

The following species are those most commonly sought for viewing and filming in Alaska.

It is, however, with mixed feelings and some risk that one commits to the printed page the whereabouts of a wildlife viewing area. There is on the one hand a desire to share a special place with others so they, too, might enjoy the thrill of seeing animal behavior in a natural setting. After all, if people cannot gain a first-hand appreciation for wildlife and some understanding of their habitat needs, how can we expect a growing and increasingly urbanized society to support the maintenance of wild animal species and the habitats necessary for their survival? On the other hand, a writer wonders if by revealing the location of such a place, others will, in their aggregate, unwittingly disturb and perhaps jeopardize the very animals they came to enjoy.

Readers are, therefore, encouraged to think of the locations described

in this issue not so much as the places to go, but rather as examples of the unique combinations of habitat requirements that cause animals to congregate. For each area featured in this magazine issue there are countless others which offer similar viewing opportunities. As one's understanding of habitat requirements becomes keener, it is possible to search out and discover areas on one's own—areas where competition from other viewers may be negligible and where the heartbeat quickens at the sounds and movements of animals in an undisturbed environment.



Looking for the Top 10 Species

Monthly Viewing Highlights

by ADF&G Staff

Here is a summary of some of the wildlife viewing opportunities that exist around Alaska each month. For more local detail, see *A Guide to Wildlife Viewing in Alaska* (see page 39 to get yours FREE).

JANUARY:

Chickadees, woodpeckers, redpolls and jays can be attracted to birdfeeders in forested areas throughout the winter.

Sitka black-tailed deer are sometimes seen along south coastal and southeastern beaches when heavy snow makes travel difficult at higher elevations.

Caribou are frequently visible from highways near Cantwell and Glennallen.

FEBRUARY:

Ravens begin pairing in late winter and their courtship antics and vocalizations can be enjoyed around many towns.

Arctic foxes roam widely across the pack ice searching for seal carcasses left behind by polar bears, but they also frequent northern coastal towns to scavenge.

Moose are frequently visible from highways in the Susitna Valley.

MARCH:

Bird migration begins in most of the state with the arrival of snow buntings.

Owls establish nesting territories by hooting and calling.

APRIL:

Waterfowl, shorebird and raptor migration begins in most of the state (earlier in Southeast).

Walrus, gray whales, and bowhead whales migrate along the southwestern and western coast.

Belugas and harbor seals congregate near southern river mouths to feed on smelt.

MAY:

Bird migration is in full swing. In coastal areas, look for ducks, geese, swans, cranes, loons and shorebirds. The Copper River Delta and some areas of Kachemak Bay host impressive numbers of shorebirds. Some waterfowl also migrate through mountain passes and river valleys.

Tree and violet green swallows look for nesting sites in natural tree cavities or nest boxes around residences.

This is a good time of year to observe bears, wolves, foxes and wolverines in open areas, while their darker coats contrast against remaining snow and before the vegetation leafs out.

JUNE:

Dall sheep ewes and lambs are often seen on the lower slopes of mountains feeding in the newly green tundra vegetation.

Enjoy courtship displays of cackling ptarmigan in alpine tundra, and listen to territorial songs of thrushes, kinglets, warblers and sparrows in forested areas.

Early June is the best time to see rare Asiatic birds in western Alaska.

JULY:

This is the best time to see seabird rookeries containing murres, kittiwakes, puffins and cormorants feeding their young.

Brown and black bears fish for spawning salmon along rivers and streams.

AUGUST:

Look for sharp-shinned hawks, merlins, and golden eagles migrating along ridge tops in alpine areas of central and southcentral Alaska.

After post-calving aggregations form during July, caribou begin migrating to their wintering areas.

SEPTEMBER:

Large concentrations of waterfowl occur in coastal wetlands.

Moose and caribou bulls have full antler racks, shed their velvet and begin aggressive rut behavior. Fall colors provide a magnificent backdrop to the action.

OCTOBER:

Hundreds of Ross' gulls occur offshore near Point Barrow and other coastal spits of land, providing a unique opportunity to view this Siberian bird.

Beavers renovate lodges and dams in southern areas in preparation for winter, mostly active in early morning and late evening.

NOVEMBER:

The largest known concentration of bald eagles in the world occurs along the Chilkat River near Haines, where they feed on spawning chum salmon.

Dall sheep and mountain goats perform rutting displays in alpine areas.

DECEMBER:

Look for wintering waterbirds by southern coastal waters, such as eiders, oldsquaws, scoters, grebes and loons. Bald eagles are often seen here too.

Moose commonly search for food in residential areas of Anchorage, especially when snowfall is deep. Look for tracks of wolves, wolverines, foxes, marten, mink, and river otter in fresh snow.

Eagle

by Marilyn Sigman

John Hyde



Alaska boasts four species of eagles: the better-known bald and golden eagles and the rarer white-tailed and Steller's sea eagles.

It is the stronghold of the bald eagle, which gathers in Alaska's Chilkat Valley during the winter in numbers unequalled by any other spot in the world for any species of eagle. Bald eagles nest throughout Alaska south of the northernmost tundra areas and are year-round residents of the southern coastline that remains ice-free during winter. They are most often located near their primary food source—fish. Thus, they reach often spectacular concentrations when the salmon are spawning in shallow rivers during summer and on into fall or when eulachon (a type of smelt) run several feet thick in estuaries in early spring in areas like Yakutat, Haines, Juneau, and in the Stikine River.

