



Ketchikan: Gateway to Wildlife Viewing

Stand on the planks of historic Creek Street and watch salmon make their annual struggle up Ketchikan Creek to spawn. Take a boat tour amid the sheer cliffs, sublime fjords and abundant wildlife of Misty Fjords National Monument. Fly to some of the best bear viewing in Alaska in a single-engine plane. Lace up your hiking boots and plunge into the Tongass National Forest.

Ketchikan is known as “Alaska’s First City,” because it is the first Alaska port of entry for boats and planes coming from the Lower 48 and Canada. Ketchikan’s range of activities and wildlife viewing experiences make it an excellent introduction to Alaska’s wildlife as well — from bears to birds, Creek Street to Fish Creek, by boat and by plane.



For information on tours and lodging, consult the Ketchikan Visitor's Bureau. Visit their website at www.visit-ketchikan.com or call 1-800-770-3300.

In Ketchikan, stop by the Visitor's Information Center on Front Street or call (907) 225-6166.



From the bears of Hyder to the bald eagles of Haines, the whales of Frederick Sound to the birds of the Stikine River, the Inside Passage Segment of the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail highlights over 70 wildlife viewing sites in and near the communities of Gustavus, Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Prince of Wales Island, Sitka, Skagway and Wrangell.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife Conservation and
Restoration Program

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
about the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail, or to
browse through wildlife viewing sites in other
communities, visit wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

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Wildlife Viewing Guide




www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov


Alaska Department of
Fish and Game
Watch Our Wildlife


Wildlife Viewing Tips

 **Keep a Low Profile.** Enjoy watching animals' natural behaviors. Resist the temptation to try to attract their attention with sounds. If your presence is causing an animal to stop feeding or act restless, give it more space. Be especially respectful of nesting and denning areas, rookeries and calving grounds, and critical feeding areas.

 **Time it Right.** Dawn and dusk are when many wildlife species are most active. Midday warmth energizes dragonflies and butterflies and creates thermals for eagles and hawks. Low tides expose tidepools and a wealth of food for birds and mammals.

 **Look for Clues.** Tracks, droppings, trails and twigs tell stories of wildlife in the area - what they are eating, where they live and when they passed through. Noticing and reading these clues adds richness to wildlife viewing. Tracking books and workshops will help you.

 **Help Keep Wildlife Wild.** Never feed wild animals. Doing so can cause them to associate people with food, which can cause trouble. Human food can also make them sick.

 **Be Considerate of Others.** People use and enjoy Alaska's wildlife in a variety of ways. Respect private property and give hunters, anglers and others plenty of space.



Although marten are suited for nocturnal foraging, they are occasionally seen during the day just before stormy weather or immediately following a fresh snowfall.

Watchable Wildlife “Fun Facts”



Kings of the Mountain: Specialized hoof structures and long shaggy coats allow goats to thrive in mountainous areas, which provide these high climbers with relative safety from predators like wolves and bears. Goats give birth to a single offspring, called a kid, in May or June. A kid is able to keep up with its mother just a few hours after birth. Look for kids among small groups of nannies throughout the summer.

Pole to Pole: Many totem poles are important tools in Alaska Native culture for telling stories that have been passed down for generations. These works of art also provide the opportunity to do a different kind of wildlife viewing. Wildlife plays a central role in many Alaska Native stories, and most totems have wildlife – including ravens, eagles, killer whales, bears, frogs, sea lions and beavers – carved into them. See how many different species you can find while looking at the poles in Ketchikan. Totem Bight State Park and the nearby village of Saxman are two good spots to view totem poles.



 **Humming Along:** Hummingbirds play an important role in the food chain of Southeast Alaska – not as prey, but as an important pollinator of wild blueberries. Blueberries are a significant food source for bears, Sitka black-tailed deer and other animals, as well as a tasty snack for humans.

noisy streams, in thick brush, and when visibility is poor. Always keep your belongings (backpack, food, fish, etc.) with you or in bear-proof storage.

If you see a bear, **stay calm**. If the bear does not notice you, quietly leave, keeping your eyes on the bear. If it does notice you, face the bear, wave your arms and talk to it calmly. If it approaches you, stand your ground. **Never run from a bear.**

If a bear is surprised at close distance, it may feel threatened and act defensively, especially if it has cubs or food. **Stand your ground!** If the bear strikes or bites you, lie on your front, protect your face and neck and remain still. In rare instances, bears may be predatory. Fight back if the attack is prolonged.



