

Kenai Fjords

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Kenai Fjords National Park
www.nps.gov/KenaiFjords



Fact Sheet

Purpose	Kenai Fjords was established to maintain unimpaired the scenic and environmental integrity of the Harding Icefield, its outflowing glaciers and coastal fjords and islands in their natural state; and to protect seals, sea lions, other marine mammals, and marine and other birds and to maintain their hauling and breeding areas in their natural state, free of human activity which is disruptive to their natural processes.	
Established	December 1, 1978..... December 2, 1980.....	Designated as a National Monument by President Carter Designated as a National Park through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).
Size	Legislative boundary..... Managed by NPS Eligible Wilderness	669,650 acres or ~ 1047 square miles 603,130 acres or ~ 940 square miles 569,000 acres or ~ 889 square miles
Visitation	418,682 recreation visits in 2024	
Employment	NPS Permanent Employees NPS Seasonal Employees NPS Volunteers	29 33 20 volunteers contributed 1507 hours of service in 2024
Budget	2024 base appropriations \$3.75 million	
Campground	12 campsites in the Exit Glacier area, with 2 wheelchair accessible sites. Campground is tent-only, and available on a first come, first serve basis. Vehicle camping is strictly prohibited. Backcountry camping is allowed throughout the park except within 500 feet of a public use cabin or within 1/8 mile of a road or trail at Exit Glacier.	
Public Use Cabins	<i>Aialik and Holgate (located on the coast)</i> : available for reservation during the summer months through Recreation.gov . <i>Willow (in the Exit Glacier Area)</i> : available during winter months by contacting the park.	
Trails	The only maintained trails within the park are those in the Exit Glacier area. Trails to Exit Glacier: These short trails are on the valley floor, range from .5 to 1.5 miles (one-way) and provide views of Exit Glacier. The Harding Icefield Trail: A strenuous hike with an elevation gain of approximately 3500 feet that ends in a spectacular view of the Harding Icefield (4.1 miles one-way). Coastline: Over 545 miles to kayak, camp, and explore without trails.	

Human Connection

Sugpiaq (Alutiiq) people and villages maintain their cultural and ancestral affiliation to lands within park boundaries. Sugpiaq means “real people” in their language, Sugcestun. A maritime people, they span a large expanse of what is now south-central Alaska—including what comprises Kenai Fjords National Park. Alutiiq is their own version of “Aleut”, a term used by Russian explorers encountering coastal Alaskans in the 1740s. No matter the name, people past, present, and future are interwoven with these lands and waters. A subsistence way of life is at the core of this relationship, including ocean resources such as seal, seabird eggs, and intertidal invertebrates, as well as, terrestrial resources including berries and land mammals.

Climate

Kenai Fjords generally enjoys a temperate maritime climate, relative to the interior of Alaska, primarily due to the influence of the Alaska coastal current that flows through the Gulf of Alaska. **Summer:** The daytime temperatures range from the mid 40s to the low 70s (Fahrenheit). Overcast and cool rainy days are frequent with occasional sunny days. **Winter:** Temperatures can range from the low 30s to -20 (Fahrenheit). The Exit Glacier area averages close to 200 inches of snowfall annually, but conditions vary greatly.

Harding Icefield

The Harding Icefield is the largest feature within Kenai Fjords National Park, covering half the park. The total area of ice for all of the icefield is **695 mi² (1,800 km²)**, of this, **424.8 mi² (1,100 km²)** are contained within the boundaries of the park. It is approximately **50 miles** across at the longest point; **20 miles** wide across the widest point. From 1950 to 2005, the glaciers in and around the park lost **252 km²** or **11.2%** of glacier ice.

Glaciers

There are at least 38 glaciers that flow from the Harding Icefield. More than 12 of these glaciers terminate within park boundaries including: *Lowell, Exit, Bear, Skee, Lechner, Aialik, Addison, Pedersen, Holgate, Northwestern, McCarty, Dinglestadt* and *Split*.

Elevation

Truuli Peak, at **6,612 feet** above sea level, is the tallest peak on the Harding Icefield and lies within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The highest surface on the Harding Icefield is approximately **5,200 feet** above sea level. The highest peak within the boundaries of Kenai Fjords, at **6,450 feet**, is unnamed.

Fauna

Land mammals: close to 30 species.
Marine mammals: around 10 species
Birds: 191 species.
Fish: 40 species (marine and freshwater)
Threatened / endangered species: humpback, sei, and gray whale, and Steller sea lion.
Species of special concern / rare species: Kittlitz’s murrelet, peregrine falcon, northern goshawk, gray-cheeked thrush, Townsend’s warbler, blackpoll warbler, and harbor seal.

Flora

Interior valleys are primarily comprised of Sitka spruce and western hemlock forest, with alder, cottonwood, and willow showing up in recently de-glaciated areas. Hemlock, blueberry, high-bush and low-bush cranberry, and devil’s club crowd the forest floor. Sitka spruce and rich growths of devil’s club and salmonberry are found along the coast. The rocky intertidal zone supports large bands of brown, red, and green algae, such as rockweed and ribbon kelp. **Management Species of Concern:** Enander’s sedge, dunhead sedge, sessileleaf scurvygrass, Alaskan douglasia, Pale poppy, Chimisso’s orchid, Arctic pennycress. **Invasive Plant Species:** common dandelion, annual bluegrass, common chickweed, common plantain, pineapple weed, common timothy, mouse-ear chickweed, meadow foxtail, smooth brome, white clover.

Contact Us

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