

The Board of Game approved an Agenda Change Request to consider this proposal at the Southcentral region meeting in March 2013.

PROPOSAL 177- 5AAC 85.025(15)(20). Season Dates and Bag Limits for Caribou.
 Convert the winter limited registration permit hunt for the Fortymile Caribou Herd to a winter hot spot permit hunt.

Units and Bag Limits	Resident Open Season (Subsistence and General Hunts)	Nonresident Open Season
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Units 20(B) and 20(F), those portions south of the Yukon River, and north and east of a line formed by the Richardson Highway from the Unit 20(D) boundary to its intersection with the Steese Highway, north along the Steese Highway to its intersection with the Elliot Highway, then northwest along the Elliot Highway to its intersection with the Dalton Highway, then north along the Dalton Highway to the Yukon River; and Unit 20(D) that portion north of the south bank of the Tanana River

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 caribou by registration permit only; or

Aug. 10–Sept. 30
 Dec. 1–Mar. 31

1 caribou by **hot-spot** [LIMITED REGISTRATION] permit only, during a season that may be announced by emergency order within a portion of the area during Dec. 1–Mar. 31

(Season to be announced by emergency order)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull by registration permit only

Aug. 10–Sept. 20

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Unit 20(E)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 caribou by registration permit
Only; or

Aug. 10–Sept. 30
Dec. 1–Mar. 31

1 caribou by registration permit only,
during a season for up to three days
that may be announced by emergency
order within a portion of the area
during the period Oct. 20–Nov. 30; or

(Season to be
announced by
emergency order)

1 caribou by **hot-spot** [LIMITED
REGISTRATION] permit only,
during a season that may be
announced by emergency order
within a portion of the area
during Dec. 1–Mar. 31

(Season to be
announced by
emergency order)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull by registration permit only

Aug. 10–Sept. 20

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(20)

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Unit 25(C)

RESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 caribou by registration permit
Only; or

Aug. 10–Sept. 30
Dec. 1–Mar. 31

1 caribou by **hot-spot** [LIMITED
REGISTRATION] permit only,
during a season that may be
announced by emergency order
within a portion of the area
during Dec. 1–Mar. 31

(Season to be
announced by
emergency order)

NONRESIDENT HUNTERS:

1 bull by registration permit only

Aug. 10–Sept. 20

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ISSUE: Technological problems prevented the Department from implementing a limited winter registration permit hunt for the Fortymile Caribou Herd (FCH) in December 2012. This hunt was recommended by the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management Coalition (HMC) and approved by the Board at its March 2012 meeting.

The purpose of the limited winter registration hunt was to allow a few hunters to take caribou along the Steese or Taylor Highways when large numbers of caribou are present near the highways and the unlimited registration permit hunt (RC867) closes because of concerns about exceeding the harvest quota. This proposal would convert the limited registration permit hunt to a “hot spot” permit hunt, which is “*a registration permit issued on a random, lottery basis to an applicant who has previously registered and agrees to participate in a hunt under short notice*”—5 AAC 92.990(82). Based on HMC recommendations, the “hot spot” harvest would be limited to no more than 20% of whatever remains in the quota for the hunt zone where the hot spot hunt occurs. The following table lists examples of how the “hot spot” limit would be applied if caribou concentrated along the Steese Highway in zone 1, causing RC 867 to close in all or part of zone 1.

Zone 1 Winter Quota	Number already taken	Remaining quota	20% of remaining quota for hot spot hunt
150	0	150	30
150	10	140	28
150	30	120	24
100	0	100	20
100	10	90	18
100	30	70	14

Harvest management is guided by the *Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Plan 2012–2018* that was developed by the HMC and approved by the Board in March 2012. Alaska members of the HMC include Anchorage, Central, Eagle, Delta, Fairbanks, Upper Tanana/Fortymile and Matanuska Valley Fish and Game Advisory Committees and the Federal Eastern Interior Regional Advisory Council.

Total FCH harvest in Alaska has been limited to approximately 2% of the herd since 2001 to allow it to grow and to potentially reoccupy its former range in Alaska and Yukon, Canada. A total of 1,066 Fortymile caribou were harvested in regulatory year 2011–2012. The most recent FCH photocensus in July 2010 indicated a population of approximately 51,600 caribou. Models suggest the herd increased 4% annually during 2006–2010. Photocensus attempts were unsuccessful during 2011 and 2012. The Department will attempt another photocensus in June 2013. Harvest will be increased if the herd continues to grow.