To spot bald eagles, scan the shorelines of the salt water or streams. Look for the prominent habitat feature—the tallest tree, the point of land which commands the best view of the water, or a small island, which is where you might see a perched eagle or a large stick nest. One of the best bets for a sighting

is from boats in the broad saltwater bays and channels of southeast Alaska's Inside Passage or of Prince William Sound. You are also likely to spot bald eagles along the road systems of many coastal communities, especially where the roads are close to the ocean or the mouth of a salmon stream during the spawning season.

Golden eagles are more limited in distribution but are often seen during summer by hikers or from cars as the eagles soar along alpine ridges in the Alaska and Brooks Ranges or circle far overhead. A single white-tailed eagle nested only in the Aleutians. Steller's sea eagles are documented on the Alaska Peninsula, and a single Steller's sea eagle is a recent summer resident of the lower Taku River. Trips to view these rare eagles are best arranged through tour guides which specialize in birdwatching tours or through local air charter operators.

Avoid disturbing eagles when they are on the nest or perched. Repeated flight, especially during winter when food supplies are low, can be costly in energy. Closer approaches are often possible by small boat (especially kayaks) or by using your car as a blind near a gathering spot.



Mark Newman

Sea Otter

by Ed Klinkhart

Sea otters, which number over 150,000 in the state, usually occur in shallow water along the shore, particularly in or near kelp beds. From a distance they may be confused with seals, but a sea otter spends most of its time on its back and usually rolls over and dives. A seal will usually sink straight down and disappear. A female otter will carry her pup on her chest. Young pups cannot dive; if you see a small ball of fur that is squealing its head off, leave it alone as its mother is probably feeding nearby. In areas of frequent boat traffic, otters will show little fear and can be closely approached.

Kodiak

Over 4,000 sea otters live near Kodiak. Most may be found near the northern part of Kodiak Island and throughout the waters of Afognak and Shuyak Islands. As sea otters are usually not seen from the city of Kodiak, transportation to outlying areas is necessary.

Seward

A few otters live in Resurrection Bay, and once in a while one will enter the boat harbor. If you want to view sea otters and other types of marine mammals, take a private or commercial tour to the Kenai Fjords. Most tour boats will visit Resurrection Bay, Aialik Bay, and Chiswell Islands. If you go farther west and are visiting the fantastic glaciers in Harris Bay, check out Northwestern Lagoon in the southwest corner of Harris Bay. At times, up to 100 otters may be found there.

Prince William Sound

In Valdez, a small group of sea otters can frequently be seen near the city dock and the state ferry terminal. Occasionally an otter will enter the small boat harbor.

If you are traveling by boat between Valdez and Whittier, watch for otters throughout Port Valdez and all along your route through northern Prince William Sound and in Passage Canal at Whittier, particular-

(Continued on page 20.)

Caribou

by Ken Whitten



K. R. Whitten

Caribou are the most abundant large mammal in Alaska. At approximately 800,000 animals, they substantially outnumber the human population. Caribou inhabit tundra and open taiga forests, are generally easy to approach, and are distributed throughout most of the state except for south coastal regions. Nevertheless, they are not always easy to find and can present some special problems for wildlife viewers.

To encounter the really large aggregations of migratory caribou requires flexibility, mobility, and more than a fair share of just plain luck. Alaska's really big herds—the Mulchatna (80,000), the Porcupine (180,000), and the Western Arctic (350,000)—inhabit remote, roadless corners of the state. To ensure success, a caribou viewer needs the flexibility to go where the caribou are, and not to some predetermined location where they may be in most years. The only feasible access is by air, and to maintain contact with the caribou requires a personal or charter aircraft at your disposal.

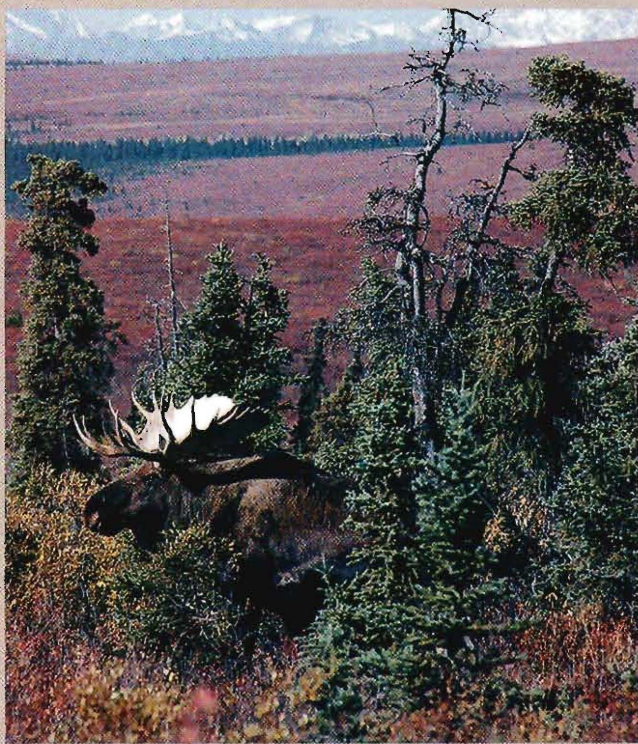
Most people don't have personal aircraft or don't want to spend their life savings on a long-term charter, even for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Therefore, most folks who seek out the really big herds fly into a preselected spot in generally good caribou range that's usually a little easier (and cheaper) to get to and has nice scenery. They set up a base camp, go hiking, or float down a river. They'll

probably see a few caribou, and maybe even a lot, but the chances of finding the "motherlode" of caribou this way are pretty slim.

