



Skagway: There's Wildlife in Them Thar' Hills

Venture out on one of Skagway's hiking trails, looking and listening for signs of wildlife. Rent a car and head for Dyea, watching for bears, eagles and marine mammals along the way. Scan the ridges above the Klondike Highway for mountain goats. Bring your tent and sleeping bag and hike the famous Chilkoot Trail. Skagway is a good jumping-off point for many wildlife viewing experiences.

Skagway was also a jumping-off point for the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, and once boasted a population of over 20,000. Most headed for Canada's Klondike region, convinced there was "gold in them thar' hills." Some struck it rich. Most went home disappointed. Spend a few days in Skagway and you'll come to realize that, while you may not find any gold, there is definitely wildlife in them thar' hills.



For information on tours and lodging, consult the Skagway Convention and Visitors Bureau. Visit www.skagway.com or call 907-983-2854. In Skagway, stop by the visitor center downtown at Second Avenue and Broadway.



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

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FOR MORE INFORMATION
about the Alaska Coastal Wildlife Viewing Trail, or to
browse through wildlife viewing sites in other
communities, visit wildlifeviewing.alaska.gov

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SKAGWAY

Wildlife Viewing Guide



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.



Long Bay is a great spot to look for harbor porpoises, harbor seals and a variety of sea birds.



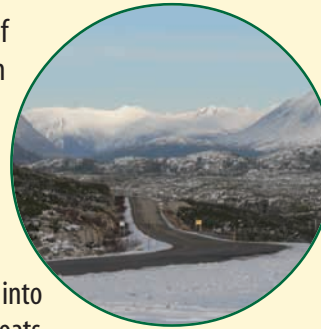
Watchable Wildlife “Fun Facts”

These Boots Were Made for Hiking: Whatever your interest and skill level, you'll find a trail in Skagway that suits you, whether it's a quick walk on the Yakutania Point Trail or a multi-day excursion on the Chilkoot Trail. Many

CHILKOOT TRAILHEAD →

trails pass through a range of habitats, including alpine, subalpine, pine forest and spruce-hemlock forest. Look for wildlife sign and listen for the songs of birds while passing through these habitats. Some trails begin right in town, while others are farther from town and a bit more isolated and rustic. The Denver and Laughton Glacier trails are reached via “whistle-stop” service on the historic White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad. Before setting out, pick up a trail map and some hiking advice at the Skagway Visitor Center or NPS Visitor Center.

O Canada: Skagway is one of only three Southeast Alaskan communities connected via road to Canada (Haines and Hyder are the others). The U.S. - Canada border is 15 miles from downtown, allowing for an easy day trip into Canada. Look for mountain goats, bears, moose, rock ptarmigan, owls, golden eagles, and other wildlife along the road on both sides of the border. Wolves, lynx and caribou might be seen in the boreal forests after crossing into Canada. Good wildlife viewing spots in Canada that can be reached on a day trip from Skagway include the lookout over Windy Arm (50 miles from town, near the “Welcome to the Yukon” sign) and the area around Carcross (61 miles from downtown).



Traveling Safely in Bear Country (All of Skagway 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.



SKAGWAY

Wildlife Viewing Sites



Look for wildlife at the fringes of historic **Downtown Skagway**. **1** Chinook (king) and pink salmon spawn in Pullen Creek and Pond in July and August. Listen and look for American dippers along the creek year-round. Follow Second Avenue east to reach the creek and pond. The Broadway Dock sits at the mouth of Pullen Creek and is a good place to see salmon pooling before they venture up the creek to spawn. Look for harbor seals, river otters, mink, marbled murrelets and pigeon guillemots from the ferry dock or the small boat harbor, found along Congress Way at the southeast corner of town. Walk the shoreline from the harbor back toward town for additional viewing chances. Keep an eye out for rufous hummingbirds, northern goshawks, Townsend's warblers, kingfishers and other species throughout the summer. Winter birds include brown creepers and golden-crowned kinglets.

The **Dewey Lakes Trail System** **2** is a network of trails found on the doorstep of town. The **Lower Dewey Lake Trail** loops 2.5 miles through pine forest around Lower Dewey Lake. Most of the other trails branch off of this trail. The **Upper Lake Trail** starts at the north end of the loop and climbs 3,000 feet in 3 miles (one way) to Upper Dewey Lake. As the trail ascends, forest gives way to alpine — good habitat for grouse and ptarmigan. Look for chicks accompanying their mothers in May and June. Marmots and pika scurry along the ground in the alpine throughout the summer. Use binoculars to search for mountain goats on the surrounding ridgelines. The **Sturgill's Landing Trail** extends 3.5 miles one way from the south end of the Lower Lake loop through pine and spruce-hemlock forest to a lookout over the waters of Taiya Inlet. To reach the Dewey Lakes trail system, cross Pullen Creek at the end of Second Avenue and then head north for about an eighth of a mile, keeping your eyes out for the trailhead marker on your right. Stop by the Visitor's Bureau or the National Park Service Visitor's Center before setting out for additional hiking information, including trail maps and conditions.