STAY SAFE!

The mountains, trails, islands and waterways of the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail are wild lands. For safety, take a guided tour or take a companion, let someone know your plans and be prepared for emergencies with spare clothes, a first aid kit and a means of communication. Visit the Alaska State Parks' Staying Safe web page for details: www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/safety.



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Wildlife Viewing Sites

Ketchikan Creek flows through **Downtown Ketchikan** ¹ and fills with spawning salmon each July and August. The planks of Ketchikan's famous **Creek Street** are a good spot to watch salmon swim upstream. Ketchikan Creek eventually passes by the **Deer Mountain Tribal Hatchery**, a working salmon hatchery with daily tours in the summer. The **Southeast Alaska Discovery Center** is one of four Alaska Public Lands Information Centers, which are run as joint ventures between a variety of public entities to provide visitors with "one-stop shops" for information about Alaska's public lands. The center has exhibits and interactive displays on the wildlife, habitats, Native cultures and modern industries of Southeast Alaska. There are also wildlife watching opportunities; use the center's spotting scope to search the ridgelines above town for mountain goats, or spend a few minutes watching the live broadcast of spawning salmon from an underwater camera in Ketchikan Creek. The Southeast Alaska Discovery Center is at the corner of Mill and Main Streets.

The waters of **Misty Fjords National Monument** ² are a prime feeding area for humpback whales, Steller sea lions and harbor seals. Look for pigeon guillemots, marbled murrelets (very common) and surf scoters as well. Sitka black-tailed deer and brown and black bears occasionally emerge from the forest to look for food on the beaches, and may be spotted with binoculars. Bald eagles nest in the trees along the shoreline. Mountain goats patrol the ridgelines, visible either through binoculars or from the window of a floatplane. Boat and plane tours venture into Misty Fjords throughout the summer. Guided kayak trips are also available for those with the time and resources. Experienced kayakers looking for a personal, extended excursion can rent kayaks in town and be dropped off by a boat tour. Check with the Visitor's Bureau for information on tours and kayak rentals. USDA Forest Service cabins within Misty Fjords are also available (see details below).

The **Ward Lake Recreation area** ³ encompasses a network of trails that offer a variety of wildlife watching experiences. The flat and easy 1.3-mile **Ward Lake Trail** circles Ward Lake through spruce-hemlock forest. Look and listen for red-breasted sapsuckers, winter wrens and Townsend's warblers in the summer, and Barrow's Goldeneyes and hooded mergansers on the lake in the winter. Barred, northern saw-whet and northern pygmy-owls have been spotted here, and western screech-owls reside at the area's Signal Creek Campground. Owls are more often heard than seen, and are more active at night than during the day. Fall and early winter is the best time to look for owls at Ward Lake. The **Ward Creek, Perseverance, and Salvage trails** start at or near the lake and plunge deeper into the Tongass National Forest, where the chance to see Sitka black-tailed deer or black bears increases. Stand on one of the viewing platforms on the Ward Creek Trail to watch pink and chum salmon spawn from late July through mid-September. Ward Lake is found on Revilla Road. Follow the North Tongass Highway out of downtown and watch for the Revilla Road sign at mile 4.3 of the Tongass Highway.

The **Brown Mountain Road** ⁴ is a well-maintained 4 1/2-mile gravel road that gradually ascends from sea level to just below alpine. Look for blue grouse along the road and from the roadside pullouts. Sitka black-tailed deer and black bears come to the alpine in spring and summer to feed on emerging plants. The Brown Mountain Road ends at the **Dude Mountain Trail**. This steep one-mile trail ascends 1,200 feet to the 2,848-foot peak of Dude Mountain, and provides additional wildlife



A view of the Salmon Glacier near Hyder



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|--------------------------------|-----|---|---|---|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Downtown Ketchikan | ♿ | 📖 | 🚶 | 🚗 | 1 – 4 hours | | |
| 2. Misty Fjords Nat'l Monument | m-s | ♿ | 💰 | 📖 | 🚶 | 🚗 | 2 hours – full day+ |
| 3. Ward Lake area | ♿ | 1 | 📖 | 🚶 | 2 hours – full day+ | | |
| 4. Brown Mountain Road | | | 📖 | 🚶 | 2 hours – half day | | |
| 5. Settlers Cove State Park | ♿ | 1 | 📖 | 🚶 | 2 hours – full day+ | | |
| 6. Hyder | ♿ | 💰 | 📖 | 🚶 | 4 hours – full day+ | | |
| 7. Deer Mountain Trail | | | 📖 | 🚶 | 🚗 | 2 hours – full day | |

* Not all areas are fully wheelchair accessible. Ask the Visitor's Bureau for details.

