

Alaska Sampler: Anchorage, Seward, and Homer Species List | August 11 – 19, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys



Compiled by guides Greg Butcher and Mollie Brown. Our clients included Stacy, Roger, Nick, Nel, Michael, Lora, Diane, Christine, Chris, Betty, and Beth.

August in south-central Alaska can be a bit of a gamble. Three years ago, our group had dark, cloudy weather all week and saw very little songbird activity. This year, we had mostly sunny weather with lots of songbirds, many moths, and one butterfly. We hit the magic 100 species mark! Guaranteed to please in any weather are the all-day trip from Resurrection Bay in Seward to Northwestern Glacier and the flight from Homer to see Brown Bears eating salmon. The scenery throughout is outstanding, with inlets, rivers, lakes, both treed and rocky mountains, and lots of glaciers. It's a good mammal trip from Humpback Whales, Steller Sea Lions, and Dall's Porpoises to moose and Mountain Goats, plus both Sea and River Otters. We saw many salmon on their way to their breeding waters. Seward and Homer are two of the most picturesque seaports imaginable, and we explored both by land and by boat.

BIRDS: — (100)

The eBird link below details the 100 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

[Naturalist Journeys Alaska | August 11-19 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the mammals we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Family or Species Common Name Scientific Name — (Number of species)

MAMMALS: — (12)

Masked Shrew *Sorex cinereus* — At Eagle River, there was a small mouse-like mammal scurrying around next to the trail just a few feet in front of us. Someone said mole, but careful photo analysis revealed that we were watching a Masked Shrew.

Beaver *Castor canadensis* — Unfortunately, we didn't see a beaver, but we did see a well made and maintained dam at Eagle River on our last full day.

American Red Squirrel *Tamiasciurus hudsonicus* — We heard red squirrels constantly while we were in the woods and were able to see them on most landbirding days.

Snowshoe Hare *Lepus americanus* — One popped out into the open at the East End of Beluga Lake while we were enjoying the White-winged Crossbills.

Moose *Alces alces* — We were in moose country for much of the trip, as the roadside signs kept reminding us, but we didn't find one until we were driving to dinner on Homer Spit. Luckily, we were able to stop and enjoy leisurely views of a male grazing in a nearby meadow.

Mountain Goat *Oreamnos americanus* — Our Seward boat captain eased us up to great views of one (and obscured

views of two more) Mountain Goats from Resurrection Bay / Kenai Fjord. Christie found another high in the mountains at Eagle River. We got good telescope views!

Brown (Grizzly) Bear *Ursus arctos* — The eight who went on the Brown Bear trip had great views, photos, and videos of a close-up Brown Bear. What's the difference between a Grizzly Bear and a Brown Bear? There are subspecies, but my sense is that Alaskans tend to call them Brown Bears and folks in the 48 states tend to call them Grizzlies. Has anyone heard a better explanation?

River Otter *Lontra canadensis* — As we were walking between Westchester Lagoon and Fish Creek in Anchorage, we got to enjoy a River Otter swimming in the marsh.

Sea Otter *Enhydra lutris* — We had Sea Otters on five different days near both Seward and Homer, much to everyone's enjoyment.

Steller Sea Lion *Eumetopias jubatus* — These sea lions haul out onto the rocks in the Chiswell Islands during the daytime and forage underwater at night. We were close to a few from the boat and had distant views of a much larger group.

Harbor Seal *Phoca vitulina* — It was odd seeing so many Harbor Seals perched on small icebergs so close to the calving glacier. I thought I saw a few flinch when there was a big icefall, but they mostly didn't seem concerned. Like the sea lions, they rest during the day and forage at night.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* — The captain was able to follow a Humpback Whale for quite a while. I counted four times when it came to the surface, and we had good looks at the blow, the back, and the back fin.

Dall's Porpoise *Phocoenoides dalli* — At first we saw a pod of Dall's Porpoise from the distance, but then they were right alongside and beneath us, swimming with the ship. A half hour later, another (or the same?) pod also swam along with the ship. It's one of my favorite occurrences in nature to be moving along in synchrony with these marine mammals.