

# Cape Krusenstern

CAPE KRUSENSTERN  
NATIONAL MONUMENT  
ALASKA



Cape Krusenstern, projecting into the Chukchi Sea, has been the site of seasonal marine mammal hunting by Eskimo peoples for several millenia. This tradition continues today. The monument, composed of 226,000 hectares (560,000 acres) in northwestern Alaska, borders the Chukchi Sea and Kotzebue Sound north of the Arctic Circle. It is about 725 kilometers (450 miles) west-northwest of Fairbanks and, at its closest point, is 16 kilometers (10 miles) northwest of Kotzebue. The Cape is remarkable archeologically, because within its gravels, in chronological order, lie artifacts from every known Eskimo occupation of North America. She-

shalik Spit, in the monument's southeastern corner, extends into Kotzebue Sound and is a focus of modern marine mammal hunting. A series of lagoons lies inland. Other archeological sites have been discovered in the rolling hills of the monument's central and eastern portions.

#### WHAT TO DO AND SEE

Cape Krusenstern National Monument has no National Park Service facilities, trails, or services. There is no public display of archeological artifacts. People who come here are chiefly interested in backpacking and camping. The best areas are along the coast on the monument's west side,

and in the hills running north and south through it. Wildlife includes grizzly bear, black bear, caribou, moose, an occasional musk ox, wolves, and lynx. Walrus, polar bears, and several species of seals and whales occur offshore at various times of the year. Many waterfowl species nest around the lagoon in summer. Grayling, arctic char, and whitefish inhabit monument waters.

#### ACCESS

Northwestern Alaska cannot be reached by road. Daily commercial flights serve Kotzebue from both Anchorage and Fairbanks. From Kotzebue, access to the monument is by chartered aircraft or chartered boat. Average flight time for a chartered aircraft to drop off passengers at Cape Krusenstern (and return empty to Kotzebue) is one hour. Aircraft land on very primitive airstrips or

certain beaches, or if float-equipped, on lagoon waters. Summer weather, extremely variable, can curtail travel to and from the monument.

#### ACCOMMODATIONS AND SERVICES

There are no accommodations or campgrounds in the monument. Kotzebue has a hotel. Camping is permitted in most of the monument. It is not permitted in archeological zones; where

it would interrupt subsistence activities; or on the extensive private coastal inholdings without the owner's consent. Kotzebue has a number of small stores where most basic goods can be purchased. Fairbanks and Anchorage offer all the usual merchandise. A few guides and outfitters work out of Kotzebue; some services are offered by air taxi operators and boat owners.

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## WEATHER AND INSECTS

Long, cold winters and short, cool summers are the rule. Temperatures here during June, July, and August range from 14°C (40°F) to 18°C (65°F), with daytime highs often around 10°C (in the 50s). June and July, usually the clearest months, commonly have dense fogs along the coast. Winter temperatures can drop to -45°C (-50°F), and temperatures of -28°C (-20°F) occurs regularly. Frequent strong winds produce a severe wind-chill factor. Mosquitos appear in late June, are at their worst in July, and disappear in August. They are most dense in the interior lowlands, least dense along the coast. (Whitesocks and gnats are present in Au-

gust and September.) Good insect repellent and a head net are highly recommended.

## CLOTHING, FOOD AND GEAR

It is essential that clothing and camping gear be of good quality. Rain gear is often needed. Tents should be able to withstand strong winds and should have rain flies. Always carry extra food in case your air or boat transportation cannot pick you up--because of weather--as scheduled. You should be familiar with your gear before your trip. You should also be competent in hiking, camping, and survival skills. Winter travel is not advised.

## PRECAUTIONS AND COURTESIES

The monument is vast, and a number of dangers may confront you here. For your safety, leave a copy of your planned itinerary with the Visitor Information Center in Kotzebue. Local residents carry on their subsistence way of life within the monument. Their camps, fishnets, and other equipment are critical to their well-being. Please observe the usual courtesies respecting their property and privacy. Bear, moose, and other wild animals are unpredictable and potentially dangerous. They are always dangerous when protecting themselves, their young, and their territories. Ask a ranger about the proper precautions to take when traveling in the backcountry.

For specific information about your planned trip, write:

Superintendent  
National Park Service  
Northwest Alaska Areas  
P.O. Box 287  
Kotzebue, Alaska 99752  
Phone: (907) 442-3890

