



Wrangell: Bears, Birds and a Whole Lot More

Watch for eagles, harbor seals and Steller sea lions while looking for ancient rock carvings at Petroglyph Beach. Rent a car and explore Wrangell Island, keeping an eye out for Sitka black-tailed deer, bears, moose and other wildlife. Walk or bike along Zimovia Strait to spot great blue herons feeding in the shallows. These are just some of the selections in Wrangell's menu of wildlife viewing opportunities.

Two spectacular seasonal wildlife viewing events occur near Wrangell. Each spring, the Stikine River Delta hosts the second largest concentration of bald eagles in the world. The Stikine Delta is also a migratory refueling stop for swans, snow geese and shorebirds. In July and August, brown and black bears feed on salmon at Anan Creek.

For information on tours and lodging, consult the Wrangell Convention and Visitors Bureau.



Visit www.wrangell.com/visitors or call 1-800-367-9745. In Wrangell, stop by the James and Elsie Nolan Center on Outer Drive or call 874-2829.



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



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

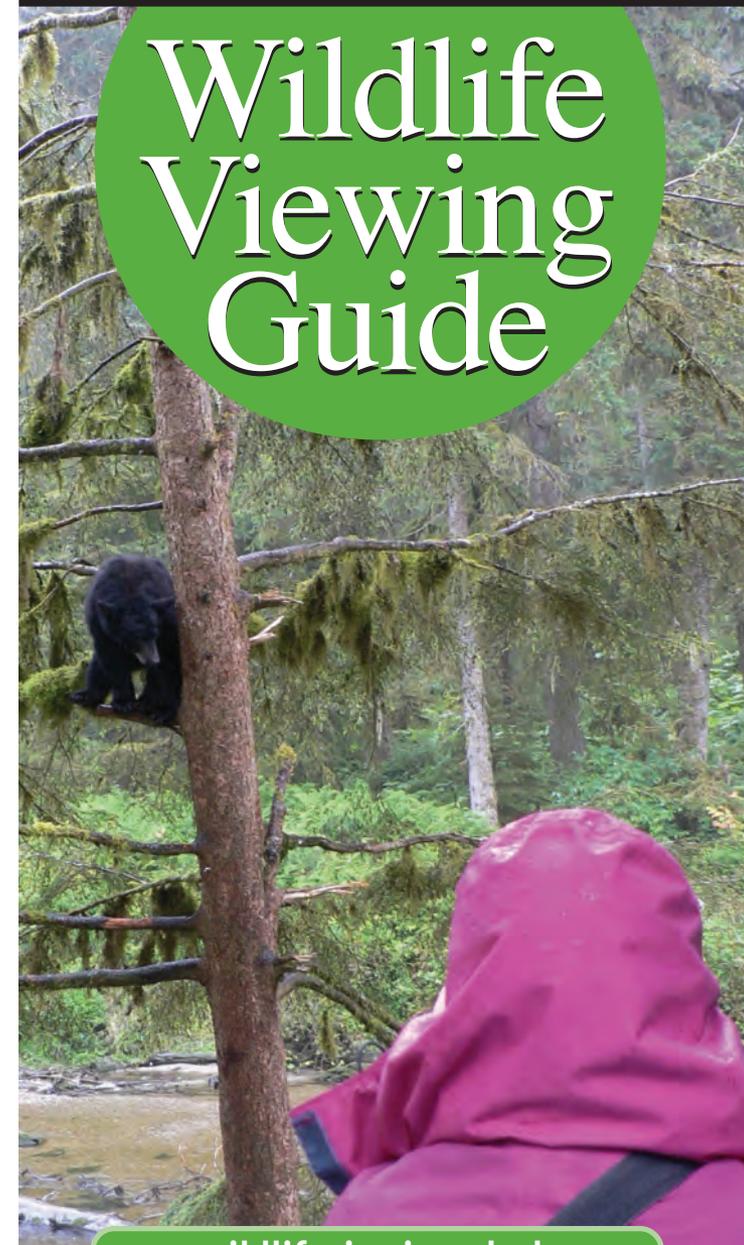
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
about the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail, or
to browse through wildlife viewing sites in other
communities, visit wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

*Great blue heron photo © A. W. Hanger. Viewers photo © ADF&G.
All other photos © Jamie Karnik, ADF&G.*

WRANGELL

Wildlife Viewing Guide



www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

Alaska Department of
Fish and Game
Watch Our Wildlife

Wildlife Viewing Tips

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

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

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

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

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



Look for great blue herons fishing along the shore near downtown Wrangell.



