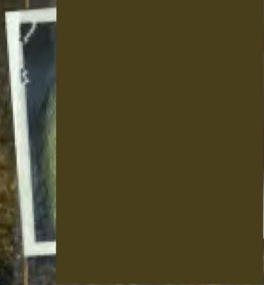


Anchorage Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots



ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Anchorage



Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots!



Alaska Department of Fish & Game
Anchorage, Alaska 2004

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Table of Contents

I. Greetings.....	4
II. Viewing Hints & Ethics	5
III. Map	8
IV. Anchorage Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots	
Site 1: <i>Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge</i>	10
Site 2: <i>Arctic Valley</i>	12
Site 3: <i>Beluga Point</i>	14
Site 4: <i>Campbell Tract</i>	16
Site 5: <i>Chugach State Park</i>	18
Site 6: <i>Conner's Bog</i>	20
Site 7: <i>Crow Pass Trail</i>	22
Site 8: <i>Eagle River Nature Center</i>	24
Site 9: <i>Goose Bay</i>	26
Site 10: <i>Government Hill</i>	28
Site 11: <i>Kincaid Park</i>	30
Site 12: <i>Palmer Hay Flats</i>	32
Site 13: <i>Point Woronzof</i>	34
Site 14: <i>Portage Glacier Valley</i>	36
Site 15: <i>Potter Marsh</i>	38
Site 16: <i>Ship Creek</i>	40
Site 17: <i>Trail to Point Campbell</i>	42
Site 18: <i>Upper Campbell Creek Gorge</i>	44
Site 19: <i>Westchester Lagoon</i>	46
Site 20: <i>Windy Corner</i>	48
V. Bear & Moose Safety	50
VI. Additional Resources	52

Greetings



Alaska hosts amazing and diverse species of wildlife. You can see small creatures like tiny ice worms or large animals like Alaska's brown bears! From Ketchikan to Kodiak to Kotzebue, wildlife abounds in Alaska.

However, it takes years, if not a lifetime to see all the wildlife Alaska has to offer. While Alaska is vast, a good place to start looking for wildlife is in Anchorage, Alaska's largest city, where wildlife viewing opportunities occur right in town. Wildlife is an important part of everyday life in Anchorage. In fact, a large moose population resides within the Anchorage Bowl making life for residents unique and exciting. Many migratory bird species visit the Anchorage area during their spring and fall migrations. Anchorage is also within minutes of truly wild lands where myriad animals can be found – from moose to bears to whales to birds, and much more!

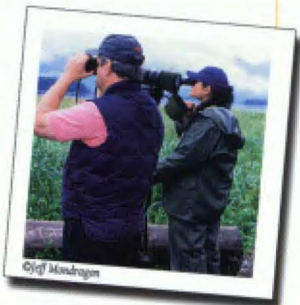
Anchorage Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots provides great ideas for day visits and weekend trips, hints about how to look for wildlife, and safety tips and resources. These "hot spots" highlight twenty local viewing areas in Anchorage, including points along Turnagain Arm to Girdwood and Portage Glacier Valley, as well as north to Palmer Hay Flats and Goose Bay.

We hope every viewing adventure is safe and one you will remember for a lifetime!

Wildlife Viewing

Hints & Ethics

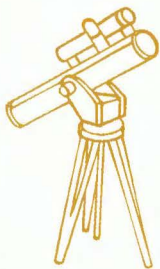
Choose your season. Many species of wildlife appear only during certain seasons. They may hibernate in winter, migrate during spring or fall, or use special nesting areas during summer.



Dawn and dusk are the best times to view most wildlife. Wildlife are often more active during the early morning and evening. During the heat of the day, some animals may be resting. Choose cooler and quieter times.



Learn the feeding habits of animals. Many birds follow the tides in their daily feeding cycle. Other wildlife, including bears, spend a lot of their summer near salmon streams and berry patches. Knowing the feeding habits of animals will help you to find them. Visit the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's Wildlife Notebook Series (www.adfg.state.ak.us/pubs/notebook/notebookhome.php) for more information.



Use binoculars or a spotting scope. These tools will help you see wildlife up close and in greater detail. For instance, with a 20-power spotting scope mounted on a tripod, it's possible to watch the activity of a mountain goat standing 1.5 miles away. Using these tools also helps ensure safety for you and the wildlife.

Fade into the woodwork. Wear natural colors and unscented lotions. Studies have shown that white clothes may startle and stress some animals. Relax your muscles and avoid staring. Some animals may detect tension and interpret a direct stare as a threat.

Move slowly and quietly. The best thing you can do to improve your chances of seeing wildlife is to slow down and periodically take a break. Animals often disappear when they hear you coming, but may return shortly if you are quiet enough. Use other senses to broaden your viewing experience. For example, listen for the chirping of birds or the howling of wolves. Practice using your peripheral vision to spot movement in trees, thick brush and water.



Look for animal sign. Fresh tracks, unusual scents, recently browsed vegetation and scat are all clues that wildlife has been in the area. Look for these clues as a way to find animals or appreciate them when they're out of sight.



Use field guides. Many field guides are available to help you identify mammals, birds, fish, and other fauna. Finding things out about your surroundings can really add to your experience.

Ask an expert. Some viewing areas have on-site staff. Don't be afraid to ask questions. It can make the difference between a disappointing visit and one you will remember forever.

Be patient. Allow yourself enough time during any wildlife viewing adventure. Even in Alaska, it can take years to see all the species you are interested in.

Be careful along highways and roads. When driving along Alaska's highways, do not park on the shoulder. Always use pullouts.

Try to view animals without changing their behavior. Watch for signs that an animal is stressed. For example, if you see a moose with its ears flattened and hair raised, you are too close. Always give animals an avenue for retreat. Do not try and attract animals with sounds. Resist the temptation to throw rocks to see a flock fly, or shouting to get an animal's attention. Remember—harassing wildlife is illegal.

Be respectful of nesting and denning areas, rookeries, and calving grounds. Well-meaning but intrusive visitors may cause parents to flee, leaving young vulnerable to the elements and predators. Stay on designated trails whenever possible. Do not disturb nesting birds or other baby animals.



Leave "orphaned" or sick animals alone. Young animals that appear alone usually have parents waiting nearby. If you are concerned, contact the Alaska Department of Fish & Game at (907) 267-2182.

Restrain pets or leave them at home. Pets may startle, chase, or even kill wildlife. Anchorage has designated several dog parks. (Check: www.ci.anchorage.ak.us.) Abide by leash laws.



Let animals eat their natural foods.

Never feed animals or leave human food or trash unattended. It is unhealthy for the animals and potentially unsafe for you. A bite of your sandwich may get animals hooked on handouts; it may even harm their digestive systems. These animals may eventually lose their fear of people.

Help Keep Wildlife WILD!

Legend

- 0 Site Number
- Roads
- Lakes/Streams/Rivers
- City Park Land
- 0 Highway #





Wildlife Viewing Sites

- Site **1** Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge
- Site **2** Arctic Valley
- Site **3** Beluga Point
- Site **4** Campbell Tract
- Site **5** Chugach State Park
- Site **6** Conner's Bog
- Site **7** Crow Pass Trail
- Site **8** Eagle River Nature Center
- Site **9** Goose Bay
- Site **10** Government Hill
- Site **11** Kincaid Park
- Site **12** Palmer Hay Flats
- Site **13** Point Woronzof
- Site **14** Portage Glacier Valley
- Site **15** Potter Marsh
- Site **16** Ship Creek
- Site **17** Trail to Point Campbell
- Site **18** Upper Campbell Creek Gorge
- Site **19** Westchester Lagoon
- Site **20** Windy Corner

Facilities & Services



Highway Signs

As you travel in Alaska and other states, look for these signs on highways and other roads.

They identify a Wildlife Viewing Area.



Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge



Watch brilliant sunsets over the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge.



directions

Lying below the coastal bluff, the refuge is accessed via the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, Kincaid Park motocross area, Johns Park, or the south ends of Victor Road or Reef Drive in South Anchorage.

The Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge extends sixteen miles along Anchorage's coastline from Point Woronzof to Potter Creek, providing excellent opportunities to view migrating snow geese and sandhill cranes.

From mid-April to early May, the refuge is a critical resting and feeding place for snow geese migrating from British Columbia and Washington to Wrangel Island, off the coast of Siberia. The snow geese feed constantly while in the refuge because they must arrive on Wrangel Island with enough protein and fat to lay eggs immediately. If egg laying is delayed, goslings may not be developed enough to fly before freeze-up.

The refuge is also a great spot to see sandhill cranes. Watch these long-legged birds foraging in the salt marsh. They dine on marine worms, sticklebacks, frogs, rodents, insects, rhizomes, seeds, and



berries. Their primitive, rattling calls can be heard for over a mile. The mating dance of the sandhill is a wondrous sight. They begin their dance with deep bows followed by intricate leaps, hops, skips and more bows. Cranes are thought to be the oldest family of birds still living on Earth.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge:

www.wildlife.alaska.gov/refuge/acwr.cfm

Large numbers of sandhill cranes also fill the sky near Creamer's Field in Fairbanks during spring migration. The 5-6 hour drive north from Anchorage to Fairbanks passes Denali National Park and Preserve and miles of scenery along the Parks Highway.

Snow geese can also be seen in spring on the Kenai Flats, several miles south of downtown Kenai. The town of Kenai is several miles north of Soldotna. The drive along this Scenic Byway takes about 3 to 3 1/2 hours from Anchorage.



©Chris Simon, JEP&G

Sandhill cranes are Alaska's largest game bird. Their long legs and neck and black chisel-shaped bills give them a graceful and stately appearance.

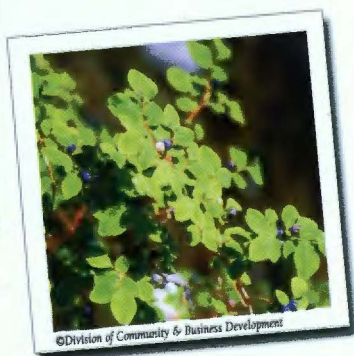
Arctic Valley



directions

The valley is accessible from Arctic Valley Road, a 20-minute drive from Anchorage. From downtown Anchorage, take the Glenn Highway east toward Eagle River. Take the first exit for Arctic Valley and follow the road to the ski area.

Blueberries and other plants bring a variety of color to this area in spring.



Arctic Valley is a popular local destination to pick berries, hike, and watch wildlife. East of downtown Anchorage, the valley is home to a variety of birds found in alpine tundra and subalpine shrub thickets, including the golden-crowned sparrow. While these sparrows sport a yellow stripe on the top of the head, most people hear them long before they are seen. Listen for their repeated three-note descending song in the minor key that sounds like “Oh poor me” – you’ll remember it well!

Ptarmigan can also be seen in this area at higher elevations and occasionally in the parking lot at the top of the road. This is one of the few places near Anchorage where tundra is only a short walk from the parking lot. This area is studded with wildflowers from spring to fall. Ptarmigan are most visible in fall and winter, when they are in flocks that feed and roost together. In spring, they can gather in groups when they are breeding. Look for the three types of ptarmigan found in Alaska – willow, rock, and white-tailed.



The willow ptarmigan, a pheasant-like bird, was named Alaska's state bird in 1955.

contacts & resources

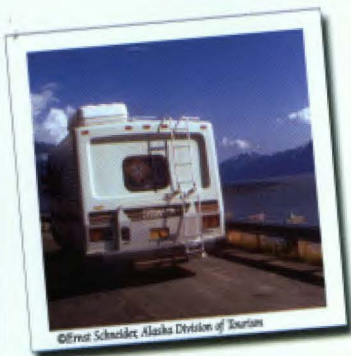
Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:
www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

tidbits



Ptarmigan are relatives of grouse and live in alpine and arctic tundra regions. They have feathered toes and white wings year-round. In winter, their plumage changes to pure white, making them hard to see in snow.

Beluga Point



RVs are a common site along the Seward Highway to viewing areas like Beluga Point. The highway has been designated a scenic byway and an All American Road.



directions

Beluga Point is located at milepost 110.5 on the Seward Highway and 6.5 miles south of the Anchorage city limits.

Beluga Point, a rocky outpost jutting into the waters of Turnagain Arm, is just south of Anchorage along the Seward Highway. Its name is apt as this spot is a good place to look for these white whales as they make their way up and down the inlet. Interpretive signs and sculpted belugas are also featured at this point.

Belugas are often seen from mid-July through August when salmon are running in Cook Inlet. As many as 300 have been counted in the inlet. Belugas use their sonar to find their way and catch fish in the silty waters of the inlet. Belugas are predators and also prey. Keep a sharp eye out for the black fins of orcas as they occasionally pursue the white belugas.

Beluga whales are relatively small, often measuring less than 16 feet. Younger whales look blue-gray in color and then turn white by age five or six. Belugas are the only all-white whale. They may also be seen at other turnouts along Turnagain Arm and can be viewed occasionally at the mouth of the Kenai River in Kenai.

tips & cautions

This rocky promontory was once a site used by Native hunters. Take a stroll along the short pathways along this stony crag and listen to the wind and waves – it's not hard to imagine skin-clad hunters with bone-tipped harpoons using this point to scan for whales.

Do not leave designated parking areas or pathways and do not venture onto the dangerous mudflats near the inlet.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Alaska State Parks:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach



Beluga whales' name is derived, in part, from the Russian word for white. Older whales are white, while younger whales look dark blue-gray in color.

Campbell Tract



directions

Travel on Lake Otis Parkway to East 68th Avenue and head east on East 68th until it intersects with Abbott Loop Road, the western boundary of Campbell Tract. Turn right onto Abbott Loop Road and the entrance to the Campbell Tract will be on your left. A large facility sign marks the entrance. The Smokejumper Trailhead is the first pullout on the left.

Two types of hares can be found in Alaska: the snowshoe, which is the most common, and the arctic hare. Both turn white during winter months.



Campbell Tract, a 730-acre forested area in East Anchorage, is home to large mammals such as moose and black and brown bears as well as a variety of smaller mammals, including lynx and coyotes. More than 40 species of migratory and resident birds can also be seen here over the course of the year. A rich diversity of insects, including many species of butterflies, also make Campbell Tract home.

The south fork of Campbell Creek meanders through this quiet natural area, providing spawning habitat for rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, and king and coho salmon. The salmon are a food source for the bears sometimes seen here. Bridges over the creek enable visitors to get a good look at the fish.

Visitors to Campbell Tract may also find porcupines, snowshoe hares and northern red squirrels. Squirrels are preyed upon by coyotes and occasionally by lynx, especially when snowshoe hare populations, their main prey, are in decline. Many raptors, including northern goshawks and great horned owls, also consider squirrels fair game.

There are several access points onto Campbell Tract. The main entrance is accessed from Abbott Loop and East 68th Avenue. Parking is available at the



Coyotes are opportunistic feeders. Snowshoe hares and other small game make up most of their diet.

Smokejumper Trailhead and visitors can access both trails and the Campbell Creek Science Center road from here. Many trails provide a nice hike into the area in summer and winter. In winter, this is a great place to try out your snowshoes and look for animal tracks.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Campbell Creek Science Center:

www.sciencecenter.ak.blm.gov

tips & cautions

Watch animals from a distance and be careful not to disturb nesting or baby animals. Be aware this area is also home to bears. Avoid surprising a bear and be especially alert in situations where a bear's ability to see you is impaired, such as low light conditions or thick brush. Be careful when background noises such as rushing water mask the sound of your approach. Sing, clap or talk loudly so a bear can hear you over the noise. Also, watch for moose along the trails and yield the right-of-way. Be especially alert for moose cows with young calves.

Chugach State Park



Hoary marmots use rock piles as their summer homes and protection from predators.



directions

Chugach State Park trailheads are a 20-minute drive from downtown Anchorage. Begin by choosing one of the main trailheads that make up the established system of routes: Prospect Heights, O'Malley, Upper Huffman, or Glen Alps Access. Take O'Malley Road leading east all the way up the hillside. Trailheads can be accessed from Hillside Drive at either Upper Huffman or Upper O'Malley roads. Follow the State Park signs. An excellent topographic map of the park and its trails is available at bookstores and sporting goods stores in Anchorage.

