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2019/2020

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE PARKS

ALASKA'S NATIONAL PARKS

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TRAILS • HISTORY • MAPS • MORE



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WELCOME

Welcome to Alaska and her incredible national parks!

Alaska's parks are as varied as they are vast, and each is worthy of exploration. This **American Park Network** guide to Alaska's National Parks will help you plan a visit, locate services from our business partners that will make your stay more rewarding, and encourage you to come back to Alaska and extend your discoveries.

The parks in Alaska are part of America's 419-unit National Park System, which collectively, honor and define our nation's heritage. In Alaska, the parks represent both the great sweep of American history and her natural abundance: artifacts of the earliest North Americans; the Russian colonial period; the quest for adventure and gold at Klondike Gold Rush; bears, salmon, caribou and eagles; and the awe-inspiring mountains and tundra.

There are many ways to visit Alaska's parks. Board a boat tour at Glacier Bay or Kenai Fjords and marvel at worlds carved by ice and the wildlife now hugging the park shores. Cast a line in a park such as Katmai or Lake Clark. Hop on one of the popular bus tours at Denali or use the shuttle buses to craft your own trip. Step out on a hike on one of the well-maintained paths in the entrance areas of several parks, or explore the vast wilderness that awaits in the backcountry of Alaska's parks. To learn more about the adventures Alaska can offer, log on to nps.gov/experiencealaska.

However you've arrived in Alaska, we hope your itinerary includes our national parks - and we hope to see you again.

FUN FACTS

National Parks: Alaska is home to 23 national parks with over two million annual visitors. With more public land than any other state, the parks explore Alaska's beautiful terrain.

Land Area: Alaska is the largest state in the country; total land area is 586,412 square miles.

Highest Elevation: The summit of Denali, at 20,320 feet, makes it the highest peak in North America.

Natural Features: Alaska's diverse landscape ranges from North America's highest peak to wild forests, lakes and streams, to the Aleutian Islands and the state's expansive coastline.

Plants and Animals: Alaska is a state of great diversity and is home to wolves, moose, bears, whales and many more wild and wonderful animals. Denali National Park and Preserve alone protects more than 750 species of flowering plants and over 250 animals.

Popular Activities: The diverse terrain in Alaska's national parks offers an array of recreational activities. Hiking, hunting, fishing, biking, dog sledding and wildlife watching are great ways to experience the wilderness.

Hiking: Alaska has miles of established trails and guided tours into the wilderness are available at many parks.

Dog Sledding: Denali uses sled dogs to help patrol the two million acres of wilderness where motorized vehicles are prohibited. Meet the huskies up close and tour the park's kennels.

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Cover: Grizzly bear in Denali National Park (iStock)



WHAT'S NEW! WE'RE ALL CONNECTED

"When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the Universe."

—John Muir

As a young man, John Muir, the naturalist known as, "Father of the National Parks," had an accident that left him temporarily blinded. It changed his life forever. When he regained his sight, he emerged into the light ever-determined to pursue his dreams of exploration. Fortunately for the world, Muir's trials led him to help move Congress to set aside Yosemite, one of his many contributions to our nation's preservation movement.

When faced with adversity, we have but two choices. We can either rise above our circumstance or succumb to our demons of doubt, fear, resentment and apathy. While Muir was lucky to have his sight return, his subsequent efforts drew strength from hope, compassion, kindness and love to rise up from personal adversity.

Lately, it feels like we're all dealing with too many hurdles. Every hour, "breaking" news spews forth accounts of tragedy and divisiveness. It was with this backdrop that I was preparing to teach a restorative yoga class, to create a safe environment for my students and provide an hour's worth of peace and quiet to carry out into the world. What theme would capture their imagination and neatly underscore our human need for connectedness?

When teaching, I try to use examples that marry ancient tradition with contemporary



Mark, Joel & Alex – connecting in parks!

science. I often find inspiration in parks. In its traditional form, yoga was about joining with the collective universe. So, too, is Muir's quote, best illustrated by an example from Yellowstone. When wolves were reintroduced there after a 70-year absence, the rampant elk population could no longer leisurely nibble on willows, graze in open meadows or congregate by the rivers. In a short period of time, the forests and meadows began to regenerate. Song birds appeared. Beavers flourished, building dams, which created habitats for otters, muskrats and ducks. Cooler waters, shaded by more trees, attracted different species of amphibians and fish. Tree roots stabilized the river banks, diminished erosion and even changed the geography of the park! Indeed, pick out anything by itself and we quickly find that *everything* is connected.

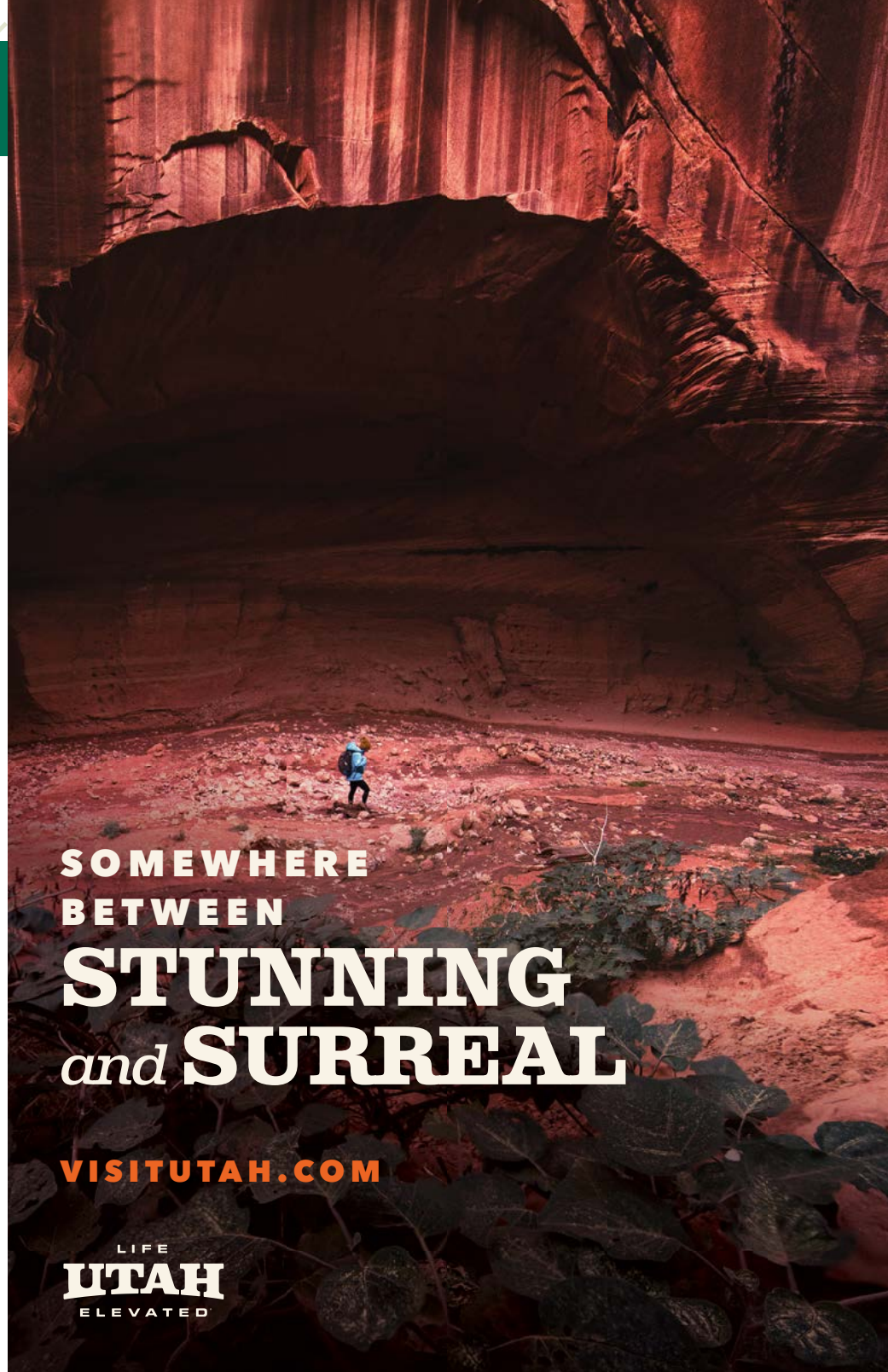
Now is the time to seek out connection—whether in a park, a yoga studio or anywhere you find inspiration—to find strength to rise up and overcome the obstacles that face us all...

mark@americanparknetwork.com



GET CONNECTED AT YOUR FAVORITE PARKS!

Parks are about enjoying nature, but what if you want to share a great picture or are awaiting an important email? If you're looking to add connectivity to your park, or if you already have Wi-Fi and would like help adding content or generating sponsor revenues, please let us know at wifi@americanparknetwork.com.



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PARK REGULATIONS & SAFETY

Make the most of your visit by planning ahead and becoming acquainted with some simple precautions designed to enhance your safety and enjoyment.

There are relatively few maintained trails in Alaska's parks and preserves; in many cases access is by unpaved road, boat or aircraft. Visitors are cautioned that this is a truly vast and remote area without the usual safeguards one expects in a more developed National Park Service (NPS) area. In the event of a mishap, opportunities for rescue and evacuation are slim and response time can be slow. Adequate preparation, experience, equipment and knowledge of extreme wilderness travel and survival skills are necessities. Equipment considerations should reflect the type of trip you are planning and must include emergency rations and gear for unexpected contingencies or delays due to weather.

PROPER CLOTHING

Summers in most Alaska parks are mild, but variable. Fall comes early; in Denali, for instance, snow in August is not surprising and snow in September is almost a certainty. Pack clothing that can be layered, like lightweight long johns (tops and bottoms), hiking pants with zip-off legs and a thin, long-sleeved shirt. Always pack rain gear, including a jacket, pants and hat. Also pack a knit cap and sun hat – you may need both in the same day! It's best to be prepared for any weather so you remain safe and comfortable for the duration of your trip.

BACKCOUNTRY TRAVEL

Check in with park rangers before heading out into the backcountry for overnight trips. In some parks, a permit is required, and leav-

ing a trip plan with the rangers is always recommended. Rangers can provide advice on river crossings, Leave No Trace principles, bear safety and weather considerations. For overnight or extended backcountry trips, make sure you are self-sufficient. The backcountry sections of most Alaska parks have no trails, signs, facilities, phones, roads or other amenities that can assist hikers in trouble. Planning, knowledge, common sense and a realistic assessment of risks are key to a successful wilderness adventure.

LEAVE NO TRACE

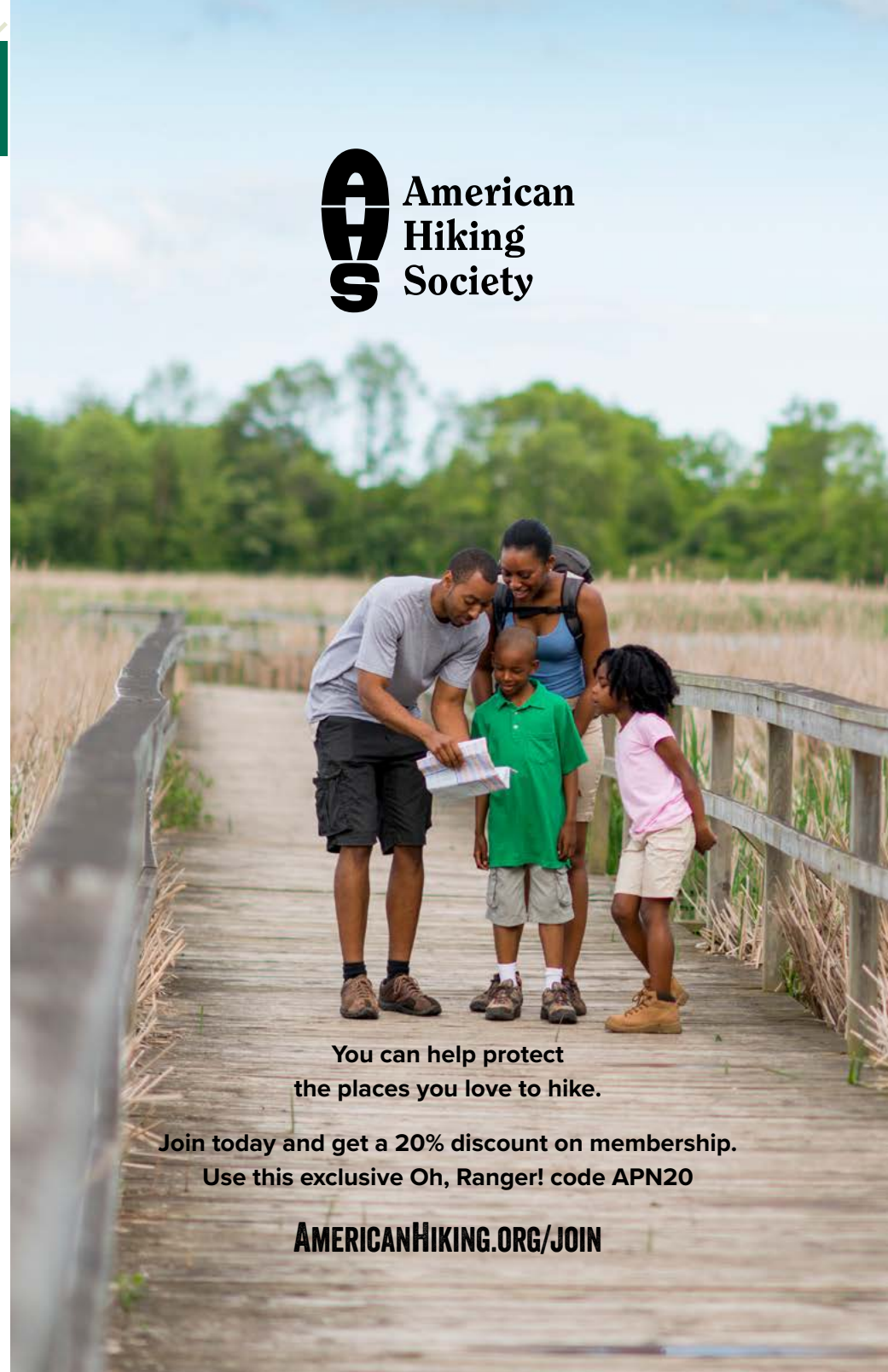
Please adhere to Leave No Trace principles to help keep parks pristine and untrampled. Make sure to plan ahead and prepare, travel and camp on durable surfaces, dispose of waste properly, leave what you find, minimize campfire impacts, respect wildlife and act in a way that's considerate of other visitors. For more information, speak with a ranger or visit lnt.org.

