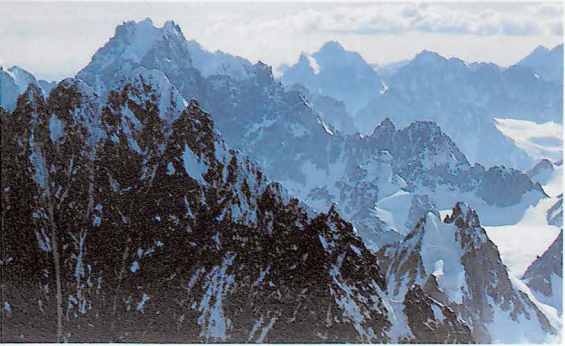




▲ The Alaska and Aleutian Ranges join here. Between them stand the awesome Chigmit Mountains, formed by violent earth movement and sculpted by glaciers.

▲ Backpacking, river running, and fishing are the major summer season activities.

▲ Storm clouds gather over Lower Twin Lake. In the foreground are richly hued arctic tundra and stands of boreal spruce forest.

▲ Dall sheep graze diminutive plant species adapted to withstand severe conditions. Rams develop curved horns, battle weapons when mating season comes.

▲ These Tanaina Indians were photographed at the village of Kijik on Lake Clark in 1902.

▲ Caribou are the only members of the deer family in which both sexes grow antlers. These "nomads of the north" travel incessantly and usually in groups.

Cover photo, islands in Lake Clark, by Nancy Simmerman

Wild, Spectacular Scenic Diversity

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve is a composite of ecosystems representative of many diverse regions throughout Alaska. The spectacular scenery is unrivaled. The recreational opportunities are varied and plentiful. Although continuously inhabited since early prehistoric times, the area remains wild and sparsely populated, with aircraft providing the primary means of access. Within the park the mountains of the Alaska and the Aleutian Ranges join. The Chigmits, an awesome, jagged array of mountains, are the result of centuries of uplifting, intrusion, earthquakes, vulcanism, and glacial action. Two active volcanoes, Iliamna and Redoubt, form an important link in the Pacific chain of fire. Venting steam, snow-capped, and rising more than 3,050 meters (10,000 feet), each is an impressive volcano to be viewed from the eastern side of the park.

The range's eastern flank descends rapidly to Cook Inlet. Rivers cascade dramatically to the sea through forests of Sitka and white spruce. The coastal cliffs, holding fossil remnants of 150 million years of sea life, are stark counterpoints to the active volcanoes and glacial streams that are

reshaping the landscape. On marshes and outwash plains, swans and other waterfowl nest. The rocky cliffs in and adjacent to the park provide rookeries for puffins, cormorants, kittiwakes, and other seabirds. Seals and whales may occasionally be observed off shore.

The western flank of the Chigmit Mountains descends through tundra-covered foothills to boreal forest. Spectacular lakes and wild rivers fill the valleys, flowing southwestward to Bristol Bay. Fish include five species of salmon, rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, lake trout, northern pike, and arctic grayling. Dall sheep, caribou, and moose forage the area. Brown and black bear are present, as well as wolves, lynx, foxes, and other mammals.

This western side of the park and preserve provides many recreational opportunities. Anglers find trophy fish; hikers explore high tundra slopes; river runners thrill to the Mulchatna or Chilikadrotna Wild Rivers. Camping along a lakeshore provides for many an inspiring evening.

This vast area also may be harsh. Planning and preparing for a wilderness experience is critical to the enjoyment of the area in all conditions: wind, rain, snow, and sunshine.

Winter is long—October through April. In some locations the sun does not rise above the peaks for several months. A fresh snow can veil the area majestically or winter winds may uncover a landscape of subtle brown highlighted by ice-blue frozen lakes. Break-up in spring can immobilize the area, as ice melts and frozen ground turns to mud. Summer is the time of life as caribou calve, buds turn to leaves, mosquitoes hatch, and salmon return to spawn. Clouds often cap the Chigmit Mountains and occasionally close the passes to aircraft. Precipitation is about a third less on the west side, but everywhere rain produces a summer floral display. Fireweed, lupine, blueberry, and bearberry abound. In autumn the burgundy hued tundra blankets the slopes around aptly named Turquoise Lake. A light dusting of snow over the yellow birch and red bearberry produces a truly rare visual pleasure.

The area has been occupied since prehistoric times and archeological investigations are continuing to trace early settlement. Tanaina Indians lived in villages at Kijik and Old Village until the early 1900s, when they moved to Nondalton and other sites. Russian explorers, traders, and missionaries began traversing the region in the 1790s. The salmon industry began attracting American and foreign settlers in the early 1900s. Around Lake Clark most were trappers and miners. Recent years have produced an economy based on subsistence lifestyles, commercial fishing, and recreation activities.

