### SHEEP POPULATIONS, HUNTERS, AND HARVEST

a summary on current status and trends

21 November 2014, Anchorage



#### The information provided will be used to:

- Provide a resource for the Board of Game to develop regulations for the management and allocation of sheep harvest.
- Complement the information collected in the Alaska Sheep Hunter User Survey conducted by Dr. Todd Brinkman.
- Present information to help sheep hunters and others prepare proposal comments for the Board of Game.

#### The information addresses these concerns:

#### <u>Management</u>

- Hunter concerns about crowding
- Guide / Transporter / Resident hunter reported conflicts
- Public desire to change or modify sheep hunt management strategies

#### **BOG Proposals**

- To restrict nonresident hunting or expand resident opportunity
- To create additional drawing hunts or limit nonresidents to draw hunts
- To limit access and change bag limits and seasons



#### The report summarizes the following:

- Sheep population status
- Hunter and harvest numbers
- Hunting opportunities and access
- Harvest trend and characteristics
- Guide / commercial activities



#### RESIDENCY is divided into two categories

#### **RESIDENTS** – includes residents of Alaska who:

- do not hire commercial services
- hire transporters (state regulated)
- hire air taxis (FFA regulated)
- hire guides

#### NONRESIDENTS – includes nonresidents who:

- are citizens of the United States
- are not citizens of the United States
- Hire a guide and/or other commercial services
- hunt with second degree kindred relatives



#### The data are divided into 4 time periods

- 1972-1980 Pre-ANILCA leading up to the loss of 25% of AK sheep hunting opportunity; ADF&G began formally collecting statewide sheep harvest information
- 1981-1988 Post-ANILCA leading up to the 1988 Owsichek Decision that eliminated exclusive guide use areas in AK; the beginning of full-curl bag limit regulation
- 1989-2000 Post Owsichek Decision and statewide implementation of full-curl bag limit; there were declines in sheep hunter numbers during this period
- 2001-2013 Continued decline in sheep hunter numbers, sheep population declines in several areas due to severe weather events; new draw permit hunts in central Chugach Mountains; any-ram draw hunts offered for the first time