Often referred to as "Anchorage's playground," Chugach State Park offers premier outdoor activities and excellent wildlife viewing just minutes from downtown. The park encompasses a half-million acres of wilderness, making it the third largest state park in the country.

Moose may be seen along many of the park's trails, but a more predictable and convenient spot is the viewing platform at Glen Alps in fall and early winter. Dozens of moose are often seen below the platform and across the Campbell Creek Valley to the east. Both brown and black bears are also present in the park. Scan the subalpine mountain slopes in the spring and fall for them. They can be spotted digging up plants and ground squirrels on the hillsides. Look in muddy areas along the creeks for their tracks too! Wolves also live in the park but are seen less frequently. Use binoculars or spotting scopes to scan alpine areas for them.

While hiking, listen for the scurrying of arctic ground squirrels, picas, and the occasional hoary marmot found in alpine areas, particularly near rock piles. All three are adept at warning each other of your presence. Listen for the variety of squeaks and whistles that emerge from the rocks. If you sit and rest for a while, these small mammals often become active around you.



The park is also a good place to observe birds that frequent alpine tundra and subalpine shrub thickets. Willow ptarmigan, Alaska's state bird, as well as rock and white-tailed ptarmigan can be seen. Their classic croaking call "get back get back get back!" will tell you they're near. In winter, watch for the flight of hundreds of ravens that sleep in the mountain valleys and commute to the city each morning at sunrise, returning to their roosts an hour or so before nightfall.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

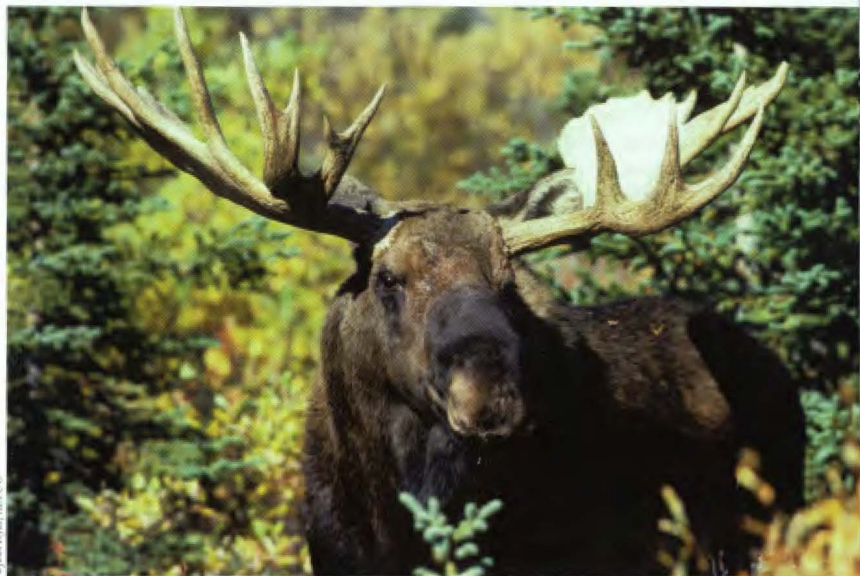
www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Alaska State Parks:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach

Bears often eat new growth on south-facing slopes in May and June and berries on alpine tundra or subalpine berry patches during late summer or fall. If hiking in bear country, be watchful, make noise and hike in groups so as not to startle an unaware bear.

Voles, or "field mice," live underground in alpine and tundra habitat. Hikers may hear the chirps of singing voles. During fall, these rodents construct piles of grasses and plants near their burrows. Look for their grassy "tunnels" as one sign of activity.



The Alaska moose is the largest of all moose. These animals can weigh more than 1,000 pounds.

Connor's Bog



directions

From downtown Anchorage, take Minnesota Drive south to the International Airport West exit. Turn left on Jewel Lake Road. A parking area with a main trailhead is located on the left-hand side of the road.

The pine grosbeak is a plump, long-tailed bird that is commonly found in wooded areas.



Nestled between residential neighborhoods and the Anchorage International Airport is Conner's Bog. The area includes diverse habitats, with a scattering of low-shrub bogs and Conner's Lake making up the prominent features. Woodlands and tall trees surround the lake and bog, creating great habitat for small mammals, moose, and many species of birds.

The freshwater wetlands at Conner's Bog offer a wide variety of bird sightings throughout spring, summer, and fall. Eighty-three species of birds have been recorded near the bog, from common mallards and resident woodpeckers to the more unusual Pacific loon. Volunteers placed an island in Conner's Lake equipped with a web camera to record and watch Pacific loons nest and raise their young.

A main trail running through Conner's Bog provides access to many offshoot trails leading to the lake, through the forest, and across the low shrub landscape. Moose are often seen feeding along the trails, munching on the woodland foliage.



Loons are often remembered for their eerie call. Hearing this mystic sound resonate across a lake is one of nature's most recognized sounds.

tips & cautions

Don't disturb nesting or baby animals. Moose are not normally dangerous, however be cautious. Watch moose quietly, at a safe distance, and recognize changes in their behavior. If a moose lays its ears back and raises the hair on its hump, you are too close. Dogs may antagonize moose simply by their presence. Cow moose with young newborn calves are particularly sensitive to humans and dogs. To protect the nesting loons, portions of the lakeshore may be closed to human and dog access during summer.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Municipality of Anchorage:

www.anchorage.ci.org

Crow Pass Trail



The shaggy coat of the goat distinguishes it from Dall sheep. Goat also have deeper chests and black horns, compared to the larger, curling horns of sheep.



directions

From Anchorage, travel south on the Seward Highway. Turn north on the road to Mt. Alyeska Resort (mile 90). After 2 miles, turn left on Crow Creek Road and follow it to the very end and parking lot (5 miles from Alyeska Highway). The trailhead is accessed at the parking area.

This popular 28-mile trail connecting Eagle River and Girdwood traverses through the Chugach Mountains and provides incredible views and wildlife viewing opportunities. For hikers with less time or stamina, plenty of excellent wildlife viewing occurs in the first 2 to 3 miles of the trail from the Crow Creek trailhead near Girdwood. From the pass, hikers often see hoary marmots and arctic ground squirrels, and occasionally mountain goats and Dall sheep.

Hoary marmots are large relatives of the squirrel, but more colorful. A dark face with a white nose patch accentuates their mostly grayish body. They look like they are wearing "boots" as they usually have dark brown feet. These social animals live with their own families but make their burrows near other families to form a colony. Marmots live in alpine meadows, often adjacent to boulders or talus. These furry creatures are true hibernators and reduce all bodily functions from mid-September until April or early May. In summer, listen for their long whistle warning calls. They also hiss, squeal, growl, and yip!

Mountain goats and their kids and Dall sheep with lambs can be seen feeding on slopes above the trail during the late spring and summer. Although easily mistaken for each other, mountain goats have a fashion

edge over sheep – their long leg hairs resemble pantaloons! Other distinctions are the goats' deeper chest and black horns. Mountain goats are typically solitary or reside in small groups of nannies, kids, and young billies. Dall sheep ewes and lambs are easy to spot in grassy alpine areas because they gather in larger bands. Carry a pair of binoculars or a spotting scope to tell these two species apart and watch them from a comfortable distance along the trail.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Chugach National Forest:

www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/cabin_web_page/cabin_files/index.html

Chugach State Park:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach

Trail use is recommended only during June, July, August, and September. Remain on the trail, especially during winter and spring when avalanche risk is high. Be prepared for a rocky route and inclement weather, including cool, wet, and windy conditions conducive to hypothermia. Wear sturdy boots and non-cotton clothing. Use designated trails and be respectful of private property near the end of the road.



Dall sheep present a majestic image with their curved horns. They rest and feed along steep slopes and alpine meadows.

