regional transportation hub, was originally settled in 1941 as a 17,000-acre 
community. The adjacent community of Cold Bay (pop. 95), a 
through seasonally.

The area is home to a myriad salmon-rich streams and lakes, and caribou migrate 
and raptors nest in the area, brown bear are prolific along the 

even for Alaska.

Izembek and Cold Bay:

A small dark sea goose called the Pacific black brant is a 
up by caribou and other animals. For vast numbers of migrating 

What's good for the goose is good for the millions of 

A small dark sea goose called the Pacific black brant is a 

unique for Alaska.

Izembek and Cold Bay: Unique, even for Alaska.

A small dark sea goose called the Pacific black brant is a 

unique for Alaska.
a U.S. military air base.

Izembek National Wildlife Refuge encompasses nearly half a million acres and is a regional transportation hub, was originally settled in 1941 as a U.S. military air base.

Together the Izembek State Game Refuge and the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge encompass nearly half a million acres and serve as a transportation hub.

myriad salmon-rich streams and lakes, and caribou migrate through seasonally.

brown bear are prolific along the wet, richly productive and diverse environment. Songbirds, waterfowl, shorebirds and seabirds that spend time in this area in autumn.

Every fall some 130,000 brant, almost its entire world population, winter in Izembek Lagoon.

A small dark sea goose called the Pacific black brant is a Unique, even for Alaska.

www.aleutianseast.org.

For information on lodging and accommodations in Cold Bay, contact the borough clerk at 907-383-2699.

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www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov.

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Consider making your first stop the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters to check road and weather information and view wildlife displays.

Bird life is abundant in waters around the Cold Bay dock. Long-tailed and harlequin ducks, Steller’s eiders, common loons and pelagic cormorants frequent the bay in winter. Emperor geese flock south of the pier and just beyond at Nurse Lagoon where they can be seen using their bills to sieve invertebrates out of the mud. Look for pigeon guillemots, harnessed puffins, black-legged kittiwakes, Arctic terns and glaucous-winged gulls perched on the pier in summer. Look for songbirds like golden-crowned and Savannah sparrows in summer and snow buntings and gray-crowned rosy finches in winter. Sea otters frequent bay waters.

Before it reaches the bay, Russell Creek cuts a deep gorge where eagles perch on bluffs scan the river for fish. When salmon are running, brown bears share the river with people also fishing for salmon and Dolly Varden. Wolves and caribou are present year round, as are many varieties of ducks, passerines, mink and river otters. Large flocks of emperor geese gather at the mouth between October and March. Harbor seals are frequently seen swimming the lower creek at high tide.

Heading north from Cold Bay, pause at Trout Creek just outside town and check for fox, mink, salmon, kingfisher, dipper or brown bear. At Mile 4 is Blinn Lake and the junction of Grant Point and Outer Marker Roads. U.S. servicemen came here to recreate during World War II and planted Sitka spruce along the shores. The scraggly survivors in this windswept otherwise treeless land draw resident and migratory songbirds. Look for tundra swans, northern shoveler and green-winged teal on the lake. In the fall, geese feed on shiny black crowberries on nearby hillside. A rough road circling the lake is not recommended for vehicles but does make for a good hike. Brown bears are prolific in the region but most visible in places like Blinn Lake, where they often sleep in the alder thickets and graze on sedges and berries near the lake. Wolves also frequent the area but are difficult to spot; look for tracks in soft soils. They are most easily seen in winter against a snow white landscape. Caribou may be present between October and May before they head to summer calving grounds further north on the peninsula. Both roads are good places to see caribou in winter, easily visible feeding on lichens on the hillside and sedges in low areas.

Veer right onto Outer Marker Road and Lake Hess. Also known appropriately as Red Salmon Lake) is about 3 miles on. Like other lakes and small ponds along the way, it’s a likely place to spot river otters at play or leaping across the road and in low wetlands. These ponds/wetlands are also valuable as resting places for tundra swans, northern shovelers, pintails and mallards. Bears may be spotted fishing for spawning salmon.

Another 1.2 miles on is Rescue Lake, a good place to look for shorebirds such as dunlin, red-breasted phalaropes, lesser yellowlegs and several species of sandpiper. Predators, such as long-tailed jaegers, gyrfalcons, short-eared owls and merlins, may be seen flying over the tundra looking for prey. Scan hillside in fall for emperor geese flocking to feed on crowberries.

The road ends at Grant Point and a small enclosed observatory with a spotting scope and interpretive panels overlooking Izembek Lagoon. This richly productive marine ecosystem, 30 miles long and 5 miles wide, is the heart of the Izembek State Game Refuge. Healthy eelgrass beds grow just below mean low tide. Nourished by ocean tides and freshwater streams, they provide feeding areas for many invertebrates, fish and marine birds. Several hundred thousand migratory waterfowl and shorebirds head to and from arctic and subarctic breeding grounds pass through or winter here between September and May. Fall migration is an outstanding opportunity to see black brant geese close-up when nearly the entire world population converges on the lagoon to feed. Most leave before winter sets in but increasing numbers stay to feed in open areas in the ice along with red-breasted mergansers and Steller’s and common eiders. You may see harbor seals, sea otters, occasional raccoons and—during April migration—gray whales. The point boasts fairweather views of three distant volcanoes on Unimak Island to the southwest: Roundtop, Ivanotski and Shishaldin.

Chances are good you’ll see ptarmigan, caribou and songbirds along Frosty Peak Road. From a raised area at a private gravel pit at Mile 5, glass surroundings for caribou, brown bears and sandhill cranes. Dippers, year-round residents thanks to a thick coat of feathers, low metabolic rate and their blood’s extra oxygen-carrying capacity, may be seen in the waters of Frosty Creek near First Bridge. Willow ptarmigan may be spotted on the road at lower elevations but as you climb you may also spot rock ptarmigan, particularly in boulder-strewn areas. Hike up the ridges from the road in spring and scan drainages for bear dens, large dark openings in residual snow banks with packed dirty snow on the downhill side and trails in and out. Snow buntings nest in rocky fields on mountainsides in spring.

Baldy Mountain Road is only passable certain times of year, so check with refuge staff before you go. A hike up Baldy Mountain (elev. 1000 ft) offers beautiful views of the lagoon and Frosty Peak but be aware! Tremendous concentrations of bears graze in the boggy flats between Baldy Mountain and Applegate Cove. Sandhill cranes nest in the open sedges flat; listen for their soft bugling. Look for snipe and listen for the winnowing noise of their tail feathers in spring. Wolves, though elusive, have also been spotted in the area. Tundra flats and hills host a variety of plants, including well known flowers like monkshood, lupine, dwarf fireweed and a miniature version of the azalea. Thick sphagnum mosses lend a soft, spongy texture to the ground. Tundra hiking is more difficult than it first appears. It’s easy to turn an ankle, get lost or surprise a sleeping bear that may lie hidden in the land’s undulations.