

HB446

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 5/6/92

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
INTO OFFICE:

5/11/92

The Finance Committee considered CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 446 (RESOURCES)

Relating to the wildlife conservation tag and to entry onto state game and wildlife sanctuaries, state game refuges, state range areas, and fish and game critical habitat areas; efd.

and recommends:

replace with 3 CS CSHB 446 (FINANCE)

or adopt previous CS ()

attaches amendment(s)

same title
 new title
 technical
title change
(HB only)

adopts Letter of Intent

further referral to the

do pass

do not pass

no recommendation

individual recommendations

NEW FISCAL NOTES: Dept/Date

zero fiscal notes

fiscal notes

appropriation--no fiscal note

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTES: Dept/Date

zero fiscal notes

fiscal notes DFG \$10.4 2/25/92

DO PASS:

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. [Signature]
Co-Chair: Signature/Recommendation

2. [Signature]
Co-Chair: Signature/Recommendation

STATE OF ALASKA
1992 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

REPORTED OUT OF NOTE

SFC 5-12-92

No. 1
Bill Version: CSHB 446 (RES)
(H) Publish Date: 2-28-92

Revision Date: 2/25/92
Title: An Act relating to the wildlife conservation tag and sanctuary entry
Sponsor: Representative Ulmer
Requestor: House Resources

Department Affected: Fish and Game
BRU: Wildlife Conservation
Component: Wildlife Conservation
COMPONENT SERIAL NO.

0	4	7	3
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Expenditures/Revenues: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 93	FY 94	FY 95	FY 96	FY 97	FY 98
PERSONAL SERVICES	4.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL	5.9	5.9	5.6	5.9	6.2	6.4
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	10.4	9.4	8.1	9.4	9.7	9.9

CAPITAL						
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REVENUE FUND SOURCE: 1004	37.0	45.0	50.0	55.0	60.0	65.0
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	10.4	9.4	8.1	9.4	9.7	9.9
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER FUND SOURCE:						
TOTAL	10.4	9.4	8.1	9.4	9.7	9.9

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

Estimate of current year impact: No FY92 impact.

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

See attached page.

Prepared By: Diana Ground Phone: 465-4190
Division: Division of Wildlife Conservation Date: 2/25/92
Approved by Commissioner: [Signature]
Agency: Department of Fish and Game Date: 2/25/92

Distribution (by preparer): Leg. Fin., Legislative Sponsor, Requestor, OMB/OBR, Gov. Legis. OSC., & Impacted Agency(ies).

FISCAL ANALYSIS of CSHB 446 (res)

The bill analysis is based on the following assumptions:

1. the fee for the wildlife conservation tag is \$10.00.
2. voluntary sales will start at 500/annum; double in the second year; and increase by 20 percent annually through FY98.
3. sales of tags to visitors at Round Island (Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary) will remain constant at 200/annum; at Pack Creek at 1000/annum; and applicants for McNeil Sanctuary viewing permits will increase from 2000 to 3500/annum through FY98.
4. half of all tags sold will be by license vendors with the other half sold by state agency offices.

No new positions will be required for this program. In the first year (FY93) approximately 2 man-months of an existing Wildlife Biologist position will be needed to establish the program; thereafter 1.5 man-months will be needed to continue the program. In addition, .5 man-months of a Data Processing Clerk I position will be necessary to handle application requests, fill orders from vendors, etc. Other operating costs will be for printing of the tags, distribution to vendors, promotional materials.

Revenue to fund this program would consist of program receipts.

*Adopted
ordered
5-11-92
10:00 am*

7-LS1864M
Utermohle
5/10/92

SENATE CS FOR CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 446 (FINANCE)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered:

Referred:

Sponsor(s): **REPRESENTATIVES ULMER, Grussendorf, Koponen, G.Phillips**

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to the wildlife conservation tag and to entry onto state game and
2 wildlife sanctuaries, state game refuges, state range areas, and fish and game critical
3 habitat areas; and providing for an effective date."

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 * Section 1. FINDINGS. The legislature finds that

6 (1) the diversity of wildlife species in Alaska and the size of Alaska make wildlife
7 management extremely expensive;

8 (2) the growth in Alaska's human population has placed pressure upon wildlife habitat
9 and wildlife populations and has increased demand for use and appreciation of wildlife;

10 (3) the Board of Game and other resource management agencies need current, accurate
11 wildlife population and human use data for regulatory and planning purposes;

12 (4) the quality and extent of wildlife information provided by the Department of Fish and
13 Game have a direct effect on the types and levels of human use of wildlife that are allowed;

14 (5) the cause of wildlife conservation would benefit from money generated by a wildlife

1 conservation tag to supplement, but not to supplant, money available for wildlife conservation purposes
2 from other sources;

3 (6) programs that benefit nongame species of wildlife, threatened and endangered species
4 of wildlife, wildlife education, and wildlife viewing would be enhanced by money generated by a
5 wildlife conservation tag.

