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NEWS

Tuesday, November 29, 2011

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Nelchina Caribou force Additional Taylor Highway Closure

A recent movement of Nelchina caribou into the area near Chicken has prompted an additional closure of Registration Hunt RC867 for Fortymile caribou along the Taylor Highway.

A closure for the hunt area south of Milepost 60 of the Taylor Highway was issued last week, but now the area south of Milepost 112.6 at the Fortymile River bridge is closed.

During a survey flight on Monday, no radiocollars from the Fortymile herd were found in the area south of the Fortymile River bridge, but numerous collars from the Nelchina herd were in the area.

"This is a recent movement," Gross said. "They were not seen north of Milepost 60 in any numbers late last week, but apparently moved north during the past few days."

Nelchina caribou have wintered in an area just north of Tok during the past seven years, but have not moved north of Milepost 60 in significant numbers in previous years, said Tok Area Biologist Gross.

"Hunters aren't losing much opportunity because the caribou south of the Fortymile bridge right now are all Nelchina caribou, which aren't allowed in this hunt," Gross added.

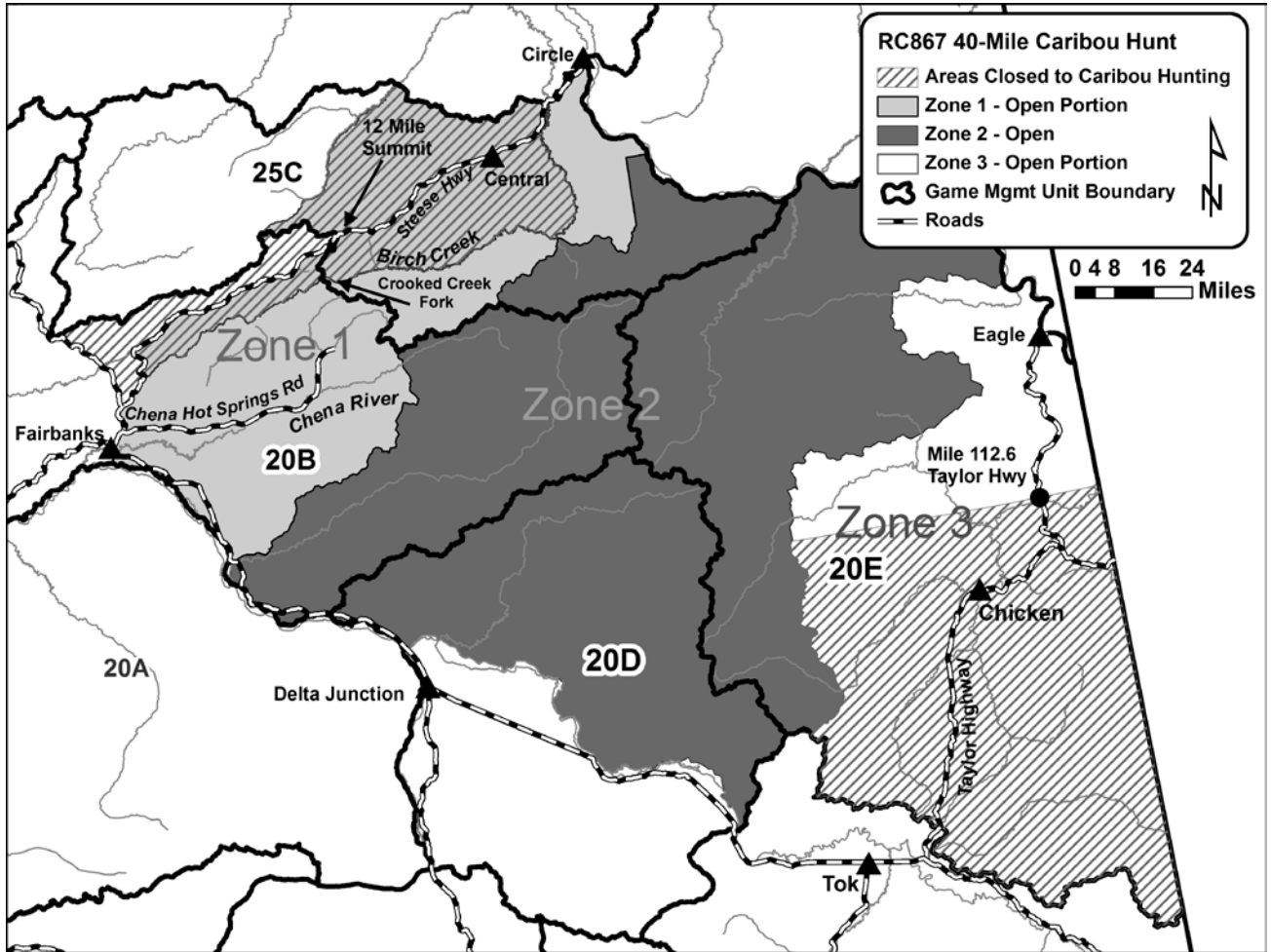
The RC867 hunt for Fortymile caribou is divided into three zones. An emergency order closing Part of Zone 1 was announced last week to prevent an overharvest during the upcoming state hunt because many Fortymile caribou have gathered along the Steese Highway.

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.

Hunters are encouraged to call the Fortymile Caribou Information line at 267-2310 before they leave for a hunt. Maps of the open areas are available from Fish and Game offices.

The Federal subsistence season for Fortymile caribou remains open and is not affected by the above changes. Hunters with questions about federal subsistence regulations should call (800) 478-1456.

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.



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