Watchable Wildlife "Fun Facts"

For the Birds: The Stikine River near Wrangell plays host to stunning numbers of birds each spring. The second largest concentration of bald eagles in the world occurs on the Stikine during the annual spring run of eulachon, a small oily fish (sometimes called "hooligan" by locals) that provides many animals with their first major food source after the scarce winter months. Grasses and sedges shoot up in the spring on the Stikine Flats at the mouth of the river, attracting up to 10,000 snow geese each year. For thousands of shorebirds, including western sandpipers, the Stikine Delta is a critical refueling stopover during annual migrations. These birds feed on tiny invertebrates and small fish before continuing their journey to their Arctic breeding grounds. Check with the Visitor's Bureau or USDA Forest Service's Wrangell Ranger District for bird information when planning a trip.



Alaska's Rainforest Islands: For a diverse complement of wildlife viewing, landscapes (from a tidewater glacier to caves with ancient animal bones), cultures, and old-fashioned Alaska hospitality, combine your Wrangell visit with trips to Petersburg and Prince of Wales Island. The new Inter-Island ferry offers convenient connections between these three destinations. For more information, visit www.alaskarainforestislands.com.



Traveling Safely in Bear Country

(All of Wrangell is bear country)

Making noise (sing, clap, talk) while you travel will reduce your chances 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 talk to it calmly. If it approaches you, stand your ground. **Never run from a bear.**

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



STAY SAFE!

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



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Wildlife Viewing Sites



Wildlife is one of many attractions that compete for your attention in Wrangell's **Downtown area**. **1** At **Petroglyph Beach**, located about a mile north of the ferry terminal, you can view ancient rock carvings (best at low tide) while scanning for Steller sea lions, harbor seals, bald eagles, surf scoters and pigeon guillemots. At the **Muskeg Meadows Golf Course** on Ishiama Drive, birders can explore forest, beach and marsh habitats looking for red-breasted sapsuckers, Wilson's snipe, hairy woodpeckers, tree swallows, fox sparrows and other birds. Check with the course staff before birding here, and be aware and respectful of golfers. It is best to bird here during the week.

A paved walking and biking path begins at the southern edge of downtown and parallels Zimovia Highway for four miles along **Zimovia Strait**, **2** ending near the Shoemaker Bay Loop Road. During late May and early June, look both in the trees and on the rocky beach for bald eagles, especially juveniles, searching for fish. Great blue herons stand sentinel-like in the shallows as they watch for food. Near the end of the path is Institute Creek, where chum (also called dog) salmon spawn in mid to late July. Stand on the bridge for the best viewing. During the winter, harlequin ducks, marbled murrelets, scoters, yellow-billed loons and other sea birds are commonly seen.

Pat's Creek **3** is eleven miles south of downtown along Zimovia Highway. The estuary at the mouth of the creek is a good place to watch pink salmon during late July and early August. Look for American dippers, Sitka black-tailed deer and the occasional black bear along the trail that follows the creek to Pat's Lake, where a few pairs of trumpeter swans rest during the early spring. The one-mile trail starts on the left side of the highway bridge and is somewhat rugged and quite steep in places. Pat's Lake can also be reached by road.

Wrangell is the gateway city for the **Stikine River**. **4** As one of the few rivers that pass through the rugged coastal mountains that separate Southeast Alaska from the interior of North America, the Stikine is a major travel corridor for wildlife. Take a boat tour to look for moose, black bears, mountain goats and harbor seals in the summer. Each spring, large numbers of birds feed at the tidal flats near the river's mouth. Bald eagles congregate on the river in early to mid April, snow geese typically arrive in mid to late April, and migrating shorebirds arrive in late April and early May (see the "Fun Facts" section for additional information). Consult with the Visitor's Bureau or USDA Forest Service's Wrangell Ranger District for the most recent information about bird activity on the Stikine when planning a trip. Also in the spring, large groups of sea lions congregate on Leisnoi Island, located between Wrangell and the Stikine, to feed and "socialize." Most charter trips and tours will go by the island on the way to the Stikine, especially if visitors ask to see the sea lions.

