



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Alaska Coastal Program



*Conserving coastal ecosystems
for fish, wildlife & people*

With an estimated 47,000 miles of tidal shoreline, Alaska has an incredible diversity of coastal habitats ranging from steep, rocky coasts and fjords, to mudflats, coastal tundra, eelgrass lagoons, and large, sprawling river valleys.

Multiple Benefits

Alaska's coastal habitats contribute substantially to the health of fish and wildlife populations and the economic well-being of the state and the nation. Great numbers of globally significant populations of migratory birds, salmon, caribou, and marine mammals depend on Alaska's coastal wetland habitats for food and rearing their young. Much of the state's human population is located along the coast, and along coastally-connected river systems. Key economies reliant on healthy coastal habitats include commercial and sport fishing, tourism, subsistence and recreation.

Threats to Alaska's Coast

Despite Alaska's reputation for having pristine coastal habitat, the majority of the state's economic activity occurs near the coast. Coastal ecosystems are subject to the same universal stressors that result in habitat degradation and loss of system resiliency in other parts of the country.

These stressors can include resource extraction activities and associated infrastructure, shoreline development, urbanization in coastal drainages, introduction/spread of aquatic invasive species, recreational overuse, and climate change.

The Alaska Coastal Program

Our Coastal Program provides direct conservation assistance: we invest funding, staff time, technical expertise, and other resources into coastal conservation efforts throughout Southcentral Alaska, the Alaska Peninsula, the Alaska Gulf Coast, and Southeast Alaska.

The program enables partners (including federal, state and local agencies, tribal corporations, non-profit organizations and private landowners) to carry out projects that benefit migratory birds, anadromous fish, marine mammals, and endangered species by conserving their coastal habitats.

For example, by supporting proactive community-supported habitat assessment and protection projects with staff time and dollars, the Alaska Coastal Program helps safeguard important coastal habitats for the benefit of fish, wildlife, and the public. Our staff's expertise leading small groups toward consensus while providing organizational and technical support helps build local capacity, leverage non-Service funding, and bring a strategic focus to project selection and implementation.

Photos on this page: USFWS/Katrina Mueller

Coastal systems provide habitat for many public trust species, including fish, marine and terrestrial mammals, and migratory birds.



Project Snapshots

The Coastal Program supports innovative coastal conservation projects that restore or permanently protect important coastal habitats, control

invasive species, and implement watershed-scale conservation assessments. Program resources are also allocated to species-specific

conservation programs. These types of projects support our mission to provide for healthy self-sustaining fish and wildlife populations in Alaska.

Alaska Coastal Program - Southeast

With assistance from the Southeast Alaska Coastal Program and Service staff based in Juneau, the Juneau Watershed Partnership (JWP) completed the Auke Lake Watershed Assessment and Watershed Action Plan. These offer an inventory and assessment of general watershed characteristics and identify unplanned development in the watershed as the greatest threat to fish habitat and water quality in Auke Lake. JWP is now working closely with Service staff to identify, assess, and map important water resources and fish and wildlife habitats in the Auke Lake, Pederson Hill Creek, and Montana Creek watersheds. The resultant conservation plan provides recommendations for the maintenance of watershed and habitat integrity as future development occurs via such means as appropriate conservation and riparian easements, development planning, stormwater management, and the minimization of impervious areas and wetland fill.



Alaska Coastal Program - Southcentral

The Great Land Trust (GLT), in partnership with the Southcentral Alaska Coastal Program, led a broad-based coalition to achieve permanent protection of 60 acres of the Campbell Creek Estuary in Anchorage. The now-protected lands, surrounded by the 32,500 acre state-owned Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge, will be transferred to public ownership with the Municipality of Anchorage. The GLT will retain a conservation easement to ensure that the property's habitat values will be protected in perpetuity. Key project partners included the Alaska Sustainable Salmon Fund, Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Audubon Alaska, Coastal Impact Assistance Program, Ducks Unlimited, Rasmuson Foundation, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the Service's National Coastal Wetland Conservation Grant Program.

Great Land Trust



Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Providing some of the last remaining intact coastal ecosystems in Anchorage, Campbell Creek and its estuary provide movement corridors and habitat for five species of Pacific salmon and other native wildlife. The Campbell Creek greenbelt and its associated pedestrian trail is also very popular among Anchorage residents and visitors, and is frequently used by educators as a focal point to illustrate the connections between intact habitats, healthy fish and wildlife populations, and vibrant communities and economies.

Contact us about the Alaska Coastal Program!

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