

Initial Study Report Meeting

Study 10.17 Population Ecology of Willow Ptarmigan in Game Management Unit 13

October 21, 2014

Prepared by

Alaska Department of Fish and Game



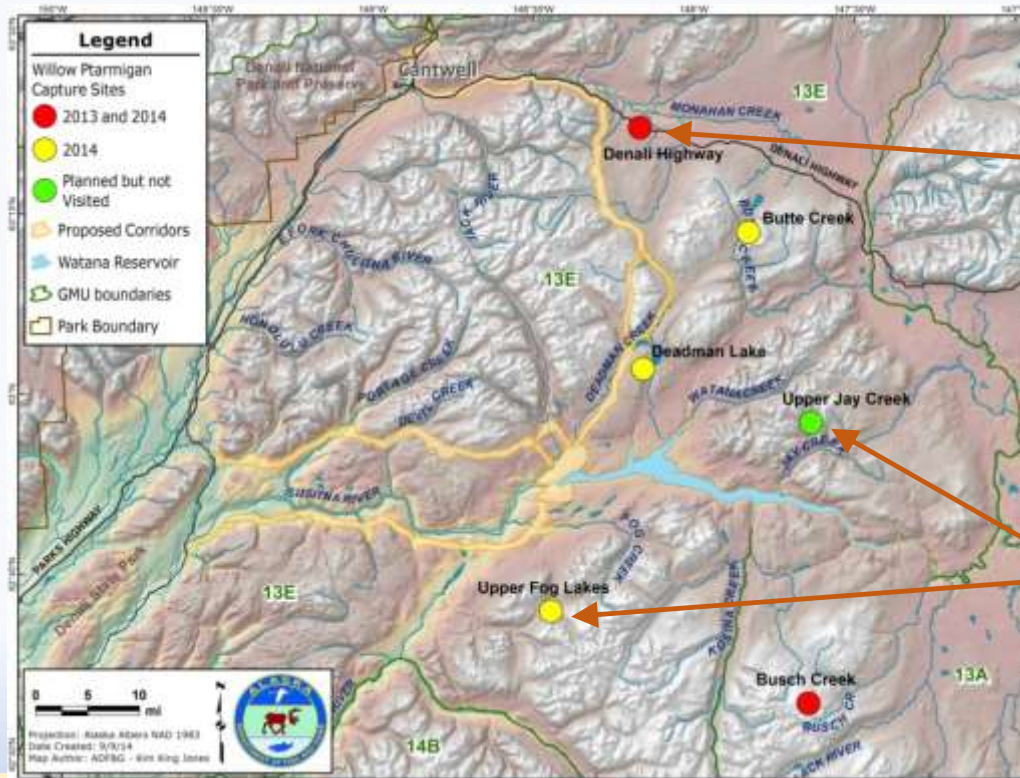
Study 10.17 Objectives

- Determine the seasonal distribution of Willow Ptarmigan in the Project area.
- Determine the seasonal migratory patterns of Willow Ptarmigan that occur in the Project area.
- Estimate the abundance of Willow Ptarmigan in the Project area during the breeding season and during the fall.
- Estimate seasonal survival of Willow Ptarmigan.

Study 10.17 Variances

Three variances resulted from the late spring, delayed snow melt, inclement weather, and subsequent transportation difficulties in 2013:

- Fewer radio tags were deployed than planned (RSP Section 10.17.4.1).
- Upper Fog Lakes and Jay Creek sites were not visited (RSP Section 10.17.3).
- Denali Highway capture location was added (ISR Part A, Section 4.1.1, pg 3).



Added in 2013

Not visited in 2013

Study 10.17 Variances (continued)

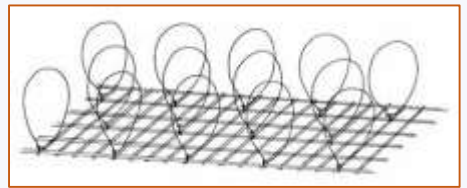
Used mist nets to capture birds under some circumstances
(ISR Part A, Section 4.1.1, pp. 3–4)



Net Gun



Mist Net



Noose Carpets

Study 10.17 Variances (continued)

Aerial transect flights were not conducted as proposed:

- Did not complete March 2013 transect flight.
- Moved September 2013 transect flight to mid-November/mid-December 2013 (ISR Part A, Section 4.3.1, pg 5).



Study 10.17 Summary of Results in ISR (ISR Part C – Section 7.1.2, pg. 2)

- January 2014 transect flight resulted in 6 flushing events in 6 hours.
- March 2014 transect flight resulted in 4 flushing events in 4 hours.



