

More information on the refuge,  
regulations, and licensing is  
available from:

Refuge Manager  
Izembek National  
Wildlife Refuge  
PO Box 127  
Cold Bay, Alaska 99571  
907/532 2445

United States  
Department of Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
1 800/344 WILD  
<http://www.fws.gov>

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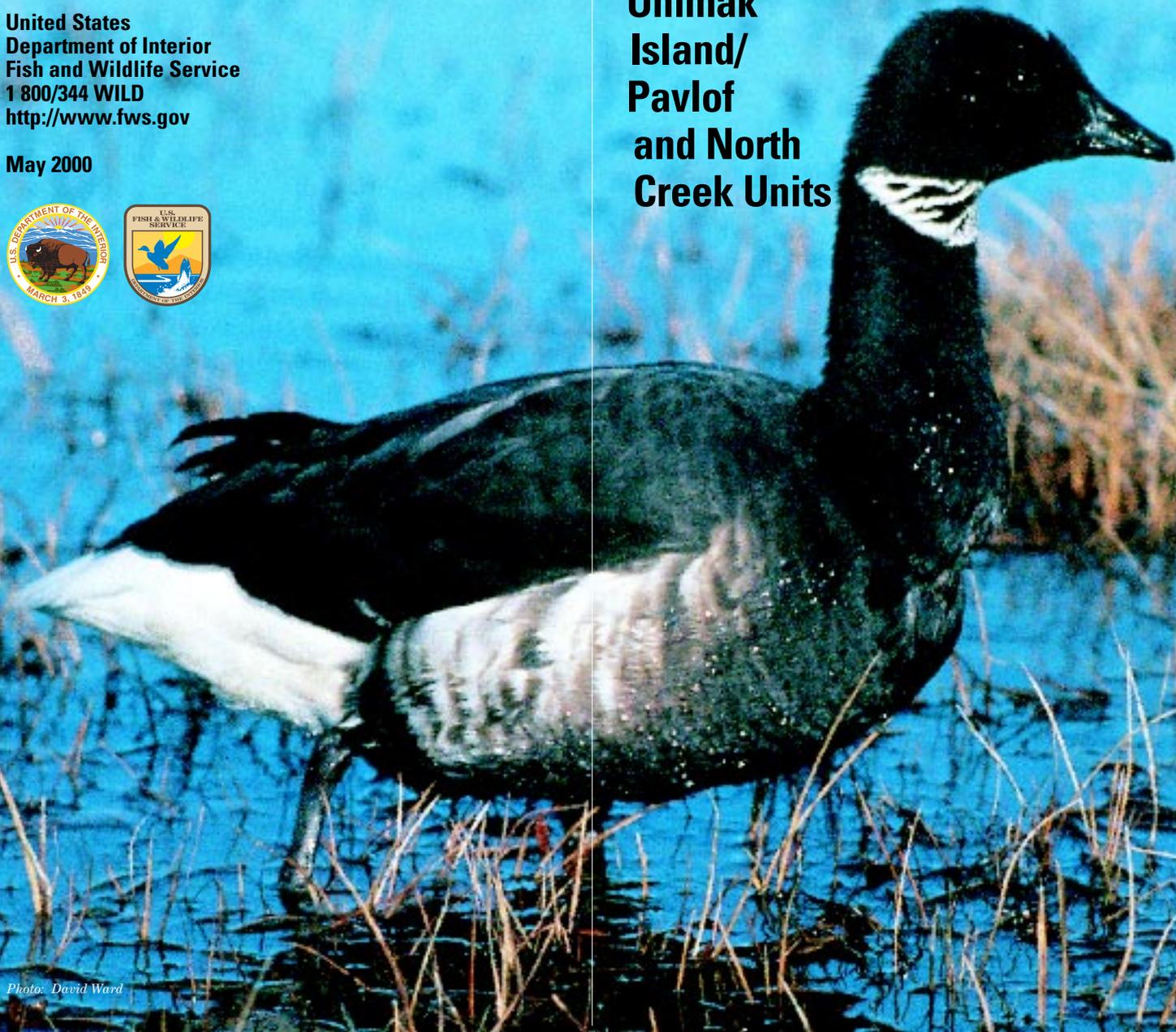


**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# Izembek

*National Wildlife Refuge*

**Izembek /  
Unimak  
Island/  
Pavlof  
and North  
Creek Units**



*Photo: David Ward*



*This blue goose,  
designed by J. N.  
Ding Darling,  
has become a  
symbol of the  
Refuge System.*

