



# ARCTIC REFUGE

In the far northeast corner of Alaska lies the biological heart of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR). This is one of the most magnificent breeding grounds in the world. Approximately 40,000 Porcupine caribou herd calves are born and/or nurse here in the early part of June each year. Birds from all 50 states and four continents migrate here for nesting and staging. It is the most important denning area on land for polar bears in the United States.

The Arctic Refuge is one of the largest refuges within the U.S. National Wildlife Refuge System. It is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior. The 19.6 million-acre Arctic Refuge is among the most complete and undisturbed ecosystems left on Earth. Here coastal lagoons, barrier islands, arctic tundra, foothills, mountains and boreal forests provide a combination of habitats, climate and geography unmatched by any other northern conservation area—conditions that support the Refuge’s diverse community of life.

The Arctic Refuge supports an impressive variety of arctic wildlife. Dominated by the rugged Brooks Range of mountains, the Refuge is the domain of the Porcupine caribou, packs of wolf, hardy musk oxen, lone wolverines, flocks of snow geese and other wilderness-dependent species. The rich pageant of wildlife found within the Refuge includes more than 160 bird species, 36 kinds of land mammals, nine marine mammal species and 36 types of fish.

## The Gwich'in Traditions and Culture

The Gwich'in are a nation of native Athabascan peoples who have lived a traditional subsistence way of life on these same lands for over 20,000 years. Their ancestors lived as nomadic hunters and gatherers. More than 7,000 Gwich'in live in 15 villages on their prehistoric homelands in northeast Alaska and northwest Canada, above the Arctic Circle. Their way of life remains among the most traditional of the surviving North American cultures.

Just as the caribou—over 100,000 at post-calving time—depend on the Arctic Refuge to survive, the Gwich'in depend on the caribou for their survival. They are known as the Caribou People. The caribou provide the Gwich'in with food, clothing, shoes, (see below)

## WILDLIFE FAMILIES (AND ORDERS) OF THE ARCTIC REFUGE

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS)