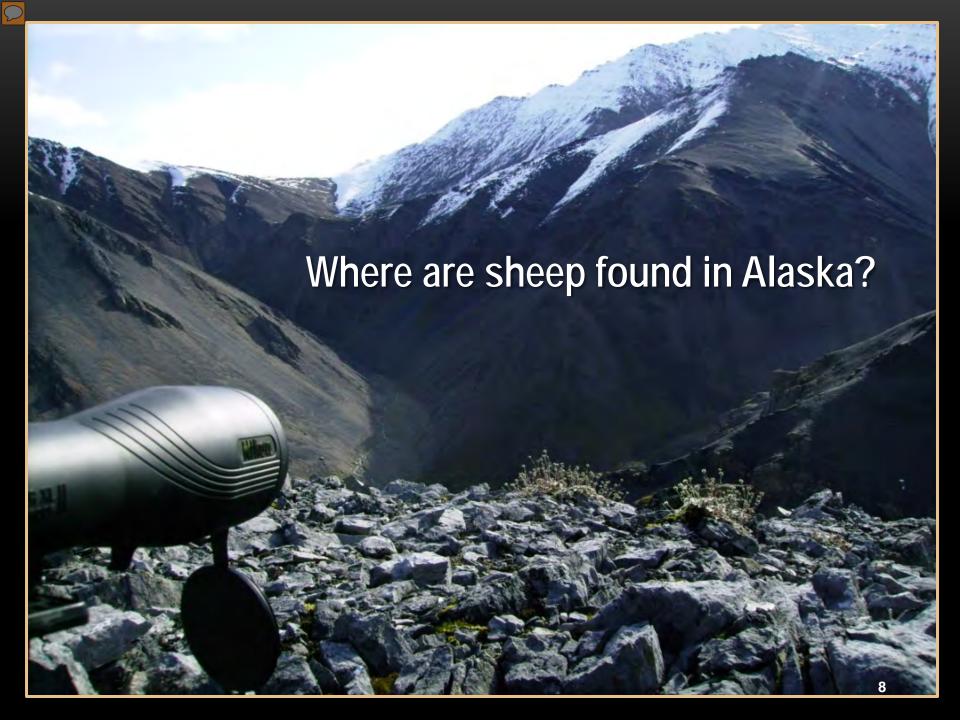


### The data are also divided into eight major

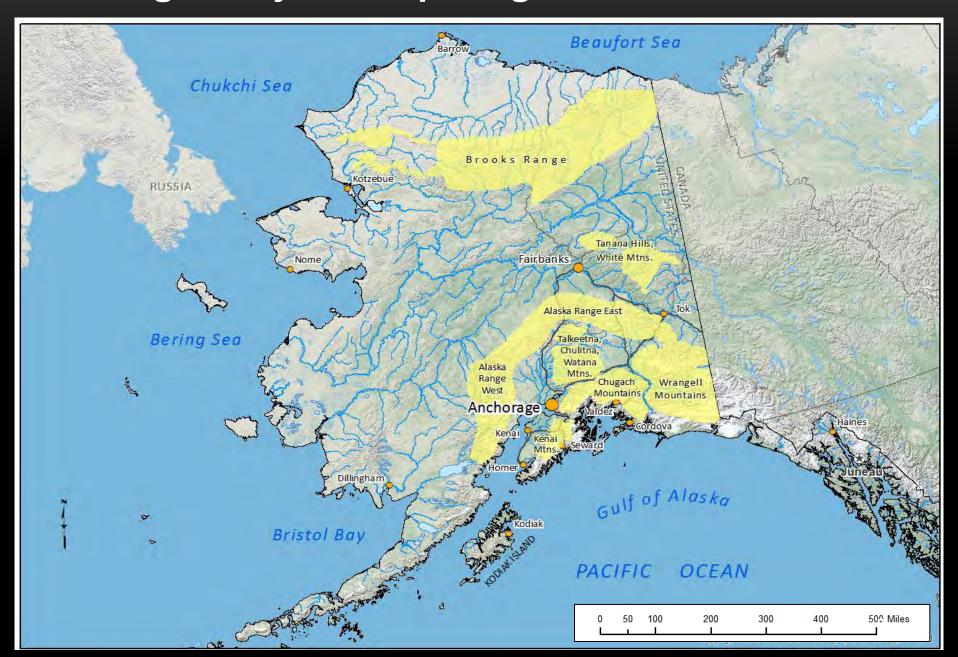
**Sheep Range Areas** 

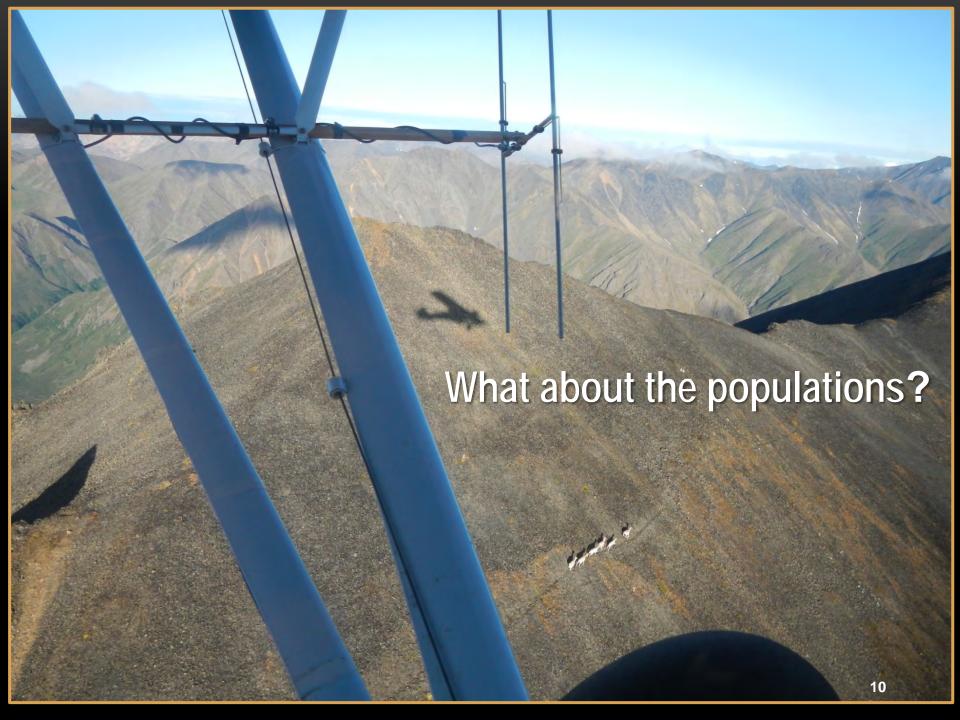
- Alaska Range EAST
- Alaska Range WEST
- Brooks Range
- Chugach Mountains
- Kenai Mountains
- Talkeetna Mountains, Chulitna-Watana Hills
- Tanana Hills, White Mountains
- Wrangell Mountains