Although aerial access is best, that doesn't mean you cannot view caribou from roads. Far from it! A drive along the Denali Highway or through Denali Park will almost always turn up a few caribou for visitors in summer or fall. The North Slope portion of the Dalton Highway is almost a sure thing any time of the year.

Although closed to private vehicles, the Dalton Highway or "Haul Road" is open to business traffic, including tour busses, and is becoming one of Alaska's more popular tourist routes. Travelers along the Taylor, Richardson, and Glenn highways may be rewarded with sightings of caribou during late fall and winter. Recently, the Alaska Highway between Tok and the Yukon border has been particularly productive for viewing wintering bands of caribou from the Nelchina, Mentasta, and Fortymile herds.

Hikers can reach caribou reasonably easily on the Malcomb Plateau south of the Alaska Highway between Delta and Tok, or on backpack trips of varying length from the Denali Highway. In many years caribou can be found during June and October near Glacier Mountain off Taylor Highway. Caribou are also accessible in the mountains of the Kenai Peninsula and even on the flats near the Kenai Airport.



John Hyde

by David Kelleyhouse

Moose are the easiest of all Alaskan big game animals to view. Moose are well distributed throughout most of southcentral and interior Alaska, they are huge (over 1,000 pounds), and in summer love to venture out into Alaska's many roadside ponds to seek nutritious aquatic vegetation.

Some of the better moose viewing areas are found in southcentral Alaska from Glennallen down to the Kenai Peninsula. In the Interior, good moose viewing areas are Donnelly Dome south of Delta and along the Chena Hot Springs Road east of Fairbanks.

To view moose during summer months in interior Alaska, it is best to travel at night (it's light enough to see moose nearly all night long). Moose are most active when the light dims and temperatures cool during the evening hours. Use binoculars to search around the margins of ponds from vantages afforded by many highway turnouts.

The surest way to view moose in Alaska during the summer is to charter a light aircraft for a "flight-

Moose

seeing" tour offered by most Alaskan air taxi companies. Experienced bush pilots know the best places to see moose because these charter operators spend so much time in the air. A flight may also reward you with a bird's-eye view of Dall sheep, glaciers, and maybe even a bear or wolf. Again, be sure to schedule such a flight either early in the morning or late in the evening when wildlife tends to be most active in open areas.

Don't approach a moose too closely if you see one near the road. Cow moose with young cinnamon-colored calves can be particularly dangerous. Bulls are less aggressive except during late September when the breeding season, or rut, begins. All moose should be considered potentially dangerous because of their sheer size and power. These are wild animals and can instantly change demeanor from docile to threatening.

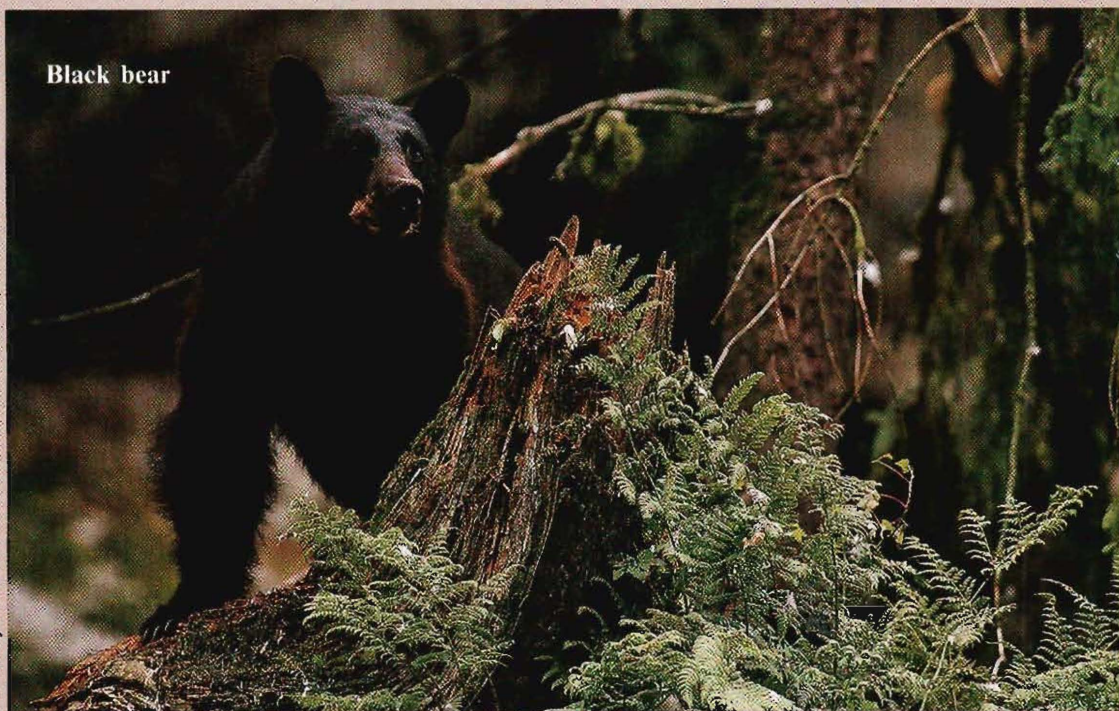
If you plan to photograph moose or other wildlife, consider using a camera equipped with a good telephoto lens and a sturdy tripod. If you have a 35 mm camera, choose a high speed film with a high ASA value (it's always printed on the box). Remember, most photo opportunities will probably occur under low light conditions and usually at considerable distance.

