

Proposal 131

5 AAC 85.025. Hunting seasons and bag limits for caribou.

In the RC 860 hunt eliminate nonresident hunting opportunity, except nonresident military, in Zones 1, 3, and 4 and shorten the nonresident season in Zone 2 as follows:

What solution do you recommend? In other words, if the board adopted your solution, what would the new regulation say?

At this time, with the FCH in such a steep decline, we propose to eliminate nonresident hunting opportunity (except nonresident military) in Zones 1, 3, and 4 for the RC 860 hunt until such time as the herd increases and is stable. We also propose shortening the nonresident season in Zone 2 as follows:

RC 860 Nonresident (*nonresident military hunters are exempt*)

Zones 1, 3, & 4 – No Open Season

Zone 2 Aug 10 – Sept 5

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why?

Decline of Fortymile Caribou Herd + Unlimited Nonresident Opportunity

The Fortymile Caribou Herd (FCH) has declined to about 26,000 animals, well under the Intensive Management (IM) population objective of 50,000 – 70,000 animals. We are not close to meeting the IM harvest objective of 1,000 animals.

In 2025, nonresident caribou hunters harvested 40% of the total harvest from the FCH during the fall RC 860 hunt. Most all of those nonresidents are not nonresident military. (*charts courtesy ADF&G*).

RC860 Harvest by Residency									
Regulatory Year	Total Harvest	Total Resident Harvest (% of total harvest)		Total Resident - Single Harvest per Hunter (% of total Harvest)		% Resident Success Rate - Single Harvest per Hunter	Total Nonresident Harvest (% of total harvest)		% Nonresident Success Rate
2021	2581	2142	(83)	2127	(82)	(37)	439	(17)	(42)
2022	795	587	(74)	585	(74)	(15)	208	(26)	(27)
2023	834	649	(78)	642	(77)	(25)	185	(22)	(37)
2024	350	240	(69)	240	(69)	(13)	110	(31)	(34)
2025	213	128	(60)	106	(50)	(15)	85	(40)	(42)

In Zone 2, the season was closed 25 days early in 2025 due to the high number of nonresident fly-in hunters harvesting caribou. The Zone 2 quota was 100 bulls and the harvest was 121 bulls. Zone 2 is the primary area where air-taxis/transporters fly their nonresident clients. These air-taxis and transporters typically book clients well ahead of that year's hunt and may book clients throughout the Aug 10 – Sept 30 season. So, when the season closes early, the clients booked to hunt after the closure aren't allowed to hunt and trips must be canceled, which is hard on all involved.

~68% of the caribou harvest in Zone 2 in 2025 was from nonresident hunters. The only nonresident harvest in 2025 was from Zone 2, which was an outlier compared to other years. Zones 1 & 4 did not open in 2025 as scheduled due to abundant caribou near the highway and there were few caribou in Zone 3.

RC860 Harvests by Residency												
Regulatory Year	Zone 1			Zone 2			Zone 3			Zone 4		
	Resident	Nonresident	Total	Resident	Nonresident	Total	Resident	Nonresident	Total	Resident	Nonresident	Total
2021	1822	240	2062	74	143	217	208	45	253	38	11	49
2022	196	50	246	51	85	136	339	73	412	1	0	1
2023	604	105	709	38	77	115	6	2	8	1	1	2
2024	173	30	203	44	73	117	5	0	5	18	7	25
2025	79	0	79	36	85	121	6	0	6	7	0	7

As you can see from the chart below, nonresidents (both nonresident military and non-military) do hunt along the road system when the zones are open and caribou are available.

RC860 Hunters by Residency												
Regulatory Year	Zone 1			Zone 2			Zone 3			Zone 4		
	Resident	Nonresident	Total	Resident	Nonresident	Total	Resident	Nonresident	Total	Resident	Nonresident	Total
2021	4024	575	4599	184	198	382	1496	248	1744	106	24	130
2022	2288	385	2673	209	161	370	1423	221	1644	95	12	107
2023	1681	224	1905	156	152	308	661	115	776	29	8	37
2024	1080	139	1219	168	114	282	580	53	633	75	10	85
2025	127	2	129	139	128	267	440	70	510	10	1	11

During the last cycle, RHAK submitted a proposal to prohibit nonresident hunters from participating in the RC 860 fall hunt in Zones 1, 3, and 4. After discussions with air-taxi/transporters we agreed to leave Zone 2 open to nonresident hunters. The board voted down our proposal saying that they did not want to prevent nonresident military hunters from participating in the RC 860 hunt along the road system. We tried to amend our proposal to exempt nonresident military hunters but there was confusion as to whether Alaska Wildlife Troopers could tell if a nonresident was military or not.

