

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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ANDRUS EXTENDS WITHDRAWALS ON 40 MILLION ACRES OF FEDERAL LANDS IN ALASKA TO 20 YEARS; CITES SENATE INACTION

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus today announced he has signed orders withdrawing 40 million acres of federally owned land in Alaska for management as wildlife refuges and natural resource areas for 20 years under authority of the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The lands currently are in protected status under withdrawals scheduled to expire in 1981, but the Interior Secretary said he considers the extensions necessary to protect the resources because of continuing uncertainty as to when Congress will finally resolve their status by new legislation.

"Under a time agreement reached in the Senate late last week, there will be no floor action on the Senate's version of an Alaska lands bill until after July 4," Andrus said. "I'm glad the Senate is finally looking to scheduling the bill, but I am very concerned that the lateness of that date will lead to a stalemate in the closing days of the 96th Congress, just as happened to its predecessor in 1978.

"In both the spring of 1978 and 1979, the House passed a strong bill to protect the resources of Alaska's crown jewels in perpetuity as national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, and wild and scenic rivers, by overwhelming margins both times. In 1978 the Senate was unable to act on a bill in the closing days of its session because of deliberate obstructionism based on the threat of a one-man filibuster," Andrus continued. "I would not want to see that happen again this year.

"I hope Senators will understand that I thoroughly respect their right to determine their own calendar according to their own priorities. I hope they will also understand that as the steward of these lands, I feel a responsibility to protect them until Congress legislates about their future. That is why I am--after much thought and deliberation--extending the period of these withdrawals, to make sure that this national heritage will be protected pending enactment of a bill the President can sign into law," the Secretary said.

"We are also beginning the preparation of a request to Congress for a supplemental appropriation so that these lands may receive the kind of special management they require to protect their values properly."

The withdrawals allow work to proceed on valid existing mining claims, but continue the existing ban on any new claim location. Mineral leasing can be permitted at the Secretary's discretion in the refuge areas, if compatible with the protection of wildlife and its habitat. Subsistence hunting is allowed by persons who traditionally have relied upon it in those areas as part of their livelihood. Sport hunting can be permitted in all the withdrawal areas.

(more)

The acreage withdrawn this week had been placed under 3-year emergency withdrawal in November 1978 under section 204(e) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, sometimes known as the "Bureau of Land Management Organic Act." An additional 12 million acres withdrawn then--including Iliamna, part of the Alaska Peninsula, and some wild and scenic river areas--are now undergoing further environmental study by Interior and may receive 20-year protection later this year.

On December 1, 1978, President Carter signed proclamations declaring nearly 56 million acres of Federal lands in Alaska as national monuments, most of them for management by the National Park Service. These declarations are permanent unless superseded by Act of Congress. They are more restrictive than any legislation currently under consideration by Congress. In particular, the monuments administered by the Park Service do not permit sport hunting anywhere within their boundaries.

"If Congress fails to act again this year, big game sport hunters and guides will miss out on still another hunting season inside the NPS national monument areas," Andrus pointed out today. "I regret it, just as they do. I agree hunting should be allowed in parts of these areas, as we have proposed. Only Congress can take remedial action by passing legislation that defines areas where hunting is permissible. Until both Houses of Congress complete action and a bill is signed, we cannot give relief to hunters in the Park Service-managed monument areas."

Andrus said he was deeply concerned that the late rush of business in the Senate would again preclude the final passage of an acceptable bill this year. He noted that if that does happen, a new Congress would have to start the entire process all over again in 1981, including hearings, markup, and passage by both House and Senate. "It continues to be my sincere hope that Congress will pass the legislation this year," he said.

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FACT SHEET
NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE WITHDRAWALS

During brief, highly productive summers Alaska seemingly teems with fish and wildlife. The refuges withdrawn by Secretary Andrus, in combination with existing National Wildlife Monuments and Refuges in the State, support vital habitats for fish and wildlife populations of national and international significance including: 10 percent of all ducks, 20 percent of the geese and 45 percent of the swans of the entire North American continent. They also host seabird colonies totaling 40,000,000 birds and over 200,000,000 other migratory birds. Seventy to ninety percent of all rookeries and hauling grounds for sea lions, sea otters and harbor seals in Alaska will be protected, as well as major portions of populations of such unique Alaskan wildlife as caribou, muskox, polar bears and a myriad of smaller mammals and fishes.

