



# ARCTIC TRUTH

Celebrating 50 Years of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge

~ August 20, 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**, 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

**George Schaller** is a world-renowned field biologist who has studied wildlife across the globe, and was instrumental in establishing a number of wildlife refuges worldwide. He is the Senior Conservationist at the Wildlife Conservation Society, and spends much of his time conducting field research. In 1956, shortly after graduating from the University of Alaska, Schaller accompanied Mardy and Olaus Murie on their historic trip to the area that would later be designated the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Using their experiences from this trip, the Muries were influential in convincing President Eisenhower to create the Refuge in 1960. Schaller revisited the Refuge in 2006, 50 years after he first travelled there. "I am happy to be here and to see that the place is still intact," he said while retracing his steps from the Murie trip, "But now there's this feeling of apprehension, of guilt even, that this place still isn't safe. So, what'll it be like in 50 years?"

## Arctic Bird

**Townsend's Solitaire** is a fiercely territorial songbird that summers in the high peaks of the Rocky Mountains up into Alaska and the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The birds build their nests in any available nook that will provide it shelter from above. They winter from Wyoming to northern Mexico, and use their mechanical-sounding song to mark their winter territory. Since the Townsend's Solitaire feeds almost exclusively on juniper berries during the winter, there is violent competition for the best areas of juniper growth.



Photo: Nick Saunders

## Arctic Action

Fox News, true to its fair and balanced mantra, featured a series this week on drilling in Alaska – with Sarah and Todd Palin as their primary commentators. The famous couple took Greta Van Susteran on a "tour" of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, without ever setting foot within its boundaries. The group landed 10 miles to the west, with an oil production facility in the background, and declared the Arctic Refuge's Coastal Plain "a flat wasteland," without acknowledging the fact that it is actually the biological heart of the Refuge – home to millions of birds that migrate through all 50 states, the calving grounds of the Porcupine Caribou herd and the most critical onland denning habitat for the threatened polar bear. Fortunately, Greta's On the Record show also featured guests [Rep. Jay Inslee \(D-WA\)](#) and Anchorage environmental attorney [Peter Van Tuyn](#), who both set the record straight about the importance of the Coastal Plain, not to mention the sheer beauty of it. Join the effort to tell the real story about the Arctic Refuge and help protect it once and for all by **cosponsoring H.R. 39/S. 231**, which would designate the Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge as wilderness.

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