FIREARMS

People who can legally possess firearms under applicable federal and Alaska state law can legally possess firearms at NPS sites in Alaska. Federal law prohibits firearms in federal facilities, including national park visitor centers. It is visitors' responsibility to understand and comply with all applicable firearms laws before entering NPS sites. Check with individual sites regarding where firearms may be carried.



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FLYING

Small planes are a great way—and sometimes the only way—to get into the interior of large Alaska parks or view the vast landscape. There are licensed air taxi operators for each of the big parks in Alaska; if you are landing in the park, make sure you're traveling with one of the operators licensed to go to that site. If you plan to fly your own plane, check with individual parks about accessibility.

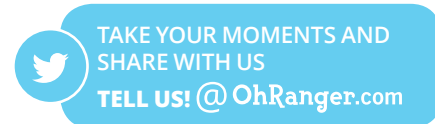
RIVER CROSSINGS

Water in Alaska is cold, meaning river crossings can be dangerous. Get advice from rangers on how best to cross streams and rivers. Travel in groups, and if water appears too

high to cross safely, it is better to wait than lose gear or risk injury. When boating, wear personal flotation devices, carry a survival kit, file a float plan and be prepared to spend more time in the backcountry than your ideal plan calls for.

PETS

Pets are allowed in some areas of some parks, but must generally be on leashes. Check with rangers or on park websites for park-specific rules.



WILDLIFE SAFETY

Help keep wildlife wild. Alaska is home to many wild animals that you are likely to encounter. **Do not approach or follow wildlife**—maintain a minimum distance of 300 yards from bears and 25 yards from all other animals. For raptor nests and den sites, it's 100 yards. If your presence alters an animal's behavior, you are too close!

MOOSE: Be cautious around moose. Despite their harmless appearance, these huge animals can cause severe injuries to people. If you encounter an aggressive moose, run from it immediately. This is actually just the opposite of what to do in the presence of an aggressive bear. Moose require "personal space" and can become upset when they feel anyone is encroaching upon their territory.

BEARS: If you encounter a bear, do not run or make abrupt moves. Bears are hunters and instinctively chase anything that flees. It is recommended that hikers in bear country carry and be prepared to use bear pepper spray. Realize, though, that danger is never totally eliminated—so ongoing vigilance is crucial.

For more information, refer to the chart in the "Nature & Wildlife" chapter.

DON'T FEED THE ANIMALS! Park staff have noted an increase in interactions between humans and park wildlife. These interactions seem to be rooted in animals receiving food when they come in close proximity to people.

Undoubtedly, humans assume they are doing a kind deed by giving animals something to eat. However, feeding wildlife, leaving food unattended at campgrounds and rest stops, or not properly disposing of trash creates a new problem. Food rewards can result in animals losing their natural fear of people. This change in behavior may lead to property damage and human injury. The animals involved can suffer negative health effects or overpopulation resulting from unnatural food sources, dependence on a seasonably unreliable food source, and greater susceptibility to predators and vehicle collisions.

It is against park regulations to feed wildlife. For the animals' safety and yours, please let wildlife stay wild!



Aramark and Leave No Trace® want to ensure visitors are equipped with the best information and resources to enjoy our parks and leave them better than we found them!

Head to www.NationsVacation.com to learn more about this partnership and ways that you can Leave No Trace® on your visit.



PRESERVATION

As you explore Alaska, the raw and expansive beauty of the wilderness seems limitless. The reality, however, is that this extraordinary landscape faces formidable threats from within its borders and beyond. This section highlights some of the challenges faced by Alaska's National Parks and what is being done about them.

ROAD AND VEHICLE MANAGEMENT

Maintaining a high-quality experience for the greatest number of visitors while preserving park resources remains a primary challenge for park managers. Limited access to Alaska's parks has kept these fragile regions pristine. Yet increased travel has fueled the need for roads not only to and from the parks, but within them. In Denali and Wrangell-St. Elias, studies continue to help determine the impacts of traffic on park resources and the visitor experience.

DEVELOPMENT

In recent years, areas around Alaskan parks have seen increased business and residential development and growth. Summer visitation in and near the park is an important part of the Alaskan economy. Park managers and the NPS have created several strategies to accommodate more visitors and help preserve the park's incredible resources. They include implementing a bus system for visitors and managing backcountry use and the use of ATVs, snowmobiles, boats and other vehicles.

AIR QUALITY

The air quality throughout Alaska's parks is exceptionally clean, allowing spectacular views throughout. Yet airborne con-

taminants—some from halfway around the world—find their way into the parks. Small but measurable amounts of pollution arrive from power plants, metal smelters and other industrial sources in Europe and Asia. It results in a phenomenon called "arctic haze." Desert dust and agricultural contaminants reach the park by traveling across the Pacific Ocean. The parks' clean air may eventually depend more on international treaties and the environmental policies of other countries than on U.S. air quality laws.

EXOTIC PLANTS

The National Park Service defines exotic species as non-native species occurring in a given place as a result of human action. Compared to other U.S. parks, the Alaska National Park Service units are relatively pristine. Most of the exotic plants in Alaska are confined to areas that have been recently or repeatedly disturbed by humans. White sweet clover is one of these species and has invaded naturally open riparian areas of Alaska. Bird vetch, like white sweet clover, invades stands of native shrubs and tree saplings, climbing over native plants. Alaska's extreme climate and isolated location have protected its parks from most exotic species. Yet in spite of these protective factors, the threat from exotic plants is increasing.

REDUCING TRASH

Created in 2016, the National Parks Zero-Landfill Initiative seeks better ways to manage the 100 million pounds of trash produced annually by the parks' nearly 331 million visitors. Denali National Park is a pilot site.

Visitors can recycle aluminum, glass and some plastics, and purchase reusable bags, mugs and water bottles. Also, new equipment and partnerships are making operations more efficient and sustainable. It's working. When Denali celebrated its centennial in 2017, more than 640,000 people visited the park. Yet, 24 percent less trash was sent to the landfill than the year before.

CLIMATE CHANGE

One of the greatest challenges with even larger implications in Alaska's parks than in other national parks is climate change. The melting of permafrost that underlies much of Alaska is a primary concern. This leads to increased erosion, landslides, sinking of the ground surface, and disruption and damage to forests. Warmer winters and longer, more intense melting seasons increase the rate of glacial retreat in Alaska's Glacier Bay and Kenai Fjords national parks. As stream

temperatures rise and coastal erosion increases, park managers must create new strategies to combat this phenomenon.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

More than half of all the breeding bird species in Alaska's parks are migratory. Birds leave for points south, including southern Alaska, South America and the western United States. With so many birds spread over such a vast area, it is difficult to fully identify the complexity of forces that shape their long-term survival.

Alaska's native birds are adapting to urbanization, agriculture, industry and other human activities that encroach on their habitat. Increased human activities may alter birds' habitats and habits. Scientists are currently assessing ways to determine the abundance and distribution of birds in the park, so that they can create effective conservation strategies.

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The Bar-tailed Godwit, a migratory bird that calls Alaska home, nests on tundra and on the shore.



ALAGNAK WILD RIVER



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The Alagnak River is brimming with salmon.

equipped with rain gear, including waterproof footwear and clothing that retains warmth when wet, such as wool or synthetics. An insect-proof head net is also a must. Primitive camping is available. Permits are recommended for users and are available at no charge at the King Salmon Visitor Center. For more information, call **(907) 246-3305** or visit nps.gov/alag.

A WORLD-CLASS FISHERY

One of the Alagnak River's most noteworthy features is its **salmon** population. The river is brimming with species such as king, silver, chum and sockeye. The waters of the Alagnak support a significant sockeye salmon spawning habitat and the largest sockeye salmon fishery in the world. Each summer, the Pacific salmon return to their birthplace in the Alagnak River to spawn and die.

Along with salmon, **rainbow trout, char, northern pike, Aleutian sculpin, Alaska blackfish, grayling** and others complete Alagnak's bounty and help provide some of the most attractive sportfishing in the world. Small wonder this river has become the most popular fishing location in all of southwest Alaska. Yet this area is still vulnerable to the hazards of overfishing. For this reason, the Alaska Department of Fish and Game takes steps to ensure that present regulations maintain the long-term stability of the Alagnak sport fishery. Subsistence fishing is permitted to local rural residents only.



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ALEUTIAN WORLD WAR II NATIONAL HISTORIC AREA

The Aleutian World War II National Historic Area is located on the site of Fort Schwatka, a U.S. Army base in the Aleutian Island Chain. The fort was built to protect Dutch Harbor (a crucial back door to the U.S.) during World War II. Today the area tells the story of the Aleut people and the role of Aleutian Islands in the defense of the U.S. during World War II.

THE ALEUT PEOPLE

The **Unangan, or Aleut**, were plentiful in their native corner of Alaska. Yet when Russian fur traders arrived in the 1750s, their numbers plummeted due to warfare, epidemics, starvation and exploitation.

After the U.S. purchased Alaska in 1867, the Aleut were classified as "Indians" and made wards of the government. Their hardships lasted for over 200 years, culminating in forced evacuation from their homeland during World War II.

On June 7, 1942, the Japanese invaded Attu Island, changing forever the lives of the 42 villagers taken as prisoners of war and the Aleut people as a whole. In response, U.S. authorities evacuated 881 Aleuts from nine villages. They were herded onto cramped ships and transported to crowded "duration villages" without plumbing or electricity.

Despite their poor treatment at the hands of the U.S. government, the Aleut remained fiercely patriotic. Twenty-five joined the armed forces, three took part in the U.S. invasion of Attu Island and all were awarded Bronze Stars. After the war, the Aleut began the long battle for restitution. The evacuation had taken place for humanitarian reasons, but rac-

ism had also played a role in their treatment. In 1988, a law was signed calling for financial compensation and an apology from Congress and the president on behalf of the American people.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Today, the area reflects a dramatic—if solemn—slice of history. Visitors can explore the remaining structures and ruins, and sense the scope of the war effort mounted in the Aleutians to protect the U.S. from Japanese invasion.

The park is located on Amaknak Island, 800 miles west of Anchorage, the nearest urban center. It can be reached by air from Anchorage, and is open year-round. Visitors may access the area at any time, but overnight camping is not permitted. Visitor center hours are 1 to 6 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday in summer. Call **(907) 581-9944** for more information.

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Begin your trip to Aleutian World War II National Historic Area at the visitor center.



BERING LAND BRIDGE NATIONAL PRESERVE

The Bering Land Bridge National Preserve is an unusually remote park, located on the Seward Peninsula in north-west Alaska. The preserve is a remnant of the land bridge that connected Asia with North America more than 13,000 years ago. The majority of this land bridge, once perhaps a thousand miles wide, now lies beneath the waters of the Chukchi and Bering seas.

During the glacial epoch, this byway was part of a migration path for people, animals and plants whenever ocean levels fell enough to expose it. Archeologists agree that the Bering Land Bridge, also called Beringia, was the access road



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The Alaska polar bear population is estimated to be between 4,000 and 7,000 individuals.

that first brought humans from Asia to the Americas. The preserve's western boundary lies 42 miles from the Bering Strait, the fishing boundary between the United States and Russia. Bering Land Bridge was designated a national monument in 1978 and a national preserve two years later.

