



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



## Overview of Alaska National Wildlife Refuges Regulatory Changes

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# What are the changes (Part 1)?

Predator control is not allowed on refuges in Alaska unless it is determined to be necessary to meet refuge purposes, federal laws, or policy and is consistent with our mandates to manage for natural and biological diversity, biological integrity, and environmental health.

The need for predator control must be based on sound science in response to a significant conservation concern. Demands for more wildlife to harvest cannot be the sole or primary basis for predator control on refuges in Alaska.

# Define Predator Control/Natural Diversity

Predator control is defined as the intention to reduce the population of predators for the benefit of prey species.

Natural Diversity is defined as the existence of all fish, wildlife, and plant populations within a particular wildlife refuge system unit in the natural mix and in a healthy condition for the long term benefit of current and future generations.

# What are the changes (Part 1 continued)

A NWR Manager will authorize predator control activities on a NWRs in Alaska only if:

- (1) Alternatives to predator control have been evaluated as a practical means of achieving management objectives;
- (2) Proposed actions have been evaluated in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);
- (3) A formal refuge compatibility determination has been completed, as required by law; and
- (4) The potential effects of predator control on subsistence uses and needs have been evaluated through an ANILCA section 810 analysis.

# What are the changes (Part 2)?

- **Prohibit the following methods and means for predator harvest:**
  - Take of brown bears over bait
  - Take of bears using traps or snares
  - Take of wolves and coyotes during denning season
  - Same day airborne take of bears
  - Take of bear cubs or sows with cubs (*exceptions apply*)

# What are the changes (Part 3)?

## Update Public Participation and Closure Procedures

- This rule limits emergency closures and restrictions to 60 days, and temporary closures and restrictions are limited to the minimum time necessary, not to exceed 12 months.
- This rule also updates the closures and restrictions notification procedures for refuges in Alaska to reflect the availability of alternative communications technologies and approaches that have emerged or evolved during the last few decades.

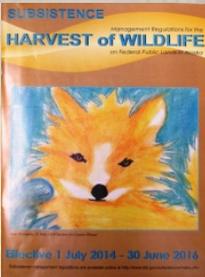
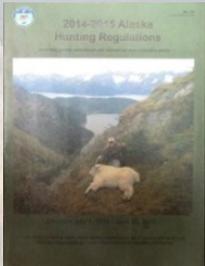
# **Why did the USFWS publish these regulations?**

- To ensure we are managing refuges in Alaska consistent with our legal mandates to conserve fish, wildlife and their habitats in their natural diversity and to maintain the biological diversity, integrity and environmental health and to increase consistency with other Federal laws, regulations, and policies.**
- In response to recent regulations passed through the Board of Game allowing particular practices for the harvest of wildlife on Alaska Refuges that are in conflict with these mandates.**
- More effectively engage the public by broadening notification and outreach methods, ensuring consultation with Tribes and the State, providing for increased transparency in our decision-making, and allowing for additional opportunity for public input.**