When viewing the ungainly moose, you should try to appreciate the animal for what it is—a large mammal uniquely adapted to life in the far north. The large ears and bulbous nose serve the moose well for sensing predators such as wolves and bears or potential mates during the rut. The long, hollow hairs ward off temperatures down to -70° F during winter. The moose's long legs allow it to wade into ponds in summer or through deep snow in winter in an endless quest for food.

Bear

Black bear

John Hyde



Species	Location	Season/ Dates	Access
Polar Bear	Kaktovik on the Northern Alaskan coast	Mid-September to when ice forms, usually in mid-October	Commercial airline to Kaktovik
Black Bear	Anan Creek in southeast Alaska near Wrangell	July through August	By boat or floatplane from Ketchikan or Wrangell
Grizzly Bear	Denali National Park and Preserve in interior Alaska	When the road opens til when the road closes, usually May-September	Parks Highway to park. Bus trips available.
Brown Bear	McNeil River State Game Sanctuary on the Alaska Peninsula	Mid-June through late August	Floatplane from Homer
Brown Bear	Brooks River in Katmai National Park and Preserve on the Alaska Peninsula	Peaks mid-July and again in September	Commercial jet to King Salmon-floatplane to Brooks camp.
Brown Bear	Stan Price State Wildlife Sanctuary at Pack Creek, Admiralty Island	Mid-July through mid-August	Floatplane or boat from Juneau
Brown Bear	Fraser River on Kodiak Island	Early July until early August	Floatplane via Kodiak to Fraser Lake

by Larry Aumiller

Viewing bears in Alaska requires careful planning before ever stepping foot into the wild. Although bear populations are thought to be healthy in most parts of Alaska, they are usually not concentrated in one place and can be difficult to locate.

Bears are also potentially dangerous although not nearly to the extent most people believe, and they require special considerations when your intent is to purposefully seek them out to photograph or watch them. It is recommended that people do not directly approach bears. In general, it is better to position yourself near areas where bears are commonly seen and let them move around you. Viewing in this manner allows bears to choose a distance that is comfor-

table for them.

The safest way to see bears is to visit the regular viewing areas listed below. These areas have bears that are somewhat used to seeing people and are generally less fearful when they do see humans. More importantly, these areas usually have management plans to minimize bear/human conflicts and field personnel to assist visitors.

In addition to these areas, bears can be seen at times in all of Alaska. The key to finding bears is an understanding of what bears eat. Except for denning, bears spend all of their time where they can best meet their nutritional requirements.

Long lenses, careful planning, and caution are recommended.

Facilities/Improvements	What you will see	Restrictions/Permits
Commercial accommodations in Kaktovik	The probability of seeing bears is further enhanced when whales are killed and butchered in the fall.	None
FS cabin, maintained trail, observatory	Black bears and occasional brown bears fish for salmon in creek	Reservations required for cabin well in advance
Tent campground and cook cabin	Grizzly bears graze and travel over tundra	Require campground reservations. Bus travel on most of road
Commercial lodge, campground and viewing platform	Numerous brown bears fish for salmon. Activity peaks in late July	April 1 application deadline for lottery permits issued for June, July, and August
Viewing platform, food cache, individual tent camping	Brown bears fish for red salmon in the Brooks River and at Brooks Falls	Campground limit, reservations necessary
Hotels, cabins, both inside and outside of the park	Brown bears fish for salmon in Pack Creek and intertidal area	Pre-registration recommended
Tents and cookshed provided	Brown bears catching salmon in Fraser River	Pre-registration required

