



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SECRETARY SEATON SENDS ARCTIC WILDLIFE RANGE BILL TO CONGRESS

Legislation creating the Arctic Wildlife Range--approximately a nine-million acre area of biologically irreplaceable land in northeastern Alaska--was transmitted to the Congress today by Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton.

The area, at its largest dimensions, is roughly 140 miles from north to south and 120 miles from east to west. Its northern boundary is the Arctic Ocean; its eastern edge is the Canadian border. It extends south of the crest of the Brooks range and goes west to the Canning River.

In recommending that the Secretary of the Interior be authorized to establish this wildlife range, Mr. Seaton said that such action is the only economically feasible opportunity for maintaining a primitive frontier large enough for the preservation of the caribou, the grizzly, the Dall sheep, the wolverine, the polar bear, and other animals which require unrestricted range.

The Secretary also pointed out that the proposed Arctic Wildlife Range offers the only opportunity for this Nation to preserve an undisturbed portion of the Arctic large enough to be biologically self-sufficient. The range is a magnificent area of wildlife and wilderness exceeded in size in North America only by Canada's Wood Buffalo Scientific Study Area. Wood Buffalo Park is further south and represents a different habitat.

The proposed wildlife range is divided roughly into two parts--the Arctic plain and the mountainous area of the Brooks Range which runs in a generally east and west direction. The Arctic plain is a major habitat for caribou in the summer. Its countless lakes, ponds and marshes are nesting grounds for numbers of migratory waterfowl. Its willow thickets are attractive to moose and the seacoast provides habitat for polar bear, Arctic foxes, seals and whales.

The Arctic caribou winter on the south slopes of the Brooks Range. Dall sheep are year around residents in the mountainous region. Grizzlies, wolverines and numerous bird species are found there.

The area is noted for its scenic grandeur. The tundra abounds with wild flowers during the short Arctic summers. The mountain peaks are jagged. The two most spectacular of the peaks are Mount Chamberlain, 9,131 feet above the sea and Mount Michelson which is 9,239 feet in elevation.

The bill would permit the Secretary to authorize mineral activity within the area but at the same time it would preclude appropriation of title to the surface of the land. Hunting, fishing and trapping also are authorized by the bill. These activities would be permitted in accordance with the laws and regulations of the State of Alaska.

More than a year ago Secretary Seaton announced his desire to have this area made into a Wildlife Range and instructed the Fish and Wildlife Service to request its withdrawal from public appropriation.

A map of the area is attached.

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SHADED AREA SHOWS PROPOSED ARCTIC WILDLIFE RANGE