Under 5 AAC 99.025 (a) (4), the Board has found that caribou in game management units (GMUs) 12, 20D, 20E, and 25C (FCH) have positive customary and traditional uses. The Board has also found that 350–400 caribou are the amount reasonably necessary for subsistence (ANS).

Prior to taking final action, the Board should determine whether the proposed regulations provide a reasonable opportunity for subsistence.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Hunters will not be able to hunt a few Fortymile caribou when they congregate near roads, and the RC867 hunt is closed.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? Yes. A few hunters will be allowed to harvest caribou when they are readily accessible adjacent to the Steese or Taylor Highways.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Hunters who would not otherwise be allowed to harvest Fortymile caribou along the Steese and Taylor Highways when thousands of animals are near the road system.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? People who do not think the FCH should be hunted near roads, and people who object to another layer of complication in regulations.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? A drawing permit hunt with a small quota is a possible alternative to a “hot spot” hunt. A drawing would allow a few hunters to take caribou along the Steese or Taylor Highways when the unlimited registration permit hunt (RC867) is closed because of concerns about exceeding the harvest quota. However, hunters would have to apply during the drawing hunt application period in November/December. They would also have to use 1 of their 3 caribou hunt choices, and pay the application fee, even though the drawing hunt may not occur because caribou do not concentrate along a highway.

Another alternative considered was to convert the unlimited registration permit hunt (RC867) that is currently in effect over the entire FCH hunt area into a drawing permit hunt. However, this would not provide reasonable opportunity for subsistence as required by the state subsistence law.

PROPOSED BY: Department of Fish and Game on behalf of the Fortymile Caribou Herd Harvest Management Coalition (SC-2013-177)

The Board of Game scheduled this proposal for the Southcentral region meeting in March 2013.

PROPOSAL 178– 5 AAC 92.125. Intensive Management Plans. Authorize a predator control program in a small portion of Unit 1A.

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() Unit 1(A) Predation Control Area. For the management of deer on Gravina Island located in Unit 1A,

- 1) The purpose of this plan is to allow for the removal of wolves by the department on Gravina Island (treatment area), to enhance deer survival and increase the population of deer on this island. Gravina Island would serve as a test area for a more expansive effort in other portions of Unit 1A should it be successful. The goal would be to increase the deer harvest in Unit 1A to a minimum of 700 animals as identified in the intensive management harvest objective for that unit.
- 2) Notwithstanding any other provisions in this chapter (92), the department shall,
 - (i) Derive an estimate of the number of wolves on Gravina Island (treatment area) and on the Cleveland Peninsula (comparison area) within Unit 1A;
 - (ii) Develop a method for estimating deer numbers within the treatment and comparison areas;
 - (iii) Assess the current habitat condition and habitat capability for deer in the treatment and control areas;
 - (iv) Develop a strategy for implementing activities that will accomplish the purpose of this plan;
 - (v) Submit an annual report to the Board of Game detailing the progress and activities associated with this plan.

ISSUE: This proposal establishes a predator control program on Gravina Island, located in Unit 1A, and focuses wolf control activities in this area. Gravina Island encompasses 96 square miles, which represents 2% of Unit 1A (5,300 square miles). Deer harvest in Unit 1A has declined markedly over the past 15 years, from a high of 900 in the mid 1990s, to about 200 the past few years. This low harvest is well below the intensive management deer harvest objective for Unit 1A of 700 animals, and has been below the 225-250 deer necessary for subsistence (ANS) during the past 3 years. The department has assessed the low deer population level in Unit 1A and is developing an Intensive Management Program that includes this wolf control plan to address the situation.

The full plan will be posted at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo .

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE Deer numbers will remain low in Unit 1A and residents of Ketchikan and other communities in Unit 1A will continue to have difficulty meeting their deer harvest needs.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? Yes, more deer will be available.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Hunters who pursue deer in Unit 1A.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? People opposed to predator control programs.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?

- 1) Habitat enhancement: winter habitat (high volume timber) is the most limiting habitat for deer in this area, and using enhancement activities to recreate this type of habitat would take many decades to accomplish.
- 2) Black bear control: although black bears are known to prey on deer fawns in Southeast Alaska, research data suggests they take very few adult deer. Additionally, Gravina Island has a low density of bears, and they are not thought to be a significant mortality factor for deer in this area.
- 3) Do nothing: though winter weather impacts deer survival and a series of mild winters may produce some recovery, it is not expected that the population will recover significantly without management intervention.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (SC-2013-178)

The Board of Game scheduled this proposal for the Southcentral region meeting in March 2013.