Locations	Transportation	Special Points
St. Lazaria Island, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge	Commercial air or cruise ships to Sitka; charter boats out of Sitka.	A large tufted puffin colony (4,000 birds) is readily accessible by charter boats in good weather. There are few horned puffins.
Glacier Bay, Glacier Bay National Park	Commercial air or cruise ships to the park; charter boats from park head- quarters or private vessels from Juneau.	These are very small colonies totalling about 100 puffins, mainly tufted. Sightings are reliable and not limited by rough seas because of the protected nature of the bay.
Chiswell Islands, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge	Charter boats out of Seward; Seward is not road accessible.	These are the easiest large puffin colonies (over 5,000 of each species) to visit. Numerous large tour boats leave Seward for these colonies every morning.
Gull Island in Kachemak Bay, Seldovia Native Association	Charter boats out of Homer; Homer is road-accessible.	This is the easiest colony to visit because it is only three miles from shore in a protected bay and accessible in any weather. However, there are only a few hundred tufted puffins, with only an occasional horned puffin present.
Barren Islands, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge	The state ferry <i>Tustumena</i> from Homer to Kodiak or specially chartered boats out of Homer; Homer is road-accessible.	These are large, impressive colonies totalling over 150,000 tufted puffins and 10,000 horned puffins. The charter industry has not yet developed to provide regular service because of the distance from Homer (50 miles) and rough seas. A boat would have to be specially chartered.
Kodiak Island, various ownerships	Commercial air or the ferry to the island; roads go near some colonies or charter boats out of Kodiak.	Mainly tufted puffins. Puffins can occasional- ly be seen in the water from the road. Numerous small colonies located on offshore islands near the town of Kodiak and large col- onies at the Triplets and Cape Chiniak can be viewed from charter boats.
Baby Islands, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge	State ferry <i>Tustumena</i> from Homer to Dutch Harbor or possibly a charter out of Unalaska; commercial air or the ferry to Unalaska.	This is an impressive colony of 150,000 tufted puffins. It has not been exploited by tourism because of its remoteness and the lack of charter operators in Unalaska. Thousands of birds can be seen in the water from the ferry, but the ferry does not go close to the colony.
Pribilof Islands, Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge	Commercial air service to the islands; guided land tours access the colonies.	There are 5,000 mostly horned puffins on St. Paul and 30,000 on St. George. This is one of the easiest places to photograph puffins because it is one of the few areas where col- onies can be approached from land.

Tufted puffin

Puffin

John Hyde

by Poppy Benson

Opposite is a list of areas where both tufted and horned puffins can be viewed. The best viewing is in summer, June through the end of August, all during the day. Puffins will be found on steep grassy slopes and cliffs. Like many other seabirds, puffins nest underground. The toes of their webbed feet have sharp claws that are used to scratch out burrows three to four feet deep into the steep

hillsides of their nesting areas. At rockier sites where soil is scarce or non-existent, puffins nest on rocky slopes or cliff faces. Puffins may desert their nests if disturbed by humans during nesting. They are not a vocal bird. Binoculars or spotting scopes will help in viewing. Prepare for cold, rainy weather with the likelihood of rough seas.

Salmon

by Kent Roth

John Hyde



Alaska offers unequalled opportunities to view migrating and spawning salmon in their natural environment. While five species of Pacific salmon return to spawn in Alaska's streams during the summer and fall, not all are normally available to see at any given time each year. As a general rule, chinook salmon are the first to return each summer, primarily during June and July. Pink, sockeye, and chum salmon return to most area streams during July and August, while coho salmon generally arrive last in August and September.

To view fish in Alaska, you need only to find a clearwater stream that supports a run of salmon. A pair of polarized glasses can help to enhance the viewing. Counting weirs or natural stream obstructions such as small waterfalls are good places to view migrating salmon. While pink and chum salmon often spawn in the intertidal reaches of coastal streams, most salmon migrate upstream to areas of clear flowing water.

In southeast Alaska, most of the coastal streams have salmon present during at least a part of each year. Near Juneau, one of the best viewing areas is Steep Creek, which is on the road leading to the Mendenhall Visitors Center. Sockeye are abundant from late July through early September in this stream. Ketchikan Creek near the city of Ketchikan has three species of salmon which provide viewing

opportunities from late June through September. In Prince William Sound, the most convenient salmon viewing areas are in Valdez at City Limits Creek and in Cordova along the roadside streams.

In the Anchorage area, chinook salmon can be seen during July and early August in the South Fork of Eagle River, Ship Creek downstream of the Elmdorf Hatchery, Campbell Creek, and Potter Marsh along the boardwalk. Ship and Campbell Creeks and Potter Marsh are also good places to observe coho salmon from late August through September. Good viewing sites in late summer are the Bodenburg Ponds along the Old Glenn Highway and the spawning channels and viewing area in Portage Valley.

Near Fairbanks, numerous access points along the Chena Hotsprings Road provide opportunities to view chinook salmon in the Chena River from mid-July through early August. The Steese Highway parallels portions of the Chatanika River with viewing opportunities for both chinook and chum salmon, also from mid-July through early August. For those who may be traveling the Richardson Highway, sockeye salmon returning to the upper reaches of the Gulkana River drainage can be seen at the viewing area just downstream from the outlet of Summit Lake.

The numerous hatcheries around the state also provide excellent salmon viewing opportunities.

Humpback whale

Whale



John Hyde

by Marilyn Sigman

While 14 different species of whales have been observed in Alaska's waters, the two species sighted with the greatest predictability are humpback whales and orca (killer) whales. Whales can sometimes be viewed from land, such as beluga whales, which occasionally travel up Cook Inlet near Anchorage, and gray whales, which may be sighted during their spring and fall migrations, but most sightings occur from on board boats and ships. Please remember, almost all species of whales in Alaskan waters are endangered and all are protected as marine mammals.

Humpback whales

Most humpback whales arrive on their summer feeding grounds in Alaska between mid-June and late July and stay until late September. The four major feeding grounds are in southeast Alaska, Yakutat Bay,

Prince William Sound, and the western Gulf of Alaska.

