

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

HOUSE FINANCE  
Operating Budget Co-Chair



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EAST SAND LAKE  
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*REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON*

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## **HB 321: State Game Refuge, Sanctuary and Critical Habitat Area** **Sectional Analysis**

(March 10, 2026, Version 34-LS1257\H)

- Sec. 1** Conforming change providing legislative intent to rename and manage game refuges and critical habitat areas as wildlife refuges, and to rename game sanctuaries as wildlife sanctuaries.
- Sec. 2** Conforming change to AS 02.20.050(d) to generally allow landings of aircraft in wildlife refuges.
- Sec. 3** Conforming change to AS 16.05.343(c) related to implementation of Sec. 1.
- Sec. 4** Adds a new statute, AS 16.05.793, to prohibit hunting of brown bears in lands adjoining the renamed McNeil River Wildlife Sanctuary including those lands between the sanctuary and Katmai National Park.
- Sec. 5** Conforming change to AS 16.20.010(a) related to implementation of Sec. 1 to recognize name change of co-designated federal refuges and ranges from state game refuge to wildlife refuge.
- Sec. 6** Repeals and reenacts AS 16.20.020 to clarify and expand the purposes of state wildlife refuges, and to give the department and boards regulatory authority to implement the purpose statement.
- Sec. 7** Adds a new statute, AS 16.20.028, to reconfirm the public's right to carry and use firearms in wildlife refuges while engaged in legal activities; allows the department, for the purpose of public safety, to adopt regulations to close a designated area of a refuge to the discharge of firearms for purposes other than lawful hunting, trapping, or fishing (i.e. target shooting at access sites); and allows the department to adopt regulations to close public access to a designated area within a refuge to protect the public's health and safety or to allow for the safe operations of a facility (i.e. downrange of a shooting range).
- Sec. 8** Conforming change to AS 16.20.030(a) related to implementation of Sec. 1 to recognize name change of co-designated federal refuges and ranges from state

game refuge to wildlife refuge; and to amend AS 16.20.030(a) to incorporate limited intertidal areas of Izembek and Moffet lagoons into the renamed Izembek Wildlife Refuge and to incorporate limited intertidal areas in Chagvan Bay into the renamed Cape Newenham Wildlife Refuge.

- Secs. 9-10** Conforming changes to AS 16.20.030(a)(14) related to implementation of Sec. 8.
- Secs. 11-12** Conforming changes to AS 16.20.030(c) related to the renamed Goose Bay Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1, and standardizing terms.
- Sec. 13** Conforming change to AS 16.20.031 related to the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.031 to extend refuge jurisdiction to previously acquired or department managed state land within or adjoining the refuge; and amends AS 16.20.031 to extend refuge jurisdiction to land acquired in the future and within the boundary of the refuge.
- Sec. 14-17** Conforming change to AS 16.20.032 related to the renamed Palmer Hay Flats Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.032 to add state land to the refuge or extend refuge jurisdiction to land located within the boundary of the refuge including current or abandoned water channels, previously acquired land, and land acquired in the future.
- Sec. 18-24** Conforming change to AS 16.20.033 related to the renamed Yakataga Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.033 to add land and water acquired in the future and within the boundary of the refuge.
- Sec. 25-28** Conforming change to AS 16.20.034 related to the renamed Mendenhall Wetlands Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; standardizing terms in AS 16.20.034(a); amends AS 16.20.034 to extend the refuge boundary to include state land previously acquired for the refuge, and to add land acquired in the future and within the boundary of the refuge.
- Sec. 29-33** Conforming change to AS 16.20.036 related to the renamed Susitna Flats Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; standardizing terms in AS 16.20.036(c); and amends AS 16.20.036 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge.
- Sec. 34-40** Conforming change to AS 16.20.037 related to the renamed Minto Flats Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; standardizing terms in AS 16.20.037(h); and amends AS 16.20.037 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the refuge.
- Sec. 41-46** Conforming change to AS 16.20.038 related to the renamed Trading Bay Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; standardizing terms in AS 16.20.038(c and e); and amends AS 16.20.038 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge.
- Sec. 47** Amends AS 16.20.039 related to the Creamer’s Field Migratory Waterfowl Refuge to extend the refuge boundary to include state land previously acquired for the refuge; and amends AS 16.20.039 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge.