From the **Yakutania Point Trail**, **3** scan the waters of Taiya Inlet and the mouth of the Skagway River for scoters, Barrow's goldeneyes, buffleheads, harlequin ducks and red-breasted mergansers. Stand on the footbridge over the Skagway River near the trailhead to look for arctic terns, which nest nearby. The shore between Yakutania Point and the mouth of the Skagway River is a favorite haunt for harbor seals, which can number into the dozens here, especially in spring when eulachon (a small oily fish) are running into the Skagway River. Look for the gray heads of these ever-curious animals from the point, while standing on the footbridge over the river, and from spots along the trail. Yakutania Point Trail follows the rocky coast and is relatively well traveled. The trail begins at the footbridge over the Skagway River at the southwest corner of town and winds for half a mile to Yakutania Point, which has good views of the waters of Taiya Inlet.

The **Klondike Highway** **4** follows the Skagway River north for 15 miles to the Canadian border, climbing quickly from sea level to alpine. Bears feed on berries and plants at lower elevations throughout the summer, with best roadside viewing chances in late spring and early autumn. Stop at pullouts (especially the one by Moore's Bridge at mile 11) to look for mountain goats on the rocky cliffs and outcroppings along the road. Marmots, arctic ground squirrels and pikas dart among the rocks and small plants near the road. Look for grouse, ptarmigan, golden eagles, yellow-crowned sparrows, gyrfalcons, northern hawk owls, snow buntings, wandering tattlers, yellowlegs, and



Watch for bears and bear sign at Dyea



1. Downtown Skagway			1 – 2 hours
2. Dewey Lakes Trail System			2 hours – full day
3. Yakutania Point Trail			1 – 4 hours
4. Klondike Highway			2 hours – full day
5. Dyea			2 hours – half day
6. Chilkoot Trail			2 hours – full day +

- Wheelchair accessible
- Interpretive signs/guides
- Hiking trails
- Camping in area

¹ Fee for tours and camping only. + Multi-day trips allow for the richest experience.

Map is for locator reference only, not for navigational use.
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sandpipers throughout the summer. The small roadside lakes just across the Canadian border (about 16 miles from town) are good birding spots. Pairs of trumpeter swans visit these lakes each spring. Keep an eye out for moose as you continue into Canada. If you plan to take a day trip into Canada, remember that proper identification is required to cross the border. To get to the Klondike Highway, drive north out of town along State Street, which curves to the left at 23rd Street, crosses the Skagway River and becomes the Klondike Highway. The highway has many large pullouts and the best, and safest, way to search for wildlife is to stop frequently and spend time listening and looking, especially with binoculars or a spotting scope.

Dyea **5** rivaled Skagway in both size and importance during the Klondike Gold Rush. While those days are long past, Dyea still hosts an abundance of wildlife each year. The Dyea Flats at the estuary where the Taiya River meets Taiya Inlet has a eulachon run in late April and early May that attracts large numbers of harbor seals, Steller sea lions and bald eagles. Eulachon are small (up to 10 inches), oily fish, and are the first major food source for many animals after the scarcity of winter. Harbor seals and bald eagles return to Dyea during the coho, pink and chum salmon runs between July and September. The salmon also attract bears to the river and estuary. Watch for bears and bear sign like scat, tracks and tree scratches. Great blue herons are seen throughout the year, and a variety of shorebirds and waterfowl come to the estuary each spring and summer. Pullouts along the 12 mile road to Dyea offer views of Long Bay, where relatively calm waters and abundant food sources attract harbor seals and harbor porpoises, as well as marbled murrelets, harlequin ducks and Barrow's goldeneyes. Bald eagles often perch in the trees along the road. Stop at one



Hiking on the Chilkoot Trail

of the many pullouts to search for their white heads amid the green. The well-maintained gravel road to Dyea branches off from the Klondike Highway a few hundred yards north of town. The National Park Service maintains a campground and offers interpretive walks in the old Dyea townsite in the summer. Commercial guided tours to Dyea are available as well. The historic **Chilkoot Trail** **6** was a primary route for gold rush stampeders in 1898. The 33-mile trail now provides hikers the opportunity for a multi-day excursion that follows in gold prospectors' footsteps. The Chilkoot is also a popular day-hiking spot; day hikers pass along the Taiya River, which has a salmon run between July and September that attracts both black and brown bears. Look for beaver dams and lodges around mile two and three, with late evening hours the best time to see these busy rodents. Early summer is a good time for beaver viewing, when juveniles are evicted from their parents' lodge and search for a new home. Watch and listen for varied thrushes, Townsend's warblers, American redstarts, Wilson's warblers and hermit thrushes, among others. Those hiking longer distances can look for mountain goats, marmots, pika, grouse and ptarmigan as the trail ascends into the alpine. Fortunate hikers might spot moose on the Canadian side of the trail. The trailhead for this popular hiking trail is at mile 8 of the Dyea road. The National Park Service and Parks Canada require every person planning to overnight on the Chilkoot Trail to obtain a permit. Visit www.nps.gov/klgo/chilkoot.htm or call Parks Canada at 1-800-661-0486 for details on fees and permits, or drop by the Chilkoot Trail Information Center on Broadway for more information about the trail. The Chilkoot enters Canada near its halfway point, and ends at Lake Bennett in the Yukon Territory. Check with the Skagway Visitor's Bureau or National Park Service for up-to-date border crossing information.