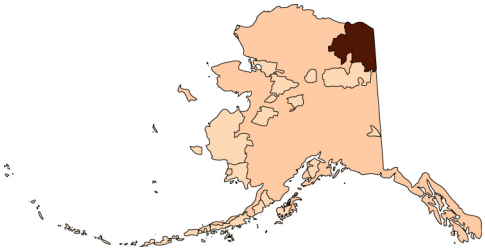
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

A Special Place in Alaska!

- The Arctic Refuge has been called "America's Last Great Wilderness" by prominent scientists and conservationists since the 1950s.
- The refuge was established in 1960 as a promise to the American people to preserve "wildlife, wilderness and recreational values."
- It is a place of wildness, where timeless ecological and evolutionary processes continue in their natural ebb and flow.
- It is a laboratory where scientists of today and tomorrow can seek to understand the natural dynamics of an unaltered land.
- Vast and remote, this 19.5 million acre refuge is the size of South Carolina.
- North to south it extends 200 miles–from the Arctic coast, across the tundra plain, over glacier-capped peaks of the Brooks Range, and into the spruce and birch forests of the Yukon basin.
- In this land of seasonal extremes, the summer sun remains above the horizon for months; in winter, the dark sky is enlivened by the multicolored aurora borealis.
- The refuge shares common borders with Ivvavik and Vuntut National Parks in Canada.
- This has been a homeland for thousands of years–to the Inupiat Eskimos of the north coast and the Athabascan Indians of interior Alaska.
- Unique to this one refuge, all three species of North American bear (black, grizzly, and polar) den within its borders.
- More than 20 rivers flow within the refuge–three designated as National Wild Rivers (Sheenjek, Ivishak and Wind).
- The most biologically diverse conservation unit in the circumpolar north, the refuge supports 45 species of land and marine mammals, 36 species of fish and 180 species of birds from four continents.
- The 120,000 strong Porcupine Caribou Herd migrates throughout the refuge and northwestern Canada, and regularly comes to the coastal plain to give birth.
- The refuge is home to muskoxen and thousands of Dall sheep.
- Open to the public year-round, the Arctic Refuge is a place where the mystery of nameless valleys remains alive, where one can experience solitude, self-reliance, exploration, adventure, and challenge.



The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service manages 16 national wildlife refuges in Alaska, or nearly 82% of the National Wildlife Refuge System acreage.

USFWS

Spring camping on the arctic tundra.

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