<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>REGULIDAE</b> (kinglets) • <b>Ruby-crowned Kinglet</b> ( <i>Regulus calendula</i> ) CB on south slope and in Brooks Range
<b>CR</b> common resident	<b>TURDIDAE</b> (thrushes) • <b>Bluethroat</b> ( <i>Luscinia svecica</i> ) UM and breeder on western coastal plain • <b>Northern Wheatear</b> ( <i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> ) CB in Brooks Range; RV on north slope • <b>Townsend's Solitaire</b> ( <i>Myadestes townsendi</i> ) UV and probable breeder on south slope and in Brooks Range • <b>Gray-cheeked Thrush</b> ( <i>Catharus minimus</i> ) CB on south slope and in Brooks Range; CV on north slope • <b>Swinson's Thrush</b> ( <i>Catharus ustulatus</i> ) UV and probable breeder on south slope • <b>Hermit Thrush</b> ( <i>Catharus guttatus</i> ) PB on south slope; AV on north slope • <b>American Robin</b> ( <i>Turdus migratorius</i> ) Abundant breeder on south slope; UB in Brooks Range; CV on north slope • <b>Varied Thrush</b> ( <i>Ixoreus naevius</i> ) CB on south slope; RV on north slope
<b>UB</b> uncommon breeder	<b>MOTACILLIDAE</b> (wagtails and pipits) • <b>Yellow Wagtail</b> ( <i>Motacilla flava</i> ) UB on coastal plain; probable breeder along coast; RV on south slope • <b>American Pipit</b> ( <i>Anthus rubescens</i> ) CB in Brooks Range; RB and uncommon fall migrant on coastal plain
<b>PB</b> possible breeder	<b>BOMBYCILLIDAE</b> (waxwings) • <b>Bohemian Waxwing</b> ( <i>Bombycilla garrulus</i> ) CV/probable breeder on south slope • <b>Cedar Waxwing</b> ( <i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i> ) AV on north slope
<b>RB</b> rare breeder	<b>LANIDAE</b> (shrikes) • <b>Northern Shrike</b> ( <i>Lanius excubitor</i> ) UB on south slope and in Brooks Range; RV and PB on coastal plain
<b>CM</b> common migrant	<b>PARULIDAE</b> (warblers) • <b>Orange-crowned Warbler</b> ( <i>Vermivora celata</i> ) UB on south slope; casual migrant on north slope • <b>Magnolia Warbler</b> ( <i>Dendroica magnolia</i> ) AV on north slope • <b>Yellow Warbler</b> ( <i>Dendroica petechia</i> ) UB on south slope; RB in Brooks Range; probable RB on coastal plain; CV along coast • <b>Yellow-rumped Warbler</b> ( <i>Dendroica coronata</i> ) CB on south slope; RB in Brooks Range; AV on north slope • <b>Palm Warbler</b> ( <i>Dendroica palmarum</i> ) Accidental or CV on south slope • <b>Blackpoll Warbler</b> ( <i>Dendroica striata</i> ) AV and probable breeder on south slope; AV on north slope • <b>Northern Waterthrush</b> ( <i>Seiurus aurocapillus</i> ) UV and probable breeder on south slope • <b>Kentucky Warbler</b> ( <i>Oporornis formosus</i> ) AV on north slope • <b>Wilson's Warbler</b> ( <i>Wilsonia pusilla</i> ) UB on south slope; casual fall migrant on north slope • <b>Canada Warbler</b> ( <i>Wilsonia canadensis</i> ) AV on north slope
<b>UV</b> uncommon visitor	<b>EMBERIZIDAE</b> (towhees and sparrows) • <b>American Tree Sparrow</b> ( <i>Spizella arborea</i> ) Abundant breeder on south slope and in Brooks Range; UB on coastal plain; CV along coast • <b>Chipping Sparrow</b> ( <i>Spizella passerina</i> ) CV on north and south slopes • <b>Gray-colored Sparrow</b> ( <i>Spizella pallida</i> ) AV on north slope • <b>Savannah Sparrow</b> ( <i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i> ) Uncommon to CB throughout Refuge • <b>Fox Sparrow</b> ( <i>Passerella iliaca</i> ) CB on south slope and in Brooks Range; RV and PB on coastal plain; CV along coast • <b>Song Sparrow</b> ( <i>Melospiza melodia</i> ) AV on north slope • <b>White-throated Sparrow</b> ( <i>Zonotrichia albicollis</i> ) AV on north slope • <b>Golden-crowned Sparrow</b> ( <i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i> ) RV in Brooks Range • <b>White-crowned Sparrow</b> ( <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i> ) Abundant breeder on south slope; CB in Brooks Range; UB on coastal plain; CV along coast • <b>Dark-eyed Junco</b> ( <i>Junco hyemalis</i> ) Abundant breeder in Brooks Range and on north slope; CM on south slope • <b>Smith's Longspur</b> ( <i>Calcarius pictus</i> ) CB in Brooks Range; RV on north slope • <b>Snow Bunting</b> ( <i>Pterophorus nivalis</i> ) Common to abundant breeder along coast
<b>UM</b> common migrant	<b>ICTERIDAE</b> (blackbirds and orioles) • <b>Red-winged Blackbird</b> ( <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i> ) CV on north slope • <b>Western Meadowlark</b> ( <i>Sturnella neglecta</i> ) CV in Brooks Range • <b>Rusty Blackbird</b> ( <i>Euphagus carolinus</i> ) CB on south slope; UB in Brooks Range; casual migrant and visitor on north slope • <b>Brown-headed Cowbird</b> ( <i>Molothrus ater</i> ) AV on north slope
<b>AC</b> accidental visitor	<b>FRINGILLIDAE</b> (finches) • <b>Black Rosy-finch</b> ( <i>Leucosticte atrata</i> ) UB in Brooks Range • <b>Pine Grosbeak</b> ( <i>Pinicola enucleator</i> ) Uncommon resident and probable breeder on south slope • <b>White-winged Crossbill</b> ( <i>Loxia leucoptera</i> ) Uncommon to abundant breeder on south slope and in Brooks Range • <b>Common Redpoll</b> ( <i>Carduelis flammea</i> ) and <b>Hoary Redpoll</b> ( <i>Carduelis hornemanni</i> ) UBs on south slope and in Brooks Range; rare to abundant breeders on coastal plain; UBs along coast; residents on south slope • <b>Pine Siskin</b> ( <i>Carduelis pinus</i> ) UV on south slope and in Brooks Range; RV on north slope
<b>RV</b> rare visitor	<b>FRESHWATER FISHES</b> • <b>Sheefish</b> ( <i>Stenodus leucichthys</i> ) • <b>Round whitefish</b> ( <i>Prosopium cylindraceum</i> ) • <b>Lake Trout</b> ( <i>Salvelinus namaycush</i> ) • <b>Arctic Char</b> ( <i>Salvelinus alpinus</i> ) • <b>Northern Pike</b> ( <i>Esox lucius</i> ) • <b>Lake Chub</b> ( <i>Coxesius plumbeus</i> ) • <b>Longnose Sucker</b> ( <i>Catostomus commersoni</i> ) • <b>Trot-perch</b> ( <i>Percopsis omiscomaycus</i> ) • <b>Burbot</b> ( <i>Lota lota</i> ) • <b>Ninespine Stickleback</b> ( <i>Pungitius pungitius</i> ) • <b>Slimy Sculpin</b> ( <i>Cottus cognatus</i> ) • <b>Threespine Stickleback</b> ( <i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i> ) • <b>Alaska Blackfish</b> ( <i>Dallia pectoralis</i> ) • <b>Arctic Grayling</b> ( <i>Thymallus arcticus</i> )
	<b>ANDROMOU FISHES</b> (*denotes freshwater-only form of species also) • <b>Least Cisco</b> (* <i>Coregonus sardinella</i> ) • <b>Bering Cisco</b> (* <i>Coregonus laurettae</i> ) • <b>Arctic Cisco</b> ( <i>Coregonus autumnalis</i> ) • <b>Broad Whitefish</b> (* <i>Coregonus nasus</i> ) • <b>Humpback Whitefish</b> (* <i>Coregonus pidschian</i> ) • <b>Pink Salmon</b> ( <i>Oncorhynchus gorbuscha</i> ) • <b>Chinook Salmon</b> ( <i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i> ) • <b>Chum Salmon</b> ( <i>Oncorhynchus keta</i> ) • <b>Coho Salmon</b> ( <i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i> ) • <b>Rainbow Smelt</b> ( <i>Osmerus mordax</i> ) • <b>Arctic Lamprey</b> (* <i>Lampetra japonica</i> ) • <b>Dolly Varden</b> (* <i>Salvelinus malma</i> )
	<b>MARINE SPECIES</b> • <b>Pacific Herring</b> ( <i>Clupea harengus Pallas</i> ) • <b>Capelin</b> ( <i>Mallotus villosus</i> ) • <b>Arctic Cod</b> ( <i>Boreogadus saida</i> ) • <b>Saffron Cod</b> ( <i>Eleginus gracilis</i> ) • <b>Fourhorn Sculpin</b> ( <i>Myoxocephalus quadricornis</i> ) • <b>Arctic Sculpin</b> ( <i>Myoxocephalus scorpioides</i> ) • <b>Greenland Sculpin</b> ( <i>Liparis tunicatus</i> ) • <b>Pacific Sand Lance</b> ( <i>Ammodytes hexapterus</i> ) • <b>Slender Eelblenny</b> ( <i>Lumpenus fabricii</i> ) • <b>Stout Eelblenny</b> ( <i>Lumpenus medius</i> ) • <b>Eelpout</b> ( <i>Lycodes terebrans</i> ) • <b>Arctic Flounder</b> ( <i>Pleuronectes glacialis</i> ) • <b>Starry Flounder</b> ( <i>Platichthys stellatus</i> ) • <b>Arctic Hooker Sculpin</b> ( <i>Arctedidius scaber</i> ) • <b>Arctic Staghorn Sculpin</b> ( <i>Gymnancistrus tricuspis</i> ) • <b>Whitespotted Greenling</b> ( <i>Hexagrammus stelleri</i> ) • <b>Bering wolffish</b> ( <i>Anarchichas orientalis</i> )