- Sec. 48** Conforming change to AS 16.20.041 related to the renamed McNeil River Wildlife Refuge and implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.041 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge; and amends AS 16.20.041(c) to prohibit the hunting of brown bears in the refuge.
- Sec. 49** Conforming change to AS 16.20.050 related to implementation of Sec. 1.
- Sec. 50** Conforming change adding a new subsection to AS 16.20.050 related to implementation of Sec. 1 and addressing disposals of privately owned lands in former critical habitat areas and renamed refuges.
- Sec. 51** Conforming change adding a new section, AS 16.20.052, related to implementation of Sec. 1 and related to submittal of development plans and specifications.
- Sec. 52** Conforming change to AS 16.20.075 related to implementation of Sec. 1 and Board responsibilities.
- Sec. 53-57** Conforming change to AS 16.20.090 – 16.20.098 related to the renamed Walrus Islands Wildlife Sanctuary and implementation of Sec. 1, and standardizing terms.
- Sec. 58** Conforming change to AS 16.20.150 related to the renames Stan Price Wildlife Sanctuary and implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.150 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the sanctuary.
- Sec. 59-61** Conforming change to AS 16.20.160 and 16.20.162 related to the renamed McNeil River Wildlife Sanctuary and implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.160 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the sanctuary.
- Sec. 62** Conforming change to AS 16.20.162 related to the renamed Walrus Islands and McNeil River sanctuaries.
- Sec. 63-64** Conforming change to AS 16.20.550 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.550 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Port Moller Wildlife Refuge; amends AS 16.20.550 to correct errors in legal land descriptions adopted in the enabling legislation; and amends AS 16.20.550 adding a new subsection to remove refuge jurisdiction on private lands (including those owned by Native Corporations).
- Sec. 65-66** Conforming change to AS 16.20.555 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.555 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Port Heiden Wildlife Refuge; and amends AS 16.20.555 adding a new subsection to remove refuge jurisdiction on private lands (including those owned by Native Corporations).
- Sec. 67** Conforming change to AS 16.20.560 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.560 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Cinder River Wildlife Refuge; and amends AS 16.20.560 to add state owned tidelands in the entirety of the Cinder River estuary.

- Sec. 68-69** Conforming change to AS 16.20.565 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.565 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Egegik Wildlife Refuge; amends AS 16.20.565 to correct errors in legal land descriptions adopted in the enabling legislation; and amends AS 16.20.565 adding a new subsection to remove refuge jurisdiction on private lands (including those owned by Native Corporations).
- Sec. 70-71** Conforming change to AS 16.20.570 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.570 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Pilot Point Wildlife Refuge; amends AS 16.20.570 to correct errors in legal land descriptions adopted in the enabling legislation; and amends AS 16.20.570 adding a new subsection to remove refuge jurisdiction on private lands (including those owned by Native Corporations).
- Sec. 72** Conforming change to AS 16.20.575 related to implementation of Sec. 1; and amends AS 16.20.575 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Kalgin Island Wildlife Refuge.
- Sec. 73** Conforming change to AS 16.20.580 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.580 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Fox River Flats Wildlife Refuge; and amends AS 16.20.580 to add tidelands excluded in the original enabling legislation.
- Sec.74** Amends AS 16.20.580 adding a new subsection to prohibit the operation of personal watercraft in the renamed Fox River Flats Wildlife Refuge and provides a definition of personal watercraft.
- Sec. 75** Conforming change to AS 16.20.585 related to implementation of Sec. 1; and amends AS 16.20.585 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Chilkat River Wildlife Refuge.
- Sec. 76** Conforming change to AS 16.20.590 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.590 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Kachemak Bay Wildlife Refuge; and amends AS 16.20.590 to add state owned tidelands excluded in the original enabling legislation.
- Sec. 77** Amends AS 16.20.590 to add a new subsection prohibiting the operation of a personal watercraft in the renamed Kachemak Bay Wildlife Refuge.
- Sec. 78** Conforming change to AS 16.20.595 related to implementation of Sec. 1; and amends AS 16.20.595 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Clam Gulch Wildlife Refuge.
- Sec. 79** Conforming change to AS 16.20.600 related to implementation of Sec. 1; and amends AS 16.20.600 to add state owned lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Copper River Delta Wildlife Refuge, and to standardize terms.

