

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

NEWS RELEASE

Thursday, June 26, 2014

CONTACT: Cathie Harms, 907-459-7231

Fortymile Caribou Hunting Season Delayed

The Fortymile Caribou hunting season RC860 in Zones 1 & 3 on lands accessible from the Steese and Taylor Highways will open September 3.

The 2014 fall season was scheduled to open August 29 in Zones 1 and 3, but is being delayed by 5 days.

By avoiding the Labor Day weekend, hunt managers hope to minimize the risk of over harvest and increase the likelihood of a longer fall season. The delay will also help reduce the chance of taking the entire annual quota in the fall hunt, which would cancel the winter hunt.

The season in the less accessible Zones 2 and 4 will open on August 10 as originally scheduled.

During fall 2013, a significant number of Fortymile Caribou congregated along the road systems in Zones 1 (Steese Highway) and 3 (Taylor Highway). Heavy participation by hunters over the Labor Day weekend caused the season in Zones 1 and 3 to last only a few days, during which the entire annual quota was exceeded. As a result, the 2013-2014 winter season had to be cancelled in the entire hunt area.

In addition to delaying the opening date in Zones 1 and 3, caribou hunting will remain closed in southern Unit 25B for the 2014-2015 season.

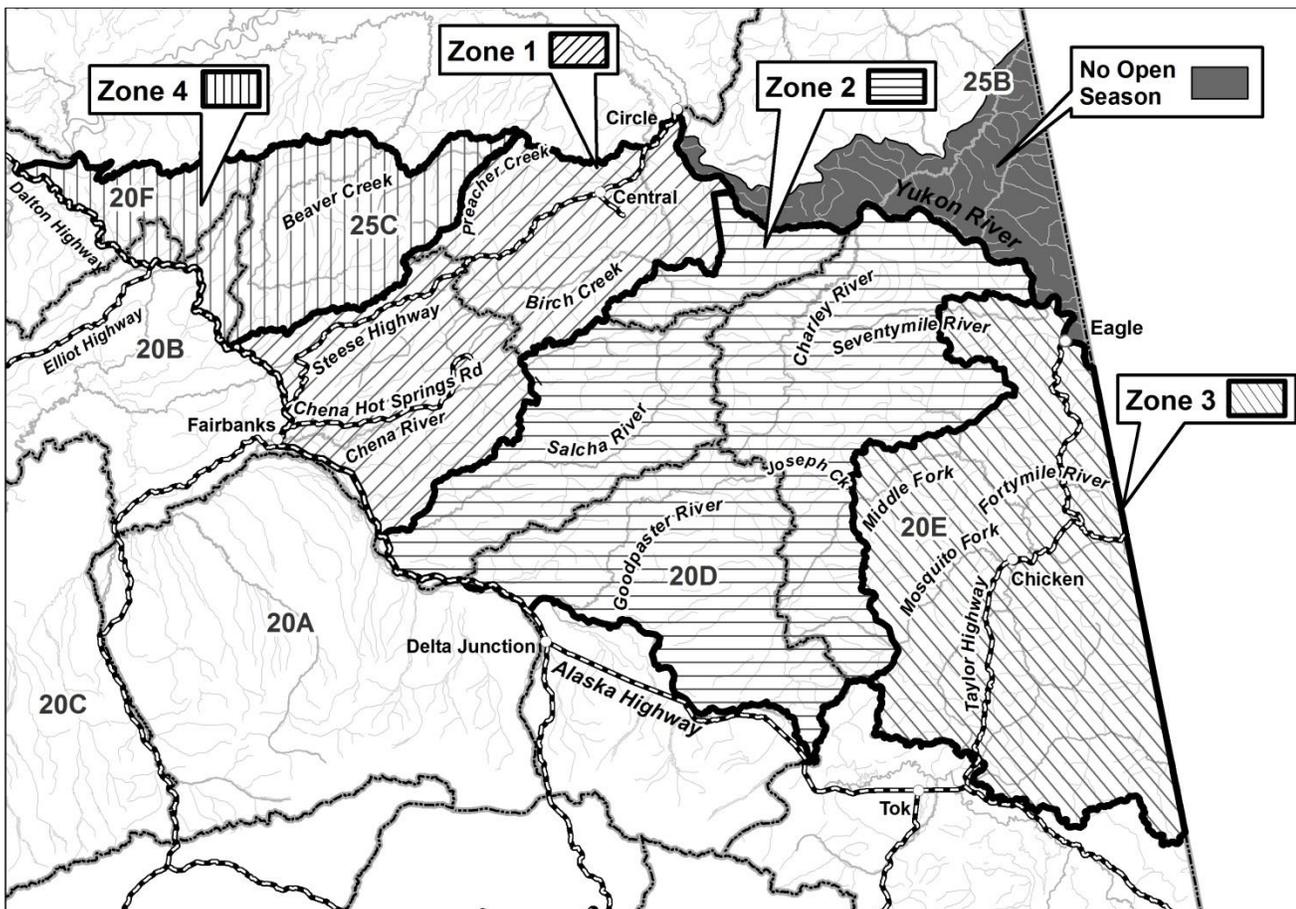
During late-September 2013, the Fortymile Caribou Herd made a sudden movement north of the Yukon River into southern Unit 25B. The long seasons and liberal bag limits for caribou in Unit 25B were designed to accommodate migratory patterns of the much larger Porcupine Caribou Herd, which rarely approaches the Yukon River in the southern portion of the unit. The fall 2013 movement by the Fortymile Herd prompted managers to close the caribou season in southern Unit 25B to prevent additional overharvest of Fortymile Herd caribou.

The annual Fortymile quota is 1000, with 750 allocated to the fall hunt and 250 to the winter hunt. The fall quota of 750 is divided as follows: Zones 1 and 4 combined is 225, Zone 2 is 185 and Zone 3 is 340. The fall bag limit is 1 bull.

Caribou movements during fall are largely unpredictable, and Fortymile Herd seasons are often delayed or closed to prevent an overharvest when large groups of caribou gather near roads or other easily accessible areas. Hunters are advised to phone the Fortymile Caribou Hotline at 907-267-2310 before departing for the field to obtain the most current information on status of the hunt.

The Alaska Board of Game endorsed the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan (harvest plan) as a means of guiding harvest of the herd from 2012 through 2018. The harvest plan allocates all available Fortymile Herd harvest to a hunt area, divided into 4 Zones, south of the Yukon River in portions of Units 20B, 20D, 20F and 25C and all of Unit 20E. Management is designed to allow the Fortymile Herd to continue to grow and expand within habitat limitations into its former range in Alaska and Yukon. At about 50,000 animals, the Fortymile Herd is the largest caribou herd in Interior Alaska.

These changes only apply to state caribou hunts in these areas. Federal caribou hunts will be unaffected by these changes. Hunters with questions about federal subsistence regulations should call (800) 478-1456.



###