

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SPORT HUNTING, OTHER USES, TO BE CONTINUED IN NEW ALASKA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Sport hunting, continued subsistence uses and other traditional activities now permitted by State and Federal laws will be continued on an interim basis under emergency regulations issued for the 12 newest Alaska National Wildlife Refuges, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Lynn A. Greenwalt announced today.

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus created these 12 refuges February 11 under the administrative authority of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, transferring management of the areas to the Fish and Wildlife Service. The 12 new wildlife refuges, totaling 37 million acres throughout the State are: Alaska Marine Resources, Arctic, Innoko, Kanuti, Kenai, Koyukuk, Nowitna, Selawik, Tetlin, Togiak, Yukon Delta and Yukon Flats.

"Because of the need to tailor several sections of the general national wildlife refuge regulations to unique Alaska needs, it is necessary to issue these emergency interim rules to permit ongoing, traditional, compatible uses of these areas while we develop more comprehensive permanent regulations," Greenwalt said. "During this interim period we will seek to formulate the permanent regulations with the full participation of the public."

The interim regulations published, in the March 4, 1980, Federal Register, provide on an interim basis the opportunity for continuation of certain established activities such as sport hunting, subsistence use of fish, wildlife, and plant resources by local rural residents, commercial trapping, and sport and commercial fishing under State and Federal laws, consistent with protection of the resource values of the new refuges. Continuing the policy of the Interior Department, subsistence uses will be given priority over other consumptive uses.

These rules will permit use of snowmobiles, motorboats and fixed-wing aircraft where such use is traditional and established; continued reasonable access to valid inholdings; continued use of existing cabins on Federal lands; legal possession, use and transportation of firearms for hunting and personal safety; and use of sled or pack dogs within the refuges. Additionally, the rules outline the process for obtaining a special access permit to continue mining operations within the refuges.

"These emergency interim rules are but the first step in development of comprehensive special regulations for the 12 new Alaska National Wildlife Refuges," said Greenwalt. "The Fish and Wildlife Service will soon publish a "Notice of Intent

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to Propose Special Rules" in the Federal Register, to be followed by full opportunity for public participation in developing permanent regulations. As a result of this extensive public process, it is possible that the final rules may differ in significant aspects from these emergency interim regulations."

Copies of the interim regulations may be obtained from the Alaska Area Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 1101 East Tudor Road, Anchorage, Alaska 99503.

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