

# Kenai Fjords

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

Kenai Fjords National Park  
[www.nps.gov/KenaiFjords](http://www.nps.gov/KenaiFjords)



## Fact Sheet

<b>Purpose</b>	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.
<b>Established</b>	December 1, 1978..... Designated as a National Monument by President Carter December 2, 1980..... Designated as a National Park through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).
<b>Size</b>	Legislative boundary..... 669,983 acres or ~ 1047 square miles Managed by NPS ..... 603,130 acres or ~ 940 square miles Eligible Wilderness ..... 569,000 acres or ~ 889 square miles
<b>Visitation</b>	303,000 recreation visits in 2017
<b>Employment</b>	NPS Permanent Employees ..... 31 NPS Seasonal Employees ..... 50 NPS Volunteers ..... 26 volunteers contributed 2,417 hours of service in 2017
<b>Budget</b>	2017 base appropriations \$3.9 million
<b>Campground</b>	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.
<b>Public Use Cabins</b>	<i>Aialik and Holgate:</i> available for reservation during the summer months through <a href="http://Recreation.gov">Recreation.gov</a> . <i>Willow:</i> available during winter months by contacting the park.
<b>Trails</b>	The only maintained trails within the park are those in the Exit Glacier area. <b>Trails to Exit Glacier:</b> These short trails are on the valley floor, range from .5 to 1.5 miles (one-way) and provide views of Exit Glacier. <b>The Harding Icefield Trail:</b> 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). <b>Coastline:</b> Over 545 miles to kayak, camp, and explore without trails.

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## Human History

The **Sugpiaq**, also called Alutiiq or Pacific Yupik, are a southwest coastal people of the Yupik peoples of Alaska. Archeological evidence and oral tradition indicate they have lived for thousands of years in this area. They traditionally lived a seasonal, coastal lifestyle, subsisting on ocean resources such as salmon, seabird eggs, seal and whale, as well as, rich land resources including berries and land mammals. The descendants of the early Sugpiaq people live today in coastal fishing communities, such as Nanwalek and Port Graham at the end of the Kenai Peninsula. They name themselves and their language *Sugpiaq*.

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## 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.

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## 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 **706.5 mi<sup>2</sup> (1,830 km<sup>2</sup>)**, of this, **424.8 mi<sup>2</sup> (1,100 km<sup>2</sup>)** 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 km<sup>2</sup>** or **11.2%** of glacier ice.

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## Glaciers

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

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## 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.

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## Fauna

Land mammals: close to 30 species.  
Marine mammals: around 10 species  
Birds: close to 200 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.

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## 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, bunchberry, mountain 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.

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## Contact Us

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