6 * Sec. 2. AS 16.05.350 is amended to read:

7 Sec. 16.05.350. EXPIRATION OF LICENSES AND TAGS. Licenses and tags required
8 under AS 16.05.330 - 16.05.430, except biennial licenses, the nonresident special sport fishing
9 license, the resident trapping license, and the waterfowl conservation tag, expire at the close of
10 December 31 following issuance. Biennial licenses expire after December 31 of the year
11 following the year of issuance. The resident trapping license expires at the close of September
12 30 of the year following the year in which the license is issued. The waterfowl conservation tag
13 expires at the close of January 31 of the year following the year of issue of the tag. The wildlife
14 conservation tag under AS 16.05.828 expires at the close of December 31 following issuance.

15 * Sec. 3. AS 16.05 is amended by adding a new section to read:

16 Sec. 16.05.828. WILDLIFE CONSERVATION TAG PROGRAM. (a) In order to
17 provide support for the wildlife conservation activities of the department, there is established the
18 wildlife conservation tag program.

19 (b) The commissioner shall provide a patch, emblem, decal, stamp, or other suitable item
20 to serve as a wildlife conservation tag. The wildlife conservation tag and proof of purchase of
21 a wildlife conservation tag shall be available through vendors of fish and game licenses.

22 (c) The commissioner shall establish the cost of a wildlife conservation tag by regulation.

23 (d) The proof of purchase of a wildlife conservation tag entitles the purchaser, after
24 complying with other applicable statutes and regulations, to

25 (1) apply, under terms and at locations established by the commissioner by
26 regulation, for a permit to enter an area identified by the commissioner by regulation where a
27 permit is required for entry into the area; and

28 (2) enter a state game or wildlife sanctuary, and as identified by the commissioner
29 by regulation, other land designated as a state game refuge, state range area, or fish and game
30 critical habitat area, where a permit is not required for entry into the area.

31 (e) The commissioner may designate by regulation those state game and wildlife

1 sanctuaries, state game refuges, state range areas, and fish and game critical habitat areas where
2 possession of a valid hunting license during open hunting seasons or of a subsistence hunting or
3 fishing permit that is valid for that location may substitute for a wildlife conservation tag.

4 (f) The revenue received from the sale of wildlife conservation tags may be appropriated
5 by the legislature to the department for programs that benefit nongame species of wildlife,
6 threatened and endangered species of wildlife, wildlife education, and wildlife viewing. In this
7 subsection,

8 (1) "nongame species" means a species of wildlife that may not be taken under
9 a hunting or trapping license; and

10 (2) "wildlife" means a species of bird, amphibian, reptile, or mammal, including
11 a feral domestic animal, found or introduced into the state, except domestic birds and mammals.

12 (g) The department may contract with a person to perform the responsibilities of the
13 department under this section to provide a wildlife conservation tag. Contracting under this
14 subsection is governed by AS 36.30 (State Procurement Code), except that a contract may include
15 provisions for advance payment or reimbursement for services performed under the contract.

16 * Sec. 4. AS 16.20.170 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

17 (b) A person, other than a person lawfully engaged in subsistence hunting or fishing, may
18 not enter the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary without having in the person's possession a
19 proof of purchase of a wildlife conservation tag.

20 * Sec. 5. This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

Alaska State Legislature

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE FRAN ULMER

MEMORANDUM

May 6, 1992

TO: Senator Pat Pourchot, Chair
Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Rep. Fran Ulmer

RE: HB 446 - "wildlife conservation tags"

I am requesting a hearing on HB 446 at your earliest convenience. The bill is expected to pass out of Senate Resources today and will be referred to your committee. HB 446 is designed to provide an alternate source of funds for the wildlife conservation efforts in the state. The bill, which passed the House by unanimous vote, will allow the sale of wildlife conservation tags to visitors to the state's game refuges, sanctuaries and other areas.

In addition, HB 446 would:

- * allow the production of a patch, decal or other emblem to be sold with each tag, so visitors can show they're supporting wildlife conservation in Alaska.
- * require that the money from the sale of the conservation tags be earmarked for wildlife conservation purposes.
- * require the tags for entry to the Stan Price Sanctuary, the MacNeil River Sanctuary, and the Walrus Island Sanctuary.
- * allow the Commissioner of Fish and Game to add other areas to the tag program, including state refuges, ranges and critical habitat areas.

Currently, over 80% of ADF&G's wildlife conservation budget comes from hunters in the form of licenses and excise taxes on firearms and ammunition. An alternative source of funds will help answer a growing concern that not enough is being done to preserve wildlife and give non-consumptive users an increased responsibility in providing for the future management of our wildlife.

