

PROPOSAL 177

EFFECT OF THE PROPOSAL: Convert the winter limited registration permit hunt for the Fortymile Caribou Herd to a winter hot spot permit hunt.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATION: NO RECOMMENDATION

RATIONALE: This proposal was submitted under authority of an agenda change request approved by the Board. It is an allocation issue that should be determined by the Board, and therefore, the Department has no recommendation.

Technological problems prevented the Department from implementing a limited winter registration permit hunt for the Fortymile Caribou Herd (FCH) in December 2012. This hunt was recommended by the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management Coalition (HMC) and approved by the Board at its March 2012 Interior/Easter Arctic meeting.

The purpose of the limited winter registration hunt was to allow a few hunters to take caribou along the Steese or Taylor Highways when large numbers of caribou are present near the highways and the unlimited registration permit hunt (RC867) closes because of concerns about exceeding the harvest quota. This proposal would convert the limited registration permit hunt to a “hot spot” permit hunt, which is “*a registration permit issued on a random, lottery basis to an applicant who has previously registered and agrees to participate in a hunt under short notice*”—5 AAC 92.990(82). Based on HMC recommendations, the “hot spot” harvest would be limited to no more than 20% of whatever remains in the quota for the hunt zone where the hot spot hunt occurs.

Harvest management is guided by the *Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan 2012–2018* that was developed by the HMC and approved by the Board in March 2012. Alaska members of the HMC include Anchorage, Central, Eagle, Delta, Fairbanks, Upper Tanana/Fortymile and Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committees and the Federal Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council.

Total FCH harvest in Alaska has been limited to approximately 2% of the herd since 2001 to allow it to grow and to potentially reoccupy its former range in Alaska and Yukon, Canada. A total of 1,066 Fortymile caribou were harvested in regulatory year 2011–2012. The most recent FCH photocensus in July 2010 indicated a population of approximately 51,600 caribou. Models suggest the herd increased 4% annually during 2006–2010. Photocensus attempts were unsuccessful during 2011 and 2012. The Department will attempt another photocensus in June 2013. Harvest will be increased if the herd continues to grow.

Under 5 AAC 99.025 (a) (4), the Board has found that caribou in game management units (GMUs) 12, 20D, 20E, and 25C (FCH) have positive customary and traditional uses. The Board has also found that 350–400 caribou are the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS).

Prior to taking final action, the Board should determine whether the proposed regulations provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence.