As we found out, while the RC 860 permit does not identify a nonresident vs a nonresident military hunter, the actual hunting license does identify whether a nonresident is military or not. So, Troopers can easily tell if a nonresident hunter is a nonresident military hunter.

Number of Nonresident Military Licenses Sold

In 2025, 614 nonresident military hunting licenses were sold, and 1, 327 nonresident military combo Hunt/Sport Fish licenses were sold. For the five years 2021 – 2025 the range of nonresident military hunt licenses sold was 560 - 625, and the range of nonresident military combo Hunt/Sport Fish licenses sold during that same time period was 1,327 – 1,560 (data from ADF&G License Statistics). We included this data for the board's information but have no way of knowing how many nonresident military hunters participate in the RC 860 caribou hunt.

Nonresident Military License

Below is a blank copy of a hunt/fish/trap license (front page). The arrows on the right point down to the nonresident military hunt or nonresident military hunt/sport fish boxes, one of which would be checked if that hunter was nonresident military.

STATE OF ALASKA SPORT FISHING, HUNTING, TRAPPING LICENSE										ANNUAL LICENSES EXPIRE DEC 31, AA 2026	
RESIDENT										Requires Affidavit 11-524	
RES CLASS 01 \$20 Sport Fish	RES CLASS 02 \$45 Hunt	RES CLASS 3A \$65 Hunt/Trap	RES CLASS 3B \$25 Trap	RES CLASS 04 \$60 Hunt/Sport Fish	RES CLASS 05 \$85 Hunt/Trap/ Sport Fish	BLIND RES. CLASS 1A \$0.50 Sport Fish	BLIND RES. CLASS 2A \$45 Hunting				
REQUIRED FOR RESIDENT LICENSES When did your Alaska residency begin? Year _____ Month _____						License is not valid if more than one class is indicated. RES= Resident NR= Nonresident					
INFORMATION REQUIRED - PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY FIRST _____ MI _____ LAST _____ GENDER ☐ M ☐ F ☐ N BIRTHDATE (MM.DD.YYYY) _____ ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE/PROVINCE _____ ZIP/POSTAL CODE _____ COUNTRY _____ DRIVER'S LICENSE OR ID _____ PHONE _____ EMAIL _____ State _____ Number _____											
VENDOR COMPLETES THIS SECTION FOR ALL LICENSES ISSUED. VENDOR NUMBER _____ CLASS ISSUED _____ DATE ISSUED (MM.DD.YYYY) _____ I have read and understand the definition of Alaska "resident" (AS 16.05.415). My license has not been suspended or revoked in any state. This information is subject to public disclosure. Making false statements herein is subject to criminal penalties (AS 11.56.210, AS 16.05.420, & AS 16.05.965). I certify all the information is true and correct.											
X VENDOR SIGNATURE						X LICENSEE SIGNATURE					
License not valid unless signed by both Licensee and Vendor.											
NONRESIDENT										START DATE AND END DATE FOR CLASSES 6A, 6B, 6C, 6D and 9C ONLY:	
NR CLASS 6A 14-DAY \$75 Sport Fish	NR CLASS 6B 3-DAY \$30 Sport Fish	NR CLASS 6C 1-DAY \$15 Sport Fish	NR CLASS 6D 7-DAY \$45 Sport Fish	NR CLASS 9C \$205 Annual Hunt/ 7-Day Sport Fish	START DATE _____ HOUR _____ AM _____ PM _____		END DATE _____ HOUR _____ AM _____ PM _____		NR CLASS 07 \$100 Sport Fish	NR CLASS 08 \$50 Sport Fish	NR CLASS 8A \$50 Small Game
NR CLASS 09 \$260 Hunt/ Sport Fish	NR CLASS 10 \$405 Hunt/Trap	NR CLASS 15 \$630 Hunt	COMPLETE AFFIDAVIT ON BACK OF DEPARTMENT COPY BEFORE ISSUANCE OF THESE LICENSES CLASS 18 Original License Class RES CLASS 5A \$5 Low Income Hunt/Trap/ Sport Fish RES CLASS 5B \$2 Duplicate class 5A Low Income Sport Fish NR YUKON CLASS 11 \$20 Sport Fish NR MILITARY CLASS 12 \$20 Sport Fish NR MILITARY CLASS 16 \$45 Hunt NR MILITARY CLASS 17 \$60 Hunt/Sport Fish								

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DEPARTMENT COPY
PRESS DOWN FOR CLEAR COPIES

On the back of the license there is a section in the bottom right that one fills out under penalty of perjury in order to receive a nonresident military license at a reduced cost.

