

🐻 Best Places to See Wildlife in Alaska

The Ultimate Guide to Alaska's Top Wildlife Viewing Destinations



One of the biggest reasons people visit Alaska is the chance to experience wildlife in its natural habitat. From massive brown bears catching salmon to humpback whales breaching beside glaciers, Alaska offers some of the best wildlife viewing opportunities anywhere in the world.

The key is knowing **where** to look. Different regions of Alaska are known for different animals, and choosing the right excursion—or simply knowing what to watch for during your cruise—can greatly increase your chances of memorable wildlife encounters.

Whether you're hoping to photograph a bald eagle, watch a pod of orcas, or see a moose grazing beside the road, this guide will help you find the best places to experience Alaska's incredible wildlife.

🐻 Katmai National Park

The Ultimate Bear Viewing Destination



If seeing brown bears is at the top of your bucket list, **Katmai National Park** is hard to beat.

Highlights include:

- Famous Brooks Falls
- Brown bears catching salmon
- Excellent photography opportunities
- Ranger-guided viewing platforms

Best For:

- ✓ Brown Bears
- ✓ Salmon Runs
- ✓ Wildlife Photography



Denali National Park



Denali offers some of Alaska's best opportunities to see large land mammals.

Common sightings include:

- Moose
- Caribou
- Dall Sheep
- Grizzly Bears
- Gray Wolves (less common)
- Golden Eagles
- Red Fox

Because wildlife roams freely, every visit is different.

Icy Strait Point



One of Alaska's premier whale-watching destinations.

Excellent chances to see:

- Humpback Whales
- Orcas
- Harbor Seals
- Bald Eagles
- Sea Lions

Many cruises offer whale-watching excursions here.

Kenai Fjords National Park



Kenai Fjords is a marine wildlife paradise.

Expect to see:

- Sea Otters
- Puffins
- Harbor Seals
- Steller Sea Lions

- Humpback Whales
- Orcas
- Dall's Porpoises

Small-boat tours often provide outstanding wildlife encounters.



Glacier Bay National Park



Glacier Bay combines breathtaking scenery with abundant wildlife.

Look for:

- Harbor Seals
- Humpback Whales
- Sea Otters
- Mountain Goats
- Black Bears
- Bald Eagles
- Puffins

Keep binoculars handy throughout scenic cruising.



Ketchikan



© Don Enright

Ketchikan is famous for salmon.

During late summer you may also see:

- Bald Eagles
- Harbor Seals
- Black Bears
- Pacific Salmon
- Sea Lions

The combination of salmon streams and coastal waters attracts wildlife throughout the season.



Sitka



Sitka offers excellent marine wildlife viewing.

Common sightings include:

- Sea Otters
- Humpback Whales
- Bald Eagles
- Sea Lions
- Harbor Seals
- Puffins

Kodiak Island



Kodiak Island is world-famous for:

- Kodiak Bears
- Bald Eagles
- Sea Otters
- Harbor Seals
- Mountain Goats
- Salmon

Kodiak bears are the largest brown bears on Earth.

Haines



Haines is renowned for bald eagles.

The nearby **Chilkat Bald Eagle Preserve** hosts one of the world's largest concentrations of bald eagles during parts of the year.

Other wildlife includes:

- Moose
- Brown Bears
- Mountain Goats

Wildlife You Can Often See from Your Cruise Ship



You don't always need an excursion.

Many guests see:

- Humpback Whales
- Orcas
- Harbor Seals

- Sea Otters
- Dall's Porpoises
- Bald Eagles
- Puffins
- Jellyfish

Simply spending time on deck often leads to unforgettable wildlife encounters.



Best Wildlife Viewing by Month

Month	Highlights
May	Bears emerge, whales return, migratory birds arrive
June	Moose calves, whale watching, puffin colonies
July	Peak whale watching, bear activity increases
August	Salmon runs, bears fishing, abundant marine wildlife
September	Fall colors, bears feeding heavily, eagle activity increases



Tips for Better Wildlife Viewing

- Carry binoculars everywhere.
 - Keep your camera ready.
 - Spend time on outdoor decks while cruising.
 - Listen to naturalists and crew announcements.
 - Stay patient—wildlife appears on its own schedule.
 - Book excursions focused specifically on wildlife if it's a priority.
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Premium Travel Group Tip

If wildlife is one of the main reasons you're choosing an Alaska cruise, consider combining your cruise with a land tour. A cruise showcases Alaska's incredible marine life, while destinations like Denali and Katmai offer opportunities to experience the state's iconic land animals. Together, they create the ultimate Alaska wildlife adventure.



Continue Exploring Alaska

Continue planning your Alaska adventure with our other guides:

- Alaska Wildlife Guide
- Wildlife Photography Guide
- Brown Bear Guide

- Moose Guide
 - Bald Eagle Guide
 - Humpback Whale Guide
 - Orca Guide
 - Kenai Fjords Guide
 - Glacier Bay Guide
 - Denali National Park Guide
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Fun Facts

- Alaska is home to **over 100,000 black bears** and approximately **30,000 brown bears**.
 - More than **40 million seabirds** nest in Alaska each summer.
 - Alaska supports the largest population of **bald eagles** in the United States.
 - Every summer, **millions of Pacific salmon** return to Alaska's rivers to spawn.
 - It's possible to see whales, bears, eagles, seals, and sea otters all in the same day during an Alaska cruise.
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Why Alaska is One of the World's Greatest Wildlife Destinations

Few places on Earth offer the opportunity to experience such an incredible variety of wildlife in such spectacular settings. Whether you're watching a humpback whale breach beside your cruise ship, spotting a moose in Denali, or photographing a brown bear catching salmon, Alaska delivers unforgettable moments at every turn.

The beauty of Alaska isn't just in its glaciers and mountains—it's in the incredible animals that call this wild landscape home.



Joe's Logbook

One of the questions I get asked most often is, "Where's the best place to see wildlife in Alaska?"

The truth is, there's no single answer because every part of Alaska offers something different. If you want whales, head toward Icy Strait Point or Kenai Fjords. If bears are your dream, Katmai is hard to beat. If you want the best variety of land animals, Denali is the place to be.

What I love most is that you never know what you're going to see. I've watched humpback whales from a cruise ship, spotted bald eagles while walking through town, and seen sea otters floating quietly beside the shoreline—all without expecting it.

My advice is simple: stay curious, keep your binoculars nearby, and spend as much time outdoors as you can. Alaska has a way of rewarding those who take the time to look, and sometimes the most unforgettable wildlife encounter is the one you never planned for.