



Alaska Topics of Interest

While you are preparing for your upcoming cruise we thought you might enjoy reading about some related topics. Each topic introduction below is followed by a link that will take you to a website to learn more about the topic. We hope you find these articles interesting and thought provoking.

Alaska Natives

Today Alaska Natives are divided into 11 distinct cultures and represent about 16 percent of Alaska's residents. They are a significant segment of the population in over 200 rural communities. Four of these cultures, the Eyak, the Tlingits, the Haidas and the Tsimshians share a similar Northwest Coast culture but their languages are not mutually intelligible.

Learn more about their similarities and differences at <http://www.alaskanative.net/38.asp>

Humpback Whales

Found in all the world's oceans, most populations of humpback whales follow a regular migration route, summering in cooler waters where they focus on feeding and wintering in tropical waters for breeding. An interesting discovery was made about humpbacks. The shape and color pattern on their dorsal fin and tail are as individual in each animal as fingerprints are for humans.

Learn more at <http://www.acsonline.org/factpack/humpback.htm>

The Aleutian Islands – UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

Biosphere reserves are sites recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme that innovate and demonstrate approaches to conservation and sustainable development. There are 507 sites worldwide and the Aleutian Islands Biosphere Reserve and National Wildlife Refuge is one of them.

Learn more at <http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?code=USA+01&mode=all>



Alaska Topics of Interest continued

Rainforest Questions & Answers

The 17-million-acre Tongass National Forest, which includes Misty Fjords, Tracy Arm, Frederick Sound and LeConte Bay is the largest intact temperate rainforest in the world. Established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907, it is the home of giant Sitka Spruce and other old growth trees as much as 500 years old.

Learn more at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/tongass_National_Forest

Alaska Glaciers

Alaska has been the home of glaciers and icefields for over 12.5 million years. Today there are over 100,000 glaciers in Alaska, with ice covering five percent of the state. Glaciers form where more snow falls than melts and are the master carvers of their landscapes. Their activity has affected human settlement, migration and subsistence for thousands of years.

Learn more about glaciers at http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/forest_facts/resources/geology/icefields.htm

Alaska's State Bird – the Willow Ptarmigan

Ptarmigan live in alpine and arctic tundras throughout the northern hemisphere. They resemble small grouse, weighing up to about 1.5 pounds, with white body plumage in the winter. Willow ptarmigan are found nearly everywhere in Alaska's high treeless country of the Alaska Range, into the central Yukon area and throughout the northern hemisphere.

Learn more about willow ptarmigan at www.adfg.state.ak.us/pubs/notebook/bird/ptarmiga.php