

Cora Campbell, Commissioner



Public Communications
P.O. Box 115526
Juneau, Alaska 99811-5526
(907) 465-6166

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

NEWS

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CONTACT: Cathie Harms (907) 459-7231

Most of Fortymile Caribou Hunt to Open Dec. 1

Most of the State winter season for Fortymile Caribou will open as scheduled on December 1, but the portion of Zone 1 near the Steese Highway and the portion of Zone 3 south of Milepost 60 of the Taylor Highway will remain closed.

RC867 will open in Zone 1 south of Crooked Creek Fork and south and east of Birch Creek in Unit 25C, and south of the Chatanika River drainage Unit 20B. Zone 2 will open as scheduled. Zone 3 will open north of an east-west line running through Milepost 60 of the Taylor Highway.

A portion of the State White Mountains caribou hunt RC879 within the Chatanika River drainage in Unit 20B will also remain closed because some Fortymile caribou are present in the area.

The southern part of Zone 3 is closed because a large number of Nelchina caribou has mixed with Fortymile caribou in that area.

Fish and Game biologists flew over the Fortymile hunt areas on Friday and saw a large number of caribou in part of Zone 1. They have also received several reports from drivers who saw caribou standing on the Steese Highway in that area.

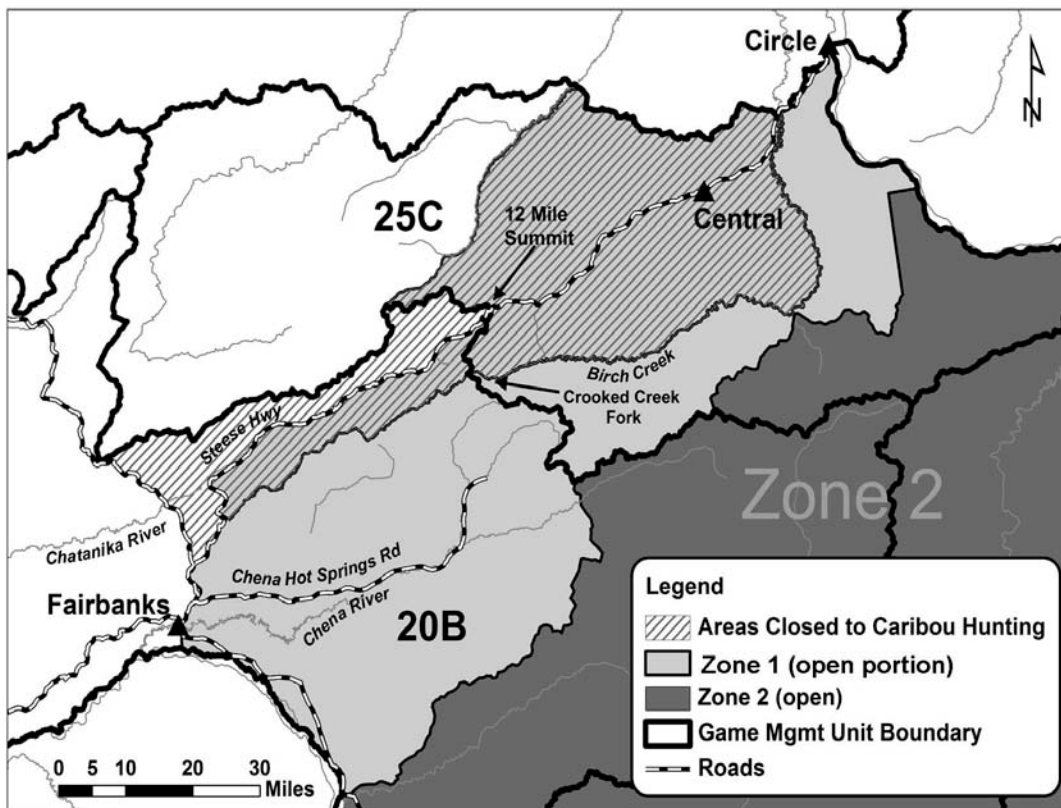
“In addition to what we learned on the flights, about two thirds of our satellite collars are north of Birch Creek along the Steese between Twelve Mile Summit and Central,” said Tok Area Biologist Jeff Gross. “Opening the hunt in that area would allow hunters to exceed the winter quota in one day. This way, the harvest will be slower, and more hunters can get into the field.”

Hunt RC867 is scheduled to close when winter hunt quotas are met, or on February 28. The total winter quota is 250 caribou with 150 allotted to Zones 1 and 2, and 100 caribou allotted to Zone 3.

“We will open the RC867 hunt in all of Zone 1, and the RC879 hunt in the Chatanika River drainage if caribou disperse more and the danger of an overharvest is lower,” Gross said.

The Alaska Board of Game endorsed the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan as a means of guiding harvest of the herd from 2006 through 2012. The annual harvest quota is allocated seasonally: 75% to the fall hunt and 25%, plus any surplus from the fall quota, to the winter hunt.

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



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