

THE ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARCTIC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Canada has expressed concern to the U.S. government about Congressional budget proposals which may result in opening up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge coastal plain to oil and gas development. Canada believes such development in the sensitive calving grounds of the Porcupine caribou herd poses a serious threat to this and other migratory wildlife Canada shares with the United States.

The herd of more than 160,000 caribou ranges across northeastern Alaska, the northern Yukon and the Mackenzie Delta in the Northwest Territories. Thousands of Aboriginal people in both countries depend on the herd for food and for the survival of their traditional way of life.

In 1987 Canada and the United States signed the Agreement on the Conservation of the Porcupine Caribou Herd, under which they agreed to protect the herd and its habitat and to

consult promptly if either the herd or its habitat were damaged or its migration routes disrupted. U.S. and Canadian scientific experts have concluded that any development in the coastal plain could pose a major threat to the calving and migration patterns of the herd.

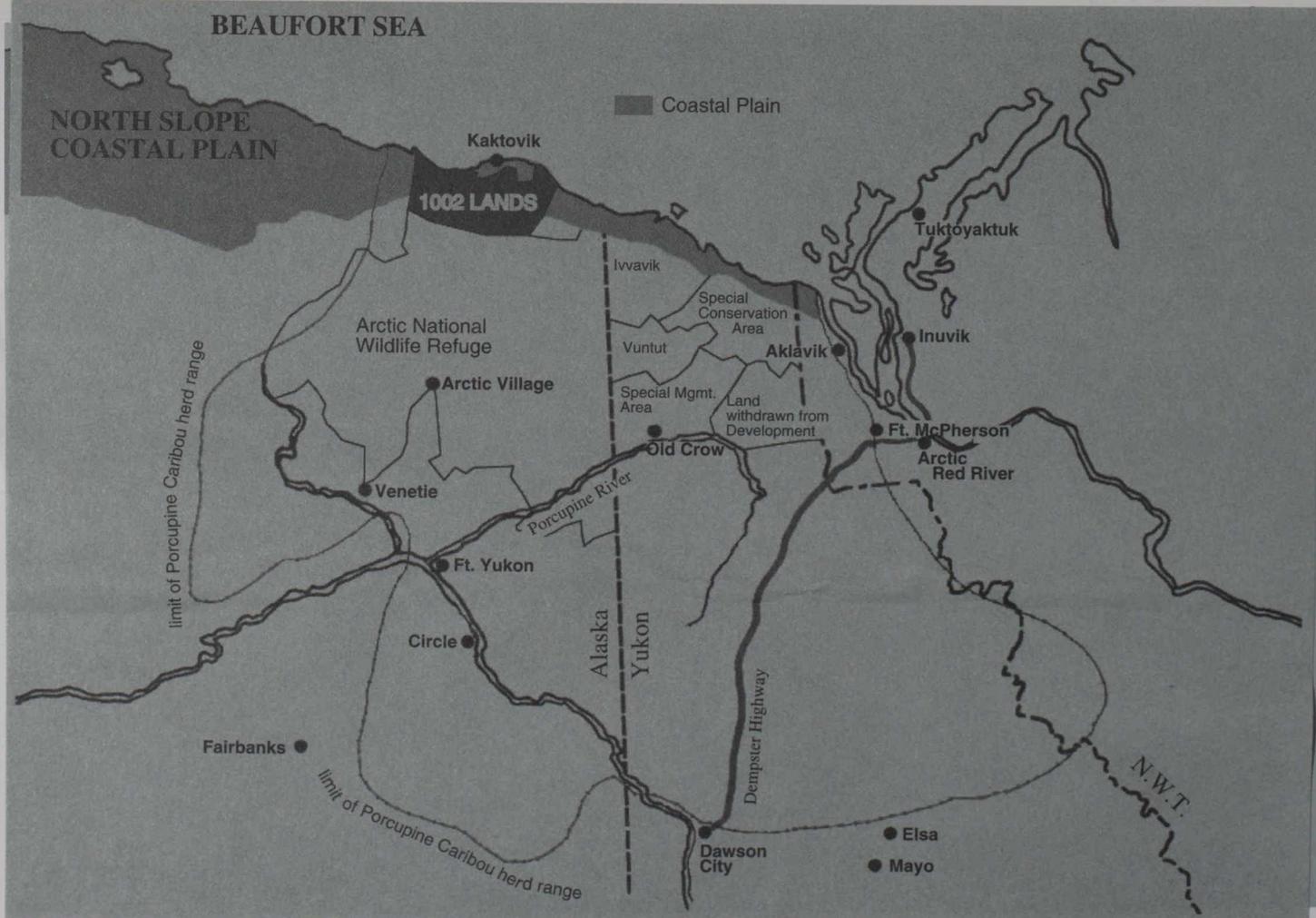
Canada believes that the best way to ensure the future of the Porcupine caribou herd is to designate the Arctic coastal plain as wilderness, thereby providing equal protection on both sides of the border for this shared wildlife resource.

In 1984, with the creation of the Northern Yukon (now Ivvavik) National Park, Canada permanently protected as wilderness a large portion of the herd's habitat, including an area of the Yukon coastal plain where the caribou occasionally calve. The creation of Vuntut National Park south of Ivvavik put additional areas of the caribou's habitat off-limits to development. Most of the

rest of the herd's Canadian range is located in areas that have either been withdrawn from development or are subject to Aboriginal land claim agreements that place stringent restrictions on development.

Much of the herd's Alaskan habitat lies within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, created in 1960 and expanded 20 years later under the Alaska National Interest Conservation Lands Act. Although development is prohibited in most of the refuge, the calving grounds lie in an area east of Prudhoe Bay that Congress set aside for possible oil and gas development under Section 1002 of the act. The act instructs the Secretary of the Interior to consult with Canada in evaluating the impact of development, "particularly with respect to the Porcupine Caribou Herd."

The 1.5-million-acre coastal area known as the 1002 lands is home to a rich variety of other wildlife—wolves,



Based on a map by the Porcupine Caribou Management Board