Eagle River Nature Center



directions

From downtown Anchorage, take the Glenn Highway to Eagle River Loop Road. At the third traffic light after the bridge, turn right on Eagle River Road. Follow this road 12 miles. The Nature Center and parking area are at the end of the road. Nature center staff offer two guided nature walks (free) each weekday (Mon-Fri) June-August that last 1.5 hours (1 mile long).

A yurt on center grounds provides a facility for educational classes and lectures.



©Kurtis Hart, ADF&G

The Eagle River Nature Center, located just 45 minutes from downtown Anchorage on the northeast side of 500,000-acre Chugach State Park, provides an excellent starting point for hikes, nature walks, and wildlife viewing.

While you can find wildlife throughout the surrounding area and along any of the four established trails from the Nature Center, two trails provide easy access to beaver and salmon viewing.

The Albert Loop Trail traverses through wooded pond areas, often providing views of beavers. These chestnut brown rodents are fun to watch as they transport branches and logs for their dams, sometimes building water routes to float the heavy objects into place. Beavers are adept in water using webbed feet and broad, flat tails to swim and dive. It's easy to imagine how the term "busy as a beaver" was conjured up because beavers work hard to build and maintain their homes in order to cache food and raise their young. Beavers add limbs and mud to their lodges every year and old lodges can be huge.

A viewing platform, located on the edge of a beaver pond adjacent to the Rodak Trail, is a good place to see red and silver salmon spawning, especially in August. Watch for



their colorful bodies as they struggle to reach a spot to lay eggs. This is their final destination. The Rodak Trail, a short self-guided nature trail, also includes interpretive signs with information about Eagle River Valley.

Brown and black bears are often seen from the trails around the nature center. Brown bears feed on salmon in shallow water between the beaver dams. The Albert Loop Trail is closed in late summer to protect visitors from surprising bears at close range.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Eagle River Nature Center:

www.ernc.org

Beavers can chew wood and sticks in and under water. Their nose and ear valves close underwater.

tips & cautions

Watch animals from a distance and be careful not to disturb nesting or baby animals. Be aware this area is also home to bears. Avoid surprising a bear and be especially alert in situations where a bear's ability to see you is impaired, such as low light conditions, fog, or thick brush. Be careful when background noises such as rushing water mask the sound of your approach. Sing, clap or talk loudly so a bear can hear you over the noise.

Goose Bay



Trumpeter swan males can weigh up to 30 pounds and females average 22 pounds. Eggs from these swans can measure 5 inches long.



directions

Road access to the Goose Bay State Game Refuge is from several points along the "old Burma Road" at the end of Knik/Goose Bay Road. Knik/Goose Bay Road is accessed from Wasilla, which is about a 45-minute drive along the Glenn Highway from Anchorage. Goose Bay is another 25 minutes from Goose Bay Road.

The Goose Bay State Game Refuge, a lesser-known site among Alaska's thirty-two state wildlife refuges and sanctuaries, is located in Upper Cook Inlet across Knik Arm from Anchorage. Each spring and fall, the refuge hosts a spectacular number of geese as they rest and feed on their way to and from northern nesting grounds.

Mid-April to mid-May is an excellent time to see Canada, snow, and occasionally white-fronted geese at the refuge. During spring migration, trumpeter and tundra swans can also be seen in the thousands.

The 10,880-acre refuge includes wetlands surrounding Goose Creek, low lying inland shrubs, and coastline affected by Knik Arm's powerful tides. This diverse landscape attracts mallards, green-winged teal, pintails, northern shovelers, snipe, and yellowlegs. Sandhill cranes have also been seen here.

Scan willow shrubs for moose from April through June. This is calving season and the willow growth provide food and cover for cows with calves.

Muskrat, mink, black and brown bears, coyote, red fox, and an occasional lynx have also been seen on the refuge.

tips & cautions

Off-road use of motorized vehicles is restricted in the refuge. Check with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game office in Palmer or Anchorage for motorized vehicle restrictions and hunting seasons. Currently there are no developed public access points or public use facilities in the refuge. Safety precautions along Knik Arm shoreline are essential. Incoming tides are high and move extremely fast. An unwary adventurer can easily get trapped in the sticky mud of Knik Arm.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Goose Bay State Game Refuge:

www.wildlife.alaska.gov/refuge/goosebay.cfm



© 2004 Alaska Wildlife Federation

Canada geese are a frequent sight on wetlands and marshy areas throughout Anchorage and Palmer.

Government Hill

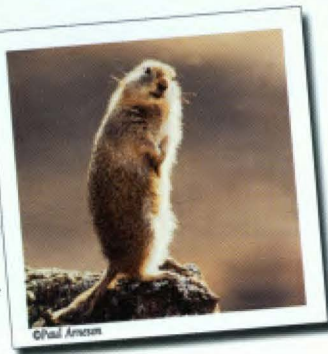
directions

Government Hill is in North Anchorage within easy walking distance from downtown and the railroad station. If you are driving, take the bridge from 2nd Avenue (near the Anchorage Hilton) in downtown Anchorage, to the northern side.

Government Hill, one of the oldest residential areas in Anchorage, is also home to a small colony of arctic ground squirrels.

Sometimes called “sic-sic” for their repeated warning call or “parky squirrel” because their soft fur is used to make parkas, arctic ground squirrels may have migrated to Government Hill by hitching rides in barges or containers from Western Alaska. Arctic ground squirrels are most abundant and visible along East Bluff Road on Government Hill, between the Port of Anchorage and the Alaska Railroad staging areas in the northwest part of town. Look for their burrows in the park north of the road and in lawns south of the road. Quietly watch burrow entrances for a few minutes from at least 30 yards away and listen for their sic-sic calls. From late September through April they are hibernating and cannot be seen.

Arctic ground squirrels can be seen in areas from southcentral to the interior of Alaska.



Interested in witnessing the age-old contest between predator and prey? Keep an eye out for red foxes, which prey on arctic ground squirrels. Their flashy red coats and keen senses of sight, smell, and hearing contribute to their image as cunning creatures. They travel along roadsides, even in areas with lots of people. Look for them in Government Hill parks during early morning



Red fox have the ability to live near people using their keen senses to adapt. They are found throughout Alaska, except for some of the islands in Southeast Alaska, parts of the Aleutians, and Prince William Sound.

and late evening. These open and grassy habitats are also home to small rodents such as voles, another favorite fox food. Turn around is fair play – eagles are one of the fox's natural predators and can be found throughout the Anchorage bowl.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Municipality of Anchorage:

www.anchorage.ci.org

tips & cautions

Stay in the parks or on the road and do not trespass on private property. Resist the urge to feed the foxes and squirrels. If fed by people, they may become nuisances and have to be destroyed.

Kincaid Park



directions

Kincaid Park is located at the end of Raspberry Road toward the ocean. Take Minnesota Drive to the Raspberry Exit and head west. The main parking lot is at the very end of the road near the recreation center. Before the outdoor center and through the main gate, several pullout areas offer opportunities for day walks and wildlife viewing.

Black bears are found in Anchorage and are most often seen in forested areas.



Kincaid Park, located in west Anchorage, is a blend of 1,400 acres of wooded lands, scenic mountain and water views, and opportunities for wildlife viewing.

Besides being a world-class cross-country ski area, Kincaid Park is home to many of Anchorage's resident urban moose. In fact, it can be one of the best places to see moose in Anchorage. Choose any one of the many trailheads beginning from the outdoor center or one of the smaller pullouts along the main road and explore miles of intersecting routes. Any time of the year you may find moose among the thick foliage that borders the road. In the spring, it is not uncommon to see a cow moose with one, two, or even three calves. Newborn calves' hair is a soft red brown, which fades to a lighter rust color. Scan the vertical and lighter landscape of trees for the darker and rounded shapes of moose. Spring is a sensitive time for cows and calves. Learn to recognize changes in a moose's behavior and never disturb baby animals. Early morning or late evening afford the best opportunities to see moose as they often bed down during the warmer hours.

Snowshoe hares can also be seen in Kincaid Park. Tracks are easy to find in the winter. If you study the shapes and styles of different animal tracks, you may learn to recognize the tracks of red squirrels, ermine and even lynx. People often call snowshoe hares "rabbits."