The following special wildlife areas were withdrawn as national wildlife refuges under the administration of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure the long term conservation of these outstanding resources. These refuges add new habitat dimensions and better management coordination of national wildlife populations to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

1. Alaska Marine Resources National Wildlife Refuge. Refuge comprised of approximately 2,400 islands, islets, rocks, reefs, spires and headland capes along the coast of Alaska from Cape Lisburne on the edge of the Arctic Ocean to Forrester Island at the southern end of the Alaska panhandle. This addition to 11 existing national wildlife refuges totals approximately 460,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area, with the existing marine-oriented national wildlife refuges, include:

--Larger and more diverse populations of marine birds than the aggregate of all such populations in the remainder of the northern hemisphere.

--Approximately 40,000,000 nesting seabirds including a number of marine species not found breeding in other parts of North America.

--Approximately 70 to 90 percent of the State's rookery or hauling areas of harbor seals, sea lions and sea otters.

--Segments of the two emergences of the Bering Land Bridge.

2. Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Located adjacent to the southern and western boundaries of the existing Arctic National Wildlife Range northeast of Fairbanks. The refuge addition encompasses approximately 9,500,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:

--The 120,000 member Porcupine caribou herd which forms the greatest assemblage of hoofed animals remaining in this Nation and its major migration corridors and U.S. wintering ground.

--Other important wildlife habitat for species including Dall sheep, grizzly bear, moose, wolves, wolverine and endangered peregrine falcons.

--A uniquely diverse ecosystem comprising coastal plains, the Brooks Range, the most northern limit of the Taiga forest and numerous rivers, including the Porcupine, Coleen, Sheenjek and Chandalar.

3. Innoko National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge is comprised of two units lying near the Yukon River south of Galena. The refuge encompasses approximately 2,850,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:

--Flood plains of the tortuous Innoko, Iditarod and Kaiyuh Rivers providing outstanding wildlife habitats and historic transportation routes to the turn-of-the century interior gold fields.

--Fall flight of more than 380,000 ducks and 65,000 geese, including mallards, pintails, wigeon, green-winged teal, goldeneye, oldsquaw and white-fronted geese.

--Significant habitat for numerous mammal species including black bear, wolf, moose and beaver.

4. Kanut National Wildlife Refuge. Located north of the Arctic Circle, northwest of Fairbanks. The refuge encompasses approximately 1,200,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:

--Kanut Flats, a product of flood plain basins at the junction of the Koyukuk and Kanut Rivers, possessing the highest nesting density of white-fronted geese known in interior Alaska as well as the presence of numerous other waterfowl.

--Wintering habitat for portions of the Western Arctic and Ray Mt. caribou herds and home of bears, furbearers and many other wildlife species.

5. Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Adjoins the Kenai National Moose Range south of Anchorage. The refuge encompasses approximately 170,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:

--The westernmost natural extension of mountain goats in North America.

--Important "calving" areas for Dall sheep, "kidding" grounds for mountain goats and "wintering" sites for black bears and moose.

--Many active glaciers of the Harding Icefield which form important water features which are an integral part of the adjacent Kenai Moose Range watershed.