AFFIDAVIT SUPPORTING LICENSE APPLICATION Complete the appropriate section and sign below.

RESIDENT LOW INCOME - Class 5A I am entitled to the Resident Hunting, Sport Fishing and Trapping License for a fee of \$5.00 for the following reason: ☐ I am the head of a family, or a dependant of a family; or ☐ I am solely dependent on myself for support. AND My family/household annual income for the preceding year is equal to or less than the poverty guidelines for Alaska set by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. AS 16.05.340(a)(6) Low-Income (Poverty) Guidelines may be found at the following web-site: https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines By signing this affidavit and purchasing a Resident Low Income (Class 5A) License I authorize the release of information by the Division of Public Assistance to the Department of Fish and Game necessary to verify my participation in any need-based program which qualifies me for this special category license and to the Department of Public Safety as necessary to investigate false claims for this license. A family's gross annual income must include all sources of income for ALL family members including permanent fund dividends, as well as any other dividends or interest payments received. A person must provide proof of eligibility under this paragraph when requested by the Department of Fish and Game or the Department of Public Safety. SURCHARGE DISCLOSURES (per AS 16.05.340) HUNTING: A Wildlife Intensive Management Surcharge has been applied to all hunting licenses; Resident Hunting Licenses: \$10, Nonresident Hunting Licenses: \$30. NOTE: Making a false statement, or omitting a material fact, is subject to a maximum penalty of \$25,000 and/or 1 year imprisonment under AS 11.56.210 and 16.05.420, 665.	DUPLICATE LICENSE - Classes 18 and 5B I hereby report the loss of my current Sport License issued to me in accordance with the Department of Fish and Game statutes and regulations as indicated below: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>License Class (REQUIRED)</td> <td>License Number (if known)</td> <td>Date of Issuance</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">Issued By (Name of License Vendor)</td> <td>Place of Issuance</td> </tr> </table> NONRESIDENT YUKON RECIPROCAL SPORT FISHING LICENSE - Class 11 <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>Yukon Resident Sport Fishing License Number</td> <td>Yukon Government Issued ID. Number</td> </tr> </table> NONRESIDENT MILITARY - Classes 12, 16 and 17 (Must be stationed in Alaska) I am entitled to the special nonresident Military License for the following reason: ☐ I am a member of the military service on active duty permanently stationed in Alaska; or ☐ I am a dependant of a member of the military service on active duty permanently stationed in Alaska. <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td>Branch of Military Service</td> <td>Rank and I.D. Number</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Assigned Duty Station</td> <td>If a dependant, what is relationship?</td> </tr> </table> NOTE: Please read definition of resident to determine residency status. I hereby certify under penalty of perjury that all the above information is true and correct. X LICENSEE SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____	License Class (REQUIRED)	License Number (if known)	Date of Issuance	Issued By (Name of License Vendor)		Place of Issuance	Yukon Resident Sport Fishing License Number	Yukon Government Issued ID. Number	Branch of Military Service	Rank and I.D. Number	Assigned Duty Station	If a dependant, what is relationship?
License Class (REQUIRED)	License Number (if known)	Date of Issuance											
Issued By (Name of License Vendor)		Place of Issuance											
Yukon Resident Sport Fishing License Number	Yukon Government Issued ID. Number												
Branch of Military Service	Rank and I.D. Number												
Assigned Duty Station	If a dependant, what is relationship?												

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It is possible for troopers to distinguish between a nonresident hunter and a nonresident military hunter. A regulation that only allows nonresident military hunters is enforceable.

With the FCH in such a steep decline, we don't believe there should be any non-military nonresident hunting at all, however, we recognize that the fly-in portion of Zone 2 is important to air-taxis and transporters who cater to nonresident hunters and we'd like to provide some nonresident opportunity in Zone 2, albeit with a shorter season. With the decline of the herd and reduced quotas, we believe a shorter nonresident season in Zone 2 is best for everyone. That ensures there is some opportunity without the likelihood of going over the quota and the season closing early.

Did you develop your proposal in coordination with others, or with your local fish and game advisory committee?

Thank you to Department staff for providing the data and information!

PROPOSED BY: Resident Hunters of Alaska

(OI-F26-090)