Look for a thick pear-shaped spout or "blow" to identify a surfacing humpback. The "humped" back of this species can frequently be seen as the whale dives. Its tail flukes are held high as it slowly slides beneath the surface. You may actually hear the slap of long thin white flippers on the water or a watery explosion as a humpback breaches, propelling itself completely out of the water and landing on its side with a tremendous crash and splash.

In July and early August, humpbacks can often be viewed in Icy Strait, near the entrance to and inside Glacier Bay National Park, in Stephens Passage, or in southwestern Prince William Sound. One of the lesser-known areas and times to view humpbacks is Frederick Sound in southeast Alaska around
(Continued on page 20.)

WILDLIFE VIEWING

Sea Otter

(Continued from page 11.)

ly in the Port Wells/College Fjord area.

Cordova has the distinction of being near the largest number of sea otters—1,000—of any Alaskan city.

Southeastern

Sea otters were re-introduced by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game in the late 1960s. Since that time, they have spread along the southeast Alaska coast, most occurring along the outer coast north of Sitka. They may commonly be seen in the area near Elfin Cove on Chichagof Island. If you are in Sitka and plan to visit the St. Lazaria Island bird rookeries, watch for sea otters there and around the southern end of Kruzof Island.

Whale

(Continued from page 19.)

Brothers Island in early September. Here, a late bloom of krill concentrates many of the whales from the entire region and provides opportunities to view many whales lunge-feeding, "bubble-net" feeding, and displaying.

Orcas

Orcas are perhaps the easiest whale to identify and one of the most fascinating. The first sight of an orca is usually the tall, dark dorsal fin, which can be 6 feet tall in males but is more curved and smaller in females and younger males. A closer look at surfacing orcas reveals the striking pattern of sharply-contrasting white and black.

Orcas are frequently seen in groups or pods. Resident pods can be found in the bays and inlets of southeast Alaska, Glacier Bay, and in Prince William Sound. Other pods are transient and travel over great distances in search of food. With both residents and transient pods occurring in Alaskan waters south of the Bering Sea, the possibility of seeing orcas always exists when travelling by boat.

Thanks to the following authors for writing the sections on the "Top Ten" species:

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Robert Stephenson (Wolf),
Wildlife Conservation, ADF&G, Fairbanks

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GUIDE TO COLLECTING, BUYING AND SELLING WILDLIFE SOUVENIRS

by Marilyn Sigman

Finding an eagle feather on the beach or a moose antler on the trail is a special Alaska experience. For many people, seeing these signs of wildlife is reward enough, while others want to take something home to prolong the experience.

If you are a collector, you should be aware that there are laws concerning possession of wildlife parts that you find. While you may think that taking "just one" of something can't harm wildlife, remember that the laws were established to protect wildlife from illegal harvests and to protect species that are rare or endangered. Also, remember that the remains of wildlife, as they decay, play a part in the natural cycle if left where they are.

Here is a brief summary of state and federal laws that pertain to acquiring souvenirs.

1. Leave feathers and any other parts of birds, eggs, or nests where you find them. It is illegal to possess any part of a migratory bird, except when legally harvested. This pertains to most species of birds in Alaska except grouse, ptarmigan, crows, waterfowl, starlings, and snowy owls in a few areas of the state.

2. Parts of nonendangered marine mammals can be kept, but they must be registered with the National Marine Fisheries Service (offices in Anchorage and Juneau) or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (offices in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, and refuge headquarters in several locations). The majority of whale species in Alaskan waters are classified as endangered, so it's best to leave whale bones where you find them.

3. You can legally possess any part of a land mammal except the edible meat that you find, provided the animal died of natural causes. It's illegal to possess any part of a road-killed animal or animal that was killed illegally without special permission of state or federal wildlife officials.

Help stop illegal trade in wildlife parts. To protect Alaska's wildlife, including rare and endangered wildlife species, learn the rules for legal sales and purchases.

1. Big game trophies and bear skins can be sold only by people with a special permit from the Commissioner of Fish and Game. (These are rarely issued.) No other parts of a bear can be purchased, sold, or bartered. The skulls of big game cannot be bought or sold. Big game species are black bear, brown bear, bison, caribou, Dall sheep, deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, muskoxen, wolf, and wolverine.

2. Antlers or horns naturally shed or permanently removed from the skull may be purchased, sold or bartered, except in Unit 23 where caribou antlers must be naturally shed (that is, caribou antlers cut off of skulls can't be bought, sold or bartered).

3. The meat of game animals cannot be bought or sold except for hares and rabbits, and caribou in a portion of the state. The meat can be bartered under some circumstances.

4. Items made from walrus ivory or fossilized ivory, whale baleen, and other parts of marine mammals are sold in many giftshops. The use of Alaska marine mammals by Alaska Native artists is traditional and specifically permitted by the Marine Mammals Protection Act. However, it is illegal for anyone who is not an Alaska Native to buy raw (unworked) ivory or any part of a marine mammal that has not been "worked" by an Alaska Native and made into a traditional Native handicraft.

5. The importation of elephant ivory is illegal, but be aware that legal elephant ivory may be found in some Alaska giftshops. Elephant ivory can be distinguished from walrus ivory by its white color and criss-cross or striped grain. New (unfossilized) walrus ivory is mostly white but has a wide mottled core surrounded by a broad layer of smooth white ivory without any grain. "Fossil" walrus ivory will be slightly colored, usually in a shade of tan or brown.