THINGS TO DO

Visitors can enjoy **camping**, **hiking** and **backpacking** in the summer months. Winter offers the opportunity to **snowmobile**, **dogsled** and **cross-country ski**. You can spot remains of the gold rush era and explore evidence of ancient Eskimo life. The preserve and surrounding areas—including native villages—give visitors the chance to observe and learn about traditional subsistence lifestyles and historic reindeer herding. Consider flying to Serpentine Hot Springs and spending a few nights in the bunkhouse while you hike among the huge granite tors (hilly rocks or peaks) that encircle the springs.

The preserve is vast and access is limited. There are no roads that lead directly into it, and summer access is usually by bush planes and small boats. Winter access is mostly by snow machine, dog sled or small planes on skis.

The **Bering Land Bridge Visitor Center** is located in the Sitnasuak Building in Nome. Hours are 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, closed on federal holidays.

For more information, contact: Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, P.O. Box 220, Nome, AK 99762; **(907) 443-2522**; **nps.gov/bela**.



DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Throughout its dynamic history, the wilderness that is now Denali National Park and Preserve has always been an awe-inspiring place to behold. Prehistoric Athabaskans, adventurous mountaineers, hardscrabble miners and modern-day sightseers have all visited this land.

ALASKA IN THE ICE AGE

Imagine the scene roughly 25,000 years ago, during the height of the Wisconsin Ice Age, as sheets of ice crept as far south as Rhode Island and central Illinois. Yet the Alaskan interior was free of ice, covered instead by **steppe tundra** vegetation and inhabited by woolly mammoths and other megafauna. The environment proved suitable for North America's first human residents, who likely crossed into this continent on the Bering Land Bridge from Siberia over 15,000 years ago. Archeological evidence shows that people have been living in Denali for at least 13,000 years and that nomadic bands of Athabaskans hunted in the lowland hills of Denali's northern reaches from spring through fall, probably in search of caribou, sheep and moose.

EUROPEANS ARRIVE

Captain George Vancouver was the first European visitor to document seeing the mountain now known as Denali. In 1794, Vancouver sailed into upper Cook Inlet and noted, "distant, stupendous mountains covered with snow and apparently detached from one another."

Near the turn of the century, American topographer Robert Muldrow calculated Denali's height using the primitive tools of his time,

missing by only 154 feet. The mountaineering community took notice.

CLIMBING DENALI

In 1913, Walter Harper, Harry Karstens, Hudson Stuck and Robert Tatum became the first to scale Denali after several others attempted and failed. The ascent took 53 days and required the group to carve a three-mile staircase into a sheet of ice. Although the adventurous spirit drew mountaineers, it was the discovery of gold in 1903 that brought throngs of settlers to the region.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS

Charles Sheldon, a naturalist and hunter, spent the 1907-08 winter in a cabin on the Toklat and fell in love with the land and its bounty of wildlife. When Sheldon left that spring, he was determined to save the area. Nine years later, his dream came true on February 26, 1917. President Woodrow Wilson signed legislation creating Mount McKinley National Park. In an effort to provide additional wildlife protection and conservation, park boundaries were extended in 1922, 1932 and 1980.

The 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act expanded the park by four million acres. The law also provided the critical range necessary to support populations of moose, wolf and caribou as part of an integral ecosystem and to include the entire McKinley massif in the park's boundaries. The newly expanded six million-acre park was renamed Denali National Park and Preserve. The park contains internationally significant resources and has been designated an International Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations.



DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE THINGS TO DO

While most of the action takes place during the summer, there are always lots of activities and programs to take advantage of at Denali National Park and Preserve. Road work between the park entrance (Mile 0) and Park Headquarters (Mile 3.4) on the Denali Park Road will last the summer season, and will occur 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.

AIR TOURS

When it comes to getting an “overview” of Denali National Park, many visitors describe scenic air tours as “a once in a lifetime” experience, a chance to glimpse everything the park has to offer from a breathtaking vantage point. For more information, inquire at the Denali Visitor Center or visit nps.gov/dena.

BICYCLING

Since visitors are allowed to bike all 92 miles of the park’s roads, cycling is a wonderful way to get around the area. With the exception of the designated bike trail between Nenana River and the Denali Visitor Center, biking on trails is prohibited. Camper buses and some Eielson buses can carry a maximum of two bikes, so a reservation is recommended. There are no repair stations, so riders must tackle their mechanical problems. Also, make sure to carry water and a purification device to treat water from streams and rivers.

CAMPGROUND PROGRAMS

Learn about anything from grizzlies to glaciers during informal 30- to 45-minute campground programs. The topics and presentation times are listed

on bulletin boards throughout the park. Programs are presented at the Savage River, Wonder Lake, Teklanika River and Riley Creek campgrounds.

CAMPING

There are six campgrounds located in the park. Visitors may camp at any one for a total of 14 days per summer season. Riley Creek Campground, located at the entrance to the park, is the only campground open year-round. Denali’s campgrounds all have different access, fees and facilities. For more details, call **(907) 683-2294** or visit nps.gov/dena. To reserve a campsite, call **(866) 761-6629** or visit reservedenali.com.

FISHING

While many streams or lakes in Denali National Park and Preserve are not prime sport fishing areas, there are spots to cast a line throughout the park. In the Kantishna area, for instance, Moose Creek and Wonder Lake offer opportunities for arctic grayling and lake trout fishing.

HIKING

There are a number of short, established trails at the entrance of the park and at Polychrome Overlook, Eielson Visitor Center and Wonder Lake—as well as many backcountry options. A great way to explore is by walking the **Savage River Loop Trail**, where you can witness the effects of glaciation and search the rocky slopes for wildlife.

The park also offers **short guided hikes**. Check at the Denali Visitor Center for schedules.

HUNTING

Sport hunting is allowed in the preserve during the appropriate hunting season, and subsistence hunting (for local rural residents) is allowed in the new park additions. Hunting is prohibited in the “old park,” which is the area that most people visit. Animals subject to sport hunting on preserve lands include moose, Dall sheep, black and grizzly bears, wolves, wolverine, coyote, red fox and lynx. For more information, call **(907) 683-2294**.

MOUNTAINEERING

Adventurers wishing to climb Denali and Mount Foraker are encouraged to check out the extensive logistical and safety information on the park’s website at nps.gov/dena. **Climbers** planning to scale either mountain must register with the park and pay a special-use fee of \$370 per climber (\$270 for those 24 and younger). There also is a 60-day pre-registration regulation—this allows mountaineering rangers to have direct contact with climbers before they arrive in Talkeetna. You can request PDF copy versions of the older booklet in German, Japanese, Korean, Polish and Russian, though key revisions will be missing and it’s best to use translation software. Climbers should have a solid understanding of potentially serious medical problems and awareness of the extreme mental and physical stresses associated with high-altitude mountaineering. Contact the Talkeetna Ranger Station at **(907) 733-2231**.

MUSHING

If you have a sled dog team, Denali is the perfect playground! The NPS maintains a working kennel and rangers continue the tradition of dog team patrols that began with the park’s first rangers in the 1920s.

For more information, visit the kennels blog at nps.gov/dena or contact the visitor center at **(907) 683-9532**.

SLED DOG DEMONSTRATION

Half-hour programs offer an opportunity to visit Denali’s Alaskan huskies at the park’s kennels. Free buses to the kennels leave the Denali Visitor Center approximately 40 minutes before each demonstration. Demonstrations run daily from June 1 to September 1, at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. They are offered on a smaller scale in May and after September 1.

OTHER WINTER ACTIVITIES

Visitors can also ski, snowshoe and snowmobile in the park, though the latter is only permissible in the 1980 additions to the park and under select snow conditions. Call **(907) 683-9532** to make sure this activity is permitted on any given day.

VISITOR CENTERS

The **Denali Visitor Center** is open daily from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. from mid-May until mid-September. The center, located near the train station, features exhibits on the history and resources of Denali.

The Denali Bus Depot is located closer to the park road entrance. Visitors can purchase or pick up shuttle bus or tour tickets and campground permits. There is a camper store and coffee shop. Backpackers and other overnight backcountry users can pick up permits at the **Backcountry Information Center**, in the visitor center. Open May 20 to mid-September, 5 a.m. to 7 p.m.



WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE
DENALI EXPERIENCE?
TELL US!



DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE WALKING AND HIKING



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Denali promises breathtaking walking and hiking across its more than 6 million acres.

For the most part, Denali National Park and Preserve is unspoiled wilderness—unencumbered by trails or other backcountry aids. The park’s philosophy rests on the concept that unstructured wandering not only engenders a more complete experience for visitors, but has far less environmental impact than would be created by a network of established trails. You will find some short trails that act as handy access routes in the park’s entrance area, near Polychrome Overlook, Eielson Visitor Center and Wonder Lake. If you seek a bit more adventure, there are plenty of options. In Denali you can explore expanses of tundra, weave through taiga forests, discover the banks of gurgling braided rivers, saunter over the tops of glaciers or scramble to the top of snow-capped mountains. Visitors are allowed to hike almost anywhere in the park!

DISCOVERY HIKES

Ranger-led Discovery Hikes, offered daily during summer, are a great way for adventurous, well-prepared visitors to ex-

plore the heart of Denali. The hikes begin on June 8 each year and are limited to 11 people.

The locations of Discovery Hikes change each day, and schedules are posted weekly at the Denali Visitor Center. The Discovery Hike bus leaves and returns from the Wilderness Access Center. The bus departure time is 8 a.m. sharp; don’t be late!

Plan on hiking for three to five hours. Depending on hike location, your bus ride can be anywhere from one to four hours. The hikes are free. You must sign up one to two days in advance for Discovery Hikes at the visitor center, and purchase your bus ticket at the Wilderness Access Center.

Be prepared to encounter uneven terrain, small stream crossings, close encounters with dense vegetation and unpredictable weather. Make sure to bring all the items on the recommended gear list, including sturdy hiking boots, clothes suitable for wet and windy weather, extra socks, food, at least one liter of water per person, insect repellent, sunscreen and a hat. Rangers will turn away all unprepared hikers.

For more information on walking and hiking in Denali, please contact the park at **(907) 683-9532**.

OUR READER FEEDBACK

“We loved the ranger-led sled dog program. It made us want to come back to mush this winter”- Stacey B.



WALKING & HIKING

Trail		Round-Trip Distance	Difficulty
Trailhead	Description	Time	Elevation Gain
Eielson Visitor Center Loop <i>Eielson Visitor Center</i>	Explore the tundra on one of the trails in the vicinity of Eielson Visitor Center. Trails vary in length and difficulty.	0.75 mile 20 minutes	very easy level
Horseshoe Lake <i>Denali Visitor Center</i>	This jewel of a lake lies in an oxbow of the Nenana River and provides spectacular views and signs of wildlife.	3 miles 1.5 hours	easy to moderate fairly level
Parks Highway Bike Path <i>by road to Riley Creek</i>	This trail leads through spruce forests to a multiuse trail, connecting to the lodging outside the park.	3.2 miles 2 hours	easy level
McKinley Bar Trail <i>road to Wonder Lake Campground</i>	Follow this trail through tundra and spruce forests, heading south toward the McKinley River for a beautiful view of the mountains.	4.5 miles 3 hours	moderate 100 feet
Mount Healy Overlook Trail <i>Taiga Trail, 0.3 mile</i>	This climb offers spectacular views of the park entrance area, the Nenana River valley and various alpine ridges.	4.5 miles 3-4 hours	strenuous 1,700 ft
Rock Creek Trail <i>visitor center to Taiga Trail</i>	Enjoy this hike through beautiful stands of spruce and birch on your way to the kennels and a sled dog demonstration.	4.8 miles 4 hours	fairly strenuous 400 feet
Savage Cabin Interpretative Trail <i>Park Road, mile 13</i>	This short loop has trailside interpretive information and leads past a historic cabin.	0.25 mile 20 minutes	easy level
Triple Lakes Trail <i>Denali Visitor Ctr.</i>	Do all or part of this trail, which connects the visitor center with Triple Lakes (a series of three lakes) to the south.	19 miles 8 hours	fairly strenuous 1,000 ft
Savage River Loop <i>Park Road, mile 15</i>	The Savage River Canyon offers scenery and possible wildlife sightings. Cross the bridge to return on the other river bank.	2 miles 1-2 hours	easy 30 feet
Taiga Trail <i>Denali Visitor Center</i>	On this subarctic forest trail you’ll spot flowers in early summer and berries later on; be alert for moose, too!	1.8 miles 2 hours	easy to moderate 75 feet
McKinley Station Trail  <i>Denali Visitor Center</i>	Learn about the early settlements of the area from trailside exhibits along this path that leads to Hines Creek.	3.2 miles 2 hours	moderate 100 feet
Meadow View Trail <i>Rock Creek Trail or Roadside Trail</i>	This trail offers spectacular views of the meadow below and the mountains to the south. Watch for signs of wildlife!	0.6 mile 1.5 hours	moderate level



DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE DENALI

While clouds often veil this magnificent peak, visitors can rest assured it is always up there! Denali is the highest mountain on the North American continent, reaching a towering 20,310 feet. Measured from the 2,000-foot lowlands near Wonder Lake to its summit, it might even be called the tallest in the world. Its vertical relief of 18,000 feet is even greater than that of Mount Everest.

