The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is our nation’s greatest wilderness icon. Located in the northeast corner of Alaska, it is the only refuge specifically designed for wilderness purposes. Its habitats range from boreal forests, north over the Brooks Range, to sweep across rivers, tundra, lakes and wetlands to coastal lagoons, barrier lands and bays of the Arctic Ocean.

The Arctic Refuge is home to some of our most beloved species of wildlife, including caribou, polar bears, grizzly bears, musk oxen, Dall sheep, wolves, wolverines and many more. Each year, the Arctic Refuge coastal plain’s vast expanse of lush tundra acts as the birthing grounds for much of this wildlife.

Birds we see in our own backyards, in all 50 states and across six continents, begin their lives in the Arctic Refuge before migrating to visit us and then returning there to start the cycle of life anew. The Arctic Refuge’s coastal plain is the most important land habitat for mother polar bears, who build dens there each year to give birth to their cubs. The Porcupine Caribou Herd also returns each year to the Arctic Refuge’s coastal plain to give birth to their calves, traveling hundreds of miles to do so. For the caribou, and for other Arctic wildlife, there is no alternative to this vital and sensitive habitat that they have depended on for millennia.

For centuries the Gwich’in and Inupiaq people have relied on the bounty of the Arctic for their livelihood. The Gwich’in refer to the coastal plain as the “Sacred Place Where Life Begins,” a place vital to their native culture.

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—The Wildest Refuge

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Dan Ritzman
THE ARCTIC REFUGE:

- Is the nation’s largest National Wildlife Refuge; at 19.6 million acres it is approximately the size of South Carolina!
- Is the nation’s northernmost National Wildlife Refuge.
- Includes five distinct landscapes: coast, tundra, mountains, taiga, and boreal forest.
- Includes the four highest peaks and most of the glaciers in the Brooks Range.
- Features 18 major rivers, three of which (Sheenjek, Ivishak, and Wind) are officially recognized as Wild and Scenic.
- Includes North America’s two largest and most northerly alpine lakes— Lake Peters and Lake Schrader.
- Supports the greatest variety of plant and animal life in any conservation area in the circumpolar north.
- Is home to over 200 species of birds, 37 species of land mammals, 25 species of fish, and 8 marine mammals along its coast.
- Contains more than 300 archaeological sites.

The wonder of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and its importance to native cultures, has not stopped continued attempts to open this special place to oil drilling. Though Big Oil would profit from drilling in the Refuge, American families and businesses would not. Drilling will not protect us, or the economy, from volatile gas prices. Instead of drilling our national treasures, we need real energy solutions—technologies to make our cars and buildings cleaner and more efficient, and that end our dangerous addiction to oil. Using available technology to upgrade our buildings could save more than 10 times the oil that might be found in the Arctic Refuge between now and 2030.

It’s time to protect places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and move our nation toward a clean energy future.

HERE’S HOW YOU CAN HELP

CALL OR WRITE YOUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

This is the most important step you can take. Urge the Obama administration to permanently protect the special places of America’s Arctic and encourage key decision makers to support administrative actions to save the Arctic.

Find and contact your Representative: www.house.gov
Find and contact your Senators: www.senate.gov
White House: (202) 456-1111, www.whitehouse.gov/contact/
submit-questions-and-comments
Department of Interior: (202) 208-3100, feedback@ios.doi.gov

TELL YOUR FRIENDS, TELL THE WORLD

Ask your friends and relatives to write letters and make calls to key decision makers to save the Arctic.

Educate your community and highlight the important role the Obama administration plays by writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. Look up your local newspaper at www.usnpl.com and find out how you can submit a letter.