

# Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) is a National Wildlife Refuge in northeastern Alaska. The refuge supports a greater variety of plant and animal life than any other protected area in the Arctic Circle. A continuum of six different ecozones spans some 200 miles (300 km) north to south. The question of whether or not to allow drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR) has been a political football for every sitting American president since Jimmy Carter. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is just east of Prudhoe Bay in Alaska's "North Slope," which is North America's largest oil field. Currently, the Prudhoe bay area accounts for 17% of U.S. domestic oil production. In 1987 and again in 1998 studies released by the U.S. Geological Survey have estimated significant deposits of crude oil exist within the land designated as the "1002 area" of ANWR, as well.

## The issue:

Allowing companies to drill in Alaska's Northern Slope would boost the revenues of American oil companies that would like to explore the area for petroleum. Expansion of the oil industry in the Northern Slope would also create thousands of jobs and decrease U.S. dependency on oil imports from politically turbulent Middle Eastern countries. A wide range of environmental conservation groups have also formed a broad coalition against the repeal of the oil export ban.

## Supporters

ANWR.org  
Report of the National Energy Policy  
Development Group

**1. Minimum Impact.** Only 8% of ANWR  
Would Be Considered for Exploration.

**2. Economic Impact.** Between 1977 and 2004,  
North Slope oil field development and  
production activity contributed over \$50 billion  
to the nations economy, directly impacting each  
state in the union. Federal revenues would be  
enhanced by billions of dollars from bonus bids,  
lease rentals, royalties and taxes. Revenues to  
the State and Federal Treasury. Estimates on  
bonus bids for ANWR by the Office of  
Management and Budget and the Department of

## Protestors

Sierra Club ([www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org))  
National resource defense Council  
([www.nrdc.org/land/wilderness/arctic.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/land/wilderness/arctic.asp))  
Save ANWR ([www.savearcticrefuge.org/](http://www.savearcticrefuge.org/))

**1. Arctic Drilling Won't Lower Prices at the Pump.** Misplaced priorities have kept Congress  
from pursuing new, forward-looking energy  
policies for long enough. America has less than  
3% of the world's proven oil reserves, but we  
account for 25% of the world's oil consumption.  
Even if we were to drill in the Arctic National  
Wildlife Refuge, Americans wouldn't see more  
than about a penny per gallon difference at the  
pump, twenty years.

Interior for the first 5 years after Congressional approval are 4.2 billion dollars. Between 250,000 and 735,000 ANWR jobs are estimated to be created by development of the Coastal Plain.

**3. *Americas Best Chance for a Major Discovery.*** The Coastal Plain of ANWR is Americas best possibility for the discovery of another giant "Prudhoe Bay-sized" oil and gas discovery in North America. U.S. Department of Interior estimates range from 9 to 16 billion barrels of recoverable oil.

**4. *North Slope Production in Decline.*** The North Slope oil fields currently provide the U.S. with nearly 16% of it's domestic production and since 1988 this production has been on the decline. Peak production was reached in 1980 of two million barrels a day, but has been declining to a current level of 943,000 barrels a day.

**5. *Imported Oil Too Costly.*** In 2004 the US imported an average of 58% of its oil and during certain months up to 64%. That equates to over \$150 billion in oil imports and over \$170 billion including refined petroleum products. That's \$19.9 million dollars an hour! Including defence costs the number would be nearly a trillion dollars.

**6. *No Negative Impact on Animals.*** Oil and gas development and wildlife are successfully coexisting in Alaska 's arctic. For example, the Central Arctic Caribou Herd (CACH) which migrates through Prudhoe Bay has grown from 3000 animals to its current level of 32,000 animals. The arctic oil fields have very healthy brown bear, fox and bird populations equal to their surrounding areas.

**2. *Industrial Impact.*** Coastal plain oil development would require a spider's web of industrial complexes across virtually the entire plain - hundreds of miles of roads and feeder pipelines, refineries, living quarters for hundreds of workers, landfills, water reservoirs, docks and gravel causeways, production plants, gas processing facilities, seawater treatment plants, power plants and gravel mines. And the oil development process is rife with catastrophe. At the Prudhoe Bay oilfield just west of the Arctic Refuge, spills of oil products and hazardous substances happen every single day, and noise and air pollution are rampant. According to Alaska's Department of Environmental Conservation, there are 55 contaminated waste sites already associated with this development.

**3. *Environment Impact.*** The threats to wildlife would be enormous. In a letter to President Bush, over 1000 scientists and natural resource managers from the U.S. and Canada confirmed that oil development could significantly disrupt the fragile ecosystem of the coastal plain and seriously harm caribou, polar bears, muskoxen, snow geese and other wildlife. (Read the letter). Biologists project that the birthrate of the Porcupine caribou may fall by 40 percent if drilling is allowed. Wintertime seismic exploration could cause polar bears to abandon their dens, leaving their cubs to die. Wolves and grizzly bears that prey on newborn caribou would also be adversely affected by the impacts of oil drilling, and the more than 130 species of migratory birds that depend on the refuge's coastal plain would suffer permanent habitat losses from oil development. Simply put, oil development would have a severe, detrimental impact on wildlife populations in the Arctic

**7. Arctic Technology.** Advanced technology has greatly reduced the 'footprint' of arctic oil development. If Prudhoe Bay were built today, the footprint would be 1,526 acres, 64% smaller.

**8. Alaskans Support.** More than 75% of Alaskans favor exploration and production in ANWR. The Inupiat Eskimos who live in and near ANWR support onshore oil development on the Coastal Plain.

National Wildlife Refuge.

**4. The Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is too Precious to Lose.** Some places should be off-limits to oil drilling and industrial development, and the Arctic Refuge is one of them. The harm to polar bear, caribou, millions of migratory birds, and to the subsistence way of life of the Gwich'in people would be permanent and irreparable. We have a moral responsibility to save wild places like the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for future generations. That's why our country has remained committed to its protection for nearly 50 years. 5. There are Cleaner, Cheaper, Safer and Smarter Energy Solutions that safeguard special places like the Arctic Refuge. Energy experts agree that the best ways to reduce our dependence on foreign oil are to make cars go further on a gallon of gas and invest in clean renewable forms of energy. Americans deserve a cheaper, quicker, safer and cleaner energy policy that safeguards the wild places we care so deeply about. We cannot drill our way to energy independence, but we can embrace responsible measures and real, 21st Century energy solutions that make cars go farther on a gallon of gas, promote conservation, invest in clean renewable energy like wind and solar, and protect our natural heritage.