



Alaska Wildlife by Month Guide

The Best Animals to See During Every Month of Alaska's Cruise Season



One of the most common questions travelers ask is, "**What wildlife will I see during my Alaska cruise?**" The answer depends largely on **when** you visit.

Every month brings different opportunities. May welcomes migrating whales and newborn wildlife, June offers long daylight hours and active bird colonies, July is prime whale-watching season, while August and September showcase spectacular salmon runs and hungry bears preparing for winter.

No matter when you sail, Alaska offers incredible wildlife encounters—you just need to know what to expect.



May

Spring Comes to Life



May marks the beginning of Alaska's cruise season.

Excellent Wildlife

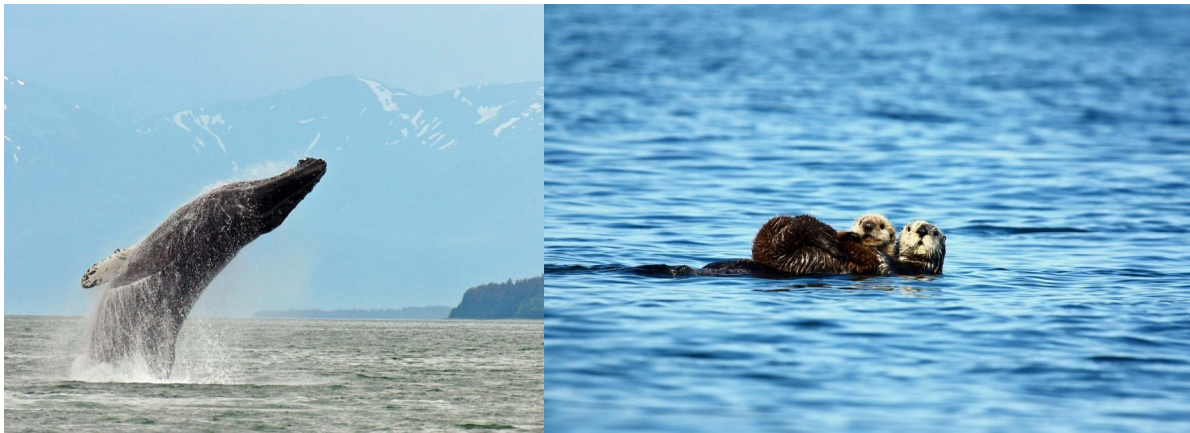
- 🐳 Humpback Whales returning from Hawaii
- 🐻 Brown Bears emerging from hibernation
- 🦌 Moose with newborn calves
- 🦅 Bald Eagles nesting
- 🐧 Puffins returning to breeding colonies
- 🦦 Harbor Seals around glaciers

Why Visit in May?

- Fewer crowds
 - Snow-covered mountains
 - Active wildlife
 - Excellent bird watching
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☀ June

Wildlife Everywhere



June offers nearly endless daylight.

Excellent Wildlife

- 🐳 Humpback Whales
- 🐳 Orcas
- 🦦 Sea Otters with pups
- 🦅 Bald Eagles
- 🦢 Trumpeter Swans with cygnets

🐐 Mountain Goats

🐧 Puffins

🦦 Harbor Seals

Why Visit in June?

- Long daylight hours
- Pleasant temperatures
- Excellent photography
- Active wildlife everywhere

☀️ July

Peak Wildlife Season



July is one of Alaska's busiest wildlife months.

Excellent Wildlife

🐻 Brown Bears

🐋 Humpback Whales

🦈 Orcas

🐬 Dall's Porpoises

🦦 Sea Otters

🦅 Bald Eagles

🐧 Puffins carrying fish

🦦 Steller Sea Lions

Why Visit in July?

- Peak whale activity
- Warm weather

- Wildlife feeding young
 - Outstanding marine life
-

August

Salmon Season



August may be Alaska's most exciting wildlife month.

Excellent Wildlife

-  Pacific Salmon
-  Brown Bears catching salmon
-  Black Bears
-  Bald Eagles
-  Humpback Whales
-  Sea Otters
-  Harbor Seals
-  Orcas

Why Visit in August?

- Peak salmon runs
 - Incredible bear viewing
 - Active wildlife everywhere
 - Excellent photography
-

September

Fall Feeding Frenzy



September brings beautiful fall colors and active wildlife preparing for winter.

Excellent Wildlife

-  Brown Bears
-  Moose during the rut
-  Bald Eagles
-  Humpback Whales
-  Orcas
-  Sea Otters
-  Harbor Seals
-  Red Fox

Why Visit in September?

- Beautiful autumn colors
 - Fewer crowds
 - Excellent wildlife photography
 - Active mammals preparing for winter
-



Best Time to See Specific Wildlife



Wildlife	Best Months
Humpback Whales	May–September
Orcas	June–September
Brown Bears	May–September
Black Bears	June–September
Moose	May–September
Bald Eagles	May–September
Puffins	May–August
Sea Otters	May–September
Harbor Seals	May–September
Steller Sea Lions	May–September
Dall's Porpoises	June–September
Pacific Salmon	July–September



Where to See Them



Marine Wildlife

Best Locations:

- Kenai Fjords
- Glacier Bay
- Icy Strait Point
- Prince William Sound

Land Wildlife

Best Locations:

- Denali National Park
- Katmai National Park
- Kodiak Island
- Interior Alaska

Bird Watching

Best Locations:

- Haines
- Kenai Fjords
- Ketchikan
- Sitka



Wildlife Viewing Tips

To improve your chances:

- ✓ Spend time on open decks
- ✓ Bring binoculars
- ✓ Keep your camera ready
- ✓ Listen for wildlife announcements
- ✓ Book dedicated wildlife excursions
- ✓ Be patient

Nature works on its own schedule.



Premium Travel Group Tip

There really isn't a "bad" month for wildlife in Alaska. Instead of asking which month has the most wildlife, think about which animals are highest on your wish list. Whale lovers may prefer June or July, while bear enthusiasts often choose late July or August when salmon runs are at their peak.



Continue Exploring Alaska

Continue planning your Alaska adventure with our other guides:

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- [Best Places to See Wildlife Guide](#)
- [Wildlife Photography Guide](#)
- [Best Time to Visit Alaska](#)
- [Brown Bear Guide](#)
- [Humpback Whale Guide](#)
- [Bald Eagle Guide](#)
- [Kenai Fjords Guide](#)
- [Glacier Bay Guide](#)
- [Denali National Park Guide](#)



Fun Facts

- Alaska's long summer days provide up to **20 hours of daylight**, giving wildlife more time to feed.
- Salmon runs trigger one of the largest seasonal wildlife gatherings in North America.
- Humpback whales arrive each spring after traveling **3,000–5,000 miles** from Hawaii.
- Many young animals—including moose calves, bear cubs, and sea otter pups—are most visible during early summer.
- Every Alaska cruise offers different wildlife sightings, making each voyage unique.



Why Every Month is Special

Alaska changes throughout the cruise season, and so does its wildlife. Spring brings new life, summer is filled with feeding and activity, and early fall offers dramatic landscapes paired with some of the year's best wildlife viewing. No matter when you visit, there's always something extraordinary waiting just beyond the next bend in the coastline or around the next glacier.



Joe's Logbook

One of the biggest misconceptions about Alaska is that there's a single "best" month to visit. After talking with travelers for years, I've come to realize the better question is, "What do you want to see?"

If your dream is watching a humpback whale breach, June and July are fantastic. If you've always wanted to see a brown bear catching salmon, late July and August are hard to beat. And if you enjoy colorful fall scenery with fewer crowds, September is an incredible time to explore.