

ALASKA



"I can't wait to return! Alaska conjures images of a true northern wilderness, with the highest of peaks and wildest of landscapes, and wildlife to match – Caribou, Moose, wolves and we've added a boat trip to watch the famed Alaskan coastal Brown Bears. This should be a very special trip."
Darren Rees

Dates Sat 8 - Sat 22 Jun 2024
(mainland Alaska)
Price £8,450
Deposit £1,690 Single Supp £1,750

St Paul Island in the Pribilofs extension:

Dates Fri 21 - Wed 26 Jun 2024
Extension price £4,500
Extension deposit £630
Extension single supp £350

Leaders Darren Rees and David Wimpfheimer

Flights United Airlines/Lufhansa scheduled
Outbound: Afternoon, Heathrow-Anchorage
Inbound: Overnight, Anchorage-Heathrow
(outbound via San Francisco)
(inbound via Frankfurt)
local airline for Anchorage-St Paul return

Weather Unpredictable throughout due to the nature of the geography. In mountains and mainland coast, warm and pleasant, to hot and sunny. The Pribilof Islands can be foggy and windy (10° at night, max 30°C daytime)

Walking Mixture of leisurely trails and longer walks along well-marked paths

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 14 (excl. Pribilofs) or Day 18 (incl. Pribilofs)

Insects Biting insects may be a nuisance, except on the Pribilof Islands, so bring repellent

Accom Twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 12 (minimum of 6 guests required for St Paul Pribilof Island visit to go ahead)

Just some of what we hope to see:

Black Bear	Rock Ptarmigan
Grizzly Bear	White-winged Crossbill
Moose	Pine Grosbeak
Caribou	Smith's Longspur
Gray Wolf	Northern Fur Seal (P)
Sea Otter	Steller's Sealion
Humpback Whale	Blue Arctic Fox (P)
Orca	Red-legged Kittiwake (P)
Dall's Porpoise	Crested Auklet (P)
Bald Eagle	Least Auklet (P)
Gyrfalcon	Parakeet Auklet (P)
Long-tailed Jaeger	Horned Puffin (P)
Northern Hawk Owl	Tufted Puffin (P)

A wilderness and landscape like no other and a holiday to match – Denali, Kenai and the Pribilof Islands for bears, wolves, whales, fur seals and Pacific seabird colonies.

- Denali, the highest American peak, with Grizzlies, Wolves and Caribou
- Northern Hawk Owl, Long-tailed Jaeger and Gyrfalcon
- Coastal bear-watching at Chinitna
- Two boat trips for Humpback Whales, Orcas and Dall's Porpoise
- Sea Otters at spectacular Kenai Fjords National Park
- The remote St Paul Island in the Pribilofs for Tufted Puffins and Crested Auklets
- The Pribilofs, the 'Galapagos of the North', home to fur seals and seabirds

1-2 We fly to Anchorage via a US stop, for our first two nights here. Nearby Parks and waterways offer an introduction to Alaskan birding with Bald Eagles, Red-necked Grebes, Alder Flycatchers and Pacific Loons. We'll explore several habitats looking for Hudsonian Godwit, Wilson's Snipe, American Three-toed Woodpecker, Boreal Chickadee and Bohemian Waxwings.

3 We travel north into the boreal forest, an expanse of spruce, willow and birch that harbours extensive terrestrial and wetland habitats for huge numbers of nesting passerines and waders. We'll meet many Alaskan birds: Lesser Sandhill Cranes, Blackpoll Warbler and Pine Grosbeaks are all possible. Driving over Broad Pass in the mighty Alaska Range we descend to Denali NP arriving at our lodging in late afternoon for the first of three nights near the Park.

4-5 We have two full days of adventure in Denali NP. With no vehicular traffic to worry about, our shuttle bus takes us through some of the most extraordinary scenery in North America, in the shadow of the continent's highest peak. Some of our target species will be Willow Ptarmigan, Hawk Owl, Gyrfalcon, Northern Shrike and Arctic Warbler. This is no ordinary shuttle bus, as it stops for just about anything we want to look at and there's a wide selection of mammals present including Arctic Ground Squirrel, Grizzly Bear, Gray Wolf, Moose, Dall's Sheep and Caribou.

6-7 The remote Denali Highway takes us east through a mosaic of spruce bogs and ponds, willow riparian and dry tundra. Target species include American Golden Plover; Common Redpoll, Long-tailed Duck and Golden-crowned, Fox and Tree Sparrow. From our base we'll look for Long-tailed Jaegers, Lapland and Smith's Longspurs.