Bull moose are frequently seen along the trails at Kincaid Park. Be careful of moose with calves, especially during spring.

Hares, however, are born with fur and their eyes wide-open, whereas rabbits are born blind and hairless. The wild hare is also able to leave the nest and hop around soon after birth. Baby rabbits are more helpless, not opening their eyes for a week or so after their birth.

Black bears occasionally den in the park and you may see them in summer and fall. While black bears are the smallest of the North American bears, the average male adult bear can weigh up to 250 pounds. If you see one, don't run, and never let them obtain human food!

Bald eagles often nest in the park, and you may see one or more from the bluffs overlooking Turnagain Arm. During spring migration, you'll also find thousands of birds, including snow geese and sandhill cranes on the mudflats below the park. Forest and woodland birds such as olive-sided flycatchers, warblers, waxwings and woodpeckers may also be seen here.

tidbits



Moose can be found in most of Alaska. They prefer habitats such as hardwood forests, tall-shrub thickets, muskegs, freshwater riparian areas and coastal wetlands. Watch for newborn calves at the end of May. In late September and October, adult moose are in rut. Bulls with full racks often spar this time of year.

Also look here for snowshoe hares in tall shrub thickets and forest settings, including black spruce bogs. In early spring (April) hares begin to breed. Hares are generally easiest to spot in winter when tracks are easy to identify.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Municipality of Anchorage:

www.anchorage.ci.org

Palmer Hay Flats



Tundra swans are smaller than trumpeter swans and can be identified by a yellow spot near their eye.



directions

Take the Glenn Highway from Anchorage to mile 32. From here, there are 3 major access points: the Knik River exit off the Glenn Highway; the Rabbit Slough access; and Cottonwood Creek access on Hayfield Road off Fairview Loop. The refuge encompasses the mouths of the Knik and Matanuska rivers.

Palmer Hay Flats, just north of Anchorage at the head of Knik Arm, is a waterfowl viewing and hunting gem. Within the marshes and sloughs of this spacious 28,000-acre wetland, tens of thousands of cacophonous dabbling and diving ducks stop to feed during their spring migration late April through May.

Pintails, mallards, green-winged teal and wigeon can be seen along Cottonwood Creek near the west side of the refuge. Diving ducks like canvasback, lesser scaup and the common goldeneye also are seen in spring on the hay flats.

Listen for the familiar honking of the Canada goose during spring and fall migrations. Three species of geese can be seen in these wetlands - the lesser Canada, greater white-fronted, and snow goose. Also watch for the bright white of trumpeter and tundra swans' wings standing out against the natural brown and green backdrop of the refuge.

The refuge's marshy areas interspersed with spruce trees attract moose, especially in the spring during calving. Winter also brings these 800-1200 pound animals in the open and looking for food. Driving the Glenn Highway through the refuge, it is not uncommon to see a "herd" of moose foraging within the expansive flats.

tips & cautions

A loud splash of water from one of the waterways might be a large salmon; however, more likely it is one of the abundant muskrats that feed on the roots and stems of marsh cattails, sedges, and grass. Muskrats, one of Alaska's most visible and numerous furbearers, can be mistaken for beavers. Look for their long, skinny rat-like tail, distinct from the beaver's wide flat tail.

Check with local Fish & Game offices for hunting seasons and regulations. Be extra careful of strong tidal waters near mudflats and waterways. The Palmer Fish & Game office telephone number is 907-746-6300.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Palmer Hay Flats State Game Refuge:

www.wildlife.alaska.gov/refuge/hayflats.cfm



Outdoor enthusiasts spend an evening on the Palmer Hay Flats watching birds fly overhead.

Point Woronzof



©Paul Aronson

Bald eagles are one of Alaska's most magnificent birds of prey. They can be seen in wild areas near the city and even on light posts within Anchorage.



directions

Point Woronzof is accessible from the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail between mileposts 3 and 4. Parking is available in a lot at Point Woronzof, or you can get there from downtown via the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. If you are driving, travel west on Northern Lights and continue past the airport. The road will curve south and continue to the Clitheroe Center.

Point Woronzof, near Anchorage's international airport provides scenic views of Cook Inlet and is a great place to watch the sunset and look for bald eagles, ravens, bank swallows and moose.

Look for bald eagle nests south of the road near the airport runway and west of the road about a half-mile south of Point Woronzof. In summer, spot the white heads of mature eagles against the dark branches and foliage. These large raptors develop this "bald" head when they are about 5 years old. Until then, they look more like golden eagles. Juvenile bald eagles can be distinguished from golden eagles by the lack of feathers on their legs (or tarsi) and their whitish wing linings.

If you are lucky, the soaring of eagles might be accompanied by raven acrobatics. Ravens are common throughout Alaska and their aerial performances make for great bird watching. Ravens are most active at Point Woronzof from December through March when the northerly wind blows—they use the updraft along the bluff for play and mating displays. Sometimes groups of 30 or more ravens can be seen showing off to members of the opposite sex.

Point Woronzof also hosts a large bank swallow colony. These birds dig nesting burrows in the silty face of the bluff. Their



nest holes are visible throughout the year, but the most exciting time to watch is early summer when hundreds of swallows fly in and out of the colony to feed their young. Approach the bluff edge carefully; it's a long fall to the bottom!

Occasionally, you can also see beluga whales from this high vantage point. They are most common during salmon runs in mid to late summer.

Viewers may also encounter one of Anchorage's resident moose along the trail to Point Woronzof, munching on foliage or bedding down. The fence around the airport and the chilly water of Knik Arm funnel moose into a narrow corridor as they walk around the north end of the airport. This is one of the most reliable spots in the city to find a moose. Drive all the way to the end of the road (Clitheroe Center) to increase your odds. Sometimes you see a moose on the way back that you missed driving in!

Moose can be found here and in most of Alaska. They prefer habitats such as hardwood forests, tall-shrub thickets, muskegs, freshwater riparian areas, and coastal wetlands. Watch for newborn calves at the end of May. In late September and October, adult moose are in rut. Bulls with full racks often spar this time of year.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable**Wildlife Program:**

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Municipality of Anchorage:

www.anchorage.ci.org

Trails of Anchorage:

www.trailsofanchorage.com



These cavities are made by bank swallows digging their nests along cliff sides.

Portage Glacier Valley



Take the time to stop and use your binoculars to scan the broad landscape for black and brown bears. You might see their lumbering shapes weaving in and out of wildflowers along hillsides.

While most of Alaska's highways abound with scenic vistas, the drive through Portage Glacier Valley, Portage Glacier the road's namesake, is no longer visible from the U.S. Forest Service Begich-Boggs Visitor Center on the edge of Portage Lake, but many informative exhibits on glaciers, wildlife and human history can be viewed there at no cost. About half of the face of Portage Glacier can be viewed from a parking area in Bear Valley, a short distance beyond the visitor center by road. The glacier, however, continues to shape the landscape of the Chugach National Forest.



directions

Take the Seward Highway 50 miles south from Anchorage. Turn left at the sign for Portage Glacier Highway and the Whittier Road Tunnel Access. The Begich, Boggs Visitor Center is at mile 5 (exit right). Look for the Portage Glacier Lodge sign. Keep following the road as it loops around. Visitor parking is available at the center, as are free award winning exhibits and the movie "Voices From the Ice," for the cost of \$1.00 per person. During the summer there are daily interpretive presentations and walks offered at no cost to the public.

Portage Glacier Valley might have been carved specifically for wildlife. The five-mile drive from the Seward Highway to the visitor center passes through a range of habitats from coastal wetlands to forests, lakes, rivers, glaciers and alpine tundra. Black and brown bears roam the forested valley at lower elevations seasonally seeking sustenance in Alaska's spring greens, wild berries and salmon. The highway follows Portage Creek and its tributaries with spawning sockeye, chum, pink and silver salmon. Get an up-close look at salmon from the Williwaw Fish Viewing Platform, especially from late July through September.

Scan the high alpine terrain for mountain goats as they pick their way among the cliffs, out of reach of predators. Goats will appear as

tips & cautions

small yellowish-white dots along mountainsides. During spring and fall bird migrations, watch and listen for geese, swans and sandhill cranes among the scattered ponds and waterways. Look for birds alongside the road as well – buffleheads, goldeneyes, common snipe and greater yellowlegs can be seen nearby.

