Chamber of Commerce. Visit www.cordovachamber.com or for information on tours and lodging, consult the Cordova neighboring communities, including Valdez and Whittier.

Eastern Prince William Sound. Ferry service links Cordova and commercial fishing continues to be an economic mainstay in commercial fisheries and gold mining soon followed.

Before the first European contact in the mid-1700s, these lands were the hunting and fishing grounds of the Chugach wildlife recreationists of all kinds. Before the first European contact in the mid-1700s, these lands were the hunting and fishing grounds of the Chugach wildlife recreationists of all kinds.

Commercial fishing continues to be an economic mainstay in eastern Prince William Sound. American traders and military expeditions arrived after the U.S. purchase of Russian America in 1867, and the development of commercial fisheries and gold mining soon followed.

For more information on wildlife viewing across Alaska, visit www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov.
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

call (907) 424-7260. If you're in town, stop by the visitor Chamber of Commerce. Visit www.cordovachamber.com or
For information on tours and lodging, consult the Cordova
neighboring communities, including Valdez and Whittier.
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Commercial fishing continues to be an economic mainstay in
of Russian America in 1867, and the development of
trading post in the area in the late 1700s. American traders
and Eyak people. The Russians established a thriving
lands were the hunting and fishing grounds of the Chugach
Before the first European contact in the mid-1700s, these
wildlife recreationists of all kinds.
and thriving moose and bear populations, the region draws
River wild salmon, millions of migrating shorebirds in spring
diverse abundant wildlife. Home to the world famous Copper
A coastal fishing town tucked between mountains and
Treasure
Cordova: Alaska's Hidden

Black bear ©Mike Truex • Dusky Canada geese ©Sean Meade • Delta wetlands ©Ron Niebrugge

Traveling Safely in Bear Country
Make noise (ring, clap, talk) while you travel to reduce your chances of surprising a bear. Be especially alert along noisy streams, in thick brush and when visibility is poor. Always keep your belongings (backpack, food, fish, etc.) with you or in bear-resistant storage.
If you see a bear, **stay calm**. If the bear does not notice you, leave quietly, 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, you may provoke a chase. Also, if a bear is surprised at close distance, it may feel threatened and act defensively, especially if it has cubs or food.

If a bear strikes, play dead or fight back. The choice depends on whether the bear is acting defensively or considering you as prey. For a defensive bear, lie on your front, keep your backpack on, protect your face and neck, and remain still. In the rare instance of a predatory bear, fight back. To learn more, visit www.alaskabear.alaska.gov.

Wildlife Viewing Fun Facts
**Tideland tidbits:** Shorebirds are well adapted to finding food. Short-legged species run back and forth with water’s ebb and flow to reach exposed invertebrates on the beach. Others poke their bills up and down in the mud like sewing machines to search for tasty morsels. Long-billed shorebirds open just the tip of their bills when they probe to collect a bit of food without a mouthful of mud too. Their prey are tiny and plentiful protein-packed invertebrates. The shorebird species that are most abundant in spring–Western sandpiper and dunlin (above)–favor small pink clams known as Baltic macoma. These clams reach densities as high as 5,000 clams a square yard. Slow growers, they may live up to eight years on the delta–unless a shorebird eats them first. In the spring the delta is an important stopover for millions of shorebirds heading north but in the fall the birds are more dispersed. No longer in a rush to breed, they may stop at wetlands other than the main ones and their journey south is a relatively more leisurely affair.

**Agile climbers:** Mountain goats, shaggy sure-footed ungulates (hoofed animals), can out climb many predators thanks to their unique foot structure. Their hooves have hard, sharp edges surrounding rubbery concave footpads that act like suction cups when weight is applied. The two halves of the hoof also move independently of one another, resulting in a better grip.

Wildlife Viewing Tips
**Keep a Low Profile.** Enjoy watching animals’ natural behaviors and try not 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, mooreries and calving grounds, and critical feeding areas. With whales, avoid causing them to change their behavior; approach no closer than 100 yards.

