Juneau: A “Capital” Wildlife Viewing Experience

Stand in the midst of Alaska’s state capital and raise your eyes to the sky to watch bald eagles, great blue herons and ravens. Turn to the steep cliffs and avalanche paths behind town and scan for mountain goats and black bears. If you are lucky, you may see humpback or killer whales swim past town.

Now, unpack your bags and settle in for a few days. Juneau has a wealth and diversity of wildlife viewing experiences for you, whether you like to go on your own or with a guide. We’ve selected a dozen of our favorite destinations to share with you. These aren’t the only places to see wildlife, but by the time you’ve visited all of them, you’ll have discovered new places on your own.

For information on tours and lodging, consult the Juneau Convention & Visitors Bureau. Visit www.traveljuneau.com or call 907-586-2203. In Juneau, stop by the Centennial Hall visitor center or call 586-2201.

Ready to get started? Juneau’s wildlife is waiting – grab your camera, a good pair of shoes and your sense of adventure and head on out!
Wildlife Viewing Experience

Juneau: A "Capital" for wildlife is waiting – grab your binoculars and enjoy all the viewing sites have to offer. Whether you like to go on your own or with a guide,Juneau's wildlife is waiting. Now, unpack your bags and settle in for a few days. Juneau is your home away from home. If you are lucky, you may see humpback or killer whales swim past as you walk along the shoreline or see mountain goats and black bears. If you are a bit more adventurous, you can try your luck at spotting grizzly bears. If you are very lucky, you may even see a wolf or a moose! The Centennial Hall visitor center or call 586-2201. In Juneau, stop by the Juneau Convention & Visitors Bureau. For safety, take a guided tour or take a naturalist with you. These aren't the only places to see wildlife, but by the time you've visited all of them, you'll have discovered with you.These aren't the only places to see wildlife, but by the time you've visited all of them, you'll have discovered with you.

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 tide exposes 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 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.

Listen for the high-pitched whistle of hoary marmots while hiking in the alpine.

**Watchable Wildlife “Fun Facts”**

**Bears’ eyesight is probably comparable to that of humans except that their night vision is better and their ability to distinguish distant, non-moving objects may be worse. However, bears trust their noses more than their eyes, just as humans trust their vision more than their sense of smell.**

**Beavers** are second only to humans in their capacity to manipulate the environment. By building and maintaining dams, busy beavers can completely change the vegetation, animal life, and other components of the watersheds in which they live. The beaver's first defense against predators like the lynx and wolf.

**When a porcupine is relaxed, its hair and quills lie flat and point backwards. When threatened, a porcupine draws up the skin on the back to expose quills facing all directions, and then presents its formidable bristling back. The porcupine tries to keep its back facing the attacker and strikes back and forth with its tail.**

**The American dipper** searches for food by plunging headlong into clear rushing streams. Grasping stones with their long toes, they walk on streambeds catching aquatic insect larvae. Special adaptations allow this songbird to feed in cold, clear waters year-round, even in northern Alaska.

**Traveling Safely in Bear Country** (All of Juneau is bear country)

**Making noise** (sing, clap, talk) while you travel will reduce your chance of surprising a bear. Be 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-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 act defensively, especially if it has cubs or food. **Stand your ground!** If a bear is surprised at close distance, it may feel threatened and attack is prolonged. If a bear is surprised at close distance, it may feel threatened and 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.
The in the early morning and late evening when many species
Creek on Douglas Island and off Radcliffe
and other wildlife watchers are at Fish
life. The primary access points for birders
fishes, and an abundance of other marine
including sculpin, oysters, clams, mussels, and barnacles. The land
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Whales and other marine mammals occasionally venture into Gastineau Channel but, for more reliable viewing, take a whale watching
trip to Auke Bay, with humpback whales seen
consistently. Consider yourself especially lucky if you see
killer whales. Daily cruises depart for Tracy Arm-Fords Terror
Wilderness Area (located about 40 miles south of Juneau)

The Mount Roberts Tramway lift's you 1,800 vertical feet
Above Downtown to subalpine habitat, with trails
leading into the alpine. This is the closest Juneau has to a
designated wildlife viewing area. Marmots and grouse are
habituated to people and readily viewable in the summer. Bears, deer, mountain goats, porcupines and other
mammals are sometimes seen, and ravens may be spotted
hunting. If you have time and energy, hiking trails from
Basin Road above Juneau link up Mount Juneau, Granite
Creek Basin, and Mount Roberts to similar habitats and
wildlife. Be sure to stay on the trails — off trail hikers are
lost and injured almost every year.

The Macaulay Salmon Hatchery 4 is three miles
west of downtown along Egan Drive. Turn left at the first stoplight
to enter town and follow the road to their facility. From late June through October watch salmon in
the fish ladder. View them from above and through a
viewing window. Inside the visitor center dozens of
aquaria present a rich diversity of marine species
throughout the year.

The Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge 5 begins at Salmon Creek (just north of DIPAC) and stretches
nine miles northwest, encompassing approximately 4,000
acres of critical habitat for migrating and resident birds. As
tides ebb and flow across the wetlands, much of the refuge
altamates between a pasture and a shallow
sea. Over the course of a year, the diverse
plant communities feed or shelter more than 140 species of birds, nearly a dozen
different mammals, eight anadromous
ducks, and an abundance of other
marine life. The primary access points for birders and
other wildlife watchers are at Fish
Creek on Douglas Island and off Radcliffe
Road at the west end of the airport.

The Mendenhall Glacier area 6 is Juneau's most popular recreation area, for residents and visitors alike. Follow the
Mendenhall Loop road (becomes Glacier
Spur road) to the USDA Forest Service Visitor Center. The glacier clearly is the focal point, but there are a wealth of
wildlife viewing opportunities as well, especially if you visit in
the early morning and late evening when many species
are most active. Graceful arctic terns migrate over 10,000 miles
from Antarctica to nest on the ground in clear view of the Photo
Point trail, and varied habitats and exten-
sive ponds and trails make the area rich for
other birding. Beavers have transformed the
landscape with their dams, lodges, and tree-
cutting in Steep Creek and the Dredge Lake area, and black and brown bears are
known to Steep Creek when the salmon are
spawning from July through September. Mountain goats can
also be seen here year round on the surrounding mountains.

Several access points to Macaulay
Bay provide wildlife viewing
opportunities. The Don Starter Harbor, 12 miles from
downtown on the back Loop Road and Glacier
Highway, is a good place to look for harbor seals and bald
eagles, with sea lions flooding the area in the winter. The
harbor is the departure point for many whale watching cruises.

Hunting porcupine and other marine mammals and sea birds are seen from the Auke Village Recreation Area, about four miles
west of Auke Bay. Look for the directional sign for the
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