



# ARCTIC TRUTH

Celebrating 50 Years of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

~ March 24, 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, 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



**Stewart Udall** passed away this weekend after a long life dedicated to fostering environmental awareness. Udall was influential in enacting the Wilderness Act of 1964, as well as many other landmark environmental bills. Since its passage, the Wilderness Act has protected over 106 million acres, including 8 million acres of wilderness in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. During Udall's time as Secretary of the Interior for Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, he oversaw the addition of four National Parks, six National Monuments, eight seashores and lakeshores, nine recreation areas, twenty historic sites, and fifty-six wildlife refuges across the United States. His book *The Quiet Crisis* is credited as one of the sources of a rise in environmental consciousness during the 1960s. President Obama said "Stewart Udall left an indelible mark on this nation and inspired countless Americans who will continue his fight for clean air, clean water, and to maintain our many natural treasures."

## Arctic Bird

Birds migrate from the Arctic Refuge to every state in the US. The **Short-eared Owl** uses extremely diverse habitat types, and can be found in Idaho and many other states, as well as across five continents. While most short-eared owls are migratory, some groups inhabit the same region year-round. Slowly flying over open fields, the short-eared owl detects its prey using sound alone. Its prey consists primarily of small rodents such as mice and voles. These owls can be difficult to spot, but they have two earlike tufts of feathers that they display when threatened.



## Arctic Action

Advocates of oil development in Alaska claim that oil exploration, production, and transportation have negligible impacts on the environment. In reality, however, the effects of oil development are significant and lasting, contributing to climate change and disrupting wildlife habitat and migration. In addition, oil spills—containing hazardous substances—are common and pervasive. Today marks the anniversary of the disastrous Exxon Valdez oil spill that devastated Alaska's Prince William Sound in 1989, reminding us that significant oil spills can and do happen. Studies of the spill have demonstrated that oil is several hundred times more toxic than previously estimated. Learn more about the impacts of oil development in the Arctic at:

<http://wilderness.org/content/broken-promises-reality-big-oil-americas-arctic>

Protect the Arctic Refuge from the dangers of oil and gas development—please **co-sponsor HR 39/S231**, the Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act, which would designate the coastal plain of the Refuge as wilderness.