The surrounding willow thickets are good habitat for moose, particularly in winter. They often travel the roads to find easier walking away from deep snow that accumulates in the valley.

Several pullouts along Portage Highway provide a nice rest stop for a picnic and a perfect time to get out those binoculars for a closer look! Use designated vehicle rest stops. Watch for weather changes and icy road conditions.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifewatching.alaska.gov

Begich-Boggs Visitor Center:

www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/chugach_pages/bbvc.html



Chunks of ice from Portage Glacier float near the U.S. Forest Service Begich-Boggs Visitor Center lookout.

Potter Marsh



directions

Roughly fifteen minutes south of downtown Anchorage, Potter Marsh is accessible from the New Seward Highway. The entrance is located just past the Rabbit Creek exit and across from the Rabbit Creek Rifle Range entrance. A small highway pullout at the southern end of the marsh also allows for viewing and photography.

Arctic terns are slim, graceful and strong birds. They have the endurance to make the 25,000 mile round trip from their northern breeding grounds to their wintering spots in the Antarctic.



Potter Marsh, at the southern end of the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge, is an ideal afternoon break from Anchorage for birders and other wildlife viewers. The drive along the Seward Highway presents a stunning view of Turnagain Arm, just before you turn left into the Potter Marsh parking lot to the east. The wooden boardwalk, which winds 1,550 feet from the back of the parking area through the marsh and across watery openings and sedges, is perfect habitat for a rich variety of birds.

From late April through September, Canada geese, northern pintails, canvasback ducks, red-necked phalaropes, horned and red-necked grebes, and northern harriers use this wetland. Look for eagle nests in the cottonwoods near the base of the bluff. Use binoculars or a spotting scope to scan the area from the boardwalk. Eagles have a sharp sense of sight and can see at least four times better than people, enabling them to detect movements of small animals like hares from a mile away. When eagles soar overhead, they are scanning open areas for prey.

From May to August, boardwalk visitors can see gulls, Arctic terns, and shorebirds such as yellowlegs. Occasionally, trumpeter swans are present during spring and fall migration.

In addition to birds, you may catch sight of a muskrat. Look for the slow movement and v-shaped wake of muskrats as they swim



The boardwalk at Potter Marsh provides good viewing points for birds, muskrats and fish.

through the marsh. Their small brownish heads peek just above the water as they meander in and out of the wetland's open areas.

Moose also frequent the marsh year round. May and June are good times to see these large ungulates standing in the marsh foraging for new growth.

About halfway along the boardwalk, Rabbit Creek flows underneath and provides a good spot to see spawning chinook, coho, or humpback salmon from May to August, depending on the species. Spot their bright red bodies swimming in the creek.

With its nearly panoramic view of Turnagain arm, Potter Marsh, buffered by spruce, cottonwoods and alders, is one of the most accessible and scenic wildlife viewing areas in Anchorage.

tips & cautions

Do not disturb nesting waterfowl or migrating salmon. Fishing is prohibited in Potter Marsh and in the creek west of the highway. Visitors should prepare for cool and windy weather even on sunny days. Occasionally, vehicles in the parking lot are broken into – leave valuables at home, lock them out of sight in the trunk, or carry them with you. If you are planning to stop at the south end vehicle pullout, please signal other highway travelers well ahead of your turn.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:
www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

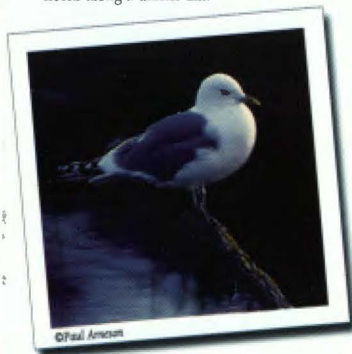
Ship Creek



directions

From downtown Anchorage, take 3rd Street as it winds downward toward the Alaska Railroad station. Pass the railroad (on your left) and turn left on C Street. Take Whitney Road (east) and watch for a stop sign and dam over Ship Creek. For the Elmendorf State Hatchery, take the Glenn Highway east about 1.5 miles from downtown. Turn left on Reeve Boulevard, then right on Post Road. Watch for the parking area on your right.

Mew gulls' plumage changes as they age and during different seasons, including breeding. Breeding mew gulls have white chests, gray feathers, and white flecks along a darker tail.



Ship Creek is a favorite local fishing spot and good shorebird-viewing site in the industrial environment of the port near downtown Anchorage. With a backdrop of the Anchorage skyline, the mud, sedge flats, and ocean-fed waters provide not only salmon runs but habitat for plovers, sandpipers, godwits, and other migrating shorebirds.

Ship Creek runs through the Port of Anchorage as well as near the ocean waters of Cook Inlet. High tides combined with the marshy mudflats close to roadways provide excellent shorebird viewing. A variety of shorebirds—including the hudsonian godwit, turnstones, surfbirds, semipalmated, western and least sandpipers—are often seen during spring and fall migrations. From the road to the public boat launch, the expanse of mudflats offers views of birds as they run to and from the waves. Large flocks of flying shorebirds often resemble a glittering sheet—as if their shallow dives and sharp turns were all from one form, not from hundreds and sometimes thousands of birds. Low tides offer occasional views of these tiny creatures flitting along the mud flats or flying in groups just above the shore. High tides push shorebirds closer to shore. When the tide begins to recede, large numbers can be visible near roads and parking areas.

Two miles upstream from the mouth of the creek is the Elmendorf State Hatchery. The



lake and adjacent pond provide salmon viewing in the spring and summer. King salmon are present from late May through July, and coho salmon from August through mid-September. Another good place to view spawning salmon is the spillway a short distance upstream from the highway overpass.

While many animals hibernate or seek warmer places during Alaska's winters, a few hardy birds, like the common merganser, green-winged teal, and bufflehead may be seen toughin' it out through the snowy season at the pond near the hatchery.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Sport Fish Division, Alaska Department of Fish & Game:

www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/sf_home.cfm

King salmon, with plump, reddish bodies, congregate in the waters at Ship Creek.

tips & cautions

Salmon viewing area hours are from late May through September, 8:00 AM until 10:00 PM.

Never walk on mudflats! Tides move extremely fast. An unwary adventurer can easily get trapped in the sticky mud. Do not disturb, chase, or feed shorebirds or ducks. Check with the local Fish & Game office for fishing regulations at Ship Creek. For more information contact: 907-267-2233

Trail to Point Campbell



Along with forest song birds, bald eagles can be seen near the bluff and ocean.

The trail from Kincaid Park to Point Campbell is a great hour-long hike complete with ocean panoramas, views of Mt. Susitna, and wildlife viewing. The trail begins near the park chalet, winds through wooded habitat and meanders along the coastline.

The trail begins just behind the chalet to the southwest, near the main parking lot. You can often see moose munching on foliage in open areas along the trail or in thick brush. Be careful walking and watch for bikers and wildlife around blind corners!

After about a mile, the trail reaches the bluff. Watch for a cut-off to the left. The trail here is unpaved and heads into very dense brush. Take a moment to listen for songbirds or ocean sounds from below the bluff. The sight of boreal birds is a good bet throughout the year. Look for the northern goshawk, three-toed woodpecker, boreal chickadee and common redpoll.

Several yards along this narrow trail, you will find an opening that leads to a sharp but short decline to the beach below. The sliding sand and sometimes wet path has its rewards. The wetlands area and open expanse of beach is a perfect place to watch for bald eagles soaring high among the trees. In spring, look for sandhill cranes in mudflats and marshy areas between the beach and the bluff.



directions

Kincaid Park is located in West Anchorage at the very end of Raspberry Road. Take Minnesota Drive to the Raspberry Exit and head west. The road ends at the main parking lot and chalet. The trailhead begins as a paved bike trail behind the chalet to the southwest.



The sandy beach is unusual for Anchorage. If you head north, the sandy portion of the beach eventually narrows and transitions into marshy wetlands. Look high against the bluff for swallow homes – small round holes that look like they have been drilled into the packed glacial silt.

