



## **MOUNTAIN GOATS TRANSPLANTED TO THE FRONT**

State wildlife officials recently moved 15 mountain goats to the Rocky Mountain Front. The move was the second and final year to release mountain goats on Ear Mountain Wildlife Management Area. Last year Fish, Wildlife and Parks released 10 goats in the same area.

“We wanted to augment the population there,” says Brent Lonner, Fish, Wildlife and Parks wildlife biologist. “The country is good goat habitat and the population, which was low, needed a boost.”

This year’s goats came in two groups: seven on Jan. 10 and eight on Jan. 15. The animals consisted of 12 female nannies, two male billies and one male kid. The animals were moved to mountain goat hunting district 442, where one license was available last year.

The mountain goat is a native Montana big game animal that occurred historically in major mountain ranges of western Montana but has been transplanted to suitable habitat in isolated mountain ranges throughout the state. They have a white coat with black horns and hooves. Both sexes have horns, which are smooth, sharp and curve slightly backwards and measure 8-10 inches long. Billies may weigh as much as 300 pounds, nannies about 150 pounds.

As their name implies, mountain goats generally live above timberline in precipitous terrain, eating grasses, sedges, lichens, forbs and shrubs.