- Sec. 80-84** Conforming change to AS 16.20.605 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.605 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Anchor River and Fritz Creek Wildlife Refuge; and to amend AS 16.20.605 to add acquired state owned lands external of the refuge boundary but which were acquired for that purpose, and to include one SOA/DNR general land parcel containing important bottomland habitat of the Anchor River.
- Sec. 85-89** Conforming change to AS 16.20.610 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.610 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Dude Creek Wildlife Refuge; to amend AS 16.20.610 to add acquired state owned lands external of the refuge boundary but which were acquired for that purpose; and amend AS 16.20.610 by adding a new section assuring egress and ingress to private parcels within the boundary of the refuge.
- Sec. 90** Conforming change to AS 16.20.615 related to implementation of Sec. 1; amends AS 16.20.615 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Tugidak Island Wildlife Refuge; and to amend AS 16.20.615 to extend the area of refuge jurisdiction from that above high tide to that above lower low water.
- Sec. 91** Conforming change to AS 16.20.620 related to implementation of Sec. 1; and to amend AS 16.20.620 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Willow Mountain Wildlife Refuge.
- Sec. 92-97** Conforming change to AS 16.20.625 related to implementation of Sec. 1; and to amend AS 16.20.625 to add lands acquired in the future and within the external boundary of the refuge to the renamed Redoubt Bay Wildlife Refuge.
- Sec. 98** Conforming change to AS 16.20.630(a) related to implementation of Sec. 1; to amend AS 16.20.630 to restore the original name to the Beluga Wetlands Wildlife Refuge from the Homer Airport Critical Habitat Area; to amend AS 16.20.630 to expand the external boundary of the refuge to encompass contiguous state owned land and private land acquired in the future.
- Sec. 99** Conforming change to AS 16.20.630(b) related to implementation of Sec. 1; to amend AS 16.20.630(b) to clarify which lands in subsection (a) are subject to the conditions of subsection (b), and to standardize terms.
- Sec. 100** Conforming change to AS 16.20.630(c) related to implementation of Sec. 1; to amend AS 16.20.630(c) to clarify which lands in subsection (a) are subject to the conditions of subsection (c), and to standardize terms.
- Sec. 101** Conforming change to AS 16.20.630(e) related to implementation of Sec. 1 and addressing bird habitat.
- Sec. 102** To amend AS 16.20.630(f) to clarify which lands in subsection (a) are subject to the conditions of subsection (f).

- Sec. 103** Conforming change to AS 16.20.630(g) related to implementation of Sec. 1 and addressing management and a management plan for the refuge.
- Sec. 104** To amend AS 16.20.630 to add a new subsection (h) requiring approval from a municipality to co-manage their lands as refuge within the boundary of the renamed Beluga Wetlands Wildlife Refuge.
- Sec. 105** Conforming change to AS 16.20.690 related to implementation of Sec. 1 and proposing additional refuges.
- Sec. 106** Amends AS 38.05.030 adding a new subsection to exempt the department from Department of Natural Resources land use permit fees when conducting duties authorized under AS 16.20 within refuges.
- Sec 107** Conforming change to AS 38.05.825(b) related to implementation of Sec. 1.
- Sec. 108** Conforming change to AS 41.21.131 related to implementation of Sec. 1.
- Sec. 109** Conforming change to AS 41.21.612 related to implementation of Sec. 1.
- Sec. 110** Conforming change to AS 41.23.480(c) related to implementation of Sec. 1.
- Sec. 111** Conforming change repealing AS 16.20.080, 16.20.500, 16.20.510, 16.20.520, 16.20.530 related to implementation of Sec. 1.
- Sec. 112** Adding a new section of uncodified law addressing a schedule for changing signs, literature, and digital publications related to the refuge name changes in this law.
- Sec. 113-117** Establishes effective dates of this Act.