#### Eight major sheep range areas in Alaska





#### **Sheep Population trends across Alaska:**

Survey and Inventory Report Area	3
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Kenai Peninsula Decreasing Unknown Alaska Range west

South Wrangell Mountains Stable or Increasing

Chugach Mountains Stable at low levels

Mentasta, Nutzotin, and N. Wrangells Stable or Decreasing

Tok Management Area Stable or Decreasing

Talkeetna Mtns., Chulitna-Watana Hills Stable at low levels

Delta Controlled Use Area Stable

N. AK Range, E. of Nenana Riv., W. of Delta Riv. Stable

White Mountains Stable

Tanana Hills Stable

Western Brooks Range Decreasing

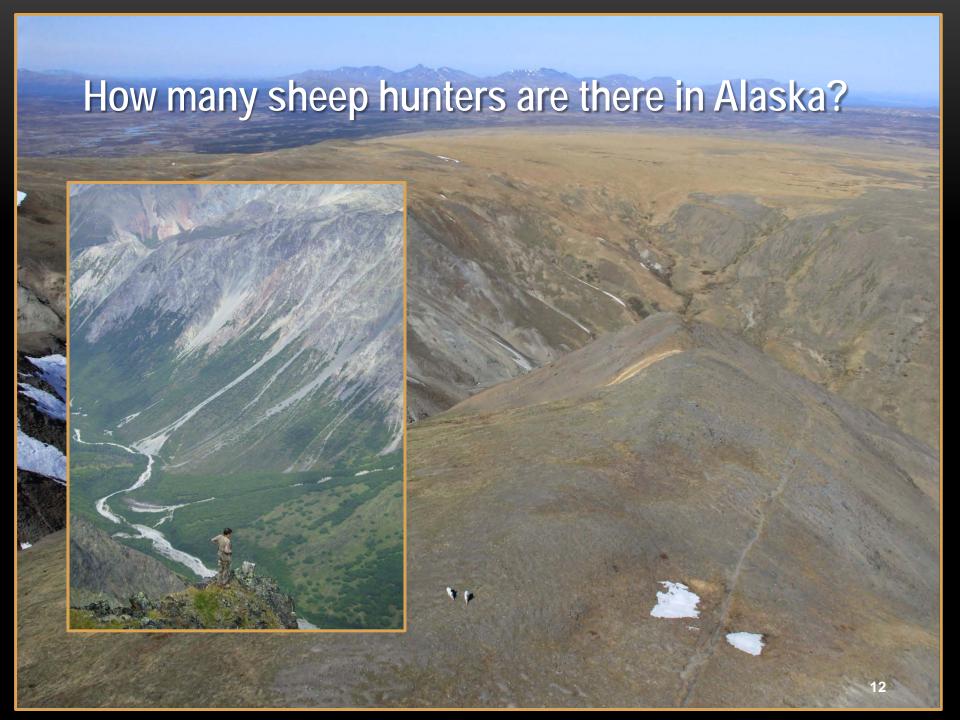
Central Brooks Range Decreasing

Eastern Brooks Range Decreasing

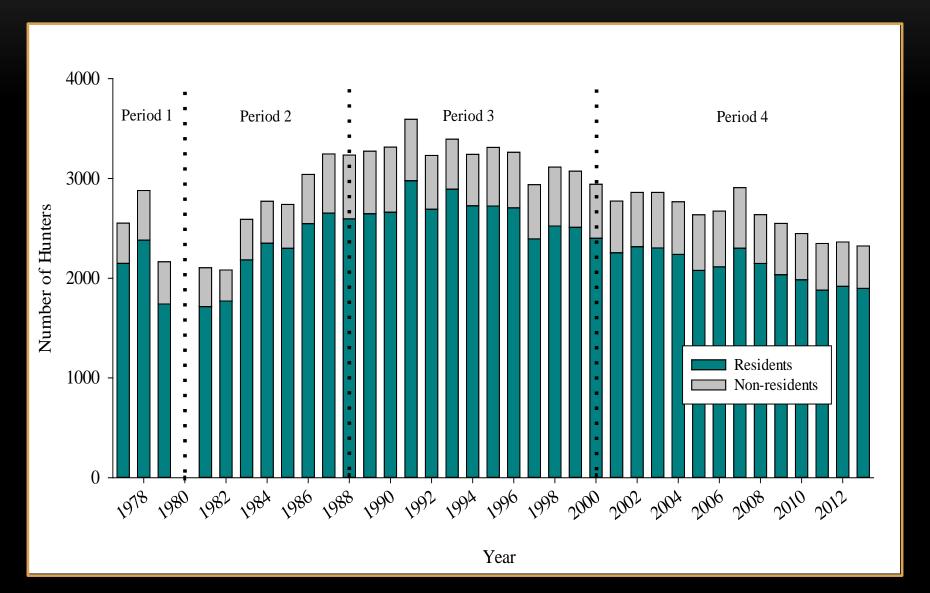
1990 2000 56,740 (53,900-62,400) 50,850 (48,300-55,900)

