



## Juneau: A “Capital” Wildlife Viewing Experience

Stand in the midst of Alaska’s state capital and raise your eyes to the sky to watch bald eagles, great blue herons and ravens. Turn to the steep cliffs and avalanche paths behind town and scan for mountain goats and black bears. If you are lucky, you may see humpback or killer whales swim past town.

Now, unpack your bags and settle in for a few days. Juneau has a wealth and diversity of wildlife viewing experiences for you, whether you like to go on your own or with a guide. We’ve selected a dozen of our favorite destinations to share with you. These aren’t the only places to see wildlife, but by the time you’ve visited all of them, you’ll have discovered new places on your own.



JUNEAU  
CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

For information on tours and lodging, consult the Juneau Convention & Visitors Bureau. Visit [www.traveljuneau.com](http://www.traveljuneau.com) or call 888-581-2201. In Juneau, stop by the Centennial Hall visitor center or

call 586-2201.

Ready to get started? Juneau’s wildlife is waiting – grab your camera, a good pair of shoes and your sense of adventure and head on out!



## Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail

From the bears of Hyder to the bald eagles of Haines, the whales of Frederick Sound to the birds of the Stikine River, the Inside Passage Segment of the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail highlights over 70 wildlife viewing sites in and near the communities of Gustavus, Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Prince of Wales Island, Sitka, Skagway and Wrangell.



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Wildlife Conservation and  
Restoration Program

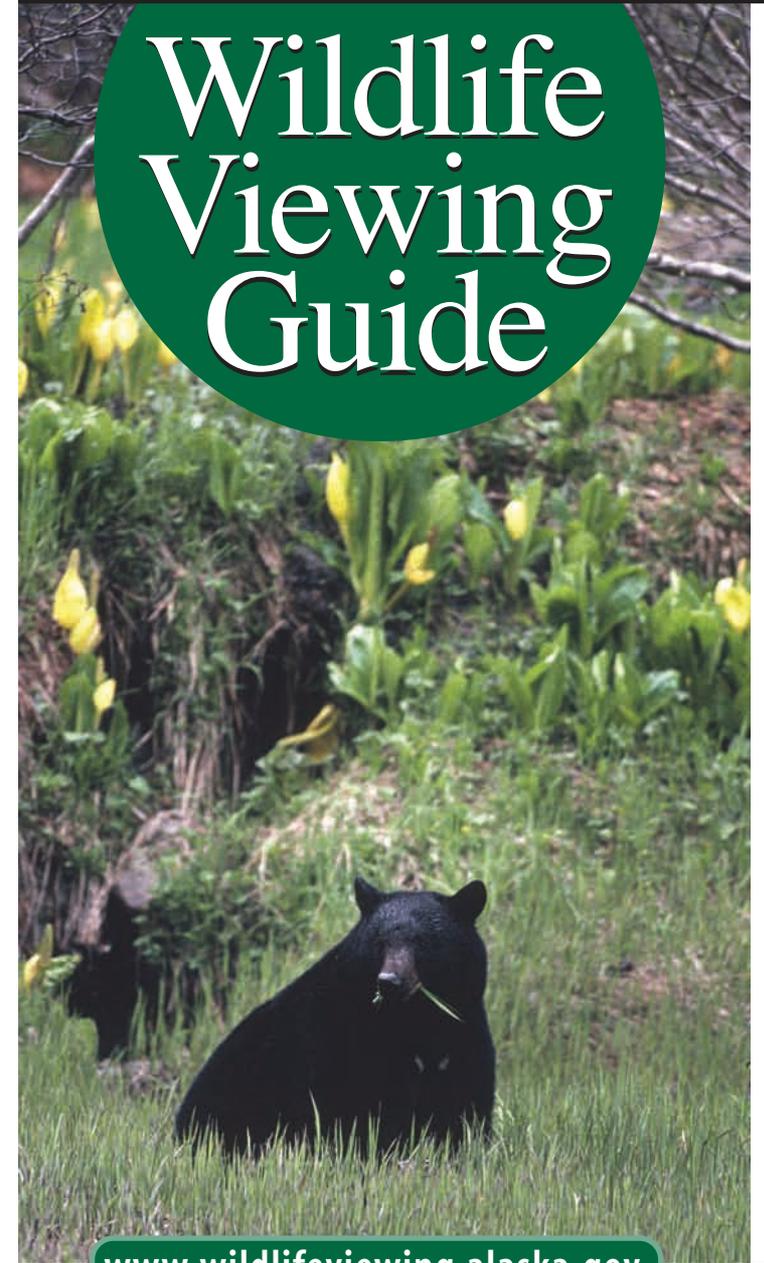
*All public partners  
are equal opportunity  
providers and employers.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
about the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail, or to  
browse through wildlife viewing sites in other  
communities, visit [wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov](http://wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov)**