*My home is in Old Crow near the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. My people talk about the sacred places within our nation, like the refuge, and our need to protect these sacred places because of our spiritual connection between the land, the animals, and our people. In this day and age, it's difficult sometimes for others to understand how this can still be, and yet it's so much a part of us that we can't see it any other way.*

Lorraine Peter, Gwich'in

shelters, medicines, blankets, sleds, tools, and more. The Gwich'in tell caribou stories, sing caribou songs, dance caribou dances. The land and the caribou are the foundation of the Gwich'in culture and life.

There are many similarities between the caribou of the Arctic and the buffalo that once lived on the Great Plains of the US and Canada. Both buffalo and caribou are migratory animals that travel in great herds. They both require large, healthy ecosystems to survive. They both define the heart of the subsistence needs and cultural way of life of the indigenous peoples who live along with them. The Gwich'in people pray that the caribou do not go the way of the buffalo.

## The Threat to Caribou

No one knows for certain how much commercially recoverable oil there is in the Arctic Refuge, however best estimates by the US Geological Survey indicate it would fuel current US consumption for less than 200 days. How do you trade that for the life of one of the largest, most migratory caribou herds on Earth? Or for an aboriginal culture that has flourished for thousands of years? Or for a safe haven for birds and land and sea animals from all over the world that come here to breed? The choice is irreversible.

## A Future for Native Peoples and Wildlife

The Gwich'in Steering Committee was authorized by the Gwich'in Nation to educate the world about the importance of protecting *The Sacred Place Where Life Begins*.

The Gwich'in Steering Committee is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit that accepts and welcomes tax-deductible contributions to help protect the Arctic Refuge:



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Please help us conserve *The Sacred Place Where Life Begins*, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR), to honor the Earth and all her living creatures.

Design and printing contributed by PANGAEA Publishing, www.pangaea.org. Printed in the United States of America 2004.