THE NAME

Denali—the High One—is the name the Athabascan people originally gave the massive peak.

It was initially called Mount McKinley—the brainchild of a gold prospector who took his inspiration from Republican presidential candidate William McKinley of Ohio. The prospector, William Dickey, had just returned to town from his claim near the mountain and was filled with enthusiasm for the politician McKinley and the 20,310-foot mountain. His choice of name caught on in much of the United States, but, ironically, never in Alaska. Denali is the official name in Alaska, and each year, congressional representatives from Ohio filed legislation to prevent the name from being changed to Denali. On August 30, 2015, however, Interior Secretary Sally Jewell officially renamed the mountain Denali.

The park was known as Mount McKinley National Park after its creation in 1917, but the name was changed to Denali National Park and Preserve in 1980.

GEOLOGY

Denali may be high, but it is actually still growing at a rate of about one millimeter per year! Active plate tectonics (the Pacific plate is plunging beneath Alaska, or the North

American plate) continually compress and fold land surfaces in Alaska. These tectonic forces are what push Denali—as well as other mountains in the Alaska Range—up higher. Although it is surrounded by many glacier-clad mountains of similar grandeur, Denali is primarily made of granite, an extremely weather-resistant rock. Its neighbors, however, are composed of sedimentary rocks such as shale, limestone and sandstone, which are much less durable. As Denali is pushed up, it remains above others in the area like a resistant sentinel, while nearby mountains erode in the continual onslaught of freezing, thawing and glacial scouring. At 56 million years old, Denali rock is also much younger than most of its sedimentary neighbors, which vary in age from 100 million to more than 400 million years old.

CLIMBING

Denali is significant to the worldwide mountaineering community. Numerous peaks in the Alaskan Range are climbed each year, but none has the appeal and drawing power of this towering peak. Compared to other high profile mountains, Denali is logistically easy to access, and has some routes which have a lower degree of technical difficulty. This is deceptive, as climbing the mountain on any route has significant challenges, including severe temperatures, extreme winds and other harsh environmental conditions. The number of mountaineers attempting to scale the

peak has increased substantially in the last 30 years. The south summit is the highest point on Denali and, therefore, becomes the goal for many mountaineers. The most popular route to the south summit is the West Buttress. Expeditions are lengthy, averaging 17 days. Despite this consid-

erable investment of time on the part of climbers, their success rate hovers in the 50 percent range.



For answers to all your questions,
go to OhRanger.com



CLIMBING DENALI

Scaling the heights of Denali—20,310 feet tall, and the highest point in North America—is a major trophy in the world of mountain climbing. Although climbers as young as 11 and as old as 76 have made the trip to the summit, Denali climbing is best left for the strong and experienced climber. Without careful planning and attention to the climb, getting to the summit can lead to accidents and risks including frostbite, dehydration, fatigue and hypoxia.

In 1995, American Merrick Johnston became the youngest female to reach the top of Denali at 12 years old. The oldest husband-and-wife team to reach the summit completed the feat in 1992, when they were ages 64 and 62, respectively. The next year, a blind person successfully made the climb! About 1,200 people per year attempt to reach the heights of Denali, a journey that can take as long as one month. The average success rate is 52 percent. Of course, there are always unforeseen challenges: frostbite or falling off one of the trail's narrow ridges. More than a setback, the loss of a hand or foot to frostbite is a life-changing event. A fall can also bring death. Climbing Denali is very serious business. The odds of making it up and back safely may be increased by hiring a guide, as more than 30 percent of all climbers do. The cost for a guide runs around \$2,500. If you count other expenses such as gear, food and the \$365 climbing fee, one can expect to spend between \$4,000 and \$5,000 on an


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Approximately 1,200 people attempt to summit Denali every year.

attempt. Rescues are undertaken by the National Park Service, with occasional support from the military, which generally helps at lower elevations or for medical evacuations.

If you are interested in making the climb, the Talkeetna Ranger Station is a good source for information, books, films, photos and equipment. Please call (907) 733-2231 for more information, or download the mountaineering booklet from the park website at nps.gov/dena.

 WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE
DENALI EXPERIENCE?
TELL US! @OhRanger



DENALI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE LODGING & DINING

The only **lodging** in the park is in Kantishna, 90 miles from the entrance. These privately run facilities are open from early June through mid-September.

The **Morino Grill** food court, across from the Denali Visitor Center, serves hot meals and grab-and-go items. The **Wilderness Access Center** houses a coffee shop that sells to-go items. For backcountry supplies, stop by the **Riley Creek Mercantile**, a full-service camper convenience store.

Most lodging and dining options are just outside the park along the Parks Highway and in local communities. Options include **Denali Park Resorts: (800) 276-7234**, denaliparkresorts.com; and **Princess Lodges: (800) 426-0500**, princesslodges.com. For more information, contact the **Denali Chamber of Commerce: P.O. Box 437, Healy, AK 99743; (907) 683-4636; denalichamber.com**.



GATES OF THE ARCTIC NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve in Alaska's Brooks Range preserves vast untouched natural beauty with exceptional scientific value. It includes glaciated valleys, rugged mountains, forest, arctic tundra and wild rivers; and is home to caribou, Dall sheep, wolves and bears. Gates of the Arctic encompasses a national park, national preserve, wilderness, six wild rivers, two national natural landmarks and the Noatak Biosphere Reserve.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

There are no roads in the park, although the Dalton Highway comes within about five miles of the park's eastern boundary. Other than hiking in from the Dalton Highway, access is generally by air. Air taxis from Fairbanks serve Anaktuvuk Pass, Bettles and Coldfoot. Charter flights may also be arranged. Bush charters are available from Bettles and Coldfoot.

Gates of the Arctic is open year-round, but call each office to confirm hours. **Bettles Ranger Station/Visitor Center** is open daily in the summer from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and weekdays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. the rest of the year, though it may be unstaffed mid-October until mid-February. Phone: **(907) 692-5494**. The **Arctic Interagency Visitor Center** in Coldfoot is open daily from mid-May through mid-September. Phone: **(907) 678-5209**. The **Anaktuvuk Pass Ranger Station** is open to the public during the summer, hours will vary depending on the schedule of the NPS ranger based there. Call **(907) 661-3520**. For more information visit nps.gov/gaar, or call the Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center at **(907) 459-3730** when the seasonal visitor center operations are closed.

AN UNCHANGING WILDERNESS

For many centuries the unmapped Central Brooks Range had been the homeland of Athapaskan and Inupiat people. These native inhabitants lived off the land wisely, preserving the integrity of their surroundings for the future.

Today the park and preserve covers about 8.2 million acres. About 5,000 to 10,000 recreational visitors make their way into Gates of the Arctic each year. Typically, they float down rivers, make a base camp on remote lakes or backpack through countless passes and drainages.

STAYING SAFE

Since the park is remote, with no facilities, visitors must be well-prepared and self-sufficient. Equipment, supplies and even emergency services may not be available.

Wilderness skills are essential and plotting a viable route is an important part of your adventure. Be prepared for emergencies, as well as for radical changes in the weather. It can snow any time of the year. Always carry enough food for extra days, because inclement weather can delay air service.

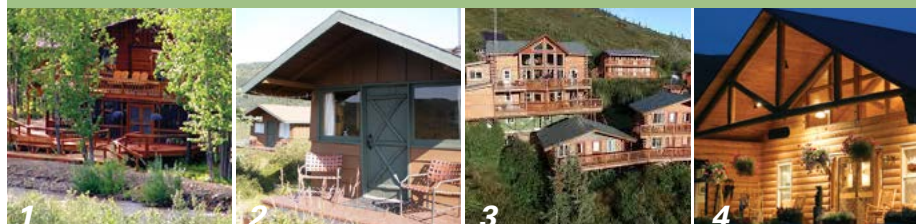
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Gates of the Arctic National Park was created to ensure the arctic environment's integrity



DENALI LODGING & DINING



1 Denali Backcountry Lodge Stay in one of 42 cedar cabins with private baths and individual climate control. At the nearby lodge you'll find hearty food and fun activities. **(800) 808-8068 • (907) 376-1992** • denalilodge.com **Dining:** Hot breakfast is served buffet-style. Evening dinners are served family-style in the lodge. **BLD**: DBL.

2 Camp Denali and North Face Lodge This facility offers multiday packages in cabins or rooms at the lodge. Both offer outdoor activities. **(907) 683-2290** • campdenali.com **Dining:** Breakfast is buffet-style or à la carte. Pack your lunch using sandwich fixings and snacks, and enjoy a freshly made dinner each evening. **BLD** Photo: Pete Klosterman.

3 Skyline Lodge This small, solar-powered lodge accommodates up to 10 guests in five comfortable rooms. **(907) 644-8222** • katair.com **Dining:** A continental, self-serve breakfast is included in the cost of your stay. Dinner is served family-style. Lunch is self-service either to pack for the day or eat at the lodge. **BLD** Photo: Kantishna Air Taxi.

4 Kantishna Roadhouse These cozy cabins have private bathrooms, showers and climate controls. The main building offers an activities desk, Alaskan library, dining room and saloon. **(800) 942-7420** • kantishnaroadhouse.com & **Dining:** Meals are prepared with fresh vegetables and house-made breads. Bagged lunches are available. **BLD** Photo: Kantishna Roadhouse.

KEY **B** Breakfast **L** Lunch **D** Dinner **☉** Open during winter **☎** Reservations required.



GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

Today's visitors to Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve sail along shorelines and among islands that were completely covered by ice 200 years ago. This unique living laboratory provides opportunities to observe the ebb and flow of glaciers and study life as it returns in the wake of retreating ice. Amid this majestic scenery, Glacier Bay also offers a connection to a powerful and wild landscape.

The park has snow-capped mountain ranges, deep fjords, tidewater glaciers, coastal beaches with protected coves, coastal and estuarine waters and freshwater lakes. The diverse land and seascape hosts a variety of plant communities ranging from pioneer species in areas recently exposed by receding glaciers to climax communities in older coastal and alpine regions. Marine and terrestrial wildlife also thrive in the maritime forest area.

HISTORY

When Captain George Vancouver steered his ship, the HMS Discovery, through the waters of Icy Strait in 1794, he and his crew described what's now known as Glacier Bay as a small, five-mile indent in a humongous glacier that stretched off to the horizon. However, by 1879, naturalist John Muir discovered that the ice had retreated more than 30 miles, forming an actual bay. By 1916, the Grand Pacific Glacier had retreated 60 miles to the head of what is now Tarr Inlet.

EARLY INHABITANTS

The members of the Discovery crew were not the first to see Glacier Bay. The ship's records mention natives who paddled out

in canoes from what is now Point Carolus to meet the boat and offer to trade. Tlingit oral history is corroborated by modern science and shows that lower Glacier Bay was habitable for many centuries up until about 300 years ago, when a final glacial surge forced the human habitants to flee.

SCIENCE AND TOURISM

In 1879, John Muir was the first in a line of naturalists to visit the park, perform research and bring this remarkable area to the world's attention. Largely due to Muir's enthusiastic writings, Glacier Bay became a popular tourist attraction and the focus of scientific inquiries during the late 1880s and 1890s. A massive earthquake in 1899 halted much of the tourism, but scientific interest remained high.

NATIONAL PARK STATUS

In 1916, William S. Cooper, a plant ecologist, convinced the Ecological Society of America to spearhead a campaign for its preservation of Glacier Bay. These efforts succeeded, and in 1925 President Calvin Coolidge signed a proclamation creating Glacier Bay National Monument.

After World War II there was talk of elevating Glacier Bay's status to that of national park. This goal was finally achieved in 1980, when the park's boundaries were extended northwest to the Alsek River and Dry Bay. In 1992, the park became part of an international World Heritage Site.



GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE PLAN YOUR VISIT

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve is open year-round (though services in the winter are extremely limited) and the visitor center is open from late May through early September.

Visitors often arrive by **cruise ship**, and can arrive year-round by **small charter plane**. Frequent flights are available from Juneau to Gustavus, where Alaska Airlines provides summer **jet service**.

The Alaska Marine Highway provides scheduled **ferry service** between Juneau and Gustavus. For more information, please contact the Alaska Marine Highway System at **(800) 642-0066**. *Note: There are no facilities for RVs (campgrounds, hookups, dump stations, etc.) in the area.*

Ground transportation is available from Gustavus to Glacier Bay (10 miles). Glacier Bay Lodge provides transfers for guests at their hotel or for the Glacier Bay Tour for free. The only road in the park runs 10 miles between Bartlett Cove and Gustavus. **Rental cars** and **taxi service** are available in Gustavus.