Groups and individuals representing a wide spectrum of interests support this legislation.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

WALTER J. HICKEL, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 3-2000
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99802-2000
PHONE: (907) 465-4100

May 7, 1992

RECEIVED MAY 7 1992

The Honorable Pat Pourchot, Co-Chair
The Honorable Jalmar M. Kerttula, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senators:

The Department of Fish and Game would like to recommend three amendments to CS ~~HB446~~ (Resources). These deal with the deletion of Sections 4 and 5 of the bill.

The purpose of CS HB446 is to provide a means for people interested in wildlife viewing, photography and other nonconsumptive uses of wildlife to contribute toward the costs of management associated with these activities. The department expects that nonresident visitors to Alaska will comprise the vast majority of the people who purchase wildlife conservation tags.

The department recommends deletion of section 4 from the bill, because local residents in the vicinity of the Walrus Island State Game Sanctuary use the area for customary and traditional subsistence activities. It is not the department's intention that legitimate subsistence users be required to purchase a wildlife conservation tag.

Deletion of this section requiring that all visitors purchase a tag, would allow the department to develop regulations which would require fees for certain users and exempt other users, such as subsistence users. Any regulations for the Walrus Island State Game Sanctuary would be developed after consultation, and public hearings, with local residents to ensure that customary and traditional users were exempted from any requirement to purchase a wildlife conservation tag.

The U.S. Forest Service has advised the Department of Fish and Game that they have objections to a mandatory fee to enter the Stan Price State Wildlife Sanctuary. It is the department's recommendation that section 5 be deleted from the bill in order to accommodate the concerns of the US Forest Service. This would give the commissioner the flexibility to develop regulations regarding

May 7, 1992

imposition of any wildlife conservation tag in the Stan Price State Wildlife Sanctuary in consultation with the US Forest Service, and consistent with the Stan Price Wildlife Sanctuary organic legislation.

The third amendment which the department proposes would add the words "and locations" after the words "...under terms..." and before the words "...by the commissioner..." on page two, line twenty-five. This language makes it clear that any locations to which the commissioner proposes applying the wildlife conservation tag fee for entry, would be subject to the adoption of regulations under the Alaska Administrative Procedures Act. This would give the public and interested agencies, such as the U.S. Forest Service, an opportunity to testify and have any concerns considered before regulations were adopted.

Sincerely,



Ron Somerville
Deputy Commissioner

Enclosure

cc: Senator Zharoff

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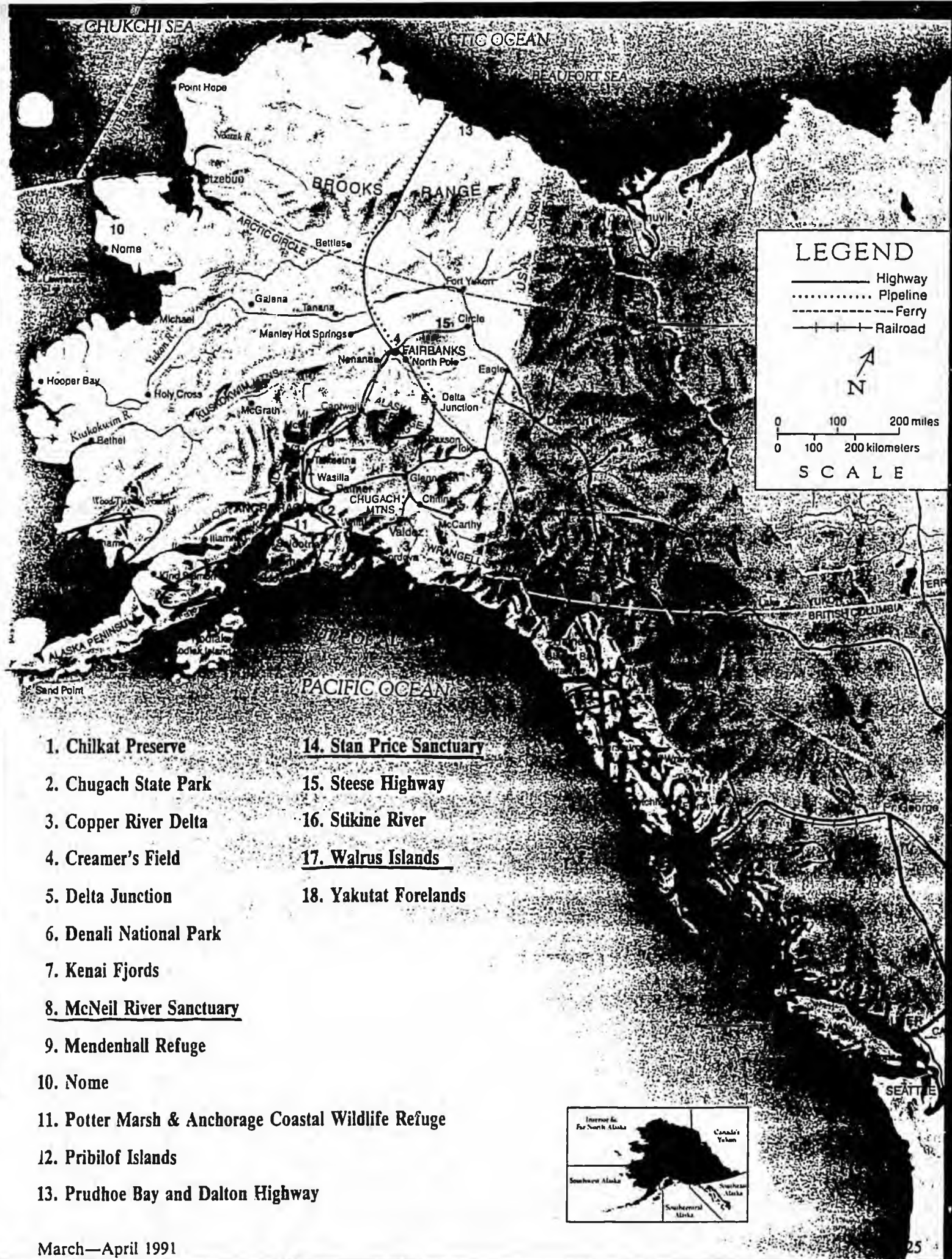
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25 (1) apply, under terms ^{of location} established by the commissioner by regulation, for a permit
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30 fish and game critical habitat areas where a permit is not required for entry into the area.