*Bear safety, porcupine and beaver photos © A. W. Hanger  
Marmot, deer, downtown and American dipper photos © Jamie Karnik, ADF&G.  
All other photos © ADF&G.*

# JUNEAU

# Wildlife Viewing Guide



[www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov](http://www.wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov)

Alaska Department of  
Fish and Game  
**Watch Our Wildlife**

## Wildlife Viewing Tips

 **Keep a Low Profile.** Enjoy watching animals' natural behaviors. Resist the temptation to try to attract their attention with sounds. If your presence is causing an animal to stop feeding or act restless, give it more space. Be especially respectful of nesting and denning areas, rookeries and calving grounds, and critical feeding areas.

 **Time it Right.** Dawn and dusk are when many wildlife species are most active. Midday warmth energizes dragonflies and butterflies and creates thermals for eagles and hawks. Low tides expose tidepools and a wealth of food for birds and mammals.

 **Look for Clues.** Tracks, droppings, trails and twigs tell stories of wildlife in the area - what they are eating, where they live and when they passed through. Noticing and reading these clues adds richness to wildlife viewing. Tracking books and workshops will help you.

 **Help Keep Wildlife Wild.** Never feed wild animals. Doing so can cause them to associate people with food, which can cause trouble. Human food can also make them sick.

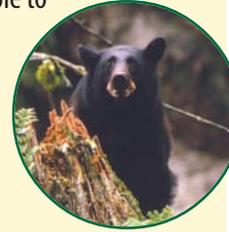
 **Be Considerate of Others.** People use and enjoy Alaska's wildlife in a variety of ways. Respect private property and give hunters, anglers and others plenty of space.



Listen for the high-pitched whistle of hoary marmots while hiking in the alpine.

## Watchable Wildlife "Fun Facts"

**Bears'** eyesight is probably comparable to that of humans except that their night vision is better and their ability to distinguish distant, non-moving objects may be worse. However, bears trust their noses more than their eyes, just as humans trust their vision more than their sense of smell.



**Beavers** are second only to humans in their capacity to manipulate the environment. By building and maintaining dams, busy beavers can completely change the vegetation, animal life, and other components of the watersheds in which they live. The ponds created by the dams are the beaver's first defense against predators like the lynx and wolf.



When a **porcupine** is relaxed, its hair and quills lie flat and point backwards. When threatened, a porcupine draws up the skin of the back to expose quills facing all directions, and then presents its formidable bristling back. The porcupine tries to keep its back facing the attacker and strikes back and forth with its tail.



The **American dipper** searches for food by plunging headlong into clear rushing streams. Grasping stones with their long toes, they walk on streambeds catching aquatic insect larvae. Special adaptations allow this songbird to feed in cold, clear waters year round, even in northern Alaska.



## Traveling Safely in Bear Country

(All of Juneau is bear country)

**Making noise** (sing, clap, talk) while you travel will reduce your chances of surprising a bear. Be alert along noisy streams, in thick brush, and when visibility is poor. Always keep your belongings (backpack, food, fish, etc.) with you or in bear-proof storage.

If you see a bear, **stay calm**. If the bear does not notice you, quietly leave, keeping your eyes on the bear. If it does notice you, face the bear, wave your arms and talk to it calmly. If it approaches you, stand your ground.

**Never run from a bear.**

If a bear is surprised at close distance, it may feel threatened and act defensively, especially if it has cubs or food.

**Stand your ground!** If the bear strikes or bites you, lie on your front, protect your face and neck and remain still. In rare instances, bears may be predatory. Fight back if the attack is prolonged.



