



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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SECRETARY SEATON ESTABLISHES NEW ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE RANGE

Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton today announced his final action establishing the new Arctic National Wildlife Range. Lands within Public Land Order 82, which order was previously modified to permit mineral leasing, were simultaneously restored to public domain status.

The Fish and Wildlife Service, at the direction of Secretary Seaton, filed application on November 19, 1957, in the Fairbanks Land Office, as the initial step in segregation of the roughly nine million acres proposed for the Arctic National Wildlife Range in northeastern Alaska.

From time to time since then, Secretary Seaton pointed out, he has stated that in the event the Congress was either unable or unwilling to act both to preserve in protected status the resource values in that area and to authorize limited mining and mineral leasing activity in a form and manner compatible with the basic purpose of the withdrawal, he would have to consider taking administrative action to create the new Range.

Secretary Seaton said he would continue to support legislation to permit mining activities in this range area provided it conformed with legislation supported in the last Congress by the Department and national conservation organizations. "It is my intention to resubmit to the 87th Congress the bill passed by the House at my request last year. Enactment of this bill will give statutory protection to the Arctic National Wildlife Range and carry out our commitment to allow mining under appropriate safeguards necessary to protect conservation values."

On June 29, the Associated Press quoted Senator E. L. Bartlett of Alaska, speaking in his capacity as a member of the Senate Commerce Committee before which the Range bill was pending in the 86th Congress after having been passed by the House, as saying that the bills "are dead for this session of the Congress. The conclusion was reached that this legislation should not be enacted into law."

Elected representatives of Alaska in the Congress, very early, and up to recent weeks, repeatedly indicated opposition, for a variety of reasons, to establishment of a Federal refuge or range area. Most recently, Governor Egan wrote the Department indicating that it is now his view that consideration should be given to conveying these lands to the State of Alaska for management as a game preserve area. Nothing in today's action prevents the establishment of a cooperative State-Federal plan to manage this new wildlife area, if the State can provide the funds to operate and maintain it, Secretary Seaton said.

"In these circumstances," Secretary Seaton said, "I felt it my duty, in the public interest, to move as promptly as possible to take the steps administratively which would assure protection and preservation of the priceless resource values contained in the proposed Arctic National Wildlife Range area."

The Secretary set forth these reasons for both the action taken, and its timing:

"1. The Congress, in its wisdom, did not see fit to create by statute the Arctic National Wildlife Range in the period 1959-1960, even though the House of Representatives acted favorably on it.

"2. Nothing has been brought to my attention which makes any less desirable that action be taken to fully guarantee preservation of the resource values involved, and nothing has been brought to my attention to convince me that this cannot be done, while leaving open the way for other resource use and development in a manner compatible with the basic wildlife management and preservation purposes.

"3. Today's action does not, of course, foreclose the 87th or any future Congress, from taking action to override what has been done today, even though I cannot believe that such action would be taken in view of the unparalleled wildlife, wilderness and scenic values involved in the new range.

"4. A very substantial amount of the support received for my action has come from those Alaskans who know their area best and who join with us in our judgment regarding the resources involved. There will be those who will say that the problem might well have been deposited on the doorstep of the incoming Secretary of the new administration. I cannot agree. We believe the resource values are there and their full protection is needed now. If that is so, and it is, then we are obligated to act. We feel the action should be taken, in the public interest, and there should be no further delay.

Public Land Order 82 originally withdrew approximately 48.8 million acres in public domain lands in northern Alaska, and in addition approximately 18 million acres in southeastern Alaska which were restored to entry in 1946. In 1957, Secretary Seaton opened to mineral leasing and mining claims approximately 20 million acres. Today's action completely restores this acreage to public entry.

Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4, which is not affected in any way by today's action, accounts for approximately 23 million acres of the area covered by PLO 82. Secretary Seaton pointed out that on July 2, 1960 he requested the Congress to restore Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4 to public domain. "If the Congress honors my request to restore Naval Petroleum Reserve No. 4, we will have restored 43.8 million acres to entry and withdrawn only an additional 4 million to create this Arctic National Wildlife Range."

The Secretary Stated that the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior stressed the Arctic National Wildlife Range's unique values in wildlife, wilderness values and scenery.

Grizzly and polar bears, Dall sheep, wolverine and great caribou herds are among its large game. Countless lakes, ponds and marshes are nesting grounds for huge flocks of migratory waterfowl which spend about half the year in the United States. The fowl are among nearly 100 bird species in the area. Numerous small land creatures abound.

