

Wilderness.net's Becharof Wilderness Fact Sheet



Credit:
USFWS

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Becharof Wilderness in 1980 and it now has a total of 400,000 acres. All of the wilderness is in Alaska and is managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Description

Set where the state begins to slim down into the Alaska Peninsula, 35-mile-by-15-mile Becharof Lake is Alaska's second largest body of inland water (only Lake Iliamna is larger). Becharof Wilderness, about one-third of the Becharof National Wildlife Refuge, extends from the

lake's northeastern shore south to the Pacific Ocean. Becharof Lake is also the world's second largest salmon nursery. When the salmon spawn, brown bears cluster here in greater numbers than anywhere else. Some actually den on islands in the lake, a behavior noted nowhere else on Earth. On the coast, Puale Bay provides haul-out beaches for thousands of Steller sea lions and other sea mammals. Multitudes of seabirds come and go along a coastline cut deeply by misty fjords (steep cliffs falling into narrow saltwater bays). Wolves, moose, and members of a caribou herd numbering 15,000 are commonly sighted.

Becharof shows the scars of recent volcanic activity. Mount Peulik (4,835 feet) leaks gasses from rocks at its foot near the southern shore of Becharof Lake. In 1977, violent eruptions formed the shallow, broad, low-rimmed craters of Ukinrek Maars, also near the lake.

Hunters score an unusually high success rate with bears and caribou. Wildlife observers and photographers are common human visitors. Bear precautions are in order. Summer temperatures may rise into the 70s. Rainfall has reached 160 inches per year on the Pacific side of the Alaska Peninsula.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Becharof Wilderness.

1. [Plan Ahead and Prepare](#)
2. [Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces](#)
3. [Dispose of Waste Properly](#)
4. [Leave What You Find](#)
5. [Minimize Campfire Impacts](#)

6. [Respect Wildlife](#)
7. [Be Considerate of Other Visitors](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Area Management

The Becharof Wilderness is part of the 110 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Becharof Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

Unless otherwise specified, no motorized equipment or mechanical transport, with the exception of wheelchairs, is allowed. This is generally true for all federal lands managed as designated wilderness.

Links to Other Websites

[Alaska Region, Becharof National Wildlife Refuge](#)

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

| Law | Date | Acreage Change (in acres) |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Public Law 96-487 | December 2, 1980 | 400,000 |
| Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act - Public Law 96-487 (12/2/1980) Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act | | |

— [download 96-487](#)