



NOAA's Habitat Focus Area in Alaska

Background

Habitat Focus Areas are targeted places where NOAA is collaborating with communities to measurably improve the environment through NOAA's mission of science, service, and stewardship.

Ten Areas for Action

NOAA selected ten Habitat Focus Areas (HFAs) nationwide to help communities protect and restore valuable natural resources that support local economies. Experts in the HFAs design and implement solutions to address threats to coastal habitats, working with partners to achieve shared conservation goals within a 5-year period. Using habitat science and best practices, HFAs demonstrate a concrete application of NOAA's mission.

NOAA Habitat Blueprint

Habitat Focus Areas are part of the Habitat Blueprint: a framework for NOAA to address the growing challenge of habitat loss. Visit the Habitat Blueprint website at <https://www.HabitatBlueprint.noaa.gov>.



The beauty of Alaska stems from its unmatched natural resources. Along Alaska's southern coast is mountain-rimmed Kachemak (CATCH-ah-mac) Bay. The 40-mile-long bay provides a home for fish, crab, shrimp, waterfowl, and endangered species. The people of Kachemak Bay work in marine transportation and fishing. Warming temperatures, invasive species, and other threats are altering traditional ways of life for coastal communities here. NOAA and its partners are addressing these issues in the Kachemak Bay Habitat Focus Area in Alaska.

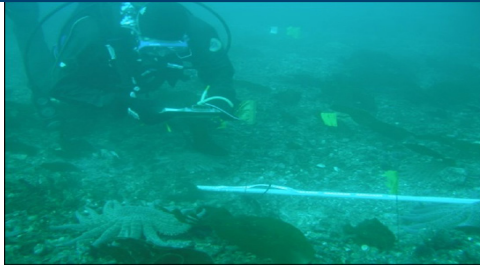
Places ▶

Kachemak Bay is in the southern Cook Inlet of Alaska, 200 miles south of Anchorage. The abundance of marine life draws waterfowl and shorebirds, as well as land mammals such as moose and bears. As the nation's largest National Estuarine Research Reserve and a State of Alaska Critical Habitat Area, it inspires fishermen and marine researchers alike.

Kachemak Bay is one of ten NOAA Habitat Focus Areas across the U.S.

Tour all ten online at [HabitatBlueprint.noaa.gov](https://www.HabitatBlueprint.noaa.gov)





Issues ▶

Kachemak Bay's highly diverse environment has experienced significant declines in their shrimp and crab populations leading to fishery closures. It is also vulnerable to:

- melting of polar ice caps, and retreating glaciers
- spread of invasive species
- coastal development & recreation, and
- rising ocean temperatures.

Fishery closures in Kachemak Bay in addition to the other major threats have profound impacts on the economy and the ecological diversity of the marine and coastal ecosystems. In order to prepare for and adapt to threats, the Kachemak Bay Habitat Focus Area emphasizes scientific tool development to increase the effectiveness of their natural resource management.



Priorities ▶

The Kachemak Bay HFA team aims to monitor and plan for marine invasive species as well as develop several management tools including:

- Resource assessment and management tools
- Habitat visualization and assessment tool
- User-friendly trajectory tool based on ocean circulation model for spill response planning and larval transport
- Risk assessment tools for harmful algal blooms and ocean acidification

To achieve these goals, NOAA is building on local momentum to protect and restore the region's habitats. The focus is a place—Kachemak Bay, Alaska—but the real drivers of positive change are its people.

Partners ▶

A central team and partners coordinate on-the-ground and in-the-water efforts in Alaska, and those partners include:

- State of Alaska
- University of Alaska
- Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies
- Seldovia Village Tribe
- Port Graham Village Tribe
- Nanwalek Tribal Council
- Bureau of Ocean Energy Management
- Cook Inlet Regional Citizens Advisory Council
- Cities of Homer & Seldovia
- Kenai Peninsula Borough

The local community in Kachemak Bay is another major partner in the HFA.



Plans ▶

For more background and resources about this Habitat Focus Area, connect with our page on the Habitat Blueprint website: [HabitatBlueprint.noaa.gov](https://www.HabitatBlueprint.noaa.gov).

Visit the story map for a visual tour of the HFA. For details about its goals, download the Implementation Plan.

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