LODGING AND DINING

Glacier Bay Lodge—the only lodge in the park—is located about 10 miles from Gustavus. The 48-room lodge features spectacular views of the Fairweather Mountain Range, overlooking Bartlett Cove. The **NPS visitor center** is located upstairs in the lodge and the NPS offers daily guided hikes around the property during the summer. The lodge's **Fairweather Dining Room** serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. There is a **camper store and gift shop** in the lobby. For more in-

formation, call **(907) 697-4000** or log on to **visitglacierbay.com**.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, contact Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve, 1 Park Rd., P.O. Box 140, Gustavus, AK 99826; visit **nps.gov/glba**; or call general information **(907) 697-2230**; 24-hour emergency **(907) 697-2651**; camping and boating information **(907) 697-2627**; whitewater rafting hotline **(907) 784-3370**; river rafting, mountaineering and hunting information **(907) 784-3295**.

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Book a boat tour for incredible views of Glacier Bay National Park's sweeping landscapes.



GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE SIGHTS TO SEE

WHALES

The sight of a whale surfacing is one of the most exhilarating sights in Glacier Bay National Park—an enduring symbol of the effort to preserve nature. Glacier Bay is summer feeding ground to humpback, Minke and killer whales. Visitors are most likely to see **humpback whales** along shorelines in the lower part of the bay. These 40- to 50-foot creatures migrate over 2,000 miles from their winter breeding grounds off Hawaii to feed on small schooling fish like capelin and sand-lance. **Minke whales** also come to the bay to feed, but are inconspicuous and difficult to spot. The presence of **killer whales** is unpredictable, as they sporadically enter the bay to hunt seals, sea lions and porpoises.

TIDEWATER GLACIERS

If you take a boat tour, look out for falling ice near tidewater glaciers! When the snouts of calving glaciers crumble, they send tons of ice crashing into roiling

seas with a thunderous sound that reverberates for miles. Most of the tidewater glaciers are 65 miles from the forests of Bartlett Cove, and a boat trip to see this site is a staple of any Glacier Bay park visit.

ROARING RIVERS

If you are looking for adventure, wildlife and an unparalleled opportunity to see the Alaskan landscape, consider embarking on a **rafting trip** down one of the park's rivers. Both the Alsek River and its major tributary, the Tatshenshini River, are large-volume, swift glacial rivers that course through areas of great environmental diversity. Most rafting trips begin on the Tatshenshini at Dalton Post. From there, it is 140 river miles to the normal take-out at Dry Bay, Alaska.

For more information about rafting, whale watching, and cruises that pass tidewater glaciers, contact park headquarters at **(907) 697-2230**.



Humpback whales breaching in their summer breeding grounds are a common site at Glacier Bay National Park. The park's waters are also home to Minke and killer whales.



GLACIER BAY NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE THINGS TO DO

If you are an outdoor enthusiast, you'll find plenty to do in Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve—regardless of the season! Summer visitors typically enjoy boating, camping, fishing, hiking, kayaking, mountaineering, ranger programs, rafting and wildlife viewing. Since winter brings an arctic chill to the frosty Alaska air, only the most experienced adventurers tend to visit the park during the coldest season.

BOATING AND BOAT TOURS

The park is most easily seen by boat. The distance between Bartlett Cove and the tidewater glaciers is 46 miles. Most visitors see the bay from cruise ships; passengers do not go ashore in Glacier Bay. Instead, National Park Service naturalists board the ships to share their knowledge about the park.

Tour boats hold up to 150 passengers. National Park Service naturalists also join these boats. Some boats also stop at Bartlett Cove to allow passengers time ashore. The Glacier Bay Day Tour is an eight-hour adventure up the west arm of Glacier Bay to the face of the Grand Pacific and Margerie Glaciers.

Charter boats offer a personalized trip for groups of about six passengers. Private boats (permit required) can also enter the bay, though must adhere to park rules and regulations. Sea kayaking is another popular means of traveling through park waters. For more information, visit nps.gov/glba or call **(907) 697-2627**. Dinner tours and whale-watching excursions are available just outside park boundaries.

CAMPING

The only established campground at Glacier Bay National Park is located at Bartlett Cove. This primitive, walk-in campground is

located about a quarter-mile from the main dock in Bartlett Cove, accessible by trail only. It has designated sites, a warming shelter, outhouses and bear-proof food caches. Campsites are available on a first come, first-served basis.

All campers are required to have a free permit and attend a short orientation offered at the nearby visitor information station. Permits are mandatory in the summer in the Bartlett Cove area and backcountry. For groups of 12 or more, group camping is permitted in the campground. A group limit of 12 exists for camping in all other areas of the park. Camping outside of the campground is prohibited within one mile of Bartlett Cove. The park has no facilities for vehicle camping or RVs.

FISHING

You must hold a valid Alaska State Fishing License and follow the state regulations to fish in Glacier Bay National Park and Pre-



National Park Service naturalists also join tour boats and cruise ships to lead interpretive tours.

serve. Stream fishing in the Bartlett River is within a short hike from Bartlett Cove. For more detailed information, call park headquarters at **(907) 697-2230**.

HIKING

Bartlett Cove offers three hikes along the only developed trails in the park. The Forest Loop Trail is a one-mile loop that begins at the Glacier Bay Lodge and winds through a pond-studded spruce and hemlock forest. The four-mile Bartlett River Trail is round-trip, meandering along an intertidal lagoon and through a forest before emerging at the Bartlett River estuary. The Bartlett Lake Trail branches off from the Bartlett River Trail. This primitive path, about eight miles round-trip, winds through temperate rainforest.

Thick vegetation and steep terrain make backcountry hiking difficult to navigate. Topographic maps and other information are available from Alaska Geographic, akgeo.org, or at the park's visitor information station at Bartlett Cove.

HUNTING

Sport hunting is allowed only in the national preserve. Two hunting guide companies are authorized to provide guided sport hunting in specific areas of the preserve. For more information about hunting, visit nps.gov/glba.

KAYAKING

Sea kayaking is one of the best ways to explore the marine wilderness of Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve. All kayakers intending to camp are required to attend an orientation, held daily upon request at the Bartlett Cove Visitor Information Station located near the dock. A camper drop off and pick up service transports back-

country campers and kayakers at various locations in the bay. For more information about this service, as well as guided day and overnight kayak trips, call Glacier Bay Lodge & Tours, **(888) 229-8687** or visit visitglacierbay.com. Kayak rentals and tours are also available from Glacier Bay Sea Kayaks. Contact them at **(907) 697-2257** or visit glacierbayseakayaks.com.

MOUNTAINEERING

Mountaineering can be very arduous in the coastal mountains. A stormy weather pattern—which includes more than 100 inches of precipitation a year—adds to the challenge. Most climbing in the park is accessible via charter boat or floatplane out of Juneau, Gustavus or Yakutat. Fixed-wing aircraft landings are allowed; helicopter landings and airdrops are prohibited. Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve does not maintain a rescue team with high-altitude rescue capabilities, so climbing parties must plan and arrange for their own backup. The NPS office in Yakutat should be made aware of the backup plans prior to the trip. For more information, contact the Yakutat District Ranger at **(907) 784-3295**.

RAFTING

There are numerous rafting opportunities in the park. The Alsek River and its major tributary, the Tatshenshini River, are both large, swift glacial rivers that offer the trip of a lifetime. Most rafting trips begin on the Tatshenshini at Dalton Post, the last road accessible off the Haines Highway in Yukon Territory, Canada. From there it is 140 river miles to the normal take-out at Dry Bay, Alaska. For a list of commercial rafting operators authorized to operate in the park, visit nps.gov/glba. A permit is required for private trips and there is waiting list.



IñUPIAT HERITAGE CENTER

The Iñupiat Heritage Center in Utqiagvik, Alaska, was designated an affiliated area of New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park in New Bedford, Massachusetts. Why the association with a site so far away? The designation was designed to ensure that the contributions of Alaska natives to the history of whaling would be recognized. More than 2,000 whaling voyages from New Bedford sailed into arctic waters during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many Alaska natives, particularly Iñupiat Eskimo people, participated in commercial whaling, a vital form of livelihood in that day. In addition to working on ships, the Iñupiat people hunted for food for the whalers, provided warm fur clothing and sheltered many crews that were shipwrecked on the Alaska coast.

The Iñupiat Heritage Center houses exhibits and artifact collections, along with a library, gift shop, and traditional room where people are able to demonstrate and teach time-honored crafts through Elders-

in-Residence and Artists-in-Residence programs. The heritage center is one of several partner organizations that participate in relating the story of whaling in the United States. Though operating independently, park partners collaborate on many educational and interpretive programs.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

The Iñupiat Heritage Center is open year-round from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. From May through September, the center offers cultural programs and craft sales. Free science and cultural meetings are hosted monthly. Topics include arctic science, Iñupiat issues and whaling.

Since it is located on the Arctic Ocean, Utqiagvik is cool to cold all year. Summer can bring fog, wind and rain; temperatures range from highs around 70°F to lows in the 30s. Winter temperatures are normally below 0°F, and often drop below -30°F. Wind often exacerbates these cold temperatures. Bring raincoats and sweaters or light jackets in the summer and warm boots, gloves and heavy parkas with hoods in the winter.

Utqiagvik is reached by air from Anchorage and Fairbanks; a major airline schedules several daily flights. Rental vehicles are sometimes available in Utqiagvik; inquire at hotels. Taxis are available in town. Tours are available through Tundra Tours.

Contact the Iñupiat Heritage Center at P.O. Box 69, Utqiagvik, AK 99723; or write to the National Park Service/INUP at 240 West 5th Ave., Anchorage, AK, 99501. For visitor information, please call **(907) 852-0422** or visit nps.gov/inup.

NPS



The Iñupiat Heritage Center helps tell the story of commercial whaling in the United States.



KATMAI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE

KATMAI NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE 

Katmai National Park and Preserve is justly famous for volcanoes, brown bears, fish and rugged wilderness. The park also has some noteworthy historic features, since it is the site of the Brooks River National Historic Landmark, with North America's highest concentration of prehistoric human dwellings (about 900). If volcanic activity was what originally sparked the interest of the National Park Service, the population of brown bears continues to be one of the area's most salient features and major attractions.

A VOLCANIC LEGACY

Katmai National Park and Preserve was created to conserve the famed **Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes**, a spectacular 40 square-mile, 100- to 700-foot-deep, pyroclastic ash flow deposited by Novarupta Volcano. Initially declared a national monument in 1918, Katmai preserved a living laboratory of its cataclysmic volcanic eruption six years earlier. Intervening years have seen most of the surface geothermal features cool. Even today, there are at least 14 volcanoes in Katmai considered "active," though none of these is currently erupting.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

The park is open year-round but is typically inaccessible during winter. The NPS campground and concession amenities are open at **Brooks Camp** and **Brooks Lodge** from June 1 through September 17. Backcountry activities are also best during this time.

Prime bear viewing months at Brooks Camp are July and September, although a few bears may be in the area at

any time between late May and mid-October. Extenuating circumstances may necessitate closure of any portion of Brooks Camp, including trails and bear-viewing platforms for safety reasons without advance notice.

The NPS has built a new bridge and boardwalk over a lower section of the Brooks River to improve safety and enhance resources, hopefully helping facilitate the movement of people and reduce stress to wildlife.

Advance reservations are required at the NPS **campground**. Please call **(877) 444-6777**. The fee is \$12 per person per night June 1 through September 17 and \$6 per person per night in May and September 18 through October 31, plus a \$6 reservation fee. Campers are limited to seven nights in July and 14 nights per calendar year. Group size is limited to six. **Brooks Lodge** information is available at **(800) 544-0551** or online at **katmailand.com**.

For **park information**, contact Katmai National Park & Preserve, 1000 Silver St., Building 603, P.O. Box 7, King Salmon, AK 99613; call **(907) 246-3305**; or visit **nps.gov/katm**.

GETTING TO KATMAI

There is no road access to Katmai, located on the Alaska Peninsula, across from Kodiak Island. Park Headquarters is in King Salmon, about 290 air miles southwest of Anchorage. Several commercial airlines provide daily flights into King Salmon. Brooks Camp, along the Brooks River approximately 30 air miles from King Salmon, is a common destination for park visitors. Brooks Camp can only be reached via small floatplane or boat.

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Katmai National Park is home to more than 2,000 brown bears, some of which weigh more than 1,000 pounds.

BEARS

The protection of brown bears is an equally compelling priority for the park. To preserve this magnificent animal and its varied habitat, the boundaries of Katmai were extended over the years, and in 1980, the area was designated a national park and preserve.

The number of brown bears at Katmai has grown to more than 2,000. During the peak of the world's largest sockeye salmon run each July—and the return of the "spawned out" salmon in September—bears typically congregate in Brooks Camp along the Brooks River and the Naknek Lake and Brooks Lake shorelines. To the east, coastal bears enjoy clams, crabs and an occasional whale carcass. This dietary wealth of protein and fat helps them build weight so they'll be prepared to endure the long winter ahead.

Alaska's brown bears and grizzlies are now considered to be one species, though people commonly consider grizzlies to be bears that live 100 miles or

more inland. Browns, in fact, are bigger than grizzlies thanks to their rich diet of fish. There are also Kodiak brown bears, a distinct subspecies that is geographically isolated on Kodiak Island in the Gulf of Alaska.