Mount Michelson and Mount Chamberlain, each more than 9,000 feet in altitude, are arresting scenic aspects.

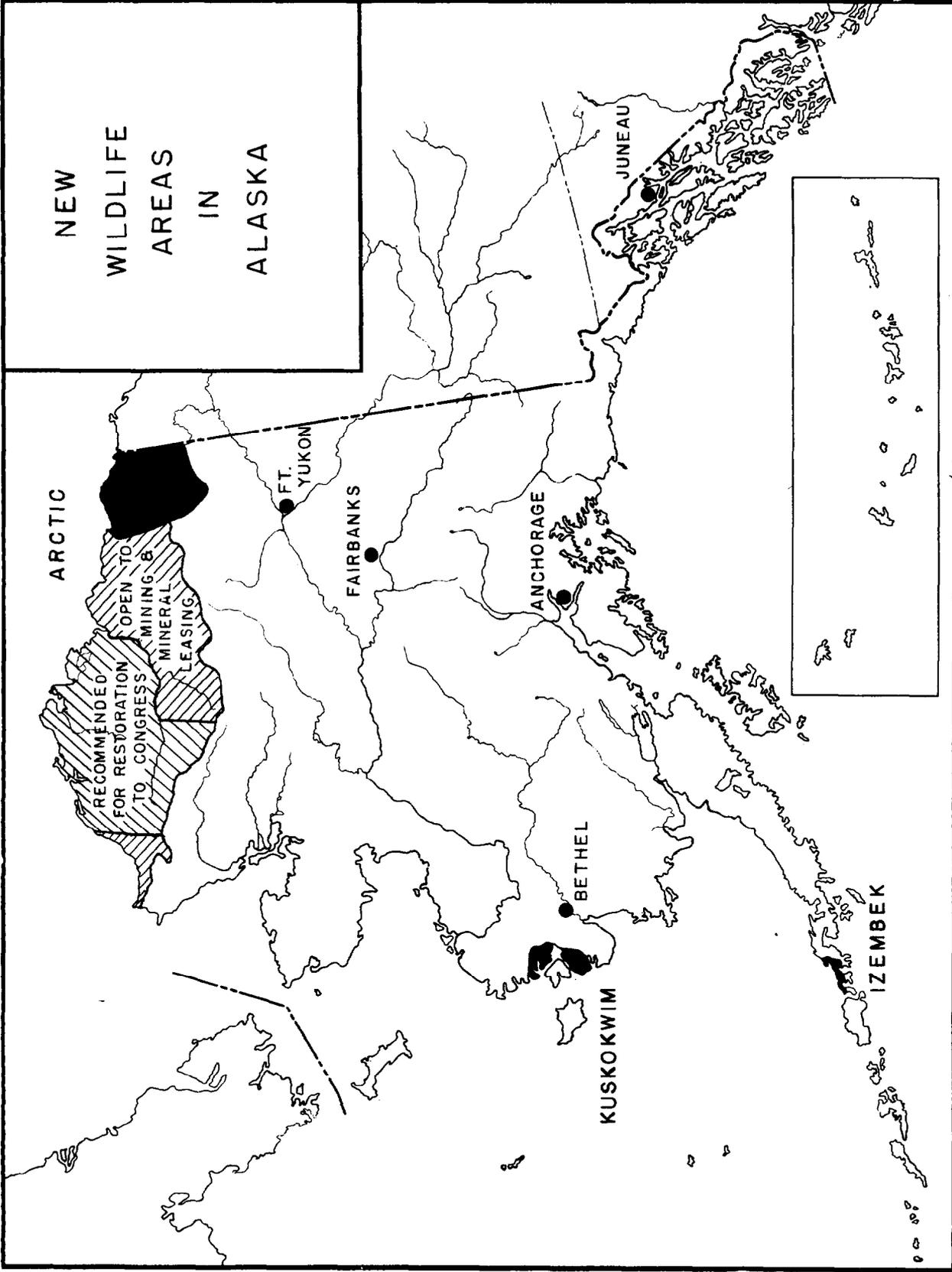
Despite the Arctic location, the area in summer time offers fine wilderness recreation for explorers, hunters, fishermen, mountain climbers and photographers.

Hunting and taking of wildlife, permitted within the Arctic National Wildlife Range by the Secretary of the Interior, will be governed by the provisions of State law. Protection will be afforded to species threatened with extinction.

A map showing the general location of the wildlife range is attached.

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NEW
WILDLIFE
AREAS
IN
ALASKA



ARCTIC NATIONAL
WILDLIFE RANGE

ALASKA