AEA Proposed Modifications to Study 10.17 in ISR (ISR Part C – Section 7.1.2)

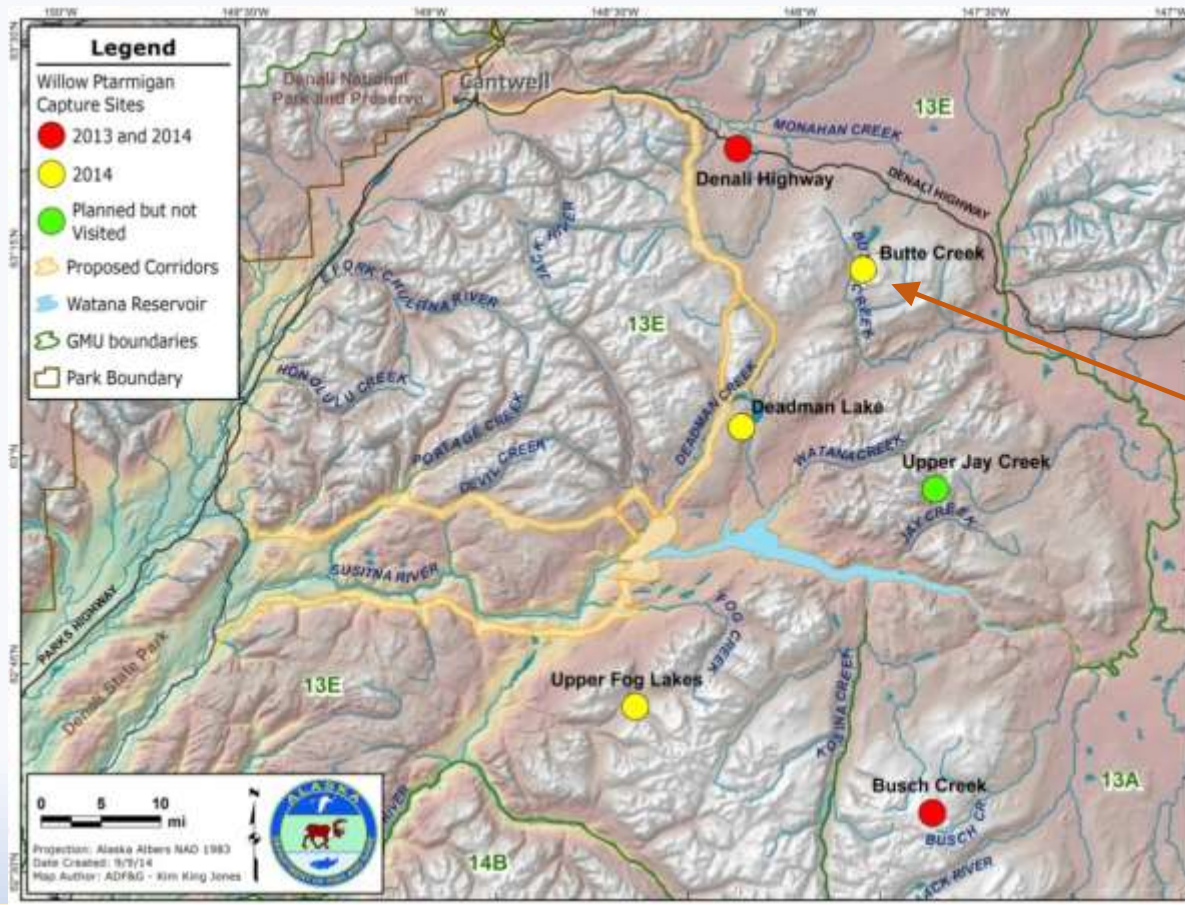
Aerial transect flights were canceled, but more telemetry flights were added:

- Improves the precision of space-use inferences.
- Allows better predictions about distribution of ptarmigan across the study area.



