

USGS Scientist Fired in ANWR Map Flap

- > Read the statement of fired USGS cartographer Ian Thomas below.
- > View the [week of Doonesbury strips about my case!](#)
- > Read the [NY Newsday](#) and [London Guardian](#) articles about the termination of Ian Thomas.

The story of fired USGS employee, Ian Thomas, in his own words:

I still find it very hard to believe that I got fired for posting a single webpage showing maps where caribou calve in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I was working as a cartographer for the Biological Resources Division of the United States Geological Survey at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center.

I strongly believe that the termination of my position by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) was a gross over-reaction due to the political considerations USGS is currently operating under with regard to caribou and development for oil within Area 1002 in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Over the last three years I created one of the largest global atlas collections on the Internet depicting animal distribution, vegetation, protected areas, and satellite images. This resource was removed from the Internet when I was dismissed. Some portions have now been restored to my [old website](#) but other parts are still missing. I hope all of my maps will soon be returned to the Internet. I can not begin to thank everybody enough who wrote asking for the return of the website.

I hope you will be as amazed as me...when I posted the caribou map I never imagined that I would be terminated for doing so, in fact I had no idea I was doing anything wrong at all. I simply thought that I was providing and improving the presentation of existing public information.

I have filed Freedom of Information Act requests to try and obtain more caribou data that USGS is currently with-holding from the public. When this succeeds I will create new caribou maps and post them to [this website](#) so that everybody can have access to the information.

The migration of the Porcupine Caribou herd to and from it's calving grounds in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is one of Nature's greatest wonders....if we, the richest country on the planet, fail to act to protect this, one of our most precious expressions of biodiversity, what hope is there for any other natural park around the World? And what kind of example are we setting to other nations? I know for a fact that many of the remaining unique and important areas for global biodiversity are also, unfortunately, sitting on top of unexploited oil, diamonds or other mineral resources.

I greatly enjoyed working at Patuxent. It was a great place to work and I have many friends there...I'm lucky enough to continue to be able to work on mapping

biodiversity and the environment. I can absolutely promise that I will now try much harder to make even better caribou maps!

I can not begin to thank everyone enough for publicizing this message and offering me so much support!

Ian Thomas

Important Caribou Calving Areas

Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (Area 1002)