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- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Chilkat Preserve | 14. Stan Price Sanctuary |
| 2. Chugach State Park | 15. Steese Highway |
| 3. Copper River Delta | 16. Stikine River |
| 4. Creamer's Field | 17. Walrus Islands |
| 5. Delta Junction | 18. Yakutat Forelands |
| 6. Denali National Park | |
| 7. Kenai Fjords | |
| 8. <u>McNeil River Sanctuary</u> | |
| 9. Mendenhall Refuge | |
| 10. Nome | |
| 11. Potter Marsh & Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge | |
| 12. Pribilof Islands | |
| 13. Prudhoe Bay and Dalton Highway | |



Walrus Islands State Game Sanctuary (Round Island) ★

Location and Access

These islands are approximately 70 miles southwest of Dillingham in southwestern Alaska and have virtually no amenities. An access permit is required to visit Round Island, and the numbers of campers and day visitors are limited. Most visitors arrive by charter boat from Togiak when conditions permit. Seasonal sanctuary staff ferry visitors from the boat or plane to the rocky shore via a small inflatable raft.

Viewing Opportunities and Seasons

Round Island, one of the islands in this remote state sanctuary, is home to a unique concentration of male walrus each summer. As many as 14,000 male walrus rest here between periodic feeding forays for clams and other shellfish. Up to 1,000 Steller sea lions haul out here, and hundreds of thousands of seabirds (mostly murre, kittiwake, cormorant, auklet, puffin, and gull) nest here. A small resident population of "tolerant" red foxes often allows good photographic opportunities as well. From late May through August is the best time to visit.

Habitat

The island habitats include marine waters, rocky shorelines, and moist alpine tundra.

Advice and Cautions

Travel to Round Island is expensive and can be dangerous. Visitors should be in very good physical condition and have appropriate clothing and gear for wet and extremely windy weather.

Above, top: Watching walrus, Round Island.

Above: Red foxes are commonly seen on Round Island.



Nancy Tankersley

Pribilof Islands, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge

Location and Access

These are remote oceanic islands off southwest Alaska, accessible by commercial air service from Anchorage during the summer. Portions of the islands are included in the 3.5 million acre Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, and other portions are occupied by year-round residents. Guided land tours and hotels are available.

Viewing Opportunities and Seasons

The Pribilof Islands have some of the largest seabird colonies in the northern hemisphere. Common nesting seabirds include fulmars, cormorants, murre, kittiwake, auklet, and puffin, which are best seen from late May to early August. Sightings of rarer Asiatic birds mostly occur during migration in spring (mid-May to early June) and fall (early August to mid-September). The world's largest rookery for northern fur seals is on St. Paul Island, and harbor seals and Steller sea lions are also commonly seen during the summer.



John Hyde

Habitat

These islands have extensive rocky cliffs where the seabirds nest, and also have areas of coastal wetlands and tundra. Tundra wildflowers can be spectacular from mid-June through July.

Advice and Cautions

Bring appropriate clothes and equipment for foggy, windy, and rainy weather. Fog frequently closes the airport, so leave some flexibility in your travel schedule. A bird checklist is available.