Bald eagles are seen in a variety of coastal habitats, spruce forests, cliffs, rocky shores, mudflats, salt marshes, freshwater riparian areas and over marine waters.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Municipality of Anchorage:

www.anchorage.ci.org



Mount Susitna or the "Sleeping Lady" glows in the evening light.

Upper Campbell Creek Gorge



directions

Take O'Malley Road east. Turn left on Hillside Drive, then right on Upper O'Malley Road. Take a left on Prospect Drive, then left on Sidarof Lane and follow it to the end to the parking lot. Take the trail toward the power line and turn left (north) at the "T". Continue following the main trail and power line until they diverge. Then, take the footpath along the power line route until you reach the gorge (less than 2 miles round trip). To reach the upper drainage, stay on the main trail when it diverges from the power line and follow the Middle Fork Loop Trail. This route, approximately 7 miles, leads to the Glen Alps trailhead.

Listen for the unmistakable "kaw" of the common raven.

Upper Campbell Creek, beginning at the Campbell Creek Gorge, is a great place to take a day hike and look for wildlife. The multiple forks of Campbell Creek rush from the higher elevations of the Chugach Mountains, joining in Bicentennial Park and meandering through Anchorage and eventually into Knik Arm of Cook Inlet.

In spring, the high vantage point overlooking the gorge is a great place to watch ravens feeding their young and young ravens learning to fly. In recent years, there has been a viewable nest on the south-facing cliff. The best view is from the south side of the gorge. Young ravens hatch earlier than most Alaska birds, usually in late March or April. They remain in or near the nest for about 50 days after hatching.

Up stream from the gorge, watch for the occasional wolf or brown bear. Wolves are highly social animals that usually live in packs, which include parents and pups of the year. Scan the trail, especially if it is muddy or snowy, for tracks. Gray or black wolves are most common. The best time to see wolves, like most other wild animals, is early mornings and late evenings.

Be on the lookout for brown bears as well. Brown bears, like wolves, are most likely to be



©Rick Sinnott, ADF&G



Wolves are social animals, usually living in packs including parents and pups.

seen from a distance on the slopes at or above treeline. However, hikers occasionally have close encounters with bears along the trail. Look for tracks in muddy areas, especially along the creek. This longer and more adventurous route also provides good opportunities to see moose—especially during the rutting period (mid-September to late October) and early winter as they congregate in the upper Campbell Creek drainage. Adult males can weigh up to 1,600 pounds. Their massive size, coupled with the jousting of antlers pushed together, creates quite a sight. Their battles are usually over a female and the rights to mate. While serious conflicts are rare, some bulls receive a few punctures or other damage and occasionally die from their wounds. The winner, however, gets to mate!

tidbits



The best place to observe raven social behavior in Anchorage is downtown, where ravens feed on human food in addition to natural foods and are often seen playing in updrafts near tall buildings.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable

Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Campbell Creek Science Center:

www.anchorage.ak.blm.gov/cc/scentr.html

Trails in Chugach State Park:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/trails.htm

Westchester Lagoon



Baby red-necked grebes often climb on mom's back for free rides across ponds and lakes.



directions

Driving north or south on Minnesota Avenue, the wetlands of Westchester Lagoon frame the road on either side. The lagoon is accessible from Spenard road and West 19th Avenue to the Chester Creek greenbelt and trails. Westchester Lagoon is accessible from Spenard Road and West 19th Avenue to Chester Creek greenbelt and trails. Take Spenard Road north from its intersection with Fireweed Lane toward downtown Anchorage. The parking area is on your left as you cross the Campbell Creek bridge. Heading south from downtown, take "L" Street and turn right on 15th Avenue, then drive to the end of the road.

Westchester Lagoon, near downtown Anchorage, provides an excellent respite from urban hustle and bustle. Waterfowl abound, moose and small mammals forage, and views of the Chugach Mountains can be spectacular, particularly at sunset.

Spring offers excellent bird watching as migrating shorebirds, waterfowl, and terrestrial species seek out the marshy ponds, coastal waters and streams surrounding Westchester Lagoon.

In April and May, grebes will make you chuckle with their persistent and nasal "Nerr! Nerr!" Mallards nest among the sedges and grasses on the shore. American widgeons swim side-by-side with families of geese. You will thank the flocks of swallows swooping across the skies overhead with extraordinary aerial skill, as they help keep the air free of mosquitoes. On April evenings, you may hear what sounds like a chorus of ducks hiding among the cattails. These elusive singers are actually mate-seeking wood frogs, croaking their eerie staccato call.

An exciting place for birders is the Fish Creek Estuary, located on the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail to the west of Westchester Lagoon and the southern railroad underpass. The mudflats attract waterfowl and shorebirds, including an occasional species far



outside of its normal range. Check the local Audubon Society Bird Alert for a recorded message with recent sightings.

Winter wildlife watchers can follow tracks of small mammals like snowshoe hares, voles, muskrats, and red foxes near the wooded areas on the east side of the lagoon.

Grebes are adept at carrying their babies on their backs as they meander in and out of lakes and marshes.

Muskrats can be found throughout Southcentral Alaska in areas with muskegs, freshwater lakes, rivers, and riparian habitats and coastal wetlands.

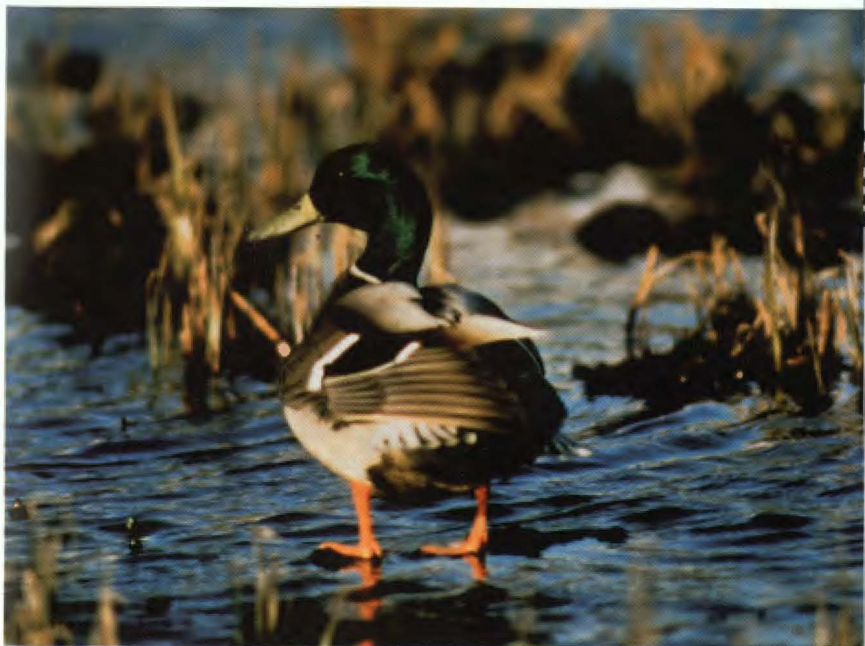
contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Municipality of Anchorage:

www.anchorage.ci.org



Mallards are easily recognized by their shiny green head and neck with contrasting yellow bill.

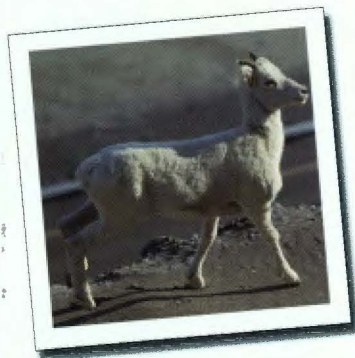
Windy Corner

P

directions

Windy Corner is located at milepost 106 along the Seward Highway heading south from Anchorage.

Dall sheep often perch on rocky points very close to the Seward Highway.



A drive along Alaska's Seward Highway south of Anchorage provides remarkable opportunities to see mountains, glaciers, and wildlife. Several miles past Potter Marsh, Dall sheep often gather quite close to the road, at a spot called Windy Corner. This is the only place in the world where Dall sheep can be seen at sea level from a nearby road.

