



Aialik Bay, Kenai Fjords National Park
Photo by Bob Dittrick

Forests & Fjords of Alaska's Kenai Peninsula

July 17-25, 2010

with Wilderness Birding Adventures

The diverse maritime and montane habitats of the Kenai Peninsula are our destination for this 9-day adventure. Extending south from Anchorage, the Kenai juts into the North Pacific and is surrounded by the waters of Turnagain Arm, Cook Inlet, the Gulf of Alaska and Prince William Sound. Geologically, it's a dramatic work in progress with glaciers sculpting and scouring the landmass, plate tectonics colliding and uplifting it, extreme tides working its shorelines and active volcanoes in view just across the inlet.

The peninsula is characterized by temperate rainforest along its rugged coastline and topped with alpine tundra, azure tarns and icefields above treeline. From the high peaks and glaciers of the Kenai Mountains, the salmon-rich rivers cascade to the sea. Forests, meadows, wetlands and riparian habitats nourish a rich faunal life including moose, caribou, mountain goat, Dall sheep, grizzly and black bear, wolf, coyote and red fox. The nearshore waters support a diversity of marine mammals including killer, humpback, minke and fin whales, Dall's porpoise, Steller sea lion, harbor seal and sea otters. An abundance of birds flock to the Kenai each summer breeding season, including peregrine falcon, pine grosbeak, three-toed woodpecker, chestnut-backed chickadee, spruce grouse, Aleutian tern and many more. On this adventure, we'll explore the flora, fauna and stunning landscapes by van, boat, airplane, foot and raft.



Moose calf
Photo by Rudy Dietz

Activities

July 17 - Day 1: Participants arrive in Anchorage this afternoon at the latest. The group will meet for the first time at dinner this evening in Anchorage. No further activities are planned for today. Overnight in Anchorage.

July 18 - Day 2: After breakfast, we'll load up the vans and head south along Turnagain Arm, onto the north end of the Kenai Peninsula and over Turnagain Pass as we make our way to the town of Seward on Resurrection Bay. Our 130 mile drive allows ample time to stop for a picnic lunch, scan hillsides for wildlife, and take short walks along the way. In Seward, we'll visit the Alaska SeaLife Center, a world-class research and education facility. Overnight in Seward.

July 19 - Day 3: This morning we board a small but comfortable 48' tour boat for an intimate 9-hour trip through Resurrection Bay and the Kenai Fjords National Park. Dall's porpoise swim alongside and sea otters and harbor seals watch as we study sea, shore and air for whales, sea lions, bears, mountain goats and birds. We'll search for the elusive Kittlitz's murrelet and red-faced cormorant amid the horned and tufted puffins, murrets and kittiwakes, while glaciers calve thunderously into the sea. Overnight in Seward.

July 20 - Day 4: As we depart Seward today by road, we'll stop at Exit Glacier for a couple of hours to walk through time down the moraine of a retreating glacier ending within yards of the glacier's face.. We don't have far to travel today, which makes for a leisurely day exploring the area rain forests. Overnight in Moose Pass.



Homer & Kachemak Bay
Photo by Aaron Lang

July 21 - Day 5: This morning we'll head for the mountain hamlet of Cooper Landing where we'll take a 2-hour raft trip down the turquoise waters of the Kenai River, floating past bald eagles fishing for salmon beneath the soaring Kenai Mountains. Then we drive on to the town of Homer on Kachemak Bay. Overnight in Homer.

July 22 - Day 6: Our plan is to fly about 1.25 hours in a small float-plane across Cook Inlet to Katmai National Park (or elsewhere on the Alaska Peninsula, depending on activity) where we'll spend a day walking and observing grizzly bears feeding on salmon in their natural habitat. Flying in a small plane is weather dependent, and we'll remain flexible with exact flying schedules. The trip will take all day; we plan to be back in Homer

around 6 PM. If our group is too large for one plane load, we may have half the group go today and the other half go tomorrow. This is a spectacularly wild experience on which we'll be guided by a local bear expert who operates with the highest wilderness ethics and safety standards. Overnight in Homer.

July 23 - Day 7: The Center for Alaska Coastal Studies (CACS) is an environmental education and research organization based in Homer. From the Homer boat harbor, we'll head across Kachemak Bay to the CACS Peterson Bay field station. Staff will guide us on a morning marine intertidal walk and a forest walk in the afternoon.



Arctic tern
Photo by Jim DeWitt



Wild geranium
Photo by Rudy Dietz



Killer Whale, Kenai Fjords
Photo by Aaron Lang

(or an optional guided kayaking trip for an additional \$50.) When we leave, the boat will drop us at Halibut Cove, a picturesque artist colony. This historic village is accessible only by boat—there are no roads or cars. We'll have time to visit the galleries connected by boardwalks, and have dinner at The Saltry, a gourmet restaurant specializing in fresh local food. We return to Homer on an historic wooden ferry. Overnight in Homer.

July 24 - Day 8: Before departing Homer for Anchorage, we'll spend some time visiting The Nature Conservancy's tract of land preserving an Aleutian Tern colony. Our drive back to Anchorage is approximately 230 miles, but we'll have time to enjoy stops along the way. Overnight in Anchorage.

July 25 - Day 9: The trip ends today after breakfast.



Resurrection Bay
Photo by Bob Dittrick



Kachemak Bay
Photo by Rudy Dietz

Guides

Wilderness Birding Adventures has been leading natural history explorations of Alaska for 24 years. While our guides are excellent birders, they are also excited about all facets of the natural world. As passionate naturalists with excellent people skills, they will share their appreciation and knowledge of birds, wildlife, wildflowers, insects and geology.

Costs and Reservations

Deposit to reserve your space, per person, payable to Wilderness Birding Adventures:	\$750
Final payment, payable to WBA, due May 19, 2010:	\$3,900
Suggested tax deductible contribution to The Nature Conservancy:	<u>\$300</u>
	\$4,950*

* \$50 early signup discount applied for those who sign up before February 1



Horned Puffin

Included in the trip price are: all ground/boat/plane transportation and fares/fees for the activities indicated in the itinerary; all meals and lodging from Day 1 dinner through Day 9 breakfast; WBA guides and a representative from The Nature Conservancy. We provide a detailed equipment list to help you prepare for the trip. Not included in the trip price are your personal clothing and equipment and all pre- and post-trip Anchorage costs.

The contribution to The Nature Conservancy is tax deductible. Please make your check payable to The Nature Conservancy at their address (see below) at the same time that you sign up for the trip with WBA.

Contact WBA to sign up for this trip. Reservations are taken on a first-come, first-serve basis. The trip is limited to 11 participants.

Cancellations

Should you find it necessary to cancel, your deposit and any payments, minus a \$100 administrative fee, will be refunded with notification to us at least 90 days prior to the trip start date. With 60-89 days notice of cancellation, all but your deposit will be refunded. With less than 60 days notice, 50 percent of your trip price is not refundable. The contribution to The Nature Conservancy is non-refundable but may be applied to a future trip.



Protecting nature. Preserving life.™

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