McNeil River State Game Sanctuary

Location and Access

This remote sanctuary is located approximately 100 miles southwest of Homer. Most visitors arrive by float-plane from Homer, with arrivals and departures coinciding with high tides. A permit is required to visit the falls during June, July, and August; the deadline for applications to enter the permit lottery is April 1. All visitors are accompanied to the falls by sanctuary staff.

Viewing Opportunities and Seasons

McNeil River State Game Sanctuary has Alaska's largest concentration of brown bears, gathering during the summer to feed on spawning chum salmon at the McNeil River falls. July is the peak month when up to 65 bears have been seen at one time. Red foxes, bald eagles, gulls, murrelets, and cormorants are commonly seen during the summer as well.

Habitat

This area is mostly open country, featuring creeks and rivers, shrub thickets, coastal wetlands, rocky shorelines and cliffs, and marine waters.

Advice and Cautions

Sanctuary staff are committed to providing a safe environment for bears and people and sanctuary regulations are strictly enforced. Weapons are allowed but not necessary. No bears or people have been injured since the permit system was initiated in 1973. All visitors must be self-sufficient as facilities are limited to a primitive campground with a cook cabin and an outhouse. Visits to the falls require a three-mile hike, round trip. High quality warm clothing, rain-gear, and hip waders are essential, as the weather is frequently cool, wet, or windy. A good camera with a telephoto lens and lots of film are strongly recommended.



John Hyde

Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve /Haines Highway

Location and Access

The preserve, a unit of the state park system, is accessible from Mileposts 19-26, north of Haines. The only facilities available within the preserve are portable toilets, garbage containers, and highway turnouts. Visitors stay in nearby Haines, which is accessible by ferry from the south, by regularly scheduled air taxi flights from Juneau, or by highway from the north. During fall and winter, commercial tours provide transportation and guides for view-



John Hyde

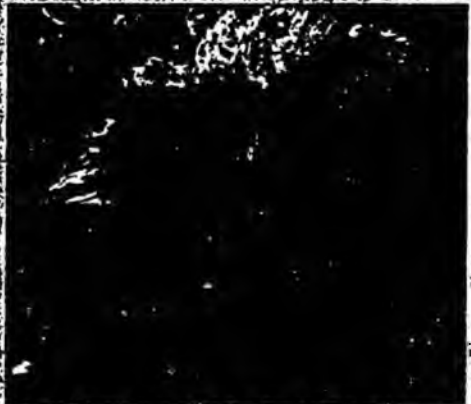
ing and photography expeditions to view the eagle concentrations, while "do-it-yourselfers" who arrive without a vehicle can combine a hotel/motel stay with car rental. During summer, natural history-oriented tours of the Chilkat Valley are provided by commercial tour operators based in Haines.

Viewing Opportunities and Season

The winter gathering of bald eagles on their "council grounds" to feed on salmon in the Chilkat River is the largest gathering of eagles in the world. Numbers of eagles begin building up in late September and peak as high as 3,500 in November. High numbers usually remain into January, unless cold weather freezes over the open channels sooner.

Habitat

A 48,000-acre preserve surrounds the unique stretch of the Chilkat River where upwellings of warm water below



John Hyde

the massive Turku River alluvial fan persist late into winter. The late fall run of chum salmon attracts the large numbers of eagles because it is their sole abundant food source during late fall and early winter.

Advice and Cautions

Park only at turnouts along the Haines Highway. To reduce disturbance to the eagles, view and photograph them from a distance, using binoculars and telephoto lenses. Remember that the birds cannot afford unnecessary expenditures of energy during this stressful period.



John Hyde

Stan Price State Wildlife Sanctuary/Pack Creek

Location and Access

The refuge is located 28 miles south of Juneau on Admiralty Island. Access is by charter boat or air taxi from Juneau. Guided tours are available from commercial tour operators. Some visitors arrive by kayak, available for rental in Juneau, but the required open water crossing between Juneau and Admiralty Island can be difficult in bad weather. Primitive camping is allowed in designated areas.

Viewing Opportunities and Seasons

Located on Pack Creek, the Stan Price State Wildlife Sanctuary is becoming increasingly popular for its opportunities to view and photograph brown bears in July and August. A small portion of the famed Admiralty Island "Fortress of the Bears," the Pack Creek area has been closed to bear hunting for many years and is jointly managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The bears tolerate a certain amount of human presence and visitors can view and photograph bears fishing for salmon and interacting. Sows and sow-cub groups are the primary users. The salmon runs attract bald eagles and gulls as well.

Habitat

Pack Creek is typical of many streams on the large islands of the Alexander Archipelago. It passes through the coastal spruce-hemlock forest and supports runs of pink and chum salmon which attract bears and other predators. A broad estuary and tidal flat at the stream's mouth is used frequently as a travel route and resting area by bears.