2010 45,010 (42,800-49,500)

**Population Trend** 



# The total number of sheep hunters has been declining over the last 20 years.



### Where are the sheep hunting opportunities?

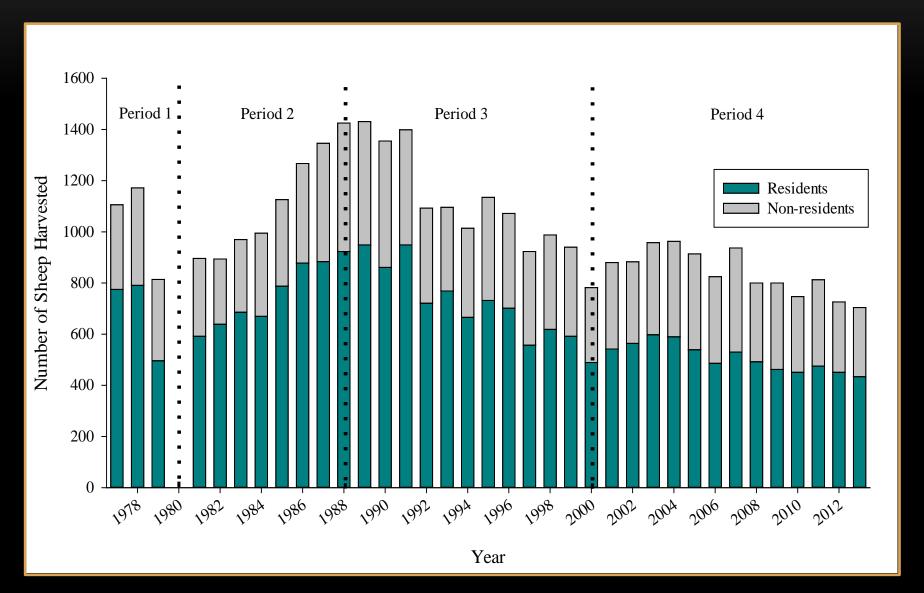


#### **Sheep Hunt Types (opportunities) in Alaska**



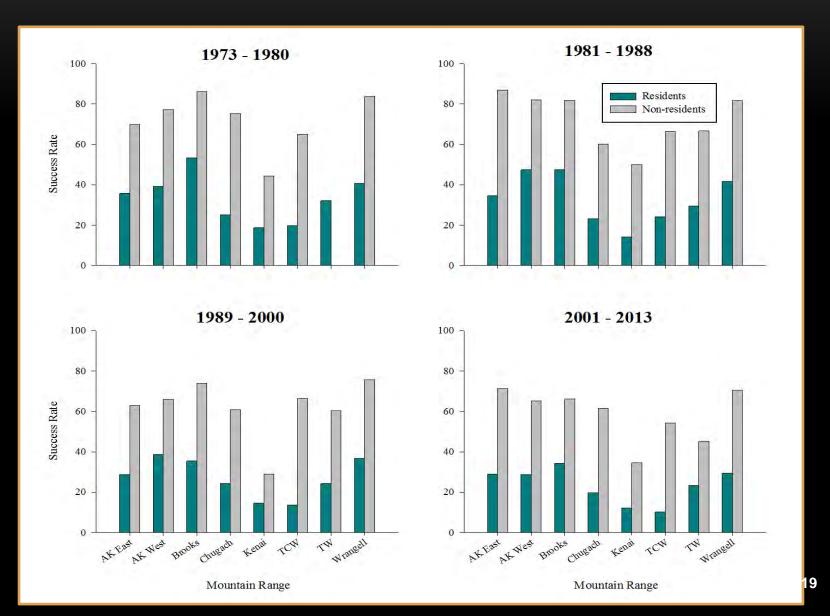


# The total sheep harvest has also been declining for over 20 years.



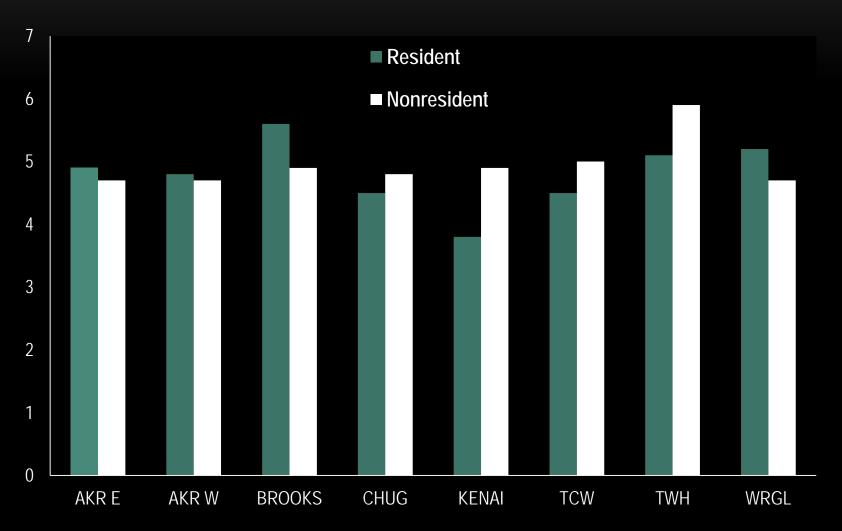


## Nonresident success rates are most often twice that of residents.

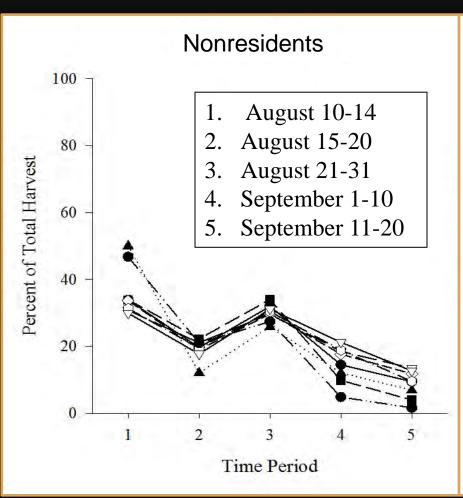


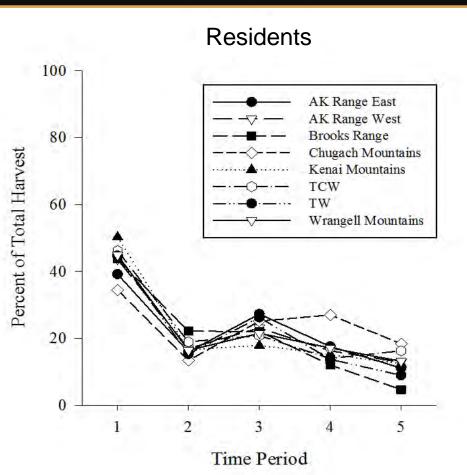


# There is not a lot of difference in the number of days hunted for successful hunters.



### Most of the harvest occurs in the first 10 days for both residents and nonresidents.





How do sheep hunters get to the place where they start walking?