For more details on clarification of wildlife laws, contact Alaska State Troopers, Fish and Wildlife Protection Division, or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Law Enforcement.

REPORT ANY ILLEGAL OFFERS OF WILDLIFE PARTS FOR SALE TO
Alaska Fish and Game Safeguard. Call 800-478-3377.

Wolf

by Robert Stephenson

Wolves are encountered in almost every habitat in Alaska, but the opportunity to watch wolves for long periods is greatest in open country. Alpine and subalpine habitat, as well as large, open river beds, provide best viewing opportunities. Some of the best areas include the northern mountains and foothills of the Brooks Range (including Denali Park), and the Chugach, Wrangell, and Talkeetna mountains. Large open river channels at lower elevations such as the Nabesna, Robertson, Johnson, and Wood rivers in eastern Alaska also offer good possibilities.

Wolves can be seen at any time of the year, but the summer months are the most practical. The warmer months are probably best for ground-based wolf watching. From mid-May through August, most adult wolves center their activity at dens or rendezvous sites where the pups are raised. It is best to stay well away from active homesites because wolves are sensitive to human intrusion in these areas. Older wolves hunt extensively around these sites and bring back food to feed the pups. These hunting adults can be seen during summer without disturbing dens.

Whether you reach a remote site using aircraft, or take advantage of roads or trails, you will greatly increase your chances by using a good quality spotting scope (variable power is best), folding tripod for the scope, a comfortable seat, an elevated lookout (a bluff or mountainside), and relaxed and patient attitude. Under these conditions, you have a good chance to see wolves as far away as 2 to 5 miles. A spotting scope will reveal a surprising amount of detail even at long range. Wolves, caribou, and Dall sheep can be seen at similar distances.

During summer, wolves are usually active during early morning and evening when temperatures are cooler, and when other animals are most active also. One of the nice things about wolf watching is that it puts you in an ideal position to watch other wildlife and enjoy the landscape as well. Alaska's long summer 'nights' are great times to be out and serious wolf

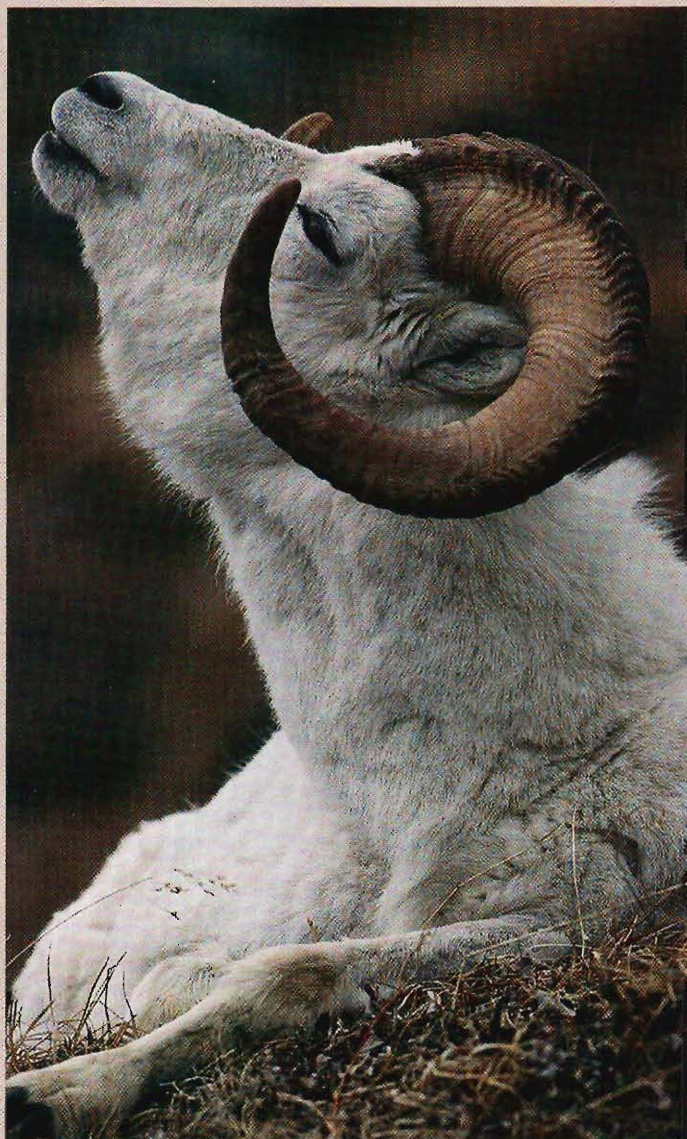


Gray wolf

John Hyde

watchers often sleep during the day, like wolves, in order to take advantage of the better light and wildlife activity in the evening and early morning. Because weather can be chilly, even in midsummer, it is important to take warm clothes (winter gear is often just right for long periods of inactivity) and otherwise make yourself comfortable.

Wolves are great travelers and their tracks can be seen in soft soil, especially along waterways, and are easy to find and observe in snow. Wolf howls are also commonly heard in Alaska from late summer through winter, especially during the breeding season in February and March. Wolves often respond to human howls and these can be used to locate wolves.