**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 tide pools and a wealth of food for birds and mammals.

**Look for Clues.** Tracks, droppings, trails and twigs tell stories of wildlife: 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 learn.

**Help Keep Wildlife Wild.** Never feed wild animals. Doing so can cause them to associate people with food, which can cause trouble (it’s illegal too). Human food can also make animals 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.

Tidepools are open during low tide and may be a good place to spot small, colorful marine invertebrates. Take a magnifying glass to see them up close.

The mountains, trails, islands and waterways of the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail are wild lands. For safety, take a guided tour or 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.

Dusky Canada goose nest almost solely on the Copper River Delta
Wildlife viewing at the Cordova boat harbor 2 is a serene experience in quiet winter months and more plentiful during summer’s hustle bustle. Long-tailed ducks, buffleheads, red-breasted mergansers, common mergansers, great blue herons, sea otters and other species seek shelter in these protected waters when the snow flies. Migrating shorebirds may be seen in May along the Breakwater Trail at the edge of the South Harbor. As commercial salmon fishing—Cordova’s main industry—heats up in summer, the harbor becomes extremely busy. If you venture down, look for sea otters, glaucous-winged and mew gulls, black-legged kittiwakes and belted kingfishers but watch your step as fishermen lay their nets out on harbor floats to repair.

Canneries are in full swing and many gull species flock to the fish offal discharges, an excellent chance to hone gull identification skills.

A hike on Henney Ridge Trail 3 crosses a variety of habitats, each offering unique wildlife viewing opportunities. The trailhead is about 5 miles from town along Whitted Road, just shy of Hartney Bay. This 4.1 mile trail (one-way) traverses rainforest, muskeg (via boardwalk) and wetlands before it climbs to sub-alpine habitat on the ridge. Look for spruce gnaw, varied thrushes, winter wrens and Townsend’s warblers in the temperate rain forest. Northern pips breed in the alpine tundra and black bears use the alpine tundra in fall if berries are present.

In May all eyes turn to Hartney Bay 4 where the annual Copper River Delta Shorebird Festival celebrates the largest spring concentration of shorebirds in the Western Hemisphere. Over 4 million migrants including western sandpipers, dunlins, least sandpipers, whimbrels, short-billed dowitchers and greater yellowlegs. Listen for the “winnowing” of a snipe in spring, a low whistling made by air flow through the male’s tail feathers. In spring small fish called eulachon spawn in the river. Seals and sea lions follow these oily protein-packed fish up river and dozens of eagles and thousands of gulls feed in frenzied flocks. Check with ADF&G to find out if the eulachon are running, generally in May and early June.

At Mile 19.2 is Hastyack Trail 6, a short (1.8 mile one way) mostly boardwalk trail through spruce and hemlock to a knoll overlooking the Delta. Look for trumpeter swans, moose and occasional brown bears. In the distance is the Gulf of Alaska and Kayak Island where Russian explorer Vitus Bering first set foot on these shores in 1741. The haystack-shaped hills are the tops of ancient mountains, buried over time.

At Mile 25 Seddabog Road heads one mile north to the start of Seddabog Glacier Trail 7. This 3.1 mile trail winds through cottonwood stands and spruce before reaching a small glaciated valley and the outlet of Seddabog Lake. The far end of the lake in view of Seddabog Glacier is a nice spot for a summer picnic. Mountain goats may be seen on nearby cliffs. Watch for brown bears and woodland birds, Townsend’s warblers and pokysawks have been spotted here.

The first Copper River bridge is at Flag Point 10 at Mile 27. If you pull off the road and scan the cliffs, you may see mountain goats feeding on moss and lichens. Small roadside tributaries often have coho salmon running in autumn. Wildlife becomes more scarce beyond the first two bridges but check the cottonwood stands along the sandy river banks for bald eagles and northern hawk owls. Several eagle nests can be seen from the road. Ponds may harbor horned grebes, red-necked phalaropes and trumpet swans.