Mature male bears in Katmai may weigh more than 1,000 pounds. Mating occurs from May to mid-July, and cubs are born in dens in mid-winter. Up to four cubs may be born per litter, weighing just a mere pound each! Cubs stay with their mother for two years, during which time she does not reproduce. The interval between litters usually runs at least three years. Brown bears don't tend to put down roots, instead they dig a new den every year, entering it in November and emerging to greet spring in April. About half a bear's lifetime is spent in their dens.

BEAR VIEWING

The chance to view brown bears in their natural habitat is one of the most popular activities in Katmai. Plan ahead and recognize that safety and preparation are key.

Although you may encounter a bear anywhere from late May to December, the **best viewing times** at Brooks Camp are late June through July and September. In fact, expect July and September to be crowded with both bears and people!

There are five bear viewing platforms in Katmai. Delays in getting to and from the platforms are common and can occur at any time. These slowdowns afford visitors the chance to view other wildlife and soak up the scenery around Brooks Camp.

Plan extra time to work around delays—bears always have the right of way! There are occasions, especially in July, when visitors are unable to get to the falls viewing platform due to time constraints and flight schedules.



KENAI FJORDS NATIONAL PARK



Kenai Fjords National Park is a dramatic glacial landscape of ice, tidewater glaciers, deeply chiseled fjords and jagged peninsulas—669,983 acres of unspoiled wilderness on the southeast coast of Alaska’s Kenai Peninsula. The park is capped by the Harding Icefield, a relic from past ice ages. The fabled Kenai Fjords, long, steep-sided, glacier-carved valleys, are now filled with ocean waters.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Today, most of the park’s acreage is roadless, rugged backcountry. The **Harding Icefield**, a vast expanse of snow and ice interrupted only by an occasional “nunatak,” or lonely peak, dominates the inland portions of the park. Tidewater glaciers, including **Aialik Glacier**, spill down from the

icefield to the steep and rocky coast. Much of the park’s shoreline is exposed to the rough water of the Gulf of Alaska, although several sheltered bays and camping beaches can be found within the fjords. These protected areas provide opportunities for kayaking, camping, fishing, beachcombing and enjoying the breathtaking scenery.

The park is open 24 hours a day, every day. The **Kenai Fjords National Park Visitor Center** in Seward offers videos, maps, publications and exhibits. It is open mid-May through September. The **Exit Glacier Nature Center**, open daily in summer, offers exhibits, information and interpretive programs.

For more information write to the park at: P.O. Box 1727, Seward, AK 99664; call (907) 422-0500; or visit nps.gov/KenaiFjords.



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Incredible views reward hikers to the Exit Glacier on Harding Icefield.



ALASKA GEOGRAPHIC



Alaska Geographic is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the stewardship of Alaska’s public lands. Founded in 1959, the organization contributes nearly \$3 million annually to the parks, forests, refuges and other public lands of Alaska.

Along with over 100 books, films and maps, Alaska Geographic publishes visitor guides to public lands including Chugach National Forest, Denali National Park and Preserve, Glacier Bay National Park and several more. The guides are available for free at alaskageographic.org.

The company also founded the Alaska Geographic Institute, which offers hands-on courses set in the Alaskan wilderness. AGI’s topics range from the wildflowers of the Chugach to the bears of Denali and many courses in between. Visit their website for more information.

If you’re planning a trip to the beautiful state of Alaska and want to learn more, contact Alaska Geographic, available by phone at (907) 274-8440. To download free visitor guides, register for courses and much more, visit the organization’s website at alaskageographic.org.

SIGHTS TO SEE

Kenai’s landscape has been shaped by glaciers, earthquakes and storms.

Exit Glacier is the park’s premier attraction. Literally the remains of a massive glacier that once extended to Resurrection Bay, this slow-moving blanket of ice is like the tongue of a massive giant, speckled with debris and splintered with crevices, as it barges through the Alaskan landscape in a slow and methodical path. It cascades out of the higher Harding Icefield and down the U-shaped glacial valley, descending nearly 2,500 feet. As it moves, the glacier carries material plucked from the underlying rock and walls and deposits it at the glacial edge in a pile of debris called a moraine. Rocks embedded in the bottom of the moving ice gouge and grind the underlying base rock, leaving distinctive striations and scars on the landscape.

To access the glacier, turn on to Herman Leirer Road at mile 3 of the Seward Highway.

This nine-mile road leads to the **Exit Glacier Nature Center**, where a 1-mile accessible loop trail offers a view of Exit Glacier, while a steeper trail continues across moraines and bedrock to the overlook. Visitors may return via a nature trail. As you explore the Exit Glacier area, please stay on the trails and clear of the ice at the foot and sides of the glacier. Glacier ice is unstable, unpredictable and extremely dangerous. There are no fees for the Exit Glacier area.

Harding Icefield, an immense piece of ice named after President Warren Harding, is one of only four remaining icefields in the United States. It seems to stretch into oblivion as it enshrouds entire valleys and mountaintops. The challenging but breathtakingly beautiful Harding Icefield Trail parallels Exit Glacier up to the Harding Icefield. The trail is accessible from mid-June to early October. The rest of the year, the trail is snow-covered and requires special equipment and climbing experience.



Rugged coastal backcountry makes up most of the park's over 600,000 acres. Access to this roadless region is by air taxi (floatplane), water taxi, charter boat or private vessel. Kayaking from Seward is not recommended except for experienced paddlers.

When **hiking**, be prepared to bushwhack; there are few designated trails. Terrain is steep and requires scrambling through dense vegetation. **Camping and landing beaches** are few and remote. Ask at the visitor center for a map of designated beaches and camping spots, and campfires rules.

Be prepared to face sudden storms, blinding sunlight, high winds and extreme temperatures. Since ocean storms can sweep through the park any time of year, durable rain gear and extra food supplies are a must; weather may delay a charter pick-up for days. Carry a map and a marine radio, and always speak with rangers about weather conditions, hazards or closures before setting out.



Kenai Fjords rugged coastal backcountry makes up most of the park's more than 600,000 acres.

Three public use cabins provide opportunities for exploration, wildlife viewing and relaxation. Two rustic summer cabins—Aialik and Holgate—are located along the coast (open Memorial Day to Labor Day). Willow Cabin, located at Exit Glacier, is open during winter (mid-November to mid-April). Most visitors access coastal cabins by floatplane, water taxi, private vessel or charter boats. Kayaking to the cabins from Seward requires advanced skills due to strong currents and is not recommended. Willow Cabin is open as soon as enough snowfall closes Exit Glacier Road. At that time, access is by snow machine, dog sled, cross-country skiing and skijoring. A minimum of 18 inches of packed snow is needed to use a snow machine. To reserve a cabin in summer, call **(877) 444-6777** after January 3 (for the following summer); for Willow Cabin, call **(907) 422-0500** after October 15. The cost is \$75 per night for summer and \$50 for winter.

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KLONDIKE GOLD RUSH NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK

Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park celebrates the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897–1898 through a total of 15 restored buildings in the Skagway Historic District.

KLONDIKE'S ADVENTUROUS HISTORY

Those initial cries of "Gold! Gold in the Klondike!" ignited a brief but fascinating adventure in the Yukon and Alaska. In August 1896, Skookum Jim Mason, Dawson Charlie and George Washington Carmack found gold in the Klondike River in Canada's Yukon Territory; at the time, they had no idea they would set off one of the greatest gold rushes ever. An army of hopeful gold-seekers—unaware that most of the good Klondike claims were already staked—boarded ships in Seattle and other Pacific port cities and headed north toward a vision of riches.

From 1897 to 1898, stampeder poured into the new Alaskan tent and shack towns of Skagway and Dyea, which were jumping-off points for the 600-mile trek to the goldfields.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Today, visitors to Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park can see local museums; participate in a guided tour of the Skagway Historic District; explore nature on the local trails; tour the Dyea townsite with a ranger; or hike the Chilkoot Trail, imagining the triumphs and travails of goldseekers.

During summer (early May to the end of September), the visitor center is open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and hour-long ranger-led walking tours of the Skagway Historic District are offered weekdays at 9, 10 and 11 a.m., and 2 and 3 p.m., and on weekends at

10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Visitors can also experience the restored Mascot Saloon, open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., daily. A 30-minute film, *Gold Fever: Race to the Klondike*, is shown at the visitor center auditorium beginning every hour from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., except at 10 a.m., when a ranger leads a presentation in the auditorium about the park's special history and heritage.

In winter, park offices and museum are open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday

GETTING THERE

By plane: Skagway is 80 air miles north of Juneau. **By car:** It can be reached by the South Klondike Highway; 110 miles south of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory. **Public transportation:** Skagway is served by the Alaska Marine Highway System from Juneau and by public bus from Whitehorse.

For information, call **(907) 983-9200**; visit **nps.gov/kglo**; or write to Klondike Gold Rush NHP, P.O. Box 517, Skagway, AK 99840. Or call the Skagway CVB at **(907) 983-2854** or visit **skagway.com**.

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Skagway is home to one of the greatest gold rushes of all times.



LAKE CLARK NATIONAL PARK & PRESERVE



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Lake Clark is mostly wilderness and demands self-sufficiency and advanced backcountry skills.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve is a composite of ecosystems representing distinctly different regions of Alaska. The spectacular scenery stretches from the shores of Cook Inlet across the Chigmit Mountains to the tundra-covered hills of the western interior.

The park's namesake, Lake Clark, is 40 miles long. Like other bodies of water in the area, the lake supports a thriving salmon habitat that is critical to the Bristol Bay salmon fishery, the largest sockeye salmon fishing grounds in the world.

TAKING A HIKE

Hiking is one of the most popular activities at the park, but since much of Lake Clark is wilderness—exceptionally remote and isolated—it is vital to be knowledgeable and prepared before setting out. Hiking

ing Lake Clark demands self-sufficiency and advanced backcountry skills. Travelers should also be prepared for the possibility of inclement weather, delaying scheduled pick-ups, perhaps by several days. For the seasoned hiker, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve offers an exceptionally varied experience. There are rivers to ford, mires to avoid, and sudden and unexpected weather changes.

CAMPING

All camping is primitive; there are no facilities or designated campsites. Backcountry permits for camping and hiking are not required. Campers, however, are asked to observe Leave No Trace guidelines to keep the wilderness pristine. Hikers and campers are also advised to leave an itinerary with the field headquarters at Port Alsworth.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve is open year-round, with its highest visitation between June and September. There is no highway access to the park and preserve—the 2.5-mile trail to Tanalian Falls and Kontrashibuna Lake is accessible from the town of Port Alsworth.

There is access to the Lake Clark region by small aircraft including floatplane. A one- to two-hour flight from Anchorage, Kenai or Homer offers access to most points within the park and preserve. For more information, call park headquarters at (907) 644-3626; or visitor information at (907) 781-2117; write to Field Headquarters, General Delivery, Port Alsworth, AK 99653; or visit [nps.gov/lacl](https://www.nps.gov/lacl).



SITKA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Sitka National Historical Park, Alaska's oldest federally designated park, was established as a federal entity in 1890. In 1910, it became a national monument to commemorate the 1804 Battle of Sitka fought between the Tlingits and the Russians. All that remains of this last major conflict between Europeans and Alaska Natives is the site of the Tlingit Fort and battlefield, located within this scenic 113-acre park in a temperate rain forest.

A RICH HISTORY

Southeast Alaska **totem poles** and a **temperate rain forest** setting combine to provide spectacular scenery along the park's coastal trail. This trail offers a classic collection of Northwest Coast totem poles—brought to the park by Alaska's District Governor John G. Brady in 1905. These histories carved in cedar were rounded up from villages throughout southeastern Alaska. Though none of the originals came from Sitka, this art form is very much a part of Tlingit tradition. Many poles exhibited along the park's two miles of wooded pathways are copies of originals. Another loop trail continues across the In-

dian River footbridge past the Memorial to the Russian Midshipmen who died in the Battle of Sitka. The park's story continues at the **Russian Bishop's House**, an 1843 log structure, which is one of three surviving examples of Russian colonial architecture in North America.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

Sitka is located on Baranof Island on Alaska's southeastern panhandle and can be reached only by air or sea. Commercial airlines fly directly from Seattle, Juneau and Anchorage. Sitka is also accessible via ferries on the Alaska Marine Highway System.

The park is at the south end of Lincoln Street, about a quarter-mile from downtown Sitka. The visitor center and Russian Bishop's House are on Lincoln Street.

The visitor center contains ethnographic exhibits, totem poles and houses artist demonstration studios where visitors can watch native artists at work. From May to September, the visitor center is open daily, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; from October to April, Tuesday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The Russian Bishop's House is open daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., May through September. Ranger-led tours of the Bishop's House and Chapel of the Annunciation run every 30 minutes; there is a \$4 fee during the summer. Winter tours are arranged Tuesday through Friday by advanced request.

For more information, call the visitor center, (907) 747-0110 or the business office, (907) 747-0107; visit [nps.gov/sitk](https://www.nps.gov/sitk); or write: Sitka National Historical Park, 103 Monastery St., Sitka, AK 99835.