*“The mission  
of the National  
Wildlife Refuge  
System is to  
administer a  
national network  
of lands and  
waters for the  
conservation,  
management,  
and where  
appropriate,  
restoration of  
the fish, wildlife,  
and plant  
resources and  
their habitats  
within the  
United States  
for the benefit  
of present and  
future generations  
of Americans.”*

National Wildlife  
Refuge System  
Improvement  
Act of 1997

*Tens of thousands of  
waterfowl erupt from  
Izembek Lagoon, as  
volcanoes simmer in  
the distance and brown  
bears wander the  
shores. Gray whales  
feed quietly in nearby  
coastal waters and a  
carpet of wildflowers  
blossoms beneath the  
late summer fog.*

*Welcome to Izembek  
National Wildlife  
Refuge!*



Photo: Spencer

Established in 1960 to protect the habitat of the Pacific black brant, Izembek Refuge is a panorama of natural beauty characterized by hundreds of freshwater lakes, meandering streams, U-shaped valleys, ancient glaciers, thermal springs, and smoking volcanoes.

At the heart of the Refuge lies Izembek Lagoon, 150 square miles of brackish water containing some of the largest eelgrass beds in the world. The State of Alaska has designated the state-owned tide and submerged lands of the lagoon as the Izembek State Game Refuge. Critically important to migrating birds, the lagoon was the first U.S. site designated as a Wetland of International Importance.

Low brush tundra, accented with tiny wildflowers and dotted with tangled alder thickets, covers most of the refuge. Flowers bloom from June through September, and salmon-berries, cranberries, strawberries and crowberries ripen in late summer.

Headquartered in Cold Bay, Alaska, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages Izembek National Wildlife Refuge (417,533 acres), the adjacent North Creek (8,452 acres) and Pavlof (1,447,264 acres) units of Alaska Peninsula National Wildlife Refuge,

Cover photo:  
Pacific Black  
Brant. Photo on  
previous spread:  
erupting Pavlof  
volcano.

Left: Eelgrass  
beds - Izembek  
Lagoon viewed  
from Grant Point.

and Unimak Island (1,008,697 acres) of Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge.

Over ninety-five percent of Izembek Refuge and all of the Unimak Island Unit are designated wilderness.

### A Rich History

Dependant upon the marine environment for food, clothing and shelter, the Aleut people who lived along the Alaska Peninsula were some of the best seamen in the world. Although no inhabited villages exist on refuge lands today, depressions in the tundra outline their ancient settlements.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russians explored this area and established fur trading posts, often resettling Aleuts in the process. Today, descendants of these Aleuts and Europeans live in Nelson Lagoon, King Cove and False Pass. First established in the early 20th century, these communities began as salmon cannery villages.

During World War II, Fort Randall was built at what is now Cold Bay. Secretly supporting up to 20,000 troops, it was never attacked, but bombs did fall on the nearby village of Unalaska in 1942. Now, over half a century later, depressions from military barracks dot the landscape and old military trails are still visible crossing the fragile tundra.

Photos this page: J. Sarvis



M. Zeillemaker

Yellow Monkey  
Flower



M. Zeillemaker

Rusty Cottongrass

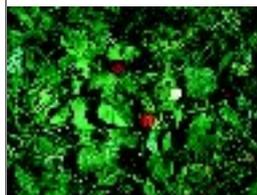


Crowberries

M. Chase



Fireweed



Strawberry and  
Nagoon Berries



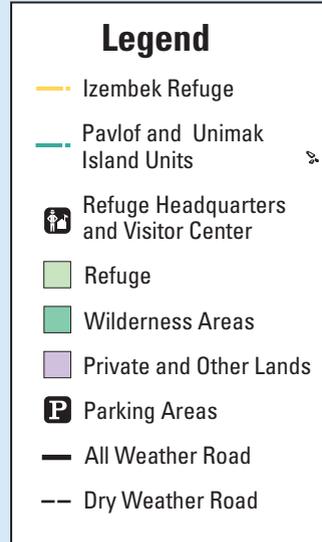
Woolly Lousewort



Right: Lupine.

# Izembek

National Wildlife Refuge





Charles Conkling & Assoc.

*Above: On the tundra, Canada geese forage extensively on crowberries.*

### A Migration Crossroads

Birds from all over the arctic funnel through Izembek Refuge each fall on their way to winter destinations throughout the world. Golden plovers and ruddy turnstones continue to the South Pacific, while semipalmated plovers and western sandpipers travel to South America.