Dall sheep can be seen at Windy Corner throughout the year. Often, travelers catch sight of them on the cliffs above the road. They are attracted to this spot because it is a mineral lick. In general, sheep rest on grassy ledges to elude predators, such as coyotes, wolves and bears. Most of the sheep here are ewes, lambs and young rams, although a few mature rams are also seen. If you are traveling in late May or June, watch for ewes and newborn lambs. In spring, Dall sheep shed their woolly winter coats and don't look as sleek as they will later in summer or as roly-poly as they do in winter. If you visit Windy Corner in November or December, watch for rutting behavior among larger rams. You might be lucky enough to see two rams butting heads, trying to establish which one is dominant.

Dall sheep can be found in different areas throughout the state. Their preferred habitat



Viewers should stay clearly off the road when stopped to view sheep. Stay well off the highway and out of the way of oncoming traffic.

is alpine tundra with tall shrub thickets. Look for sheep by scanning rocky mountain slopes and alpine areas in and near Denali National Park and along northern highways. In summer, they look like groups of small white patches against the mountains and you can often count fifteen or twenty together.

contacts & resources

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Alaska State Parks:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach

tips & cautions

Do not park on the shoulder of the highway; use appropriate turnouts. Stay well clear of on-coming traffic and be completely off the road. Do not feed the sheep or other wildlife and be careful about getting too close. Watch for changes in their behavior, like skittishness or if they move away.

Bear & Moose Safety in Anchorage



Although Anchorage is Alaska's largest urban center (pop. 260,000) it hosts a unique diversity of wildlife. The variety and abundance of wildlife provide a special quality of life for many residents.

Wildlife in our backyards can be both exciting and challenging! We can coexist with bears, moose, and other animals if we follow a few simple guidelines.

Avoid surprising bears. Make noise while you travel (sing, clap or talk loudly), especially in thick brush or near spawning salmon. Hike or walk in groups. Be especially alert in situations where a bear's ability to see you is impaired, such as in low light or thick brush. Be aware of wind direction. If the wind is in your face, it will be more difficult for a bear to catch your scent in the direction you are moving. Be careful when background noises, such as rushing water, mask the sound of your approach.

If you encounter a bear and it does not notice you, leave the area quietly while keeping an eye on the bear.

If a bear notices you, let it know you are a person: face the bear, wave your arms, and talk to it calmly. Don't immediately yell, because you don't want to startle the bear. Try to appear larger by standing close to others in your group. If it approaches, stand your ground and make more noise. Never run from a bear! Like a dog, it may chase you.

A surprised bear, especially one with cubs or food may feel threatened by you and charge in defense. Continue to stand your ground. Running or falling to the ground too soon may escalate the encounter.

If a bear that seems agitated (i.e., not slow or deliberate) makes contact, fall on the ground and stay there, without making sounds, until the bear leaves. Lie on your stomach and cover your head with your hands. If a bear that has slowly approached you makes contact, fight back.

Keep your belongings (backpack, fish, food, etc.) with you or in bear-safe storage at all times. Do not abandon your belongings to bears.

contacts & resources

For more information on bear encounters pick up a copy of the "Bear Facts" brochure or visit www.wildlife.alaska.gov

Don't approach moose too closely. Moose are not normally aggressive, but more people are charged and injured by moose in Anchorage than by bears.

Look for signs that a moose is nervous like raised hackles, flattened ears, and licking lips. These signs mean you are too close. Move away promptly. During spring, female moose have young calves and are more sensitive to nearby humans. Try not to get in between mother and calf.

Moose are not like horses! They should not be fed or approached. If a moose does charge you, try to stand behind trees, brush or other objects. Or run away quickly. If all else fails, drop into a fetal position, cover your head with your arms, and wait until the moose leaves.



Additional Resources

Alaska Department of Fish & Game:

www.adfg.state.ak.us

Alaska Division of Wildlife Conservation:

www.wildlife.alaska.gov

Alaska Natural History Association:

www.alaskanha.org

Alaska Public Lands Information Centers:

www.nps.gov/aplic

Alaska State Parks:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks

Alaska Travel Industry Association:

www.travelalaska.com

Alaska's Watchable Wildlife Program:

www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Audubon Alaska:

www.audubon.org/chapter/ak/ak

Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau:

www.anchorage.net

Bureau of Land Management:

www.ak.blm.gov/ak930/recreationpage2.html

Chugach National Forest:

www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach

Chugach State Park:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach

Fish & Wildlife Planner:

www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/resource

Hunter Education, Alaska Department of Fish & Game:

www.wildlife.alaska.gov

Municipality of Anchorage:

www.ci.anchorage.ak.us/homepage/index.cfm

National Park Service:

data2.itc.nps.gov/parksearch/state.cfm?st=ak

Trails in Chugach State Park:

www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/units/chugach/trails.htm

Trails of Anchorage:

www.trailsofanchorage.com

Sport Fish Division, Alaska Department of Fish & Game:

www.sf.adfg.state.ak.us/statewide/sf_home.cfm

USDA Forest Service:

www.fs.fed.us/r10/ro/naturewatch/index.html

US Fish & Wildlife Service:

alaska.fws.gov/nwr/nwr.htm

Wildlife Notebook Series, Alaska Department of Fish & Game:

www.adfg.state.ak.us/pubs/notebook/notehome.php



Sponsors



Alaska Department of Fish & Game
www.wildlife.alaska.gov



Alaska Conservation Foundation
www.akcf.org (907) 276-1917



Alaska Marine Highway
www.FerryAlaska.com 1-800-642-0066



Alaska Wilderness Recreation
& Tourism Association
www.awrta.org (907) 258-3171



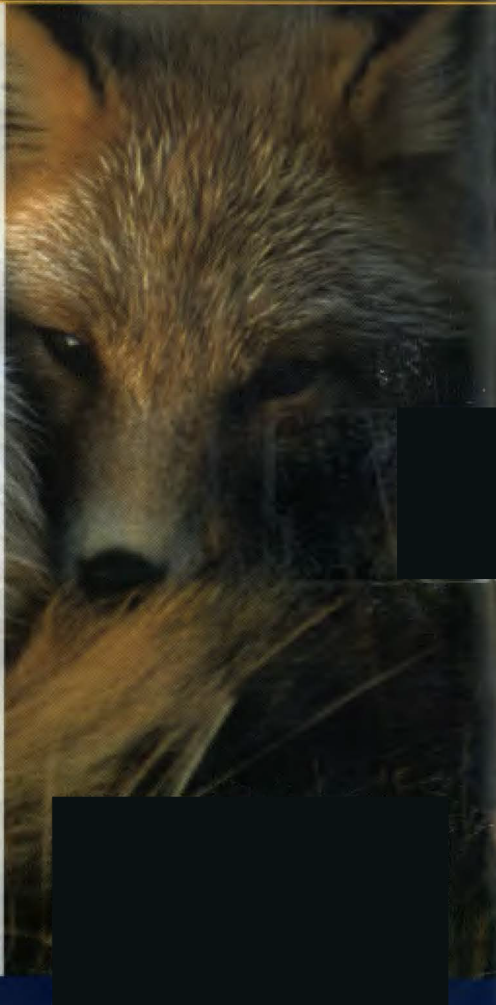
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Alaska
National Wildlife Refuges
<http://alaska.fws.gov/nwr/nwr.htm>

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The Alaska Hot Spots Series

Anchorage Hot Spots is a wildlife viewing guide for areas in and near Alaska's largest city. Learn where you have the best chance of seeing magnificent moose or how to find a red fox family right in town. You can see where amazing varieties of migratory species stop and rest in Anchorage and learn what animals stay around all year long. Anchorage Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots is your resource for day adventures in town, or for longer excursions along one of Alaska's scenic roadways. From the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge to Portage Glacier to Palmer Hay Flats, spend a day, week or month discovering the wildlife viewing opportunities Anchorage and Southcentral Alaska have to offer.



Anchorage Wildlife Viewing Hot Spots is perfect for a family trip or for visitors seeking a truly wild Alaska experience.