### STAY SAFE!

The mountains, trails, islands and waterways of the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail are wild lands. For safety, take a guided tour or take a companion, let someone know your plans and be prepared for emergencies with spare clothes, a first aid kit and a means of communication. Visit the Alaska State Parks' Staying Safe web page for details: [www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/safety](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/parks/safety).



# JUNEAU

# Wildlife Viewing Sites



You might begin your wildlife viewing adventure in **Downtown Juneau 1** where you are never more than a few blocks from prime wildlife habitat, and bears and porcupines wander through town. Scan Mount Juneau's steep faces for mountain goats, checking the avalanche slopes to spot black bears feeding on vegetation. Public spotting scopes in Marine Park allow a closer look. Look down into Gastineau Channel for the shiny heads of harbor seals, as well as large rafts of surf scoters, which are common in spring and early summer. Gold Creek has a small salmon run each August, and great blue herons fish at the mouth of Gold Creek year round, along with harlequin and mallard ducks. Bald eagles frequently fly over town, often harassed by crows.

Whales and other marine mammals occasionally venture into Gastineau Channel but, for more reliable viewing, take a **whale watching 2** or **Tracy Arm 12** cruise. Half and full day cruises that specialize in whale watching depart from Auke Bay, with humpback whales seen consistently. Consider yourself especially lucky if you see killer whales. Daily cruises depart for Tracy Arm-Fords Terror Wilderness Area (located about 40 miles south of Juneau) combining spectacular scenery, tidewater glaciers and harbor seals with fair chances of seeing whales, mountain goats, bears, and other wildlife. Bring a kayak and camp on shore for a true wilderness adventure.

The Mount Roberts Tramway lifts you 1,800 vertical feet **Above Downtown 3** to subalpine habitats, with trails leading into the alpine. This is the closest Juneau has to a designated wildlife viewing area. Marmots and grouse are habituated to people and readily viewable in the summer. Bears, deer, mountain goats, porcupines and other mammals are sometimes seen, and raptors may be spotted hunting. If you have time and energy, hiking trails from Basin Road above Juneau lead up Mount Juneau, Granite Creek Basin, and Mount Roberts to similar habitats and wildlife. Be sure to stay on the trails – off trail hikers are lost and injured almost every year.

The **Macauley Salmon Hatchery 4** is three miles west of downtown along Egan Drive. Turn left at the first stoplight after leaving town and follow the road to their facility. From late June through October watch salmon in the fish ladder. View them from above and through a viewing window. Inside the visitor center dozens of aquariums present a rich diversity of marine species throughout the year.

The **Mendenhall Wetlands State Game Refuge 5** begins at Salmon Creek (just north of DIPAC) and stretches nine miles northwest, encompassing approximately 4,000 acres of critical habitat for migrating and resident birds. As tides ebb and flow across the wetlands, much of the refuge alternates between a pasture and a shallow sea. Over the course of a year, the diverse plant communities feed or shelter more than 140 species of birds, nearly a dozen different mammals, eight anadromous fishes, and an abundance of other marine life. The primary access points for birders and other wildlife watchers are at Fish Creek on Douglas Island and off Radcliffe Road at the west end of the airport.

The **Mendenhall Glacier area 6** is Juneau's most popular recreation area, for residents and visitors alike. Follow the Mendenhall Loop road (becomes Glacier Spur road) to the USDA Forest Service Visitor Center. The glacier clearly is the focal point, but there are a wealth of wildlife viewing opportunities as well, especially if you visit in the early morning and late evening when many species



Look for Sitka black-tailed deer along Juneau's roadways.



<b>1. Downtown Juneau</b>	♿	T	1 – 2 hours
<b>2. Whale Watching</b>	m-s ♿ \$	T	Half – full day +
<b>3. Above Downtown</b>	m-s ♿ 1	T	2 hours – full day
<b>4. Macauley Salmon Hatchery</b>	♿ \$	T	1 – 2 hours
<b>5. Mendenhall Wetlands</b>		T	2 hours – half day
<b>6. Mendenhall Glacier</b>	♿ 2	T	2 hours – full day
<b>7. Auke Bay</b>	♿	T	1 – 4 hours
<b>8. Out the Road</b>	♿		2 hours – full day +
<b>9. Eagle Beach State Park</b>	♿ \$		2 hours – full day +
<b>10. Point Bridget State Park</b>			Full day +
<b>11. Pack Creek</b>	m-s \$		Half – full day +
<b>12. Tracy Arm</b>	m-s ♿ \$		Full day +

m-s May–Sept. only  
 ♿ Wheelchair accessible\*  
 \$ Entry or tour fee  
 Interpretive signs/guides  
 Hiking trails  
 Guided boat tours  
 Camping in area  
 T Public transportation within one mile

\* Not all boats are accessible, ask when booking.

