

2024 BELUGAS COUNT! STATIONS

Locations are outdoors and not covered, so please be prepared for all weather conditions with appropriate clothing.

Please bring your own binoculars or spotting scopes for the 2024 event.

Kincaid Chalet Information Station (1a)

Location: Anchorage

Hours: 10:00am – 12:30pm

Host: NOAA Fisheries

Directions: To reach the Kincaid Chalet take Raspberry Road west until it ends. A lower parking lot gives immediate access to the flat ski stadium area, while the upper parking is closer to the chalet and its restrooms. The information booth will be adjacent to the Chalet.

Other Information: This location serves to direct visitors to the various other stations, including in the Kincaid area, and provide outreach and education. No belugas can be observed at this location but it is within walking distance of the Kincaid Overlook Viewing Station (see below). This location is wheelchair accessible.

Kincaid Overlook Viewing Station (1)

Location: Anchorage

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Alaska Department of Fish & Game

Beluga Presence: Beluga whales travel past the Kincaid Overlook as they move in and out of Turnagain Arm and along the shoreline. Best viewing is during high tides.

Directions: Take Minnesota and at Raspberry Rd., drive toward the direction of the Airport. Keep driving until you reach Kincaid Park. The park has 4 main parking areas. The parking area for the chalet is located on Raspberry Rd. and is the 3rd entrance area. From the Kincaid Chalet follow the signs that will be posted on the event day. The walk from the Kincaid Chalet to the overlook is .6 miles 1-way (1.2 miles roundtrip).

Other Information: The trail is moderate with short, steep climbs with a narrow, primitive routes. This location is not wheelchair accessible.

Point Woronzof Viewing Station (3)

Location: Anchorage

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: HDR, Inc

Beluga Presence: A popular high bluff site with great vantage including this end of Fire Island (Nutul'iy), Mt. Susitna, Denali, and the city of Anchorage. Visitors sometimes see belugas passing silently by whether they are walking the cobblestone/mud beach or viewing from the bluff.

Directions: Point Woronzof Park (9700 Point Woronzof Rd) is accessible from the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail between mileposts 3 and 4. Parking is available in a lot at Point Woronzof Park, or you can get there from downtown via the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail. If you are driving, travel west on Northern Lights and continue past the airport.

Other Information: The station is set up immediately adjacent to the parking lot, set back safely from the bluff. Binoculars or a scope are highly recommended for viewing at this location. Bathroom facilities are usually available at the far end of the parking lot. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Campbell Creek Estuary Natural Area (CCENA) (Beluga Overlook)

Viewing Station (4)

Location: Anchorage

Hours: 9:00am – 12:00pm

Host: Friends of Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge (FAR)

Beluga Presence: Beluga whales travel past the CCENA viewing station as they move in and out of Turnagain Arm and along the shoreline. At high tides, they may be viewed traveling up Campbell Creek towards the viewing station.

Directions: This station can be accessed via the CCENA public parking lot at 9520 Selkirk Dr. Follow the directional signs along the short, level dirt/gravel path to of the Meadowloop Trail to the viewing station at the Beluga Overlook.

Other Information: Bathroom facilities are available in the parking lot. No dogs or other pets are allowed. Scopes or binoculars are recommended for viewing at this location. This station is not wheelchair accessible.

Windy Corner Viewing Station (5)

Location: Turnagain Arm

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Bureau of Ocean Energy Management

Beluga Presence: Beluga whales travel past this location as they move in and out of Turnagain Arm with the rising and falling tides.

Directions: From Anchorage, take the Seward Highway south and look for the Windy Corner pullout on your right (ocean side) at about mile marker 106 of the Seward Highway. Please take great care pulling in and out of this station as this is known as a dangerous section of the highway.

Other Information: Scopes or binoculars are recommended for viewing at this location. Please take great care pulling in and out of this station as this is known as a dangerous section of the highway. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Bird Point Viewing Station (6)

Location: Turnagain Arm

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: NOAA Fisheries, Mystic Aquarium, Shedd Aquarium

Beluga Presence: Beluga whales often can be seen around Bird Point a couple of hours before high tide and can stay in the area through high tide.

Directions: From Anchorage, take the Seward Highway about 30 miles south and look for the large Bird Point car park on your right (ocean side) at about mile marker 96 of the Seward Highway. Follow the pathway from parking lot to the spacious boardwalk. This is not to be confused with Bird Creek and Bird Ridge which are a few miles further north.

Other Information: This station has plenty of parking, restrooms, and is handicap accessible. Scopes or binoculars are recommended for viewing at this location. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Seward Highway Mile 91.5 Viewing Station (7)

Location: near Girdwood

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Beluga Whale Alliance

Beluga Presence: Cook Inlet belugas can often be viewed from this public and handicap-accessible scenic highway pullout as they travel past and mill in Turnagain Arm on daily rising tides in the fall.

Directions: This station is located along the shoreline of the Turnagain Arm, at a vehicle pull-out at Mile 91.5 of the Seward Highway, just north of Girdwood. It is most safely and easily accessed via the southbound highway lanes (recommended). Care should be taken if accessing this station from the northbound direction. No foot-travel is required to access this station.

Other Information: Please exercise caution when turning into the pullout and park in available designated spots, not along the highway shoulder. Additional parking and viewing opportunities are available at other nearby scenic pullouts. Bathroom facilities are located nearby at the Speedway gas station or Bird Point. Dogs are discouraged as this site is near a busy highway, but if present should be kept on a leash. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Twentymile River Viewing Station (8)

Location: Girdwood

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: U.S. Forest Service, Chugach National Forest

Beluga Presence: Cook Inlet belugas are often observed in upper Turnagain Arm, with sightings most common in the spring and early fall. They typically enter and exit Turnagain Arm on the rising and falling tide.