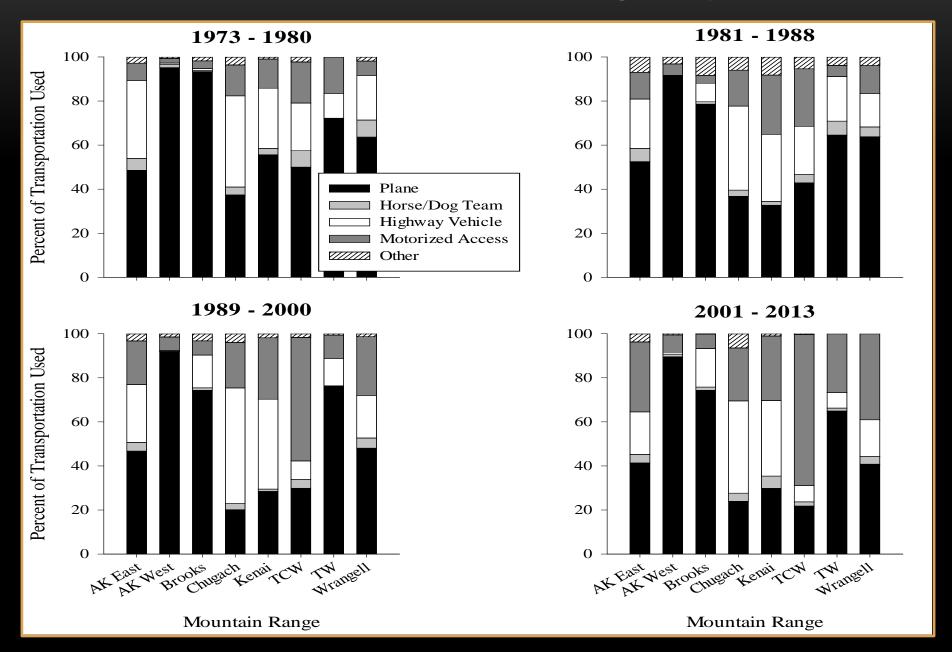






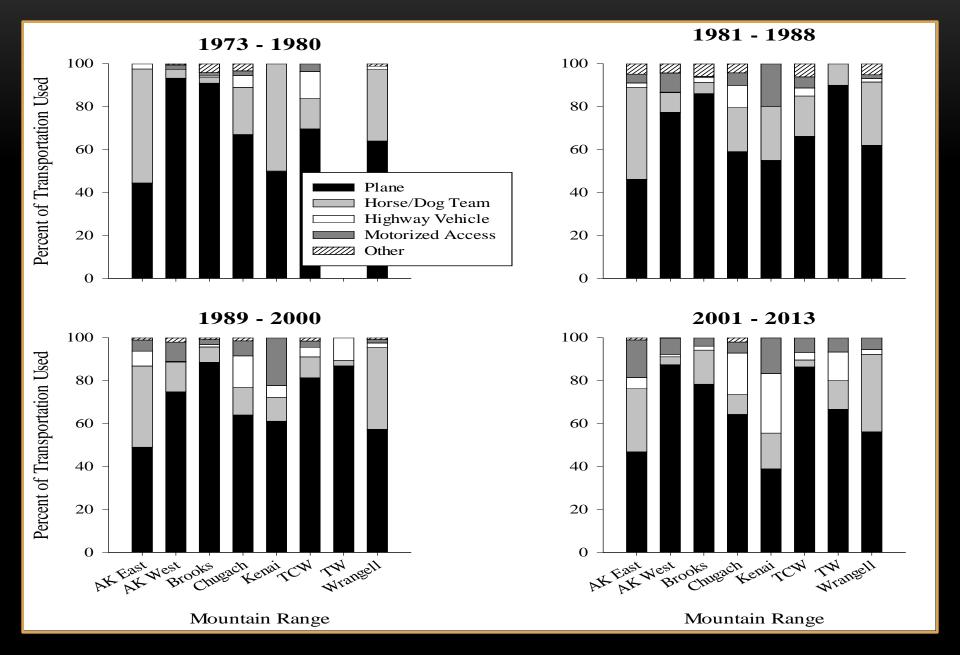


#### Residents use planes, ORVs, highway vehicles.



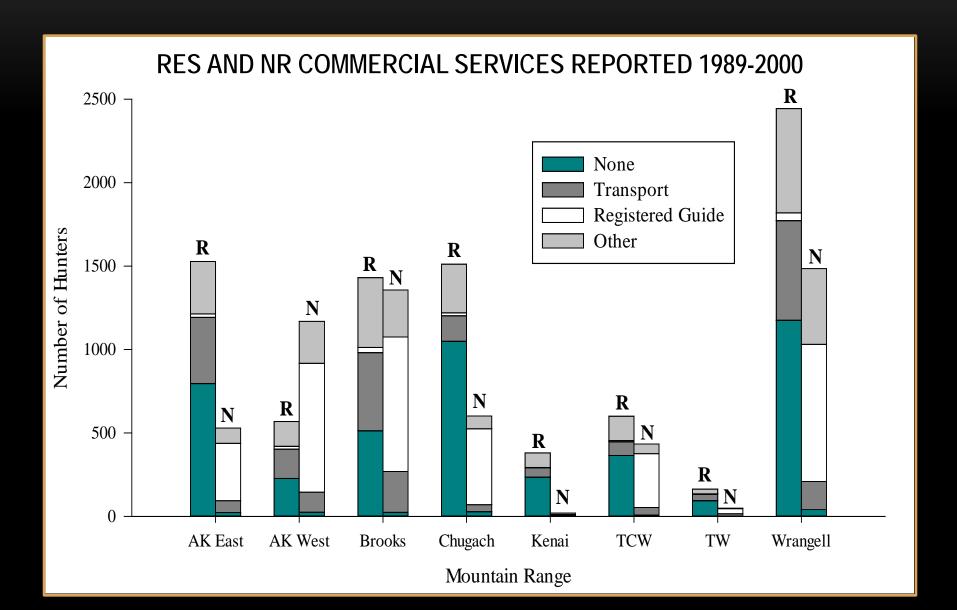


