Whole Lot More

Wrangell: Bears, Birds and a Whole Lot More

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

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.

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.

Keep a Low Profile.

Time it Right.

Look for Clues.

Help Keep Wildlife Wild.

Be Considerate of Others.

Never feed wild wildlife.

STAY SAFE!

Are you prepared?

Every one of us has a role in wildlife conservation. If you come across wildlife, take a moment to think about what you will do, and the steps you will take to help wildlife.

If it does not notice you, do not call wildlife to your car. If the bear does not notice you, stay calm, and return to your vehicle. If the bear does notice you, face the bear, wave your arms and talk to it calmly. If it approaches you, stand your ground. Making noise and acting defensively, especially if the bear has cubs or food, can reduce your chances of surprising a bear. Be alert along trails and in backcountry. Always keep your belongings (backpack, food, fish, etc.) with you or in bear-proof storage.

Always keep your belongings (backpack, food, fish, etc.) with you or in bear-proof storage. For safety, take a guided tour or take a first aid kit and a means of communication. Visit the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail for more information on wildlife and safety. Visit www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov or call 874-2829. For a diverse selection of wildlife viewing, culture and wilderness destinations. For more information, visit www.alaskarainforestislands.com.

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Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail

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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.

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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.

Make noise (sing, clap, talk) while you travel to reduce your chances of surprising a bear. Be alert along noisy streams, in thick brush, and when visibility is poor. 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.

WILDLIFE VIEWING TIPS

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 Delta 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.

Walk or bike along Zimovia Strait to spot great blue herons fishing along the shore near downtown Wrangell.

STAY SAFE!

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.

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!

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 U.S. Fish and Wildlife 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.

For information on tours and lodging, consult the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development’s website. To learn more about the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail, visit www.wrangell.com/visitors or call 1-800-367-9745. In Wrangell, stop by the James and Elsie Nolan Center on Outer Drive for information on tours and lodging, consult the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development’s website. To learn more about the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail, visit www.wrangell.com/visitors or call 1-800-367-9745. In Wrangell, stop by the James and Elsie Nolan Center on Outer Drive (All of Wrangell is bear country). 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.

Whole Lot More

Wrangell: Bears, Birds and a World of Lore
Wildlife is one of many attractions that compete for your attention in Wrangell. 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 Stellar sea lions, harbor seals, bald eagles, trumpeter swans and pigeon guillemots. At the Muskeg Meadows Golf Course on Ishkama Drive, birders can explore forest, beach and marsh habitats looking for red-breasted sapsuckers, Wilson’s snipe, harry 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. The trail crosses the creek and continues through the north end near the Shoremaker Bay Loop Road. From there the trail follows the creek to Pat’s Lake, from 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 5. 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 destination. A paved walking and biking path begins at the southern end of the island. A network of unpaved and often rugged, steep roads make exploring the island a challenge for some drivers. Map is for locator reference only, not for navigational use.

Anan Creek's lower falls. A large run of pink salmon in Anan Creek during July and August attracts wildlife to the area. USDA Forest Service maintains a viewing platform next to Anan Creek in July and August. The USDA Forest Service maintains a viewing platform next to Anan Creek in July and August. The Anan Creek viewing platform is a popular destination, and advance reservations are strongly encouraged. Contact the Wrangell Ranger District at 907-874-2323 for more information. The USDA Forest Service’s Wrangell Ranger District offers a self-guided interpretive tour inside the protected area. Interpretive signs have information on camping and recent wildlife sightings. Looking for more? There are many USDA Forest Service cabins scattered around Wrangell.

Making your own way to Anan Creek, permits are available at www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/recreation/wildlife_viewing/anancreek_wildlife.pdf. Parking is available at the USDA Forest Service’s Wrangell Ranger District at 907-874-2323. This is a popular destination, and your trip several months in advance is strongly encouraged.

Feeling adventurous? Continue your wildlife search along the road system of Wrangell Island. A A network of unpaved and often steep roads provide access to camping, hiking and wildlife viewing. Birders can access the USDA Forest Service’s Wrangell Ranger District at 907-874-2323. This is a popular destination, and your trip several months in advance is strongly encouraged.

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