Directions: From Anchorage, take the Seward Highway about 44 miles south and look for a large parking area on your right (ocean side) just after mile marker 82 of the Seward Highway. This is about 9 miles south of Girdwood.

Other Information: Scopes or binoculars are recommended for viewing at this location. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center Viewing Station (9) (Fee area)

Location: Portage

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center

Beluga Presence: Cook Inlet belugas are often observed in upper Turnagain Arm, with sightings most common in the spring and early fall. They typically enter and exit Turnagain Arm on the rising and falling tide.

Directions: The Center is 11 miles south of Girdwood at mile 79 on the Seward Highway. The station will be set up at the Point Boardwalk area, approximately ½ mile from the entrance on the west end of property.

Other Information: Parking is available at the station location and gift store areas. Binoculars and scopes are recommended for this location. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Hope Highway Viewing Station (10)

Location: Hope

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: U.S. Forest Service, Chugach National Forest

Beluga Presence: Beluga whales travel past the viewing station as they move in and out of Turnagain Arm and along shoreline.

Directions: The Hope Highway Cutoff is located at Mile 56.7 of the Seward Highway. The station is between mile 11 and 12 of the Hope Highway cutoff, just south of mile marker 12. This is the further north of two large pullouts between miles 11 and 12 which is about halfway between Sunrise and Hope on the Hope Highway.

Other Information: Bathroom facilities are not available. Scopes or binoculars are recommended for viewing at this location. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Port MacKenzie (11) (Not a public site)

Location: Port MacKenzie

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: HDR

Other Information: Not a public site.

Goose Bay Viewing Station (12)

Location: Goose Bay State Game Refuge

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: The Cook Inlet Beluga Whale Photo-ID Project, Knik Tribe

Beluga Presence: beluga presence at this site is typically patchy and unpredictable, with a slightly better chance of seeing them on the ebb and flood tides

Directions: Goose Bay State Game Refuge site: From the George Parks Highway in Wasilla, travel approximately 17 miles south on Knik-Goose Bay Road. Approximately ¼ mile before the road's end at the Goose Bay Airport, turn west (right) on the gravel road marked "Refuge Access" (aka Cameo Drive but not marked as such). Approximately ½ mile, veer left when road forks at sign marked "Knik Arm". Follow gravel road for approximately ½ mile, passing through open road gate to parking area on the shore of Knik Arm. Access is easy. All weather gravel roads are passable to most passenger vehicles.

Other Information:

The gravel road can be rough, so going slow is a must.

Parking is limited to fewer than 10 cars, so please consider carpooling.

This site does not appear to be accessible for most wheelchairs or walkers (those designed to travel off road may be fine). The station is atop a bluff, so hiking up/down an incline is not required.

Scopes or binoculars are recommended for viewing at this location.

Biting insects may be present, consider bringing protective gear.

Kenai Scenic Bluffs Viewing Station (13)

Location: Kenai

Hours: 12:00-4:00pm

Host: Alaska Wildlife Alliance, UAA Kachemak Bay Campus

Beluga Presence: Beluga whales swim by the bluffs of Kenai heading into the Kenai River. It's believed that these whales use the river to hunt for fish, such as salmon. They use the river the most in the spring and fall, but they can be spotted year-round. They've been spotted travelling up the Kenai as far as 10 miles!

Directions: This station is located at the end of Spur View Dr., Kenai, AK 99611. Signs will be posted to help find the site. This site neighbors the Kenai Senior Center and Millennium Square.

Other Information: Personal binoculars or spotting scopes are recommended. Few picnic tables are available, so personal camp chairs are encouraged. This location is not covered, so please be prepared for all weather with appropriate clothing. Parking is available on site and is paved. Restrooms are available. Dogs welcome, but must be on leash and under control. Please be a responsible pet owner and remove any pet waste from the site. This station is wheelchair accessible.

Hilcorp East Foreland OSK dock (15) (Not a public site)

Location: Cook Inlet

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Hilcorp

Past Host(s): Hilcorp

Other Information: Not a public site.

Hilcorp Staffed Platforms (16) (Not a public site)

Location: Cook Inlet

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Hilcorp

Past Host(s): Hilcorp

Other Information: Not a public site.

Tyonek Viewing Station (17)

Location: Tyonek

Hours: 10:30am – 1:30pm

Host: Tebughna School, Native Village of Tyonek

Past Host(s): Tebughna School, Native Village of Tyonek

Directions: Station at the mouth of the Chuitna River, overlooking the northwest shore of Cook Inlet.

Other Information: Personal binoculars or spotting scopes are recommended. This station is not wheelchair accessible.

Glacier Oil & Gas Osprey Platform (18) (Not a public site)

Location: Cook Inlet

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Glacier Oil & Gas

Past Host(s): Glacier Oil & Gas

Other Information: Not a public site.

Ship Creek Viewing Station (19)

Location: Anchorage

Hours: 10:00am – 1:00pm

Host: Defenders of Wildlife

Beluga Presence: Belugas can be seen swimming past and milling around this station during both high and low tides as they travel up and down Knik Arm.

Directions: 25 Small Boat Launch Rd, Anchorage. From downtown Anchorage head west on W 5th Avenue. Turn right onto E St. Turn right onto W 2nd Ave which turns left and becomes N C St. Continue onto Ocean Dock Rd. Turn left onto Small Boat Launch Rd. and follow it to the end. Limited free parking.

Other Information: Personal binoculars or spotting scopes are recommended. This station is wheelchair accessible.