#### Nonresidents use planes and horses.

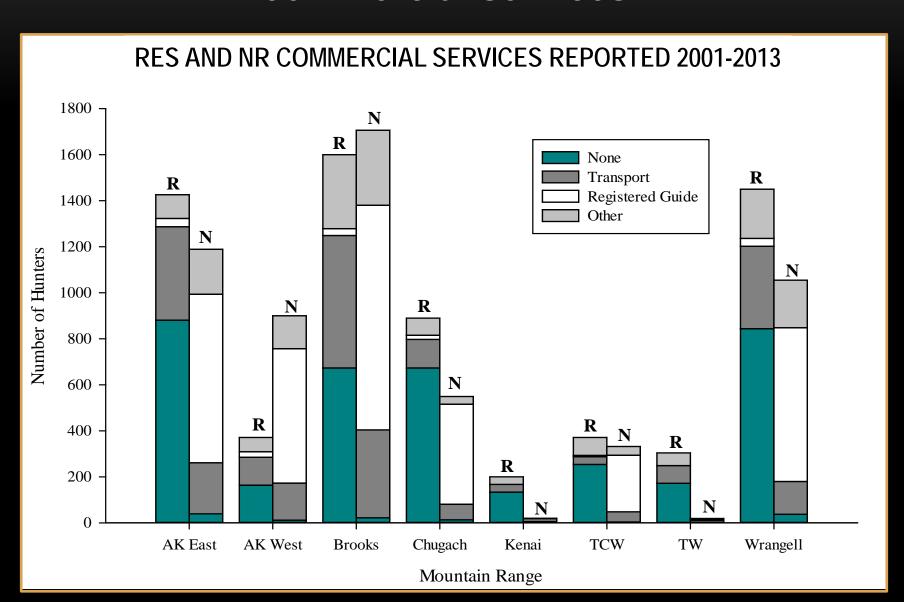




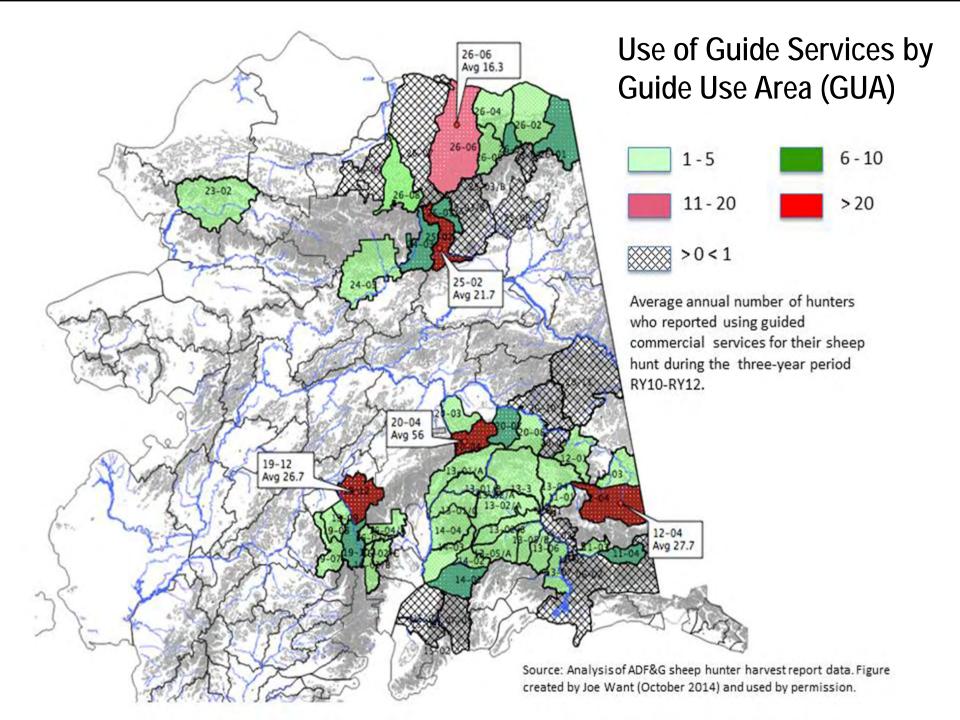
### Nonresidents typically hire guides and/or other commercial services.