NPS



The Sitka Community gathered to raise a replica of the Yaadaas Crest Pole.



WESTERN ARCTIC NATIONAL PARKLANDS

The Western Arctic National Parklands comprises Kobuk Valley National Park, Cape Krusenstern National Monument and Noatak National Preserve. The nearby Bering Land Bridge functions independently. This windy northernmost region has short, mild, sunny summers with 24 hours of daylight. But winter sets in early; by December there's only one hour of daylight per day!

The parks are open year-round. The **visitor center** is located at the Northwest Arctic Heritage Center in Kotzebue, where educational and interpretive programs are available. The center's hours are 9 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturday; closed Sunday, June through August. From September through May, the office closes weekdays from 12 to 1 p.m. and is not open on Saturdays and Sundays.

To get to Kotzebue or nearby Bettles by plane, fly from Anchorage or Fairbanks. To go from Kotzebue to the parklands, there are scheduled air taxi flights to villages and chartered flights to specific park areas.

For more information, call the Northwest Arctic Heritage Center at (907) 442-3890, or during summer call (907) 442-3760, or write: NPS, P.O. Box 1029, Kotzebue, AK 99752.

CAPE KRUSENSTERN

Cape Krusenstern National Monument is a treeless coastal plain dotted with lagoons and backed by gently rolling limestone hills. The bluffs on the cape—along with a series of 114 beach ridges—record the changing shorelines of the Chukchi Sea over thousands of years. In summer, wildflowers color the beach, ridges and nearby hills. Migratory birds from around the world nest here. There are no developed facilities. For

more information, call (907) 442-3890 or visit nps.gov/cakr.

KOBUK VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

Kobuk Valley National Park provides protection for several geographic features, including the central portion of the Kobuk River, the 25 square-mile Great Kobuk Sand Dunes, and the Little Kobuk and Hunt River dunes. Sand created by the grinding action of ancient glaciers was carried here by wind and water, and dunes now cover much of the valley. For more information, call (907) 442-3890 or visit nps.gov/kova.

NOATAK NATIONAL PRESERVE

Noatak National Preserve is a stunning unspoiled wilderness. As one of North America's largest mountain-ringed river basins with an intact ecosystem, the Noatak River environs feature some of the Arctic's finest arrays of plants and animals. The river also offers wilderness float trip adventures. Noatak is not accessible by road. Primary access is by air or boat; during winter, snow machine and dog-sled travel are common. For more information, call (907) 442-3890 or visit nps.gov/noat.



A hiker descends from Copter Peak in Noatak National Preserve

NPS



WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS NATIONAL PARK

Known as the "mountain kingdom of North America," Wrangell-St. Elias National Park is the point where the Chugach, Wrangell and St. Elias mountain ranges converge. This park is the largest in the National Park System and includes the continent's largest assemblage of glaciers and the greatest collection of peaks above 16,000 feet. Mount St. Elias, at 18,008 feet, is the second-highest peak in the United States.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

With towering mountains, massive glaciers, powerful rivers, a seemingly endless variety of flora and fauna—plus Kennecott, a National Historic Landmark—Wrangell-St. Elias National Park has something for everyone. Consisting of more than 13 million acres, the park is located in a setting full of natural and historic wonders.

Visiting **Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark** is safe with a tour guide or in any historic area open to the public. Keep to the gravel path and avoid the steep slopes where loose debris is present. Likewise, do not attempt to walk on decks or stairs attached to the buildings. The doors of the



Kennecott Mines National Historic Landmark are safe and can be toured with a guide.

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buildings are locked, but a local guide company has permission to lead groups through the safer interiors. The **Kennecott Visitor Center** is open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily, from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

The **Copper Center Visitor Center Complex**, located on Richardson Highway between Glennallen and Copper Center, is open daily in summer, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., May 15 through September 29; closed October through April.

Ranger-led programs are presented in summer at visitor centers and at Princess Lodge in Copper Center; inquire locally about times, topics and location.

Other local **outfitters and guides** offer a variety of activities, including river trips, flightseeing, glacier hikes and backpack adventures.

Visitors who want an added element of adventure can consider a **backcountry trip**, which presents challenges to even the hardest travelers—those who persevere will be rewarded with a vast, pristine wilderness and remarkable solitude.

The most direct way to reach the park by commercial plane is to fly into Anchorage, then take an air taxi to the Gulkana Airport in Glennallen and on into the park. By car, the Copper Center Visitor Center is about four hours east of Anchorage. Two gravel roads enter the park—the McCarthy Road and Nabesna Road. Be advised, though, that some car rental companies prohibit clients from accessing these roads. For more information, call the Copper Center Visitor Center, (907) 822-7250. You can also write: Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, 106.8 Richardson Hwy., P.O. Box 439, Copper Center, AK 99573; or visit nps.gov/wrst.



YUKON-CHARLEY RIVERS NATIONAL PRESERVE

Located near the Canadian border in central Alaska, Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve protects part of the Yukon River and the entire Charley River basin. Rustic cabins and historic sites are reminders of the role of the Yukon River during the 1898 gold rush. The rolling hills are home to an array of wildlife, and the Charley River is considered by many to be the most spectacular in Alaska.

HISTORY

The Klondike Gold Rush changed forever the land along the upper Yukon River. When gold was discovered in 1897, population spread along the river into the area now encompassed by the preserve.

Towns developed at places like Seventymile, Star City, and Nation, but mining machines replaced miners and populations diminished. Today, all that remains of these towns are points on a map and occasional cabin ruins. In its heyday, the Yukon River served as a highway, full of miner and sternwheeler traffic.

THINGS TO DO

The Eagle Visitor Center offers a short video and exhibits depicting the rich history, geology and ecology of Yukon-Charley Rivers. Rangers work with the Eagle Historical Society giving tours of parts of the Eagle Historic District.

Six **public use cabins** in the preserve are available on a first come, first-served basis. **Rafting, kayaking and canoeing** are popular on the Yukon. **Powerboats** are also permitted. Many paddlers start in Eagle and end in Circle, either arranging to be picked up or flown back to Eagle. Rafting and kayaking are also popular on the Charley—air-char-

tered drop-off and pick-up, or continuation to Circle, must be arranged.

PLAN YOUR VISIT

The preserve is open year-round. The Eagle Visitor Center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., daily, from mid-June through mid-September; it is closed the rest of the year. Scheduled air service is between Fairbanks and Eagle, Monday through Friday. Air taxis service Circle and also Coal Creek Camp. Two highways serve nearby towns. The 161-mile Taylor Highway begins at Tetlin Junction on the Alaska Highway and ends at Eagle, 12 river miles from the preserve. It is usually open from mid-April to mid-October. The Steese Highway, open year-round, begins in Fairbanks and travels 162 miles to Circle, 14 miles from the preserve. In good weather, it is a 3 1/2- to 4-hour drive from Fairbanks. Ask about road conditions before setting out.

For information, call Eagle Visitor Center (907) 547-2233; Fairbanks Alaska Public Lands Information Center, (907) 459-3730; or visit nps.gov/yuch.

NPS



There are no maintained trails in the preserve for hikers, though there are game trails.



NATURE & WILDLIFE

A state of great diversity, Alaska comprises some of the most majestic natural environs in the world—mountains, rainforests and fjords just to name a few—and these places encourage a range of ecosystems. Plants and wildlife are specially adapted to the different climate zones, so Alaska's parks are home to a tremendous variety of plants and animals.

ALAGNAK WILD RIVER

Wildlife thrives along the Alagnak River, its surrounding environs inhabited by a wide diversity of species typical of southwest Alaska. **Brown bears** seek out the area to feed on spawning salmon. **Moose** can be seen year-round, while most of the Alagnak River drainage west of Kukaklek and Nonvianuk lakes is a winter home for **caribou**. **Beaver, lynx, mink, otter, fox, wolverine** and the occasional wolf can be seen along the river.

Alagnak area vegetation includes **spruce, willows** and many types of **berry bushes** (salmon berries, blackberries, blueberries and cranberries). **Fiddlehead ferns, wild celery** and **sourdock** are endemic and collected by subsistence users.

BERING LAND BRIDGE

The Seward Peninsula is home to seabirds like **gulls, murres** and **kittiwakes**; migrating and nesting waterfowl including **ducks, swans** and **geese**; as well as birds of prey like **hawks, eagles, falcons** and **owls**. Since the area stands at the crossroads of the Asiatic-North American flyway, it offers a rare glimpse of several Old World and Asian bird species.

Along the coastline, there are occasionally **seals, walrus, beluga** and **bowhead whales**. On land, there are **moose, caribou, grizzly bears, wolverine, wolves** and many smaller Arctic species.

More than 400 species of plants have been listed in Bering Land Bridge preserve. Many evolved in ancient Beringia and spread into Asia or northern Canada and the United States. Tundra plant communities range from wet tundra on the coast to alpine tundra on mountains.

Fishing enthusiasts can cast a line for **salmon, grayling, char, whitefish** and **pike** in area rivers and lakes (both hunting and fishing are permitted under state regulations; Alaska hunting and fishing licenses are required).

The preserve contains extensive **lava flows** and ash/stream explosion craters—now turned to lakes called **maars**. It also offers dynamic **coast** and **beach** environments of barrier islands and low sand dunes.

DENALI

Denali National Park and Preserve is bursting with life—more than 750 species of flowering plants, 39 species of mammals, 169 species of birds, 14 species of fish and even one hardy type of amphibian all thrive within its borders.

The park is home to **moose, grizzly bears, Dall sheep, caribou** and **wolves**. If you take the shuttle bus to Wonder Lake or spend time in the backcountry, chances are you will spot at least one of these species.

Denali is also home to **yellow-cheeked voles, hoary marmots** and **beavers**. During summer, watch for rodents like **red squirrels, mice, voles, shrews** and **lemmings**.

THE WOOD FROG

While the bears slumber, Denali's lone amphibian, the wood frog, spends the cold arctic winter months frozen solid in layers of muck. Wood frogs are just one of many creatures that use "cryoprotectant" chemicals to survive temperatures as low as -54°F. As winter approaches, wood frogs prepare for the cold weather by burrowing into decaying leaves on forest floors. As daily temperatures dip below 32°F, the eyeballs and extremities of wood frogs start to freeze. This first sign of freezing stimulates the frog's brain to send a message to the liver, which starts to convert stored glycogen into glucose, a sugar. The glucose circulates through the frog's bloodstream and into the cells where it lowers to the freezing point of water. The glucose also protects cells from damage and minimizes the effects of dehydration. As the temperature continues to drop, the frogs actually freeze solid. Throughout the entire winter, hibernating frogs are inanimate: they don't breathe and their hearts don't beat. Scientists

Kerry Bixted



have found that core organs, such as the heart and liver, freeze last and thaw first. That means vital body functions such as circulation and metabolism are maintained for the longest possible time. Once the temperatures begin to rise in spring, the frogs thaw—and they're off in search of ponds for breeding.

scrambling to store food that will sustain them through winter.

A variety of migratory birds come to the park from all corners of the globe—some from as far away as Siberia, Japan, Hawaii, California, Costa Rica and even Antarctica. Some species, like the **red-throated loon**, **sandhill crane** and **long-tailed duck**, stop only briefly before continuing northward. Others, including the **great horned owl**, **raven** and **willow ptarmigan**, are year-round residents.

Most fish can't tolerate the rivers inside the park, because these bodies of water contain a milky suspension of pulverized silt—known as rock flour—from glacial runoff. However, freshwater streams and lakes support at least 14 species of fish, including **chum salmon**, **chinook salmon**, **coho salmon**, **arctic**

grayling, **Dolly Varden**, **lake trout**, **northern pike**, **slimy sculpin**, **Alaska blackfish**, **arctic lamprey** and **longnose sucker**.

The vegetation in Denali is a mosaic of taiga and tundra ecosystems that are separated into three zones: lowland, sub-alpine and alpine.

The **lowland zone** occurs at elevations below 2,500 feet and is predominately forested. It includes plants like **alder**, **dwarf birch**, **willow** and **blueberries**. River corridors and upland areas here are home to forests of **white spruce**, **paper birch**, **aspen**, **rose** and **cranberry**.

The **subalpine zone**, occurring at 2,500 to 4,000 feet in elevation, consists of scrub vegetation dominated by **dwarf birch**, **alder** and **willow** that alternates with open **spruce woodland**. Other species found in

this zone include **wormwood**, **lupine**, **wintergreen** and **goldenrod**.

The **alpine zone** is generally found at elevations above 3,500 feet and consists of tundra, most often dominated by the dwarf species of **heath**, **rose** and **willow**. The upper limit of plant growth is about 7,500 feet; elevations above 8,000 feet are mostly blanketed by glacial ice.

GLACIER BAY

A variety of marine mammals, including the endangered humpback whale and the threatened Steller sea lion, swim and forage in park waters. Thousands of harbor seals breed and nurture their pups on floating ice in Johns Hopkins Inlet and among the reefs of the Beardslee Islands. Minke and killer whales—along with harbor and Dall's porpoises—feed in the park's near-shore waters. Sea otters are rapidly colonizing Glacier Bay, Icy Strait and Cross Sound. From the tour boat, watch for tufted and horned puffins, guillemots, murrelets and kittiwakes. Bald eagles are easily seen along park shorelines. Back on land, watch for mountain goats, brown and black bears, river otters, porcupines, red squirrels, moose, coyotes and wolves.



