

BOOK #006

The Smart Traveler's Alaska Wildlife Guide

Chapter 3 — Alaska's Birds

Imagine standing on the top deck as your ship glides into port. Suddenly, a bald eagle soars overhead before landing high in a spruce tree. Nearby, colorful puffins dive into the water while ravens call from the shoreline. Alaska's skies are just as full of life as its mountains and oceans.

Bald Eagles

Alaska is home to one of the largest populations of bald eagles in the United States. These magnificent birds are commonly seen perched in tall trees, soaring over coastal waters, or searching for fish along rivers and shorelines. Ketchikan is especially famous for eagle sightings.

Puffins

Often called the "clowns of the sea," puffins are easily recognized by their colorful beaks and playful personalities. During the summer breeding season, they nest on rocky islands and cliffs and can often be seen diving underwater in search of fish.

Owls, Ravens & Songbirds

Alaska's forests are home to great horned owls, snowy owls in the far north, clever ravens, and a wide variety of colorful songbirds. While they may be smaller than Alaska's famous mammals, they are an important part of the state's diverse wildlife.

Waterfowl

Watch for ducks, geese, swans, loons, cormorants, and other seabirds throughout Alaska's bays, lakes, and coastal waters. Many species migrate thousands of miles each year to spend the summer in Alaska.

Where to Watch Birds

Excellent birdwatching opportunities can be found in Ketchikan, Glacier Bay National Park, the Kenai Peninsula, Icy Strait Point, and along much of the Inside Passage. Keeping a pair of binoculars nearby will help you spot birds both near shore and high overhead.

Aimee's Insider Tip

One of my favorite Alaska memories is watching a bald eagle glide effortlessly beside the ship. Don't spend all your time looking at the water—remember to look up. Alaska's skies are full of incredible wildlife too.