



New England & Canada Wildlife Guide

Discover the Incredible Wildlife of the Atlantic Coast



While New England & Canada may be best known for colorful fall foliage, charming coastal towns, and historic cities, it's also home to an incredible variety of wildlife. From whales breaching offshore and puffins nesting on rugged islands to moose wandering through forests and seals basking on rocky shorelines, every cruise offers opportunities to experience nature at its finest.

Unlike Alaska, where wildlife often steals the spotlight, New England & Canada blends wildlife with history, culture, and breathtaking coastal scenery. Keep your camera and binoculars nearby—you never know what you'll discover while sailing between ports or exploring ashore.



Marine Life



The cold waters of the North Atlantic support an amazing variety of marine life.

Common species include:

- Humpback Whales
- Fin Whales
- Minke Whales
- Harbor Seals

- Gray Seals
- Atlantic White-Sided Dolphins
- Harbor Porpoises

The best opportunities to see marine wildlife are often during whale-watching excursions and while sailing between ports.



Land Mammals



Forests throughout New England and Atlantic Canada are home to:

- Moose
- White-tailed Deer
- Black Bears
- Red Foxes
- Beavers
- Snowshoe Hares
- Coyotes

Moose are among the region's most iconic animals and are most often seen in northern Maine, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.



Birds of the Atlantic Coast



Bird lovers will find plenty to enjoy.

Popular species include:

- Atlantic Puffins
- Bald Eagles
- Ospreys
- Great Blue Herons
- Common Loons
- Northern Gannets
- Black Guillemots
- Double-crested Cormorants

Many seabirds nest on offshore islands during the summer months.

Marine & Freshwater Species



The Atlantic Ocean supports countless fascinating species, including:

- Atlantic Salmon
- American Lobster
- Blue Mussels
- Sea Stars
- Crabs
- Jellyfish
- Sea Urchins

These waters also sustain the region's famous seafood industry.



Best Places to See Wildlife



Top wildlife destinations include:

Bay of Fundy

Excellent whale watching and seabirds.

Acadia National Park

Deer, foxes, seals, and coastal birds.

Cape Breton Highlands

Moose, bald eagles, and scenic landscapes.

Machias Seal Island

One of the best places to see Atlantic puffins during nesting season.

Gulf of St. Lawrence

Whales, dolphins, and seabirds.



Wildlife by Season



May

- Migratory birds arrive.
- Whale season begins.

June

- Puffin nesting season.
- Excellent whale watching.
- Active seabird colonies.

July

- Peak whale watching.
- Marine wildlife at its busiest.
- Young wildlife becomes more visible.

August

- Continued whale activity.
- Great conditions for wildlife excursions.
- Excellent coastal bird watching.

September–October

- Moose become more active during the rut.
 - Migratory birds begin heading south.
 - Beautiful fall scenery enhances wildlife photography.
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Wildlife You May See From Your Cruise Ship



Keep an eye on the water and shoreline—you may spot:

- Humpback Whales
- Minke Whales
- Harbor Seals
- Dolphins
- Bald Eagles
- Ospreys
- Great Blue Herons
- Seabirds

Many cruise lines announce significant wildlife sightings over the public-address system.



Wildlife Photography Tips



For the best photos:

- Carry binoculars.
- Keep your camera ready.

- Use burst mode for whales and birds.
- Photograph early in the morning or late afternoon for softer light.
- Include coastal scenery to tell the full story.

Sometimes the landscape is just as impressive as the wildlife.

Respect Wildlife

Always remember:

- ✓ Observe from a safe distance.
- ✓ Never feed wildlife.
- ✓ Stay on designated trails.
- ✓ Follow your guide's instructions.
- ✓ Leave nature exactly as you found it.

Responsible wildlife viewing helps protect these incredible animals and their habitats.

Premium Travel Group Tip

If wildlife is high on your priority list, consider booking at least one dedicated whale-watching excursion. While you may spot whales from your cruise ship, a smaller excursion boat often gets you closer—while still following wildlife protection guidelines—and experienced naturalists help identify species and explain their behaviors.

Continue Exploring New England & Canada

Continue planning your adventure with our other guides:

- Whale Watching Guide
 - Best Time to Cruise New England & Canada
 - New England & Canada Cruise Planning Guide
 - New England & Canada Packing Guide
 - Fall Foliage Guide
 - Acadia National Park Guide (*future guide*)
 - Bay of Fundy Guide (*future guide*)
 - Halifax Cruise Port Guide
 - Bar Harbor Cruise Port Guide
 - Québec City Cruise Port Guide
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Fun Facts

- The Bay of Fundy has some of the **highest tides in the world**, creating nutrient-rich waters that attract whales and countless other marine animals.
 - Atlantic Puffins can carry **multiple fish at once** thanks to the unique structure of their beaks.
 - Moose are the **largest members of the deer family**, with bulls weighing well over 1,000 pounds.
 - Humpback whales migrate thousands of miles each year between warm breeding grounds and the rich feeding waters of the North Atlantic.
 - Bald eagle populations have made a remarkable recovery and are now commonly seen throughout much of New England and Atlantic Canada.
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Wildlife Adds Another Dimension to Your Cruise

The wildlife of New England & Canada may not always be as famous as Alaska's, but it's every bit as rewarding to discover. Watching a humpback whale surface beside your excursion boat, spotting a puffin on a rocky island, or seeing a moose emerge from the forest reminds you that this region is more than historic towns and colorful leaves—it's also home to thriving coastal and forest ecosystems that make every cruise unique.



Joe's Logbook

One thing I really appreciate about New England & Canada is that wildlife often appears when you least expect it.

You might spend the morning walking through a historic town, then look out across the harbor and suddenly spot a whale in the distance. Or while enjoying a scenic drive, you catch sight of a moose feeding along the edge of a lake. It's those unexpected moments that often become the memories you talk about the most.

I always encourage travelers to keep a pair of binoculars handy and spend a little extra time on the outside decks while the ship is sailing. Just like Alaska, some of the best wildlife encounters happen between ports—not just during excursions.

This region has a quieter kind of beauty, where history, nature, and coastal life all come together. If you take the time to look around, you'll discover that New England & Canada has plenty of wild surprises waiting for you.