



Alaska Dall Sheep Guide

Your Complete Guide to Seeing Alaska's Majestic White Mountain Sheep



Few animals symbolize Alaska's rugged mountain wilderness like the **Dall sheep**. With their brilliant white coats, impressive curled horns, and incredible climbing ability, these mountain dwellers are among the state's most iconic wildlife species.

Found high above the treeline on steep alpine slopes, Dall sheep have evolved to thrive in some of Alaska's most challenging terrain. Their agility allows them to navigate rocky cliffs with ease while avoiding predators such as wolves and bears.

For many travelers visiting Denali National Park or Alaska's Interior, spotting a Dall sheep perched high on a mountainside is one of the highlights of their trip.



Quick Facts



Scientific Name: *Ovis dalli dalli*

Height:

- About **3 feet (90 cm)** at the shoulder

Weight:

- Rams: **160–250 pounds**
- Ewes: **100–140 pounds**

Lifespan:

- 10–15 years in the wild

Diet:

- Grasses
- Sedges
- Wildflowers
- Mosses
- Lichens
- Shrubs

Their thick white coat provides excellent camouflage against snow-covered mountain landscapes.

Where Can You See Dall Sheep?



The best places to see Dall sheep include:

- Denali National Park
- Alaska Range
- Wrangell–St. Elias National Park
- Chugach Mountains

- Brooks Range
- Hatcher Pass
- Interior Alaska

Denali National Park is one of the most popular places for visitors to spot Dall sheep.

★ Masters of the Mountains

Dall sheep spend much of their lives on steep mountain slopes.

Their specialized hooves provide:

- Excellent traction
- Sure footing
- Incredible balance
- The ability to escape predators on rocky cliffs

Terrain that appears impossible to humans is simply home to a Dall sheep.

🌀 The Rams' Impressive Horns



Male Dall sheep, called **rams**, are famous for their massive curled horns.

The horns:

- Continue growing throughout life.
- Can weigh up to **30 pounds**.
- Are used during dominance contests between males.

Older rams often have the largest and most impressive horn curls.

Lambs

Dall sheep lambs are typically born during:

Late May through early June

Within just a few days of birth, young lambs are already climbing steep mountain slopes alongside their mothers.

Watching lambs confidently navigate cliffs is one of Alaska's most remarkable wildlife sights.

Can You See Dall Sheep on an Alaska Cruise?

Seeing Dall sheep directly from a cruise ship is **very unlikely**.

Your best opportunities are during:

- Denali CruiseTours
- Alaska Railroad journeys through Interior Alaska
- Scenic motorcoach tours
- National park excursions

Many visitors spot Dall sheep high on distant mountainsides while traveling through Denali.

Photography Tips



Dall sheep are usually seen from a distance.

For the best photos:

- Bring binoculars.
- Use a telephoto lens (300mm or longer if possible).

- Scan rocky ridgelines carefully.
 - Look for bright white shapes against gray mountains.
 - Include the surrounding scenery to showcase their incredible habitat.
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Best Time to See Dall Sheep

May

Excellent.

Sheep move into greener alpine areas.

June

Outstanding.

Lambs are commonly seen with ewes.

July

Excellent.

Sheep graze on mountain meadows.

August

Excellent.

Clear weather provides outstanding viewing opportunities.

September

Very good.

Beautiful fall colors enhance the scenery.



Interesting Behaviors

Dall sheep are known for:

- Living at high elevations
- Traveling in small groups
- Resting on steep cliffs
- Outstanding eyesight
- Exceptional climbing ability

Their sharp vision often allows them to detect danger long before predators get close.



What to Bring

Bring:

- ✓ Binoculars
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Telephoto lens
- ✓ Layered clothing
- ✓ Sunglasses
- ✓ Patience

Most Dall sheep sightings happen at considerable distances.



Premium Travel Group Tip

When traveling through Denali National Park, don't just look at the valley floor for wildlife. Spend plenty of time scanning the mountainsides. Dall sheep often appear as tiny white dots high on the cliffs, and once your guide points them out, you'll be amazed at where they're able to live.



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Fun Facts

- Dall sheep can leap **more than 20 feet** across rocky ledges.
- Rams' horns continue growing throughout their lives and can weigh **up to 30 pounds**.
- Their eyesight is so sharp they can detect predators from over a mile away.
- Lambs can climb steep rocky terrain just days after birth.
- Dall sheep rely on high cliffs as their primary defense against predators.



Why Are Dall Sheep So Special?

Dall sheep are among Alaska's most remarkable mountain animals. Their bright white coats, graceful movements, and ability to thrive in rugged alpine landscapes make every sighting unforgettable. Whether you're spotting a lone ram silhouetted on a ridgeline or watching a group of ewes and lambs navigate impossible-looking cliffs, Dall sheep embody the resilience and beauty of Alaska's wilderness.



Joe's Logbook

Dall sheep are one of those animals that really make you appreciate a good pair of binoculars. Most of the time, you'll first hear someone say, "There's a sheep up on that mountain!" At first, all you see is a tiny white speck. Then you focus your binoculars, and suddenly you realize you're looking at a full-grown ram standing on a cliff that hardly seems wide enough for its hooves.

One thing I enjoy about spotting Dall sheep is knowing you're seeing an animal exactly where it's meant to be. They look completely at home on steep mountainsides that most of us wouldn't even attempt to climb.

If you're visiting Denali National Park, don't forget to spend as much time looking **up** as you do across the landscape. Some of the best wildlife in Alaska isn't on the valley floor—it's standing proudly on the cliffs above, reminding us just how wild and extraordinary this state really is.