¹ Fee for camping. Trail use is free. + Multi-day trips allow for the richest experience.

m-s May–Sept. only

♿ Wheelchair accessible*

📖 Interpretive signs/guides

🏕️ Camping in area

🚶 Hiking trails

💰 Entry or tour fee

🚤 Guided boat tours

🚗 Near public transportation

Map is for locator reference only, not for navigational use.

Map created with TOPO! software © 2006 National Geographic Maps. To learn more visit: www.nationalgeographic.com/topo

viewing chances and good vistas along the way. Look and listen for willow ptarmigan, Alaska's state bird, as the trail ascends into alpine. The turnoff for the Brown Mountain Road is on Revilla Road, five miles from the junction with the North Tongass Highway (see previous site for directions).

The **Lunch Falls Loop Trail at Settlers Cove State Park** ⁵ passes over Lunch Creek before circling through spruce-hemlock forest. Pink salmon spawn in Lunch Creek during August. Stand on the bridge near the parking area for best viewing. The **Lunch Creek Trail** follows Lunch Creek for 3 1/2 miles, providing additional wildlife viewing opportunities. Look for black bears and Sitka black-tailed deer on either trail throughout the summer. Rocky beaches in the park overlook Clover Passage and Behm Canal. Scan the waters for marbled murrelets, harbor seals and Steller sea lions year-round, and rafts of hundreds of sea birds between October and March. The Lunch

Falls Loop Trail is wheelchair accessible to the bridge over Lunch Creek, then continues on a single-plank boardwalk system. Settlers Cove State Park is 18 miles north of Ketchikan at the end of the North Tongass Highway.

Hyder ⁶ is a small community 80 air miles east of Ketchikan. Between mid-July and September, nearby Fish Creek has large pink and chum salmon runs, which attracts black and brown

bears, river otters, mink and bald eagles. A USDA Forest Service viewing platform is open daily between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m., enabling wildlife viewers to watch the bears and other wildlife safely. Contact the Ketchikan Ranger District at 907-225-2148 for more information on Fish Creek, including details about permits and best times to visit. Hyder is also popular with

birders working to build their Alaska bird lists. Birds found in and near Hyder that are rare in the rest of Southeast Alaska include magnolia warblers, northern rough-winged swallows, western kingbirds, black swifts and the American crow. Day tours to Hyder are offered from Ketchikan, and car rentals and accommodations are available in Hyder for those interested in a longer stay. Hyder is one of three Southeast Alaskan communities connected to the North American highway system, just across the border from Stewart, British Columbia.

The **Deer Mountain Trail** ⁷ passes through spruce-hemlock forest before ascending 3,000 feet into the alpine. Look for mountain goats from the trail, especially with binoculars.

Listen for the soft clucking and hooting of blue grouse and willow ptarmigan while hiking in the alpine. Sitka black-tailed deer and black bears come to higher elevations in the spring and early summer to feed on early-season plants. Look for bears and deer at lower elevations on the trail throughout the summer. The trailhead for the Deer Mountain Trail is near the end of Ketchikan Lakes Road at the east edge of downtown. This is a challenging trail and should only be attempted by fit and experienced hikers.

Looking for more? Flights depart from Ketchikan to remote bear viewing sites at **Margaret Creek** and **Neets Bay** when salmon are running. Check with the Visitor's Bureau for information. Or consider a remote getaway at one of the remote and rustic **USDA Forest Service cabins** scattered throughout the Ketchikan area. Check with the Ketchikan Ranger District at 907-225-2148 for information on rentals and tips for seeing wildlife near cabins, or go to www.reserveusa.com to browse available cabins. Cabins rent for \$25-45 a night, and have a stove for heat and bunk beds.

Alaska Hummingbird Festival

Each April, the Alaska Hummingbird Festival celebrates the return of migratory birds from western North America and Central and South America. While brightly-colored rufous hummingbirds are the most popular species, the festival also highlights other birds as well. Events include guided bird walks, bird banding stations, art shows and educational activities for both children and adults.

For more information contact the festival headquarters at the USDA Forest Service's Alaska Discovery Center at 907-228-6220 or visit www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/districts/discoverycenter