



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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SECRETARY SEATON CREATES IZEMBEEK NATIONAL WILDLIFE RANGE IN ALASKA

Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton today announced establishment of the Izembek National Wildlife Range in Alaska. The range embraces about 649 square miles on the north side of the Alaska Peninsula, the long arm reaching out and joining the Aleutian Islands. This confirms an application for withdrawal, having the effect of segregating the land from entry, which was originally filed in 1942.

Secretary Seaton said the Izembek National Wildlife Range contains the most important concentration point for waterfowl in Alaska. Gigantic flights of ducks, geese and shorebirds converge through this area in the spring and fall. The area also supports many large brown bears and herds of Stone's caribou.

The Izembek National Wildlife Range is near the western end of the Alaska Peninsula. Within its boundaries are rangeland, tideland and tundra of Izembek Bay, Cold Bay, and Morzhovoi Bay, including a gross of about 649 square miles of land and water. State-owned inland navigable water areas are not included in the Range. Furthermore, the Range does not include any lands or waters granted to the State of Alaska by virtue of the Alaska Statehood Act.

Secretary Seaton explained that the Range will continue, as has been the case for the past eight years, to be closed to all forms of disposition under the public land laws including the mining but not the mineral leasing laws. Any mineral leasing would be done under the protective safeguards of the Department's wildlife land-leasing laws.

The area's isolation and extreme climatic conditions have largely prevented settlement in the area. Natives will continue to have the right to hunt, fish and trap game animals and game birds in accordance with the law.

The Izembek National Wildlife Range is primarily a feeding ground. Its biggest asset is the enormous amount of eel grass produced in the shallow waters of Izembek Bay and in marshes along the coasts of other bays and lagoons. The eel

grass, along with grasses and berries produced on the tundra, attract hundreds of thousands of waterfowl--particularly Brant, Emperor geese, and lesser Canada geese.

Funds for development, operation and maintenance of this and other new wildlife management areas in Alaska will be requested from the next Congress.

Establishment of the Range marks the end of an effort which began nearly 20 years ago when first steps were taken to protect wildlife in this area. Preservation of the area in public ownership as a major link in the Nation's wildlife system will assure conservation of the valuable wildlife feeding and habitat area, Secretary Seaton said.

A complete description of the affected lands and the terms of the withdrawal order will be published in the Federal Register. A map showing the general location of the Range is attached.

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IZEMBEK NATIONAL
WILDLIFE RANGE
ALASKA

