

Website Comment **196207**

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Comment: Please do not open National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska to Oil and Gas Leasing

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The American Arctic is in danger of being destroyed with this new proposal by the Bush administration to open previously protected special places within the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska to oil and gas leasing.

002  
Wildlife

The Teshekpuk (the-shek-puk) Lake region of America's Western Arctic offers unparalleled landscapes and abundant wildlife. From a vast network of coastal lagoons to deep lakes, wet sedge grass meadows and numerous river deltas, the area is prime habitat for caribou, lemmings, snowy owls, Arctic fox and the spectacled eider, a threatened sea duck. During the summer molting season, the region also supports as many as 60,000 geese, the largest concentration in the entire Arctic, and plays an important role in the Inupiat Eskimos' subsistence lifestyle.

3

Unfortunately, this unique tundra-wetland ecosystem happens to be situated in the middle of the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska. In 1977, the Interior Department designated the lake as one of three "Special Areas" within the petroleum reserve requiring "maximum protection" because of their significant natural values. To date, most of the reserve has remained pristine and unmarred by roads, oil rigs and other signs of development. However, under the Bush administration's new proposal 96 percent of the Reserve's northeast region, including much of the Teshekpuk Lake Special Area, would be opened to oil and gas development.

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Please adopt a policy that ensures America's entire arctic region is developed in a way that balances the nation's energy needs with a respect for the wilderness values of this amazing land.

Protecting our precious resources is the most patriotic thing you can do.

Attached: None