Advice and Cautions

Brown bears can be extremely dangerous and unpredictable. Visitors must obtain a permit from the U.S. Forest Service in Juneau or the Regional Division of Wildlife Conservation office in Douglas. Permits are free and currently not limited to a specific number each day. An orientation to the area and rules to increase (but not guarantee) your safety in the area are provided upon arrival.



John Hyde

Top: Viewers look for brown bears at Stan Price State Wildlife Sanctuary.

Left: In her younger days, this female was a nuisance to Pack Creek visitors.

With better management systems now in place, she has gotten over her bad habit of looking to people for food.

Alaska's wildlands provide a rich variety of recreational and educational experiences found nowhere else in the world. This issue of *Alaska's Wildlife* focuses on wildlife watching opportunities in Alaska and their relationship to economics and conservation.

According to the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, more than 167 million Americans (about 75 percent) participated in hunting, fishing or wildlife watching during 1985. The survey also identified wildlife watching (including viewing, photography, and feeding) as the fastest growing segment of wildlife recreation, with 135 million participants age 16 years old or older accounting for \$14 billion in annual expenditures. The same survey estimated that 288,000 Alaskans participated in wildlife watching in 1985. Clearly, wildlife watching has become a significant and growing recreational pursuit in Alaska and across the nation.

Wildlife managers throughout the United States are being challenged by diverse and increasing demands for wildlife recreation while, concurrently, wildlife habitat is shrinking and becoming fragmented. Revenues to support management and conservation programs are also declining. In recognition of this dilemma and the burgeoning public interest in wildlife, state and federal wildlife agencies are embracing the national "Watchable Wildlife" initiative. The central focus of this initiative, which is endorsed by national conservation groups (including Defenders of Wildlife, Fish and Wildlife Conservation Foundation, Walton League, National Audubon Society, and National Wildlife Federation), federal land management agencies, and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, is to promote and expand wildlife recreation and education. This, in turn, is expected to broaden public support and funding for the conservation of all wildlife species and their habitats.

Like our counterparts in Colorado, Montana, Oregon, and Wyoming, the Division of Wildlife Conservation recognizes the opportunity the "Watchable

Wildlife" initiative represents for enhancing wildlife recreation and conservation in Alaska. This should not be interpreted as abandoning our traditional hunting constituency, nor decreasing our efforts to provide for sustained yield of game resources. Rather, we are acknowledging an expanding public interest in wildlife conservation and management and we will begin broadening our programs to reflect that change. All wildlife users (including hunters, wildlife watchers, and tour operators) must recognize that the conservation of wildlife habitat is the common ground they share in their pursuit of wildlife opportunities throughout this remarkable state.

We have the opportunity in Alaska for developing a wildlife recreation and conservation program that could stand as a model for the world. There are few areas on earth that capture people's enthusiasm for experiencing wildlife and wildlands more than Alaska. Tourism has become a billion dollar industry in Alaska and our spectacular wildlife resources are one of the state's primary attractions. A brief glance at Alaska travel brochures lends credence to this point. Where else can you walk on an ocean beach and watch mountain goats, brown bears, bald eagles, and humpback whales; or hike a tundra ridge and observe caribou, Dall sheep, snowy owls, muskoxen, wolves, and hundreds of thousands of migratory birds? In east Africa where wildlife viewing and photography have become a major industry, they say, "If wildlife pays, wildlife stays."

This issue of *Alaska's Wildlife* highlights some of the world's premiere viewing areas, explains how and when to find several of the most sought-after species, and how we manage for wildlife viewing. You will also learn more about the importance of wildlife to the tourism industry and its potential economic significance to the state.

Although Alaska has outstanding potential for wildlife watching, we are at an early stage in our development of these new programs. One of our new projects, in cooperation with other resource agen-



John V. Schoen

cies, will be a revision of the department's *Guide to Wildlife Viewing in Alaska* as part of a new national series. A key to successfully broadening the division's wildlife program will be finding new alternative funding sources. Currently, over 80 percent of our division's budget comes from hunters through the sale of hunting licenses and excise taxes on firearms and ammunition.

Successful conservation of Alaska's unique wildlife heritage will require broad-based public support and interagency cooperation. We believe that expanding wildlife recreational and educational opportunities in Alaska will increase the public's enjoyment of their wildlife resources, promote long-term conservation, and benefit the Alaskan economy. We welcome your ideas and comments as we begin our new and exciting journey toward expanding wildlife management on the last frontier.

John Schoen in the senior staff biologist for Conservation and Education, Division of Wildlife Conservation, ADF&G, Fairbanks.

A Growing Nation

Americans' love affair with the great outdoors traditionally has been expressed through sport fish and game activities. But more recently, the relationship has been marked by a growing national interest in wildlife viewing and appreciation. Wildlife viewers are becoming increasingly vocal on the need for more attention to all wildlife, including the 90 percent of all species that are neither hunted nor fished.