PROPOSAL 179– 5 AAC 92.125. Intensive Management Plans. Authorize a predator control program in a portion of Unit 3.

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() Unit 3 Predation Control Area. For the management of deer within a portion of Unit 3,

- 1) The purpose of this plan is to allow for the removal of wolves by the department in a portion of Unit 3(22% of Unit), to enhance deer survival and increase the population of deer in this area. This portion of Unit 3 would serve as a test area for a more expansive effort in other portions of Unit 3 should it be successful. The goal would be to increase the deer harvest in Unit 3 to a minimum of 900 animals as identified in the intensive management harvest objectives for Unit 3.
- 2) Notwithstanding any other provisions in this chapter (92), the department shall,
 - (i) Derive an estimate of the number of wolves in both the treatment and comparison areas within Unit 3;
 - (ii) Develop a method for estimating deer numbers within the treatment and comparison areas;
 - (iii) Assess the current habitat condition and habitat capability for deer in the treatment and control areas;
 - (iv) Develop a strategy for implementing the activities that will accomplish the purpose of this plan;
 - (v) Submit an annual report to the Board of Game detailing the progress and activities associated with this plan.

ISSUE: This proposal establishes a predator control program in Unit 3 and focuses wolf control activities in a 648 square mile portion of Unit 3 (3,000 square miles), or approximately 22% of the unit. The deer population trends as determined by deer fecal pellet data suggests deer numbers are low throughout most of the Unit. Additionally, the deer harvest in Unit 3 has been below the 900 deer intensive management objective since 2005. The department has assessed the low deer population level in Unit 3 and is developing an intensive management program that includes this wolf control plan to address the situation.

The full plan will be online at: www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=gameboard.meetinginfo .

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE Deer numbers will remain low in Unit 3 and residents of Petersburg and other communities in Unit 3 will continue to have difficulty meeting their deer harvest needs.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? Yes, more deer will be available.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Hunters who pursue deer in Unit 3.

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? People opposed to predator control programs.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED?

- 1) Habitat enhancement: winter habitat (high volume timber) is the most limiting habitat for deer in this area, and using enhancement activities to recreate this type of habitat would take many decades to accomplish.
- 2) Black bear control: although black bears are known to prey on deer fawns in Southeast Alaska, research data suggests they take very few adult deer which we believe is the most important portion of the Unit 3 deer population to protect.
- 3) Do nothing: though winter weather impacts deer survival and a series of mild winters may produce some recovery, it is not expected that the population will recover significantly without management intervention.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game

(SC-2013-179)

The Board of Game scheduled this proposal for the Southcentral region meeting in March 2013.

PROPOSAL 180 - 5 AAC 92.095(a)(12). Unlawful methods of taking furbearers; exceptions.

Clarify the regulation concerning the incidental take of moose, deer, or caribou using traps or snares.

(a) The following methods and means of taking furbearers under a trapping license are prohibited, in addition to the prohibitions in 5 AAC 92.080:

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(12) by placing or leaving an active trap or snare set on land or ice that is within 300 feet of the site at which a moose, caribou, or deer was [TAKEN USING] **killed as a result of being caught in** a trap or snare; this prohibition applies for the duration of the regulatory year in which the moose, caribou, or deer was [TAKEN USING] **killed as a result of being caught in** the trap or snare;

ISSUE: The Board of Game (board) requested this proposal be scheduled for the Southcentral region meeting scheduled for March 2013. The proposal clarifies the intent of the board for requiring trappers to remove traps and snares when moose, caribou or deer are killed with a trap or snare, and not when moose, caribou or deer break free or are released from the traps or snares.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF NOTHING IS DONE? Trappers will be expected to remove all traps within 300 feet of where moose, caribou, or deer were caught in snares but escape or are released unharmed.

WILL THE QUALITY OF THE RESOURCE HARVESTED OR PRODUCTS PRODUCED BE IMPROVED? N/A.

WHO IS LIKELY TO BENEFIT? Trappers

WHO IS LIKELY TO SUFFER? No one.

OTHER SOLUTIONS CONSIDERED? Leave the regulation as is.

PROPOSED BY: Board of Game

(SC-2013-180)