AEA Proposed Modifications to Study 10.17 in ISR (ISR Part C – Section 7.1.2)

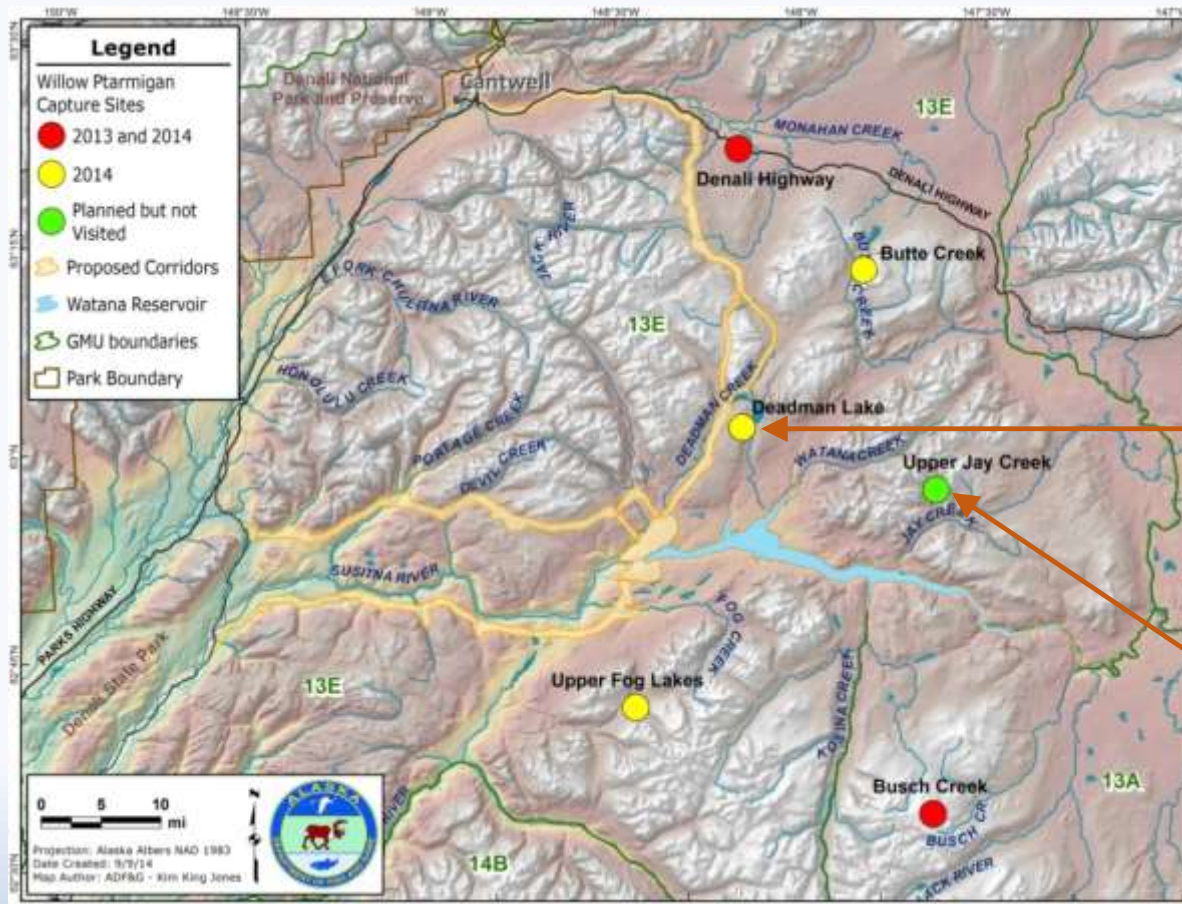
Butte Creek capture site was added in 2014 as an alternative capture site
(ISR Part A, Figure 4.1-1 and ISR Part C, Section 7.1.2)



Added in 2014

New Modifications to Study 10.17 since ISR

- Deadman Lake site was added in 2014 as an alternative capture site.
- Upper Jay Creek site was not accessible.



Added in 2014

Not visited in 2013 or 2014

New Modifications to Study 10.17 since ISR

ADF&G proposes the following modifications, which were accepted by AEA:

- Capture and collar additional birds in May and August 2015.
- Recapture and recollar currently collared birds in May and August 2015.
- This additional capture effort will allow us to reach the collaring objective of 50–100 collars/year (RSP Section 10.17.4.1).



Ptarmigan Captures 2013 and 2014					
Capture Location	May 2013	August 2013	May 2014	August 2014	Total
Busch Creek	12	10	19	12	53
Denali Highway	17	2	14	5	38
Butte Creek	-	-	6	1	7
Upper Fog Lakes	-	-	6	8	14
Deadman Lake	-	-	7	7	14
TOTAL	29	12	52	38	126

Steps to Complete Study 10.17 (ISR Part C – Section 7.1)

- Conduct monthly aerial telemetry surveys to record habitat use, movements, and mortality.
- Capture and collar additional birds in May and August 2015.
- Recapture and recollar currently collared birds in May and August 2015.



Licensing Participants' Proposed Modifications to Study 10.17?

- Agencies
- CIRWG members and Ahtna
- Public