6. Koyukuk National Wildlife Refuge. Located north of Galena in central Alaska. The refuge encompasses approximately 3,330,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:
 - Outstanding waterfowl nesting area including the northwesternmost nesting population of trumpeter swans.
 - The contribution of 330,000 ducks and 75,000 geese to the four continental flyways including a higher proportion of "diving ducks" (scaup and scoters) than other interior Alaskan basins.
 - Currently supports some of Alaska's highest populations of beaver and muskrat.
 - One of the largest active sand dune areas in Alaska, the Nogahabara Dunes and, nearby, a unique meandered river floodplain.
7. Nowitna National Wildlife Refuge. Located in the center of Alaska, west of Fairbanks. The refuge encompasses approximately 1,720,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:
 - A quarter million waterfowl disperse from this area across the lower 48 States in fall.
 - One of the two areas in Alaska where the population of the once endangered trumpeter swan is expanding.
 - With the Tanana Valley, the second most significant breeding area for canvasbacks in Alaska (1% of continental population within the unit).
 - Large wolverine, marten and other furbearer populations.
 - Essential winter habitat for concentrations of moose and correspondingly dependent wolf populations.
 - Major spawning grounds for king, chum and coho salmon and critical rearing areas for sheefish and northern pike.
8. Selawik National Wildlife Refuge. Located in northwest Alaska, directly east of Kotzebue. The refuge encompasses approximately 2,390,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:
 - The nesting ground of over 109 species of birds from six continents.
 - The nesting area of waterfowl using all four North American flyways with fall flight totals numbering 450,000 to 550,000 ducks, geese and swans.
 - The major portion of the current wintering habitat of the western Arctic caribou herd.

--Major spawning and migration habitat of the sheefish, often dubbed the "freshwater tarpon."

--Numerous significant archeological sites along the Selawik River relating to prehistoric Inupiat Eskimo cultures.

9. Tetlin National Wildlife Refuge. Located along the Alcan Highway at its entrance to Alaska. The refuge encompasses approximately 770,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:

--Nesting populations of unusual-to-Alaska redhead, blue-winged teal and ring-necked ducks.

--Osprey and canvasbacks are represented in high numbers for Alaskan habitats.

--Dolly Varden, a fish species, occurring in the Tanana River drainage are of particular scientific interest because of their genetic isolation from other populations of their species.

--Large beaver and muskrat populations, moose calving grounds and areas used by bears and caribou.

10. Togiak National Wildlife Refuge. Located on the mountainous peninsula west of Dillingham. The refuge encompasses approximately 3,840,000 acres of Federal lands. Resources of the area include:

--A diversity of habitats from mountains to broad glacial valleys containing deep lakes and major river drainages allows this area to feature most of the major wildlife species of Alaska.

--Three major watersheds supporting annual populations of 1,700,000 spawning salmon and such other fish as Arctic char, grayling and trout.

--Provides vital freshwater component to Bristol and Kuskokwim Bays which support millions of migrating birds, anadromous fish, several species of whales, seals and the walrus.

--Northern limits of coastal brown/grizzly bear as well as providing habitat for wolves, wolverine, moose, caribou (formerly) and most of Alaska's small mammal species.

--Significant cultural resources relating to southern Eskimo groups.

11. Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Refuge encompassing approximately 10,600,000 acres of Federal lands in the vast deltas of the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers northwest of Dillingham. Resources of the area, with adjacent existing refuges, include:

--The largest delta formation in this Nation formed by the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers.

--Hosts nesting and migrating populations of as many as 200,000,000 birds including significant portions of many national and international populations: 80 percent of Pacific Flyway whistling swans; almost all white-fronted geese of Pacific Flyway; 50 percent of continent's black brant; 80 percent of world's emperor geese; nearly all "cackling" race of Canada goose; 90 percent of world's bristle-thighed curlew; lesser sandhill cranes, sandpipers, plovers, phalaropes and loons.

--Alaska's largest population of muskox; and a cross-section of other mammal species.

--Major salmon populations migrate through these river systems.

--42 villages, home to most of Alaska's Yupik Eskimos.

12. Yukon Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Located north of Fairbanks on the western edge of the Yukon Flats National Monument. The refuge encompasses approximately 80,000 acres of Federal lands. Resource significance of the area includes:

--Key watershed element to one of the Nation's most productive wildlife areas.

--Yukon Flats basin sends forth a fall flight of 2,100,000 ducks and 16,500 geese to this Nation, Canada and Mexico.

