

ECOLOGY OF THE NORTH SLOPE
(title only)

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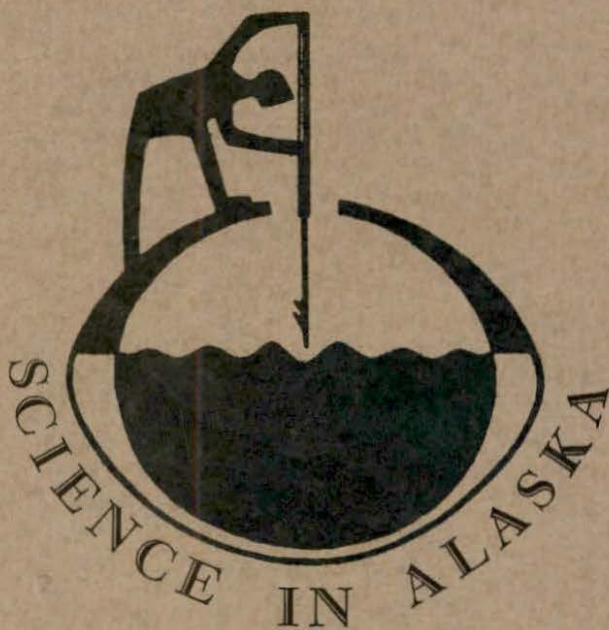
ARCTIC OIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION
(abstract)

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Development of arctic oil reserves reduces the productivity of tundra and eliminates some human opportunities, such as wilderness experience of certain scientific studies. The degree and rate of degradation differs for each wildlife species, plant community, and resource use; some opportunities improve during oilfield development. Whether degradation of environment and opportunity is economically and socially tolerable should be considered carefully prior to allocation of land areas to oil interests. Some areas, of high recreation or scientific value, might be closed to oil exploration or development until there is a proven urgent need for more oil. In other areas, the rate of exploration and development and the operational techniques that are acceptable should be under close control. Some of the social costs of oilfield development, associated with environmental protection and repair, should be internalized within the industry rather than being paid by the public.

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