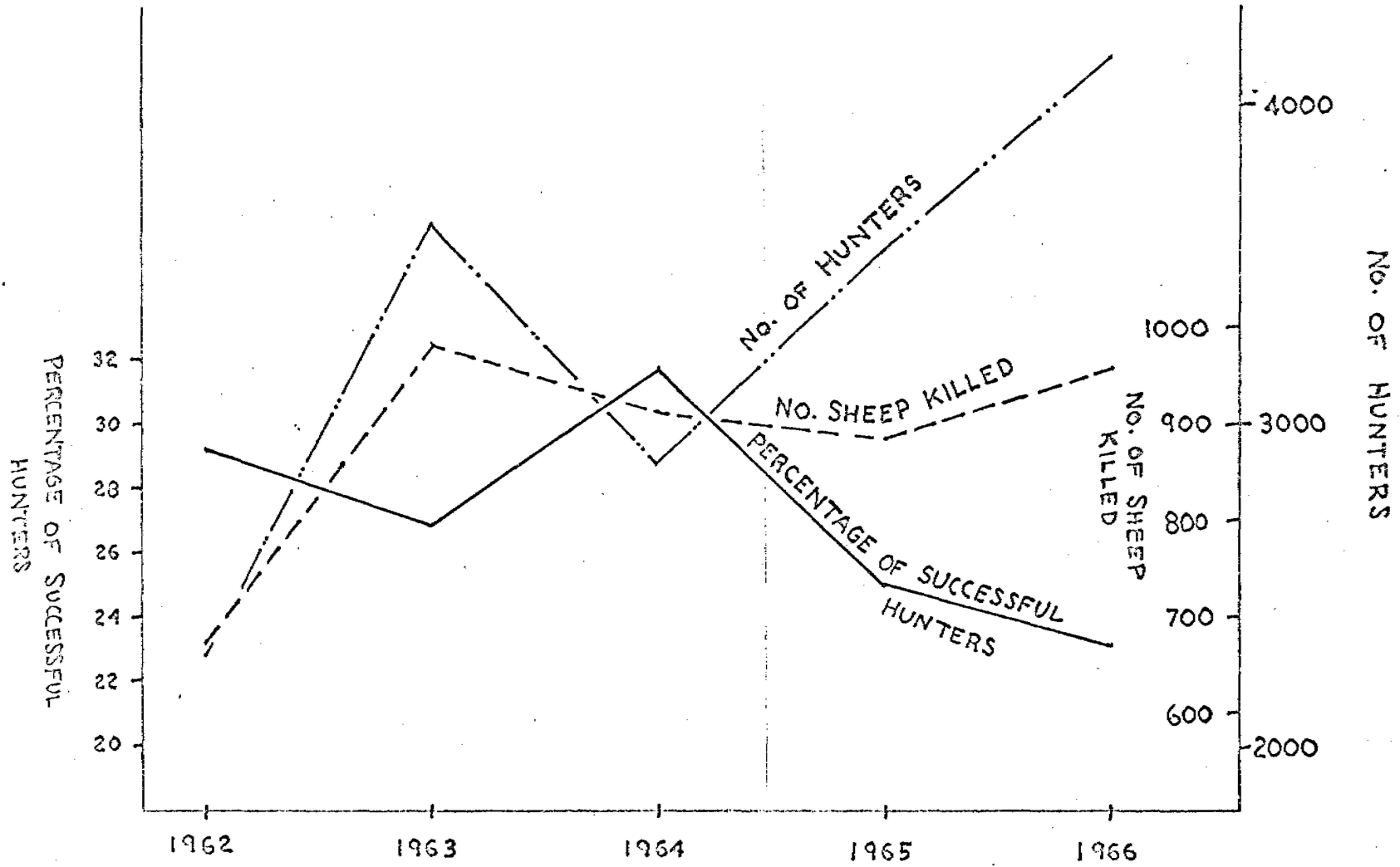
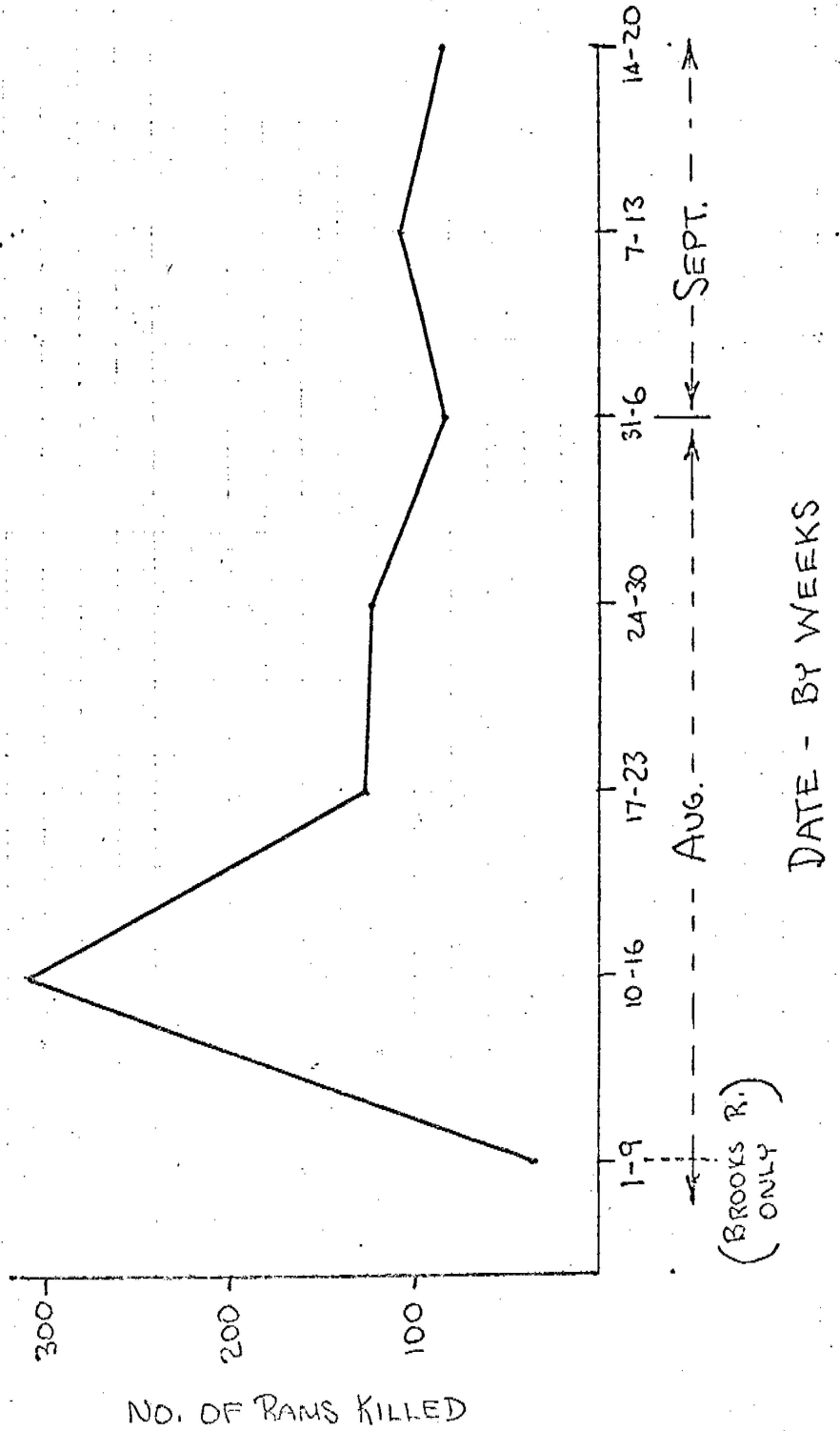


FIGURE II.

CHRONOLOGY OF 1966 SHEEP HARVEST



A chronology of the harvest, as presented in Table 4 and Figure II, again shows that approximately 50 percent of the harvest occurs during the first two weeks of the main hunting season (not counting Units 23 and 26, which opened on August 1), as it did in 1965. The overall weekly harvest remained fairly steady from the second week until the end of the season.

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