## The majority of residents do not use commercial services.







# Non residents hunting with second-degree-kindred relatives

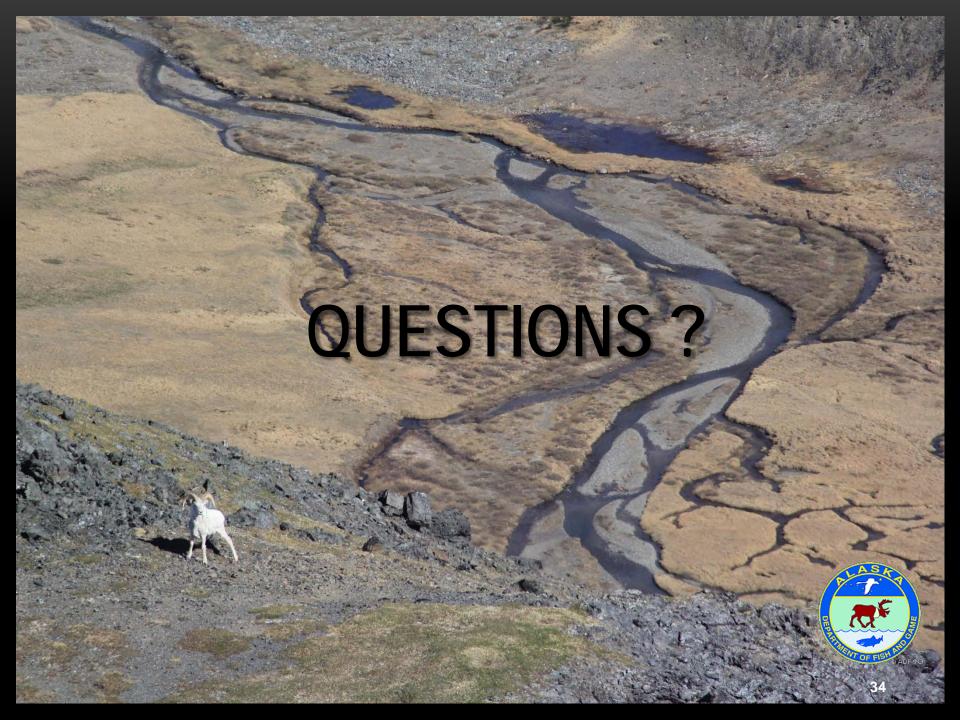
- Most of the range areas show NR sheep hunters reporting guides 70% or more or the time
- Other commercial use categories such as <u>lodge/camp</u> and <u>other services</u> are not well defined
- For the Tok Management Area (TMA), 20 to 25% of the NR draw applicants intend to hunt with relatives

#### SUMMARY

- Sheep populations in Alaska are currently considered to be stable or decreasing
- For over twenty years, there have been declines in the total number of hunters and number of sheep harvested
- Nonresident sheep hunter success rates are most often twice that of residents although there is very little difference in the number of days hunted between residents and nonresidents
- Over half of the total harvest occurs in the first 10 days of the season with a majority of this occurring in the first 5 days

#### SUMMARY continued

- Nonresident sheep hunters reported using airplanes and horses more often than other methods for <u>access</u>
- Residents reported using airplanes the most with ORVs and highway vehicles also used more often for access
- Most nonresident hunters hire guides and/or other commercial services while the majority of residents do not
- Residents that use commercial services hire transporters more than all other types



### **NEXT STEPS**

- Review Board of Game Proposals
- Review Survey and Sheep Reports
- Prepare comments
- ADF&G Advisory Comm. meetings
- Submit Written Comments
- Attend Board of Game Meeting

NOW - 30 JAN

15 DEC - 30 JAN

NOW - 30 JAN

NOW - 12 FEB

NOW - 30 JAN

13 FEB - 20 FEB

Thank You