Anan Wildlife Observatory **5** is 30 miles southeast of Wrangell and accessed by floatplane or boat from town. The USDA Forest Service maintains a viewing platform next to Anan Creek's lower falls. A large run of pink salmon in Anan Creek during July and August attracts wildlife to the area. The main attraction is the chance to see both black and brown bears feeding on salmon. Black bears tend to feed



Map is for locator reference only, not for navigational use. Map created with TOPO! software © 2006 National Geographic Maps. To learn more visit: www.nationalgeographic.com/topo

nearer to the falls, while brown bears are more often seen farther up or down the creek. Black bears will typically (but not always) retreat if a brown bear ventures too close to their fishing spot. Chances of seeing black bears at Anan Creek in July and August are high. Brown bears are seen less frequently. Harbor seals follow salmon into the lagoon at the mouth of the creek

during high tide. Dozens of bald eagles flock to the creek in early to mid July.

A moderately strenuous, 1/2-mile boardwalk trail with stairs leads from the "lagoon entrance" (where visitors are dropped off by boat or floatplane) to the viewing platform. Good walking shoes or boots are highly recommended for the trail. Bears are sometimes seen along the trail. On guided tours you will be accompanied to the falls. If you use a transporter, you will be on your own

on the trail. Interpretive rangers are stationed at the entrance and on the viewing platform, but not along the trail. Visit www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/districts/wrangell/an_an_guides_transporters.shtml for a list of authorized guides and transporters, or contact the Wrangell Convention and Visitor's Bureau for information on tours. A strictly enforced pass system limits the number of visitors to 60 per day between July 5th and August 25th. Commercial tours to Anan Wildlife Observatory include your day use pass. If you are



making your own way to Anan Creek, permits are available at www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/recreation/wildlife_viewing/ananobservatory, or by calling the USDA Forest Service's Wrangell Ranger District at 907-874-2323. This is a popular destination, and booking your trip several months in advance is strongly encouraged.

Feeling adventurous? Continue your wildlife search along the road system of **Wrangell Island**. **6** A network of unpaved and often bumpy forest roads provides access to camping, hiking and wildlife viewing. Sitka black-tailed deer are

frequently seen along the roads. Watch for moose as well. Both black and brown bears live on Wrangell Island; three particularly good spots to look for bears are Earl West Marsh, Thoms Creek and the Thoms Lake Trail. All are located at the southern end of the island. Road maps of the island are sold at the USDA Forest Service's Wrangell Ranger District. A high clearance vehicle is recommended for some roads.

There are first-come, first-serve campsites scattered around the island for overnight trips. The volunteer hosts at the Nemo Point recreation area have information on camping and recent wildlife sightings.

Looking for more? There are many **USDA Forest Service cabins** scattered around Wrangell. The **Harding River, Berg Bay, Steamer Bay and Mallard Slough** cabins are particularly good spots for wildlife viewing. Contact the Wrangell Ranger District at 907-874-2323 for more information on wildlife viewing near cabins, or visit www.reserveusa.com to browse available cabins.

1. Downtown Wrangell

1 – 2 hours

2. Zimovia Strait

2 hours – half day

3. Pat's Creek

1 – 2 hours

4. Stikine River

4 hours – full day+

5. Anan Wildlife Observatory

2 – 4 hours

6. Wrangell Island

2 hours – full day+

Wheelchair accessible* Hiking trails
 Interpretive signs Entry or tour fee
 Camping in area Guided boat tours

* Ask the Visitor's Bureau for more information about wheelchair accessibility

+ Multi-day trips offer the richest experience

Stikine River Garnet Festival

The Stikine River Garnet Festival celebrates spring and the arrival of migrating birds to the Stikine River Delta. The festival includes wildlife and birding education, keynote speakers, bird viewing tours to the Stikine Flats, and artistic and cultural events. For more information, visit www.wrangellchamber.org/garnet.php