Dozens of other species remain within the North American Pacific Flyway—including mallards, rock sandpipers and dunlins. More than 98% of the world's Pacific black brant converge on Izembek Lagoon each fall to feed on eelgrass in preparation for their 3000 mile non-stop flight to wintering grounds in Mexico.

Nesting in wetlands and wintering near thermal springs, many tundra swans remain at Izembek throughout the year. Steller's eiders and emperor (beach) geese also stay throughout the winter feeding on crustaceans and vegetation.



C.F. Zeilemaker

*Emperor geese*



USFWS

*Steller's eider*



J.E. Sarvis

*Tundra swan*



J.E. Sarvis

*Bald eagle*



J.E. Sarvis

### Wildlife

Brown bears, giant symbols of Alaska's wilderness, make their summer home along salmon-rich streams throughout the refuges. The steep slopes of the Joshua Green River Valley provide world-renowned brown bear habitat. During fall surveys, more than 150 bears have been seen in this area alone.



USFWS

Caribou migrate to Izembek Refuge each fall and early winter from calving grounds to the north. Wolves follow the caribou, but only lucky observers see these elusive hunters.



USFWS

Seals, sea lions and sea otters inhabit nearby coastal waters and lagoons. Killer, grey and minke whales can be seen as they migrate along the shoreline.



USFWS

Beginning in mid-summer, red, pink and chum salmon return to spawning grounds within the refuge. Silver salmon arrive in early fall. Hundreds of thousands of salmon begin and end their life cycles within the refuges, enriching streams and lakes with nutrients they bring from the sea.

*Photos from top: brown bears, caribou, sea otter, Arctic ground squirrel, sockeye (red) salmon.*

J.E. Sarvis





R.L. West

## Recreational Opportunities

Each refuge area offers spectacular scenery and recreational opportunities for the adventurous outdoor enthusiast. However, limited access and inclement weather make exploring them challenging at all times of the year.

The refuge headquarters is located in Cold Bay, one half mile from the airport terminals. Open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., visitors can view wildlife specimens, interpretive exhibits and a large raised relief map of the refuges.

Businesses in Cold Bay include limited lodging, restaurant, vehicle rental, air charter, and fishing and hunting guide services. A few short roads link Cold Bay to nearby refuge lands and Izembek Lagoon.

No designated trails or campsites exist on the refuge, although hiking and camping are allowed. Hunting, fishing, berry picking, wildlife observation, and photography are all common activities on the refuges.

It is best to check with refuge staff to determine what activities are allowed and what regulations apply. Upon arriving in Cold Bay, visit the refuge headquarters to discuss your plans. Hunting and fishing regulations are available there or from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G), P.O. Box 25526, Juneau, Alaska 99802-5526. Although hunting and fishing are normally allowed within the Izembek State Game Refuge, other types of activities may require a Special Area Permit from the state. Contact ADF&G, Habitat &

Above: Cold Bay, viewed from Baldy Mountain.

Right: Bear track at Outer Marker mud flat.

Restoration Division, 333 Raspberry Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99518 or call 907/267 2285.

Some lands within the refuge boundary are owned by Native corporations. You will need permission from the landowner before entering these lands. If you are uncertain about land status, contact the refuge staff.

## Weather

Weather along the southern Alaska Peninsula and eastern Aleutian Islands is typically wet, cool and windy. Average daily wind speed is nearly 20 mph year round, and winds greater than 50 mph are not uncommon. Temperatures rarely top 70° F during summer and can fall below zero in winter. Plan your equipment and clothing appropriately!

## Be Bear Aware

Visitors often observe brown bears while hiking, fishing, or hunting. Keep these unique encounters safe by following a few common sense guidelines:

*Make your presence known.*

When hiking, make noise, go as a group, avoid thick brush, and walk with the wind at your back.

*Give bears space.*

When photographing, use long lenses to ensure a safe distance.

*Keep it clean.*

Bears have a keen sense of smell and are always ready for an easy meal. Cook away from your tent, and store food in air-tight, bear proof containers.

*That's my fish!*

If a bear approaches while you are fishing, stop fishing. If you have a fish on the line, don't let it splash—if necessary, cut your line.

*Do not run.*

You cannot outrun a bear— some have been clocked at speeds of up to 35 mph. Like dogs they will chase fleeing animals. Instead, talk to the bear and wave your arms while walking slowly backwards.

*Play dead if attacked.*

In the extremely unlikely event of a bear attack, play dead. Keep any backpacks on and protect the back of your neck and chest with your hands and legs.

Photo: USFWS