

Alaska Wildlife

Wildlife

Like the landscape, the wildlife in Southeast Alaska is big. You may spot mountain goats patrolling shoreline cliffs, black bears catching their lunch, and, moose foraging in marshy tidelands. The mainland and islands of Southeast are ripe for sightings.



Black Bears

Alaskan Black bears aren't as hard to find as you may think. How come? Because while they're mostly black, black bears can also be white, brown, or cinnamon-colored. Some bluish-colored bears, called glacier bears, have even been found in Southeast Alaska. While both black and brown bears spend six to eight months a year preparing for hibernation, you can tell a black bear from a brown bear by their straighter, flatter face and shorter claws. After hibernation, black bears weigh 40 percent less than they did in the fall. Spring males weigh up to 200 pounds and females up to 150 pounds. They are the smallest of North American bears and have an incredible sense of smell.

Marine Life

Alaska is known for its rich marine life: salmon, halibut, crab, and whales. The most commonly spotted cetaceans are orca and humpbacks that migrate to these waters annually, but surprisingly, there are species under the water's surface you might never suspect. Ungainly on land, they look like fat sausages when at rest.



Harbor Seals

One of the most innocent-looking marine animals, harbor seals pop their round heads above the surface and greet many a visitor with their big eyes. When they're not bobbing up or perched on an iceberg they can stay submerged for 20 minutes. Between May and June, females give birth to a single pup on icebergs. Pups then quickly swim away and are on their own in about six weeks.



Sea Otters

Often spotted floating on their backs—sometimes with a pup on their tummies—sea otters spend most of their lives in water, only hauling out to rest. To stay warm in the cool Alaskan waters, they eat 20 percent of their body weight each day. Sea otters also have the densest fur of any mammal with 800,000 to one million hairs per square inch. They even have two types of fur: a dense underfur and longer guard hairs.

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3826 18TH AVE. W.
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