Lake Clark National Park and Preserve was established on December 2, 1980. The park contains approximately 1 million hectares (2.6 million acres); the preserve contains 565,000 hectares (1.4 million acres). Wilderness designation has been placed on 970,000 hectares (2.4 million acres) of the total.

Logistics

Access to the Lake Clark region is almost exclusively by small aircraft. Float planes may land on the many lakes throughout the area. Wheeled planes land on open beaches, gravel bars, or private airstrips in or near the park.

There is no highway access to the park and preserve.

A one- to two-hour flight from Anchorage, Kenai, or Homer will provide access to most points within the park and preserve.

Scheduled commercial flights between Anchorage and Iliamna, 48 kilometers (30 miles) outside the boundary, provide another means of access.



Field headquarters for the park/preserve is located at Port Alsworth. There are no other National Park Service facilities available in the park and preserve.

For Information

For specific information about the area, topographic maps, guides, and private accommodations in or near the park, write: Superintendent, Lake Clark National Park and Preserve, 701 C Street, Box 61, Anchorage, AK 99513.

What to See and Do

Summer season activities in the Lake Clark area largely center around backpacking, river running, and fishing. For all activities you must either arrive fully self-sufficient, or make advance arrangements with a guide, outfitter, or lodge operator. There are no trails in the park or preserve. However, the western foothills are ideal for backpacking on open, relatively dry tundra. The mountains themselves are steep, rugged, and subject to year-round inclement weather. The lowlands can be boggy, wet tundra punctuated by maddening tangles of alder.

A float trip on any of the three designated wild rivers as well as other

ivers in the area is spectacular. Commercial float trips, fly out fishing, and flightseeing may be arranged.

Sport hunting is permitted in the preserve in accordance with State of Alaska regulations. The park is closed to sport hunting.

Weather

Both continental and maritime elements influence the park's eastern region near Cook Inlet. June through August temperatures average between 10° and 18°C (50° and 65°F), with considerable precipitation. The park's interior—west of the Chigmit Mountains—and the preserve are warmer and drier in summer. Temperatures occasionally reach 27°C (80°F). Frost and snow can occur in September and October, and even in mid-summer you should anticipate evening frost. Snow permitting, March and early April are best for cross country skiing. From mid-April to late May thawing streams and lakes make all travel difficult and dangerous. Strong winds—severe in

and near the mountain passes—can occur at any time. Winter temperatures in the interior can plummet to -40°C (-40°F), and occasionally lower.

Precautions

This is a vast area subject to harsh weather, high winds, and rain. Guard against hypothermia.

Animals are wild and must be respected. Both moose and brown bears are present. Information about handling wildlife encounters is available at the National Park Service office. Please review the brochures before traveling in the backcountry.

Mosquitoes and biting flies may require a head net and/or repellent.

Drinking water should be boiled for one minute before use. Giardia could be a problem in some bodies of water.

You should know—and test—your gear before

you arrive, and you must possess good backcountry skills for wilderness survival. For your safety, leave your itinerary with someone and notify that person on completion of your trip.

Winter travel can only be recommended to those experienced in cold weather camping and survival techniques.

Special Note: Local residents carry on the subsistence way of life within the national park and preserve with camps, fishnets, and other equipment. Please practice courtesy and respect their property and their privacy.

Guides, Outfitting, and Supplies

For stores offering the widest selection of goods, plan to outfit yourself in Kenai, Homer, or Anchorage. Stores in Iliamna and Nondalton, offering limited foodstuffs, equipment, and clothing, are accessible only by air.

Some merchants and lodge operators along the coast, in Nondalton, Iliamna, and on Lake Clark offer rooms, cabins, meals, guiding, and outfitting services. Arrangements should be made well in advance. Air and boat charter operators may also provide guides and rental equipment.

For a list of businesses licensed to operate in the area, write the superintendent.

In the park and preserve you are on your own and dependent on your own resources. Quality clothing (wool is recommended), rain gear, and good insect repellent are essential. Tents should have rain flies, mosquito netting, and be designed to withstand strong winds. Always carry emergency food rations because bad weather can delay your scheduled pickup.

Map Warning

The map in this folder is not to be used for backpacking or navigation purposes. U.S. Geological Survey topographic maps for Lime Hills, Lake Clark, Iliamna, Kenai, Seldovia, and Tyonek cover the park and preserve.

Lake Clark

National Park and Preserve
Alaska

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service

