

**Division of Wildlife Conservation**  
**Doug Vincent-Lang, Acting Director**  
Headquarters  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526



**Alaska Department of Fish and Game**  
**Cora Campbell, Commissioner**  
P.O. Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526  
[www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)

## **NEWS RELEASE**

*Friday, December 7, 2012,*

**CONTACT: Cathie Harms, 907-459-7231**

### **Steese Highway Limited Registration Hunt Cancelled**

Permit Hunt RC999 was designed to allow small harvest along Steese

A new limited registration permit hunt for Fortymile Caribou near the Steese Highway has been cancelled by the Department of Fish and Game.

Hunters interested in having their name entered on a list to be eligible for hunt RC999 flooded the phone system and caused it to fail on Monday.

"In less than three hours, more than 60,000 calls were made. The phone system couldn't handle it," said Management Coordinator Roy Nowlin. "We didn't expect this volume of calls."

The Fortymile Harvest Management Coalition, with members from seven different Fish and Game Advisory Committees, worked with Department staff to develop the Fortymile Caribou Harvest Management Plan. The Coalition recommended several options to allow a limited harvest of caribou near highways when large numbers of caribou are present, and to give all hunters an equal chance of getting a permit. The Department chose to implement a phone-in option using its Fairbanks regional office phone system.

"It appears that some people had a technological advantage. One hunter reported making more than a thousand attempts to call within two hours. Others living in areas with less modern phone systems didn't have the same chance. It's apparent that all hunters did not have equal access to this first-come, first-serve process," Nowlin said.

The hunt is being cancelled this year but Department staff is working in conjunction with the Harvest Coalition to seek a fair method of allocating permits.

"This was a new hunt to provide limited hunting opportunity along the Steese Highway as an alternative to being completely closed," said Regional Management Coordinator Roy Nowlin. "We're still committed to finding a way to allow some caribou to be taken along the highway without risking an overharvest."

Drawing permit hunts have been proposed numerous times over the years, but have not been approved by the Board of Game due to legal concerns relating to the state's subsistence law.

Most of the State winter season for Fortymile Caribou (RC867) opened as scheduled on December 1, but the portion of Zone 1 near the Steese Highway remains closed.

RC867 is open in Zone 1 south of Crooked Creek Fork and south and east of the main stem of Birch Creek in Unit 25C, and south of the Chatanika River drainage in Unit 20B. The open area is 10-20 miles from the Steese Highway. A map of the open area is available at Fish and Game offices and on the Fish and Game website.

RC867 remains closed in Zone 1 within the Chatanika drainage and north of the main stem of Birch Creek and Crooked Creek.

RC867 is open in all of Zones 2,3 & 4 as shown on the map.

Recent flights have shown that large numbers of caribou are present in Zone 1. Many drivers have reported caribou standing on the Steese Highway in that area.

In previous years, opening the hunt near the Steese highway when caribou were present in large numbers resulted in exceeding the harvest quota.

Hunt RC867 is scheduled to close when winter hunt zone quotas are met, or on March 31, 2013. The total winter quota is 250 caribou with 150 allotted to Zones 1, 2 and 4 combined, and 100 caribou allotted to Zone 3.

Fortymile hunters are encouraged to call the Fortymile hotline at (907) 267-2310 for updates about closed areas or other hunt changes before going into the field.

The Federal subsistence seasons for Fortymile and White Mountains caribou remain open to federally qualified hunters on federal lands and are not affected by the above changes. Hunters with questions about federal subsistence regulations should call (800) 478-1456.

**Division of Wildlife Conservation**  
**Doug Vincent-Lang, Acting Director**  
 Headquarters  
 P.O. Box 115526  
 Juneau, AK 99811-5526



**Alaska Department of Fish and Game**  
**Cora Campbell, Commissioner**  
 P.O. Box 115526  
 Juneau, AK 99811-5526  
[www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)