"The Pribilof Islands are known as the Galapagos of the North and for good reason, with cliffs and beaches stuffed with millions of seabirds and fur seals. With great whale-watching along the Kenai Fjords coastline of the mainland, the marine life of Alaska promises spectacles beyond compare."
Darren Rees

8 Our continuing wilderness loop takes us by the Wrangell-Saint Elias Range whose snowy peaks exceed 14,000ft. In the forest here our targets will be interior breeding species such as Spruce Grouse, Gray Jay and White-winged Crossbill. We'll overnight at Sheep Mountain Lodge – last time we saw Boreal Owl here!

9-10 The long road to Homer; our next base for two nights, takes us along the coast through Chugach National Forest to the beautiful Kenai Peninsula. From Homer; our all-day boat trip takes us across Cook Inlet to Chinitna Bay in the spectacular Lake Clark National Park, home to coastal Brown Bears. With local guides we should find these charismatic animals combing the shore, foraging for food in the most dramatic setting.

11-12 We continue our exploration of the Kenai Peninsula enroute to Seward. The coastline of Kenai Fjords NP is home to some of the most pristine, rugged, breathtaking glacial vistas in North America. Dall's Sheep are often seen on the cliffs above the road as well as the more elusive Mountain Goat. Islands busy with birds and mammals await us on our full-day boat trip from Seward into the Park's dynamic fjords. Alcids rule the day as we watch for Horned and Tufted Puffins, Kittlitz's and Ancient Murrelet, Thick-billed Murre and Parakeet Auklet. We'll head towards the Chiswell Islands where thousands of nesting Black-legged Kittiwakes have painted the islands white. Marine mammals include Sea Otter; Harbor Seal, Steller's Sealion, Pacific White-sided Dolphin, Orca, Humpback Whale and Harbour and Dall's Porpoise.



13-14 After birding around Seward, we'll take a leisurely pace back to Anchorage for the night, stopping at any habitat that offers the last chance for a missing species. Favourite stops between Seward and Anchorage may add that last Barrow's Goldeneye, Hudsonian Godwit or Rusty Blackbird to our list. The following day those who are returning to the UK depart in the evening, via a US stop, arriving in the UK on day 15.

For those going to St. Paul, one of the Pribilof Islands - the famed 'Galapagos of the North', they depart in the afternoon. Our naturalist tour starts immediately upon arrival, with local species that include Pacific Wren, Rock Sandpiper, Red-faced Cormorant, Gray-crowned Rosy Finch, Lapland Longspur and 'Blue' Arctic Fox. St. Paul is the largest of the Aleut communities and our base for the next three nights.

15-16 We have two full days to visit the teeming seabird colonies and Fur Seal rookeries of St Paul – they have to be seen to be believed! Rugged cliffs are stuffed with hundreds of thousands of Horned and Tufted Puffins, Common and Thick-billed Murres, Parakeet and Least and Crested Auklets. This is also one of the few places on the planet to view Red-legged Kittiwake. We shall also visit blinds (hides) and viewing areas that allow access to the incredible Northern Fur Seal colonies, one of the greatest gatherings of mammals on earth!

17-19 We fly back to Anchorage for our final evening in Alaska. The next day we leave Anchorage for our return to the UK, on an overnight flight, via Frankfurt.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2 Fly to Anchorage, via San Francisco
2 nights Coast Inn Lake Hood
- Days 3-5 Drive north to the Alaska Range.
Exploration of Denali NP
3 nights McKinley Creekside Cabins
- Days 6-7 Drive east to explore the Denali Highway - 2 nights Maclaren Lodge
- Day 8 Continued drive through Alaskan wilderness - 1 night Sheep Mountain
- Days 9-10 Drive to Homer on Kenai Peninsula.
First boat trip, bear-watching at Chinitna Bay - 2 nights Oceanshores
- Days 11-12 Drive to Seward for second boat trip exploring Kenai Fjords NP
2 nights Hotel Edgewater
- Day 13 Return to Anchorage - 1 night Coast Inn
- Days 14-16 Fly to UK, land Day 15. Or fly to St Paul for exploration of Pribilofs
3 nights King Eider Hotel
- Days 17-19 Fly to Anchorage - 1 night Coast Inn
Fly back to UK, via Frankfurt, arriving Day 19

Bear Viewing Alaska: Brown Bears
Steven Kourik: Orca Darren Rees: Arctic Fox
Terence Lee: Kenai NP, Tufted Puffin, Crested Auklets