# Who do these Regulations apply to?

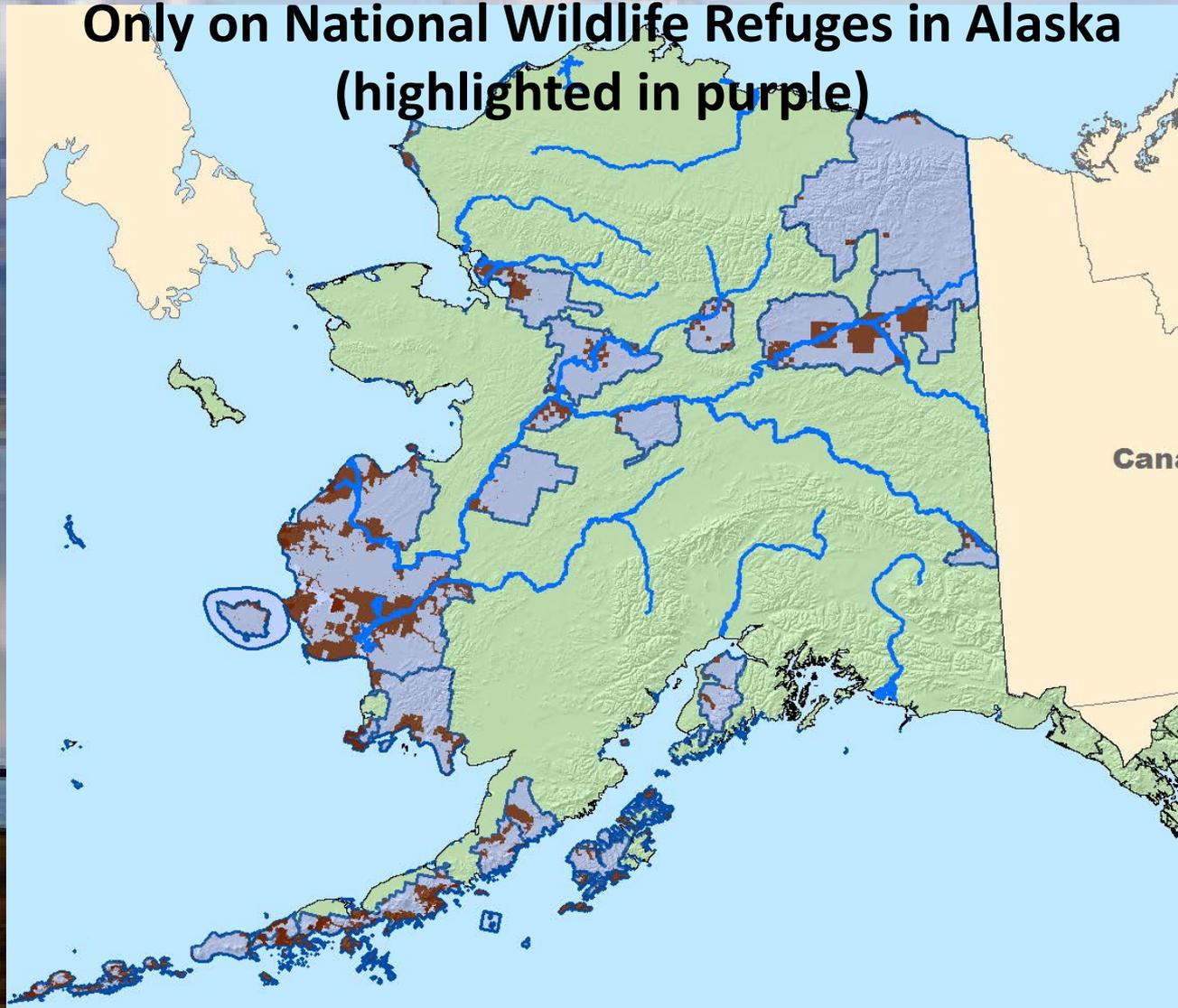
Proposed changes under the refuge hunting and trapping regulations would apply only to State regulated general sport hunting and trapping and intensive management activities on Alaska National Wildlife Refuges.

These proposed regulations would NOT apply to Federally qualified subsistence users hunting or trapping under Federal Subsistence Regulations.



# Where would these regulations apply?

**Only on National Wildlife Refuges in Alaska  
(highlighted in purple)**



# Final Rule

On August 5, 2016, the USFWS Alaska Region published a final rule codifying regulations on predator control, public participation and closures

The final rule was effective September 6, 2016

Governor Walker has stated that the State of Alaska will sue us over this rulemaking -



# **Immediate Impacts in 2016 Fall Bear Hunt – Brown Bear Baiting (What will change?)**

The State allows same day airborne over bait (allowed August 10 through September 30)/brown bear baiting (August 1 until September 30) at the following refuges:

GMU 21D - portion of Innoko NWR, Northern Innoko & portion of Koyukuk NWR

GMU 24C & 24D - portion of Koyukuk NWR

GMU 25D - Yukon Flats NWR

Questions?