The 1980 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation showed that some 93 million Americans, age 16 years and older, participated in some form of wildlife viewing, feeding, or photography as a primary or secondary recreational activity. By 1985, the number had increased to nearly 135 million—a 43 percent increase. The 1986 report by the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors identified wildlife-associated recreation as one of the nation's most popular outdoor activities.

Effects on Federal Agencies

Several federal agencies have responded to this trend by integrating wildlife viewing into all resource planning efforts and developing new recreation and conservation programs. The U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) "Eyes on Wildlife" program has resulted in enhancements like viewing platforms and blinds and interpretative information for viewers. The Forest Service has also entered into an agreement with Defenders of Wildlife to coordinate the publication of a state-by-state series of wildlife viewing guide books.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has joined the charge by playing a prominent role in seeking funding for the federal Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (1980). [The Act (also known as the Nongame Act) was intended to provide funding

to state fish and wildlife agencies to develop and implement comprehensive wildlife conservation plans to benefit species overlooked by traditional game management programs.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has also embraced this trend with enthusiasm, developing a strategic plan to implement more recreation and conservation programs to

benefit viewers. BLM also deserves much of the credit for coordinating a partnership of 14 national agencies and conservation groups in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to support wildlife viewing nationwide. Implementation of this national MOU offers exciting opportunities for cooperation among a variety of groups, including the military, federal natural resource agencies, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Defenders of Wildlife, Izaak Walton League, and other conservation groups to develop recreation, education, and conservation programs to benefit viewers.

One product of this partnership has resulted in the Federal Highway Administration adopting a binocular symbol as the official roadside logo for wildlife viewing areas. This logo will aid travelers in finding designated viewing sites along the nation's highways and roads.



John Hyde **Effects on State Agencies**

In response to public concern, many state wildlife agencies began expanded efforts towards nongame species in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Funding for many of these programs was based on or enhanced by voluntary income tax donations. Although \$11-15 million has been generated by 34 states annually, most nongame programs have been underfunded and understaffed, constituting less than 3 percent of statewide wildlife management budgets! The voluntary nature of the

Recreation

by Sara Vickerman and Wendy Hudson

donations and growing competition from other income tax check-offs have rendered them an unreliable source of revenue. In any case, estimates are that at least 30 times the annual amount is needed nationally to conduct viable nongame and watchable wildlife programs.

At the same time, hunting has shown a steady decline nationally. In California, for example, the Department of Fish and Game posted a budget deficit of nearly \$10 million in 1990 and anticipates a deficit of \$12.6 million in 1991. "With their budgets still tied to license sales," writes Tom Arrandale in *High Country News*, "most state agencies lack the funds they need to protect nongame species and counter habitat destruction." In the face of declining hunting-related and nongame checkoff revenues, state wildlife managers are beginning to court additional political and financial support from wildlife viewers, most of whom do not fish nor hunt.

Wyoming was one of the first states to recognize that visitors were spending phenomenal sums annually to visit the state to enjoy its wildlife. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department, in coordination with their state tourism agency, developed a trademarked name, "Wyoming's Wildlife - Worth the Watching," and a professional public relations campaign to increase wildlife viewing tourism. Oregon, Montana, Utah, and Idaho also are developing viewing programs, and have published statewide viewing guide books as part of the national series with Defenders of Wildlife. Along with the guide books, these states have formally designated viewing sites, installed signs with the binocular logo, and developed interpretive materials for viewers.

In many of these states, it is hoped that by obtaining the political and financial support of hunters and wildlife viewers, and by enlisting the aid of the tourism industry, state conservation efforts can be expanded.

