



# ARCTIC TRUTH

Celebrating 50 Years of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

~ February 25, 2010 ~

Each week leading up to the **Arctic National Wildlife Refuge's 50<sup>th</sup> 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; **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



John "Jack" Biscoe was one of Maine's most well-known champions for the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Alaska's other wild lands. Jack, who passed away this past November, worked closely with the Alaska Wilderness League over many years and helped create the Alaska Coalition of Maine. Jack was first introduced to Alaska's wild beauty in the 1950s when he tagged salmon for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the rough seas off the Aleutian Islands. In 1989 when the Exxon Valdez spilled millions of gallons of crude oil into Prince William Sound, Jack twice volunteered to help with the

clean-up operations. Jack said the experience changed his life and he spent the rest of his days generating citizen support to protect Alaska's wild places, including the Arctic Refuge. His persistent yet gentle efforts had a big impact and won the respect and friendship of many, including Maine's congressional delegation. Senator Olympia Snowe (R-ME) is currently working to honor Jack's memory in the Congressional Record.

## Arctic Bird

Birds migrate from the Arctic Refuge to every state in the US. The **Black-bellied Plover** breeds in the Arctic Refuge's tundra and then journeys to coastal beaches in Delaware and many other states for the winter. These large plovers have striking black and white plumage. Black-bellied plovers are wary and quick to give alarm calls, even when predators are a long way off, making them potentially more sensitive to disturbance than many other birds.



Photo: Karen Bollinger, USFWS

## Arctic Action

In a recent Baltimore Sun op-ed, Robert H. Nelson, a University of Maryland professor, asserted that because the Arctic Refuge has changed geologically and biologically throughout the history of our planet, it is not a unique, wild, spiritual place, and therefore does not deserve or require protection. His words brought swift and passionate reactions from local readers. "My defense of that spectacular area is

based on my hope that it will be kept as the last bastion of true wilderness free from industrial exploitation," and that "my children and their children will someday be able to experience the same wonder of the area that will finally be designated as a wilderness area where development is forbidden," wrote Ajax Eastman of Baltimore. Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin wrote "Nature, creation, does inspire many of us. Many of us find comfort, renewal, peace, purpose, humility and beauty in the natural world...Imagine what it would be like to live among friends and neighbors, scientists, politicians and policy-makers who were not replenished by these gifts." Please help protect the inspirational, spiritual Arctic National Wildlife Refuge by cosponsoring H.R. 39.



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