John Hyde

by Wayne Heimer

Dall sheep are probably the easiest of Alaska's big game species to see. They are completely white and contrast starkly with the green meadows and dark rocks of their summer alpine habitat. Dall sheep can be seen from the highway in many areas of the state where treeless alpine tundra is nearby. The Cooper Landing Closed Area at Mile 41.1 of the Sterling Highway on the Kenai Peninsula; at Miles 104-106 along the Seward Highway; the Eklutna/Twin Peaks area (use the Glenn Highway Mile 26.3 exit); the Sheep Mountain Closed Area near Mile 106 and Mile 116 of the Glenn Highway, and Denali National Park are the best

Dall Sheep

places to see sheep from the highway or at marked pull-outs. Powerful optics like spotting scopes or high-powered (at least 10X) binoculars will help your viewing.

Dall sheep are rewarding to watch because they are intensely social animals and offer the serious observer an opportunity to see and interpret a fascinating series of behavioral displays. Many of these displays are well understood by humans as well as by sheep. An observer has only to recognize and interpret these behavioral displays to understand what is happening within the band to gather an increased appreciation for the importance of the social 'pecking order' in Dall sheep ecology.

The classic reference on sheep behavior is *Mountain Sheep, a Study in Behavior and Evolution* by Valerius Geist (University of Chicago Press, 1971). This reference will help the serious wildlife watcher make the most of watching sheep.

If you wish to go beyond casual roadside viewing, considerable effort is required. You will have to join the sheep in their environment. This requires that you equip yourself and develop the necessary skills and physical endurance. In short, you must prepare to go "sheep hunting" even though you do not plan to shoot one with a gun. Several good reference books covering equipment and techniques are available. The classic in this field is *Sheep and Sheep Hunting* by Jack O'Connor (Winchester Press, 1974). The tips it provides on stalking and advice on optics and backpacking equipment are common to both hunting and watching. You might also ask an experienced sheep hunter for advice. One hint: being downwind is more important than being out of sight.

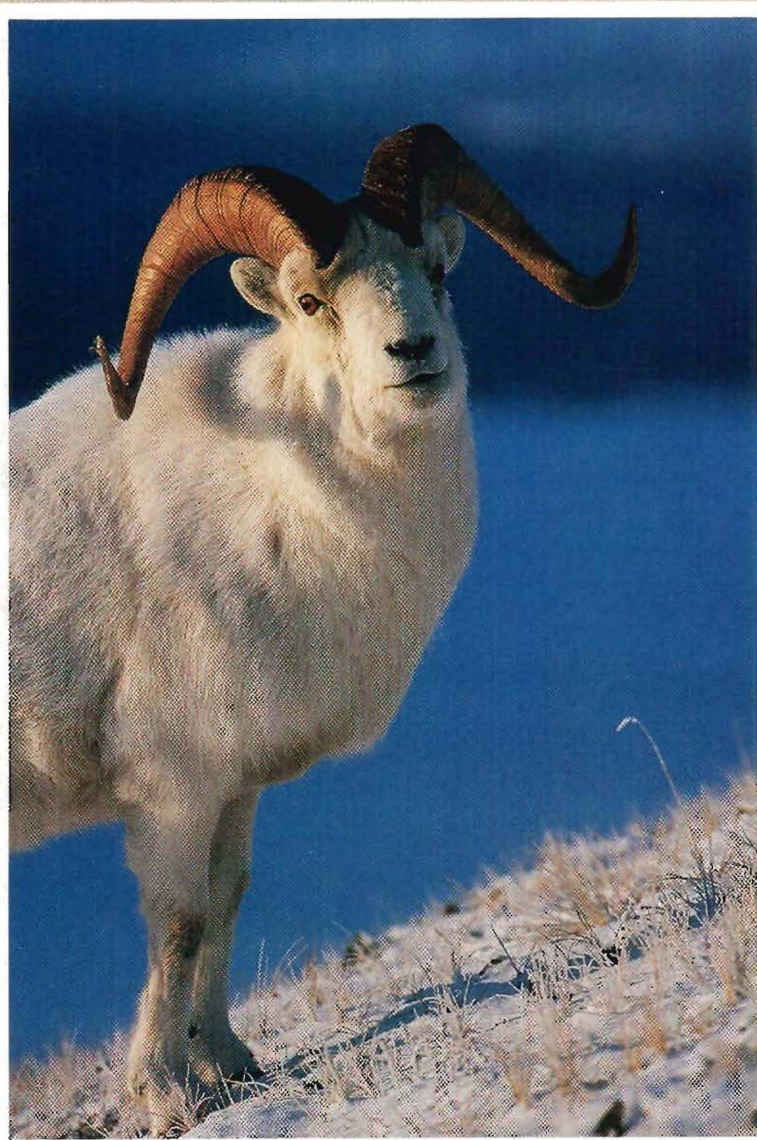
The best times and places to see a broad array of Dall sheep behavior displays are during the rut, which is in late November and early December wherever sheep can be approached; and during the last half of June when sheep congregate at mineral licks.

If you are interested in this sort of "heavy duty" sheep watching, contact the ADF&G office in the area where you want to watch Dall sheep, and our wildlife biologists will be glad to help you.

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ALASKA'S WILDLIFE

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