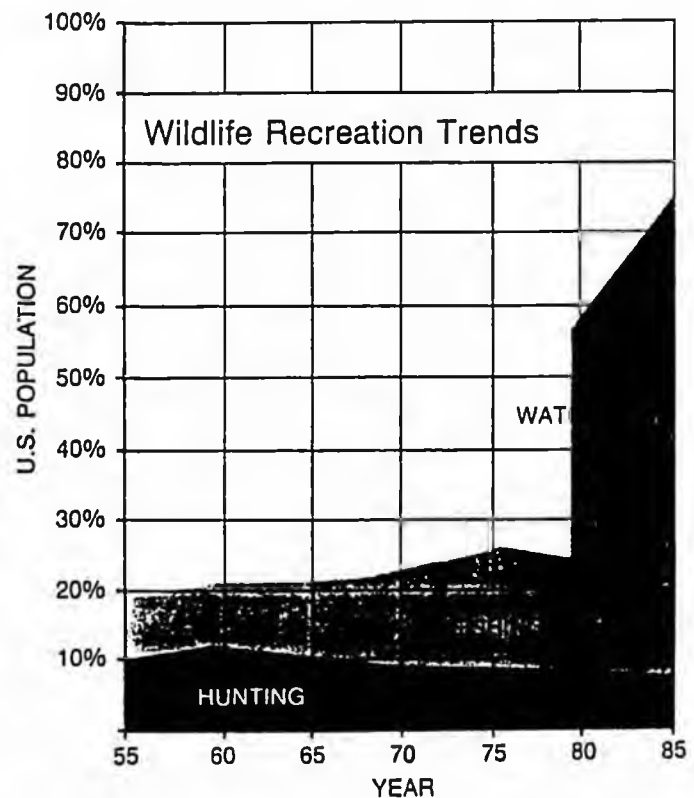
The Winning Formula

The ultimate success of these efforts, however, depends on our collective ability to maintain, and in some cases restore, habitat to support a natural diversity of wildlife. Recently, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released its Strategic Planning Document that has as its centerpiece the conservation of biological diversity. The President's Commission on Americans Outdoors recommended the protection and enhancement of recreation opportunities on federal lands and waters, including long-term emphasis on conservation of natural resources. The commission also encouraged educators to integrate environmental issues into basic education, and urged federal resource agencies to help children experience the nation's diverse ecosystems.

For natural resource agencies, achieving broad conservation goals means making fundamental changes in policies, structure, funding, and constituencies. It means breaking out of the mold, taking risks, communicating with unfamiliar people, and accommodating the ecological requirements of some little known and unappreciated creatures and the vegetation upon which they depend.

Alaska has a tremendous opportunity--perhaps the last in North America--to design and implement a world-class wildlife recreation and conservation program, and to prevent the endangered species crises we have seen with alarming frequency in many other states. Defenders of Wildlife applauds the Alaska Department of Fish and Game for its interest in and dedication to the conservation of wildlife diversity, and for sharing its magnificent lands and inhabitants with those of us who are lucky enough to visit once or twice in a lifetime.

Sara Vickerman is Regional Program Director and Wendy Hudson is Communications Coordinator for the Defenders of Wildlife in Portland, Oregon.



WILDLIFE WATCHING IN ALASKA—WHAT'S IT WORTH?

by SuzAnne Miller

The image of Alaska as a wildlife haven has significant economic value which will only grow as wildlife continues to decline elsewhere. It is in Alaska's best interest to maintain and cultivate the resources upon which that image is based.

ADF&G's Division of Wildlife Conservation has initiated a research program to determine the economic value of Alaska's wildlife resources. It will allow the state to focus on wildlife as an economic resource which can be evaluated like other resources.

Research in the economic program is focusing on two areas: impact and value. A project has been started to estimate the impacts (the amount of money actually spent) of wildlife-dependent business activities on both the state and regional economies. This involves developing computer models which follow the flow of money generated by such businesses. This study will provide information on how much money comes in, where it comes from, who receives it, how much of it flows back out of the economies, and what jobs are created. This information will allow the state to examine the economic effects of different resource management decisions, to identify new business opportunities and to limit the flow of money outside the state. Alaska residents, nonresident visitors to Alaska, and Alaskan businesses will be surveyed to gather data on their respective expenditures.

Economic value data (how much a person values an experience, not how much they actually spend for it) will be collected through a series of site specific projects. For example, the Division of Wildlife Conservation cooperated with Yale University on an economic survey of wildlife watchers visiting the McNeil River State Game Sanctuary last summer. Results will be available later this year. Similarly, the division is cooperating with the University of Alaska Fairbanks to study the economic value of the Delta bison herd. Questions regarding economic value will be included on the surveys conducted for the impact study.

The difference between what a person actually spends for an experience (economic impact) and how much they would be willing to spend (economic value) is called consumer

surplus. Knowing the consumer surplus for specific wildlife dependent activities (watching, hunting, etc.) will enable the state to consider ways of capturing some of that surplus in the form of state revenues.

The trick is to devise methods of payment (hunting licenses, for example) and appropriate amounts which will not turn users away, but will bring their actual expenditures closer to their total values. The only way to achieve this is through knowledge of both their expenditures and their values.

With the help of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Federal Aid Program and with the U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station, the Division gathered some of the nation's leading economists to develop a technically sound study plan. The results will be presented in a book entitled *Valuing Wildlife Resources in Alaska* to be published by Westview Press later this year. The book will establish the foundation for the division to proceed in applying economic principles to wildlife management issues.

Since wildlife and wilderness recreational opportunities are rural, they can be used to promote economic development and stability in remote areas where unemployment is high. Many wildlife-related business opportunities do not require large capital outlays, allowing entry by small operators.

By studying potential visitor's preferences, the state can stimulate appropriate tourism to capture more money from visitors. Thus the state can identify new revenue sources from visitors without burdening Alaska residents.

Too often wildlife has been seen as an obstacle to economic development, rather than as an opportunity. Knowledge of the value of Alaska's wildlife will enable decision-makers to better select among resource management and development alternatives.

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