



ARCTIC TRUTH

Celebrating 50 Years of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

~ February 19, 2010 ~

Each week leading up to the **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's 50th Anniversary** on December 6, 2010, we will be sending you an Arctic Truth newsletter highlighting an **Arctic Hero** – someone who has gone above and beyond to protect the natural treasures of the Arctic Refuge, an **Arctic bird** that migrates from the Refuge to other states in the US, and other news about why the Arctic Refuge deserves the strongest possible protections.

Arctic Hero



Celia Hunter was a dynamic leader of Alaska's conservation movement for many decades. Celia helped form the Alaska Conservation Society (ACS) in 1960, which aimed to protect the region that would become the Arctic Refuge. Voting members of ACS were required to be Alaskan, because there was nothing that got the Alaskan delegation more riled up than a bunch of "outsiders" telling Alaska how to manage its resources. Celia remarked "OK, if you don't want to listen to people from Outside, you better listen to us." In the 1970s she was the first female leader of a large conservation group, the Wilderness Society, and in 1980 she helped found the Alaska Conservation Foundation to bring more resources to the conservation movement in Alaska. She was honored with the highest conservation leader awards given by the Sierra Club and the Wilderness Society.

Arctic Bird

Birds migrate from the Arctic Refuge to every state in the US. The **Greater Scaup** breeds on the Arctic tundra and then travels in flocks to Connecticut and many other states. It is a small diving duck that mainly eats mollusks and aquatic plants. In North America, Greater Scaup populations have been on a steady decline since the 1990s and biologists are unsure of the reason, though some researchers believe a parasite found in snails may be to blame.



Photo: Donna Dewhurst, USFWS

Arctic Action

The Arctic plays a crucial role in regulating the Earth's climate by acting as the planet's air conditioner. During these cold winter days an air conditioner might sound unnecessary, but a recent Pew Environment Group report found that the global cost of the Arctic's declining ability to cool the planet could carry a minimum price tag of \$2.4 trillion by 2050. As snow and sea ice melt, and thawing permafrost releases methane, the planet will get hotter—causing this cycle to accelerate. This year alone, Arctic carbon emissions will be equivalent to 500 large coal-burning power plants. The trillions of dollars of costs caused by these emissions come from, among other things, impacts to water availability, agriculture, sea level rise, and floods. Increased fossil fuel development in the Arctic will only exacerbate these problems—please help protect one of our last remaining Arctic wildernesses, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, by **cosponsoring HR39**.

The full report is available at www.oceansnorth.org.



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