FACT SHEET
NATURAL RESOURCE AREA WITHDRAWALS

Four areas are encompassed in the withdrawal actions which are to continue under the administrative jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. These areas are adjacent to four national monuments administered by the National Park Service, and, accordingly, management of the four areas will be a cooperative effort between the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service. Data on each of the four areas, termed "Natural Resource Areas," follow:

1. Aniakchak Natural Resource Area. Located on the Alaska Peninsula adjacent to the 350,000-acre Aniakchak National Monument. The Natural Resource Area withdrawal encompasses 160,000 acres. Resources of the area include:

- Lower reaches of the Aniakchak River.
- Ocean bay coastline of beaches and headlands.
- Brown bear habitat.
- Relatively recent evidence of volcanic activity.

The area will provide opportunity for scientific research, environmental education, hiking, river trips, camping and other forms of outdoor recreation.

2. Lake Clark Natural Resource Area. Located at the head of the Alaska Peninsula, near Cook Inlet, adjacent to the western boundary of the 2.5-million-acre Lake Clark National Monument. The Natural Resource Area withdrawal encompasses 2.6 million acres, of which 1.15 million acres are Federal lands. Resources of the area include:

- Upper Mulchatna River Valley, Chilikadrotna River and headwaters of Stony River.
- Several very scenic lakes.
- Watersheds protecting nationally significant salmon spawning grounds.
- Portions of the Alaska and Aleutian Mountain Ranges, with numerous waterfalls and alpine meadows.
- Brown bear, salmon, trout and bald eagles.

The area will provide opportunities for camping and river trips and other forms of outdoor recreation.

3. Noatak Natural Resource Area. Located north of Kotzebue in northwestern Alaska, adjacent to the southwestern boundary of the 5.8-million-acre Noatak National Monument. The Noatak Natural Resource Area withdrawal encompasses 660,000 acres. Natural and cultural resources include:

--Lower portions of Noatak River Basin, which is the largest pristine river basin in the Nation.

--Major part of the Cape Krusenstren archeological district, which is on the National Register of Historic Places.

--Caribou, grizzly bears, moose, wolves, geese and swans.

The area will be managed to protect the integrity of the Noatak River basin and its value for scientific research, to protect archeological resources and for outdoor recreation.

4. Wrangell-St. Elias Natural Resource Area. Located in interior Alaska along the Canadian border on the north of the 10.95-million-acre Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument. The Wrangell-St. Elias Natural Resource Area withdrawal encompasses 1.24 million acres. Natural and cultural resources include:

--Scenic Wrangell Mountain foothills, lakes and glacial streams and rivers.

--Caribou, brown bear, Dall sheep, moose and wolves.

--With the Wrangell-St. Elias National Monument and Kluane National Park in Canada, completes the representation and protection of physiographic units and vegetation types from the Pacific Ocean coast to the Alaskan interior.

The area will be administered to provide opportunity for camping, hiking and other forms of outdoor recreation.

ALASKA NATIONAL INTEREST LANDS

204(c) WITHDRAWALS

(in millions of acres)

<u>Area</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
National Wildlife Refuges	
Alaska Marine Resources	0.46
Arctic	9.50
Innoko	2.85
Kanutu	1.20
Kenai	0.17
Koyukuk	3.33
Nowitna	1.72
Selawik	2.39
Tetlin	0.77
Togiak	3.84
Yukon Delta	10.60
Yukon Flats	<u>0.08</u>
Subtotal	36.91
Natural Resource Areas	
Aniakchak	0.16
Lake Clark	1.15
Noatak	0.66
Wrangell-St. Elias	<u>1.24</u>
Subtotal	<u>3.21</u>
TOTAL	40.12

ADMINISTRATION 204-C WITHDRAWALS February 11, 1980

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

1. Alaska Marine Resources
2. Arctic
3. Innoko
4. Kanuti
5. Kenai
6. Koyukuk
7. Nowitna
8. Selawik
9. Tetlin
10. Togiak
11. Yukon Delta
12. Yukon Flats

NATURAL RESOURCE AREAS

13. Aniakchak
14. Lake Clark
15. Noatak
16. Wrangell-St. Elias