Sea otters are a common sight in the cold waters of Alaska.

KENAI FJORDS

At Kenai Fjords National Park, the vegetation tends to be sparse, but hardy. Due to acidic or sandy soil, more than 90 percent of the landscape remains bare. The vegetation that survives is often divided into four major ecosystems. The highest, the **arctic-alpine zone**, is above the tree line and dominated by **sedges**, **grasses**, **willows** and other dwarf plants. In lower elevations, dense thickets of **alder**, **willow** and **devil's club** prepare the way for mature stands of spruce and **hemlock forests**; these, along with **bunchberry** and **mountain cranberry**, make up the **Hudsonian zone**. On the coast, the Hudsonian zone merges with the **Canadian zone**, a comparatively lush ecosystem of **Sitka spruce**, **salmonberry** and **skunk cabbage**. Offshore, the **coastal marine zone**, concentrated on islands and beaches, includes large stands of **kelp** and **eelgrass**.

When hiking, look for mountain goats, marmots, bears, moose and bald eagles. The coastal areas offer views of seals, sea lions, sea otters and migrating whales. More than 50,000 seabirds, including murre, puffins and squealing black-legged kittiwakes, occupy coastal cliffs in summer.

One of the best places to observe wildlife in Kenai Fjords is at the Chiswell Islands, which are located at the mouth of Aialik Bay in the Gulf of Alaska. Technically, the Chiswells are not in the park; they are part of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge, but many of the same critters are seen on the rocky headlands, which are part of the national park. In addition, the only **Steller sea lion** nursery area that can be legally approached is situated on these islands.



WATCHABLE WILDLIFE



1 CARIBOU (*RANGIFER TARANDUS*)

Caribou are adapted to the cold climate, with two layers of fur and hooves that change shape in cooler months to cut through snow and ice. They are most often seen in treeless tundra and mountains. Their domesticated relatives in Scandinavia and Russia are called reindeer. • **Weight** 130-700 lbs • **Height** 3-5 ft at shoulders • **Active** year-round. Photo: iStock

2 WOLF (*CANIS LUPUS*)

Alaska holds the largest remaining population of gray wolves in the U.S., with 7,000 to 11,000 wolves roaming the state. They prey on sheep, goats, deer, moose, yaks and horses. Wolves usually travel and live in packs of two to 20 members. • **Weight** 40-50 lbs • **Height** 2-3 ft at shoulders • **Active** year-round. Photo: iStock

3 WOLVERINE (*GULO GULO*)

Although they're the size of a dog, wolverines can kill prey as large as a moose. They also have a special rotated molar that can cut through frozen meat and bone. Wolverines don dark brown fur and give off a strong, unpleasant odor. • **Weight** 22-36 lbs • **Length** 2-3 ft • **Active** year-round. Photo: iStock

4 MOOSE (*ALCES ALCES*)

Moose are the largest members of the deer family. Male moose display large antlers shaped like clawed scoops, clearly distinguishing them from females, which have none. Each year the males shed their antlers after mating season only to regrow them the following spring. • **Weight** 600-1,580 lbs • **Height** 6-7 ft at shoulders • **Active** year-round. Photo: iStock

5 DALL SHEEP (*OVIS DALLI DALLI*)

It's hard to miss the white coat and thick, curved horns of this sheep. Dall sheep perch on steep ledges and graze in open alpine ridges and meadows near slopes with extremely rugged ground—a treacherous habitat that deters predators. • **Weight** 150-300 lbs • **Height** 3 ft at shoulders • **Active** year-round. Photo: iStock

6 MUSK OX (*OVIPOS MOSCHATUS*)

These shaggy survivors of the ice age have a thick fur coat, called qiviut, to keep them warm, but they must also protect themselves from predators. If one predator approaches, they run in a line. If several predators, like wolves, surround the group, they form a circle with all musk oxen facing outward. • **Weight** 400-800 lbs • **Height** 4-5 ft • **Active** year-round. Photo: iStock



IDENTIFYING ALASKA'S BEARS

BLACK BEAR



Left Front Foot Track

- Claws shorter
- Toes more separated and more curved



Left Back Foot Track



GRIZZLY BEAR



Left Front Foot Track

- Claws longer
- Toes closer together and less curved



Left Back Foot Track



– Tracks of big grizzlies are larger

Heel pad of front foot often does not show for either species

HOW TO IDENTIFY

Follow the numbers in each step:

1. Find the lowest point of outside (largest) toe
2. Find the highest point on front edge of palm pad.
3. Connect point 1 and 2; extend this line to the inside of the track.
 - If more than 50% of the inside (smallest) toe is above the line, the track is from a grizzly bear.
 - If more than 50% of the inside (smallest) toe is below the line, the track is from a black bear.
 - If the line bisects the inside toe, claw marks shape of the palm pad, spacing between toes, other signs must be used in species identification.



PHOTOGRAPHY

For millennia, we've looked towards the heavens and contemplated what's beyond our orbit and universe. More recently, stargazing has become increasingly difficult for millions of people living in developed areas. If you live in a populated area east of the Mississippi or along the Pacific coast, odds are that you can count the number of stars you see on your hands. National and state parks—remote and minimally developed—not only protect our land, but also our dark skies which are ideal for astrophotography.

There are two primary types of astrophotography shots that yield different, but stellar compositions. A long exposure setting will show stars trailing across the sky, while a shorter exposure will show pinpoints of light—objects that a camera can capture that the unaided eye cannot. Both require a camera with interchangeable lenses and manual controls to set aperture, ISO, and exposure settings. Here's what you'll need to start:

- **A sturdy tripod:** Simply put, a shaky tripod will yield blurry photos.
- **A cable release or remote control or intervalometer:** You'll want to avoid touching your camera to minimize shake. The addition of an intervalometer will allow you to take sequential long exposures.
- **Batteries:** Your aperture may be open for several hours, so it's important to have multiple fresh and fully charged batteries.
- **A wide lens:** Use the fastest, widest lens available.
- **A head lamp:** It'll be useful to set up your equipment and illuminate your foreground.

Check the cloud cover; if there's too much wait until you have a clearer night. Before you start, set your focus to infinity and turn off your autofocus and high ISO noise reduc-

tion. Next, set your white balance to daylight settings (5500k) and turn on your mirror lock to avoid mirror shake. Wait until the moon is out, too, as it'll illuminate and add detail to your foreground. Make sure that it's behind you. To capture star trails:

- Set your ISO at 200 to reduce digital noise.
- Compose your image, making sure you have interesting features in the foreground.
- Choose your focal length. The longer the focal length, the quicker your star trails will start to form.
- Set your camera to manual mode so that you can select your shutter speed and aperture.
- Set your aperture between f/2.8 and f/4 for best results.
- Select "bulb mode" as your shutter speed.
- Use your cable release or remote to open the shutter or set your timer for two to four minutes.

Check your results. If your picture is too dark, increase the exposure time. If your trails are too short, increase the exposure time. Keep playing around with your settings to get the results you desire. To learn how to take photos of the milky way and millions of points of light, visit ohranger.com/brightskies.

Shutterstock



Photographing the night sky is as close as many of us will get to exploring space.



Discover Moab in the Off-Season

With unmatched solitude, spectacular views, and discounted rates, the off-season in Moab is fast becoming one of the most rewarding times to visit. Enjoy year-round access to Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, Dead Horse Point State Park and thousands of square miles of spectacular red rock scenery. No matter what time of year you visit, Moab's warmth and hospitality will shine through.



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435-259-8825 or visit
discovermoab.com





JUST FOR KIDS

A visit to any of Alaska's national parks gives kids a chance to get back to nature, and acquire a better understanding of weather patterns, plant and animal life, living history and the wonders of the ecosystem. At the same time, they're able to gain a better appreciation of the role rangers play in preserving America's parks.

BECOME A JUNIOR RANGER

Kids between the ages of 5 and 13 are eligible to become junior rangers! Several Alaska parks, including **Denali, Glacier Bay, Klondike** and **Lake Clark** have free, fun and informative junior ranger programs. Stop at a main visitor center to get your free junior ranger activity guide. When you're finished, bring the completed activity guide to a ranger, recite the junior ranger pledge, sign the junior ranger certificate and you'll receive an official junior ranger badge.

BECOME A WEBRANGER

Not able to come to one of Alaska's parks? Or planning to visit one? Become a junior ranger from home! You can take a virtual tour, print out and complete the junior ranger activity page, and mail the completed form back to the park. All the information you need is at www.nps.gov/webangers.

VIRTUAL VISITS AT SCHOOL

Alaska's national parks aren't just for fun during vacations. Students can find a variety of online resources that will help them complete school projects at go.nps.gov/AKteachers. You'll find maps, photographs, park facts and activities.

Teachers will find distance learning and lesson plan materials for Denali, Glacier Bay, Kenai Fjords and Sitka.

DISCOVER DENALI

Take part in the **Denali Discovery Pack** program, designed for kids ages 6 to 12, and you'll receive a backpack filled with fun. This pack contains an activity guide, tools and other materials that help you explore the park. There's also lots of amazing wildlife to discover in Denali. Take a trip on a shuttle bus and keep your eyes peeled for bears, caribou, sheep, wolves and moose. If you're lucky, you might see all five!

GATES OF THE ARCTIC

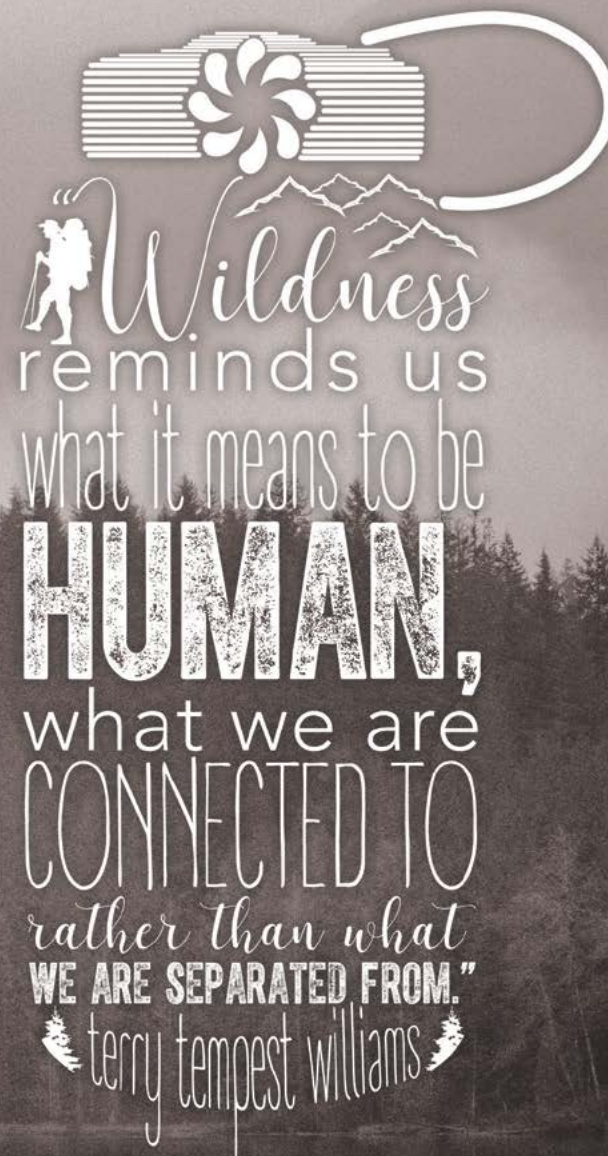
Students and teachers may find an online student handbook useful in researching this national park unit for projects. Simply contact the interpretive specialist at the Bettles Ranger Station and Visitor Center.

GLACIER BAY

If you visit the park by land, be sure to see the ranger and the exhibits in the visitor center on the second floor of Glacier Bay Lodge. If you come by ship, look for someone wearing the familiar gray and green uniform, badge and ranger hat! Rangers join all cruise ships and tour boats that visit the bay. If you are a virtual visitor, log on to nps.gov/glba/forkids.

WRANGELL-ST. ELIAS

There are millions of acres of mountains, glaciers, wildlife and old mines to explore. If you can't actually visit the park, you can learn about this very special place online at nps.gov/wrst/learn/kidsyouth.



NATURE VALLEY

HAVE SOME
FAMILY FUN

CLIMB A MOUNTAIN

SLEEP UNDER THE STARS

RECHARGE

EAT A NATURE VALLEY BAR

CAST A LINE

RUN A RIVER

REFRESH

FIND YOUR
HAPPY PLACE

HIT THE TRAIL

TAKE A HIKE WHERE THE WIFI IS WEAK!

You're not going to remember the time you spent surfing the web. Get back to nature and see why you'll find the best tweets outside, not online.

#NatureGives

