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NEWS RELEASE

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Most of Fortymile Caribou Winter Hunt to Open Dec. 1

New Permit Hunt RC999 to allow small harvest along Steese

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

RC867 will 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.

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

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

Fish and Game biologists flew over the Fortymile hunt areas on Friday and saw a large number of caribou in Zone 1. Also, drivers reported caribou standing on the Steese Highway in that area.

“In addition to what we learned on the flights, about three quarters of our satellite collars are north of Birch Creek along the Steese between Twelve Mile Summit and Central,” said Tok Area Biologist Jeff Gross. “Opening the hunt in that area would result in an overharvest of the winter quota in one day. We will open the RC867 hunt in all of Zone 1 at a later date only if the caribou disperse, eliminating the danger of an overharvest.”

Some hunting will be allowed this winter along the Steese Highway through a new limited registration permit hunt RC999, which was approved by the Board of Game in March, 2012. Up to 30 caribou in the winter quota may be taken in RC999.

For a chance to participate in the RC999 hunt, Alaskan hunters must call (907) 328-6124 or toll free (855)-328-6124 after 8:00 am on Monday, December 3, 2012, to have their name added to a first-come, first-served list. Both numbers will ring the same phone, and only one hunter may register per call.

The first 100 phone calls will be accepted, and names will be listed in order of their call. Callers must provide their Alaska driver's license and resident hunting license numbers.

Resident hunters who have not already harvested a caribou since July 1, 2012, are eligible to call. Alaskan hunters who possess an RC867 permit are eligible to call if they have not harvested a caribou since July 1.

During the week of December 3, Department staff will notify the first 15 hunters on the list and issue them RC999 permits, which will be valid for a one week hunt period beginning December 10.

Following the first hunt period, additional RC999 permits will be issued if the Zone 1 harvest quota has not been reached.

“This is a new hunt that will provide limited hunting opportunity along the Steese Highway as an alternative to being completely closed,” said Regional Management Coordinator Roy Nowlin.

In past years, the southern part of Zone 3 was closed to prevent an overharvest of the Nelchina Caribou Herd when it migrated into the area. This year, however, all of Zone 3 will open December 1 for RC867 hunters because, even though Nelchina caribou are once again present, the Nelchina harvest quota has not been reached. Caribou harvested in Zone 3 will be assigned to the Fortymile or Nelchina herd quotas based on harvest locations because the two herds are presently in different parts of Zone 3. Most caribou accessible from the Taylor Highway are likely to be from the Nelchina herd. Harvest of Nelchina caribou will not be counted towards the Fortymile quota.

Several thousand Nelchina caribou are still accessible in Unit 13, and hunters with RC566 and CC001 permits may hunt caribou only in Unit 13. For additional information on the Nelchina Herd, contact Glennallen ADF&G staff at 822-3461. Unit 13 hunters are encouraged to call the Nelchina Hotline at (907) 267-2304 for updates.

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.

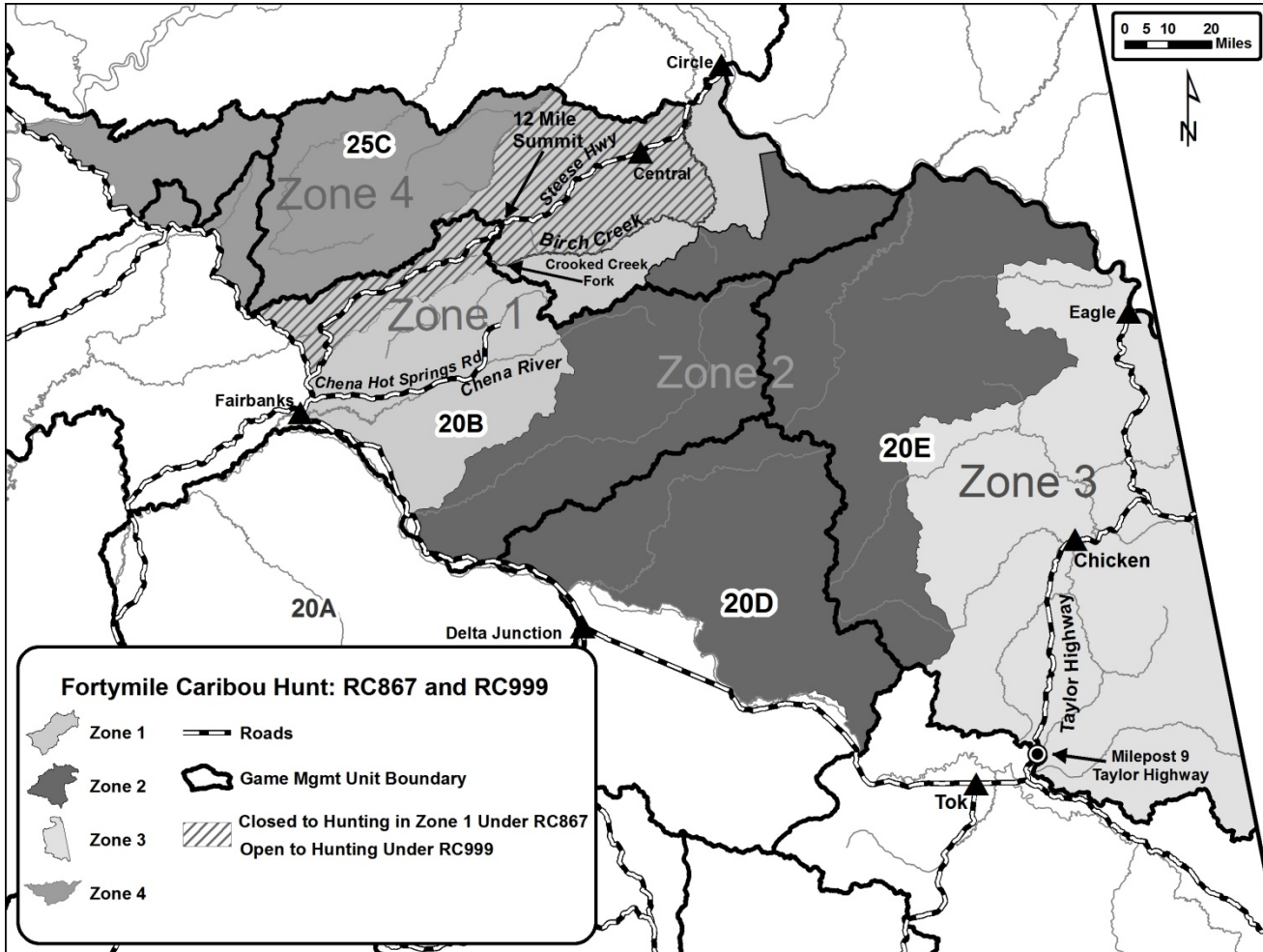
Fortymile hunters are encouraged to call the Fortymile hotline at (907) 267-2310 for updates about closed areas or other hunt changes before going into the field.

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.

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