+ Multi-day trips allow for the richest experience.

<sup>1</sup> Fee for tram ride. Trail use is free.

<sup>2</sup> Fee for visitor center entry and camping. Trail use is free.

Map is for locator reference only, not for navigational use.

Map created with TOPO! software © 2006 National Geographic Maps. To learn more visit: [www.nationalgeographic.com/topo](http://www.nationalgeographic.com/topo)

are most active. Graceful arctic terns migrate over 10,000 miles from Antarctica to nest on the ground in clear view of the Photo Point trail, and varied habitats and extensive ponds and trails make the area rich for other birding. Beavers have transformed the landscape with their dams, lodges, and tree-cutting in Steep Creek and the Dredge Lake area, and black and brown bears are drawn to Steep Creek when the salmon are spawning from July through September. Mountain goats can also be seen here year round on the surrounding mountains.

Several access points to **Auke Bay 7** provide wildlife viewing opportunities. The Don Statter Harbor, 12 miles from downtown at the intersection of the Back Loop Road and Glacier Highway, is a good place to look for harbor seals and bald eagles, with sea lions frequenting the area in the winter. The harbor is the departure point for many whale watching cruises. Harbor porpoise and other marine mammals and sea birds are seen from the Auke Village Recreation Area, about four miles west of Auke Bay. Look for the directional sign after the ferry terminal.

For the intrepid wildlife viewer, no visit to Juneau is complete without a trip **“out the road.” 8** Trails, pullouts and overlooks offer remote, often solitary, wildlife watching opportunities and spectacular views of Lynn Canal and the Chilkat Mountains. For marine mammal viewing, any time of day is fine. If you are hoping to see black and brown bears, porcupine, beavers or other land mammals and birds, your chances will be better at dawn and dusk. Stop at pullouts to improve viewing chances. Year round, the Shrine of St. Therese (~mile 23) offers the best shore-based marine mammal viewing. Look for whales from the overlooks above Mab Island (~mile 37.5) as well. The public road ends 39.5 miles from downtown at Echo Cove. Auke Bay has the last available food and gas.

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**Eagle Beach State Park, 9** at Glacier Highway mile 29, is at the rich confluence of the glacial Herbert and Eagle Rivers and Lynn Canal. The extensive tidal flats at Eagle Beach are feeding grounds for shorebirds, geese, and gulls year round, and both black and brown bears frequent the area as well. Check at the ranger station for the latest wildlife news. A one-mile loop trail into the forest, with good birding opportunities, goes near beaver ponds and cottonwood trees. If you have a full day, hike the longer trails up the wildlife-rich Eagle and Herbert valleys.

**Point Bridget State Park 10** is near the end of the road, with trailhead parking at mile 39. The trail passes through muskeg and old-growth forest, past beaver ponds, and then skirts the edge of a large uplift meadow near stands of cottonwood and alder. This diversity of habitats makes for excellent birding, including some vagrant species. Keep an eye out for wildlife sign, as well as black and brown bears, porcupines, deer, and red squirrels. About two miles in, the trail reaches the shores of Berners Bay. Watch for seals, sea lions, humpback whales, and even the occasional killer whale or minke whale as well as eagles, ducks, red-throated and common loons, kingfishers, and gulls. Continue by trail or beach (a rocky scramble, watch for hoary marmot and mink) another 1.4 miles to Point Bridget for more viewing chances.

**Pack Creek 11** brown bear viewing area is located south of Juneau on Admiralty Island. Careful management of people allows the bears to interact, fish for salmon and go about their lives under the eager eyes of wildlife watchers at the estuary and from a viewing tower one mile upstream. Forest Service and/or Fish and Game staff are present during the peak viewing season. Access is by limited permit only. Visitors arrive by floatplane, boat or kayak. Commercial and self-guided options are available. Advance planning is suggested, though permits may be available on short notice. Contact the USDA Forest Service at 907-586-8800 for details.

