Comprised of 2.7 million acres on the Seward Peninsula in northwest Alaska, Bering Land Bridge (BELA) is one of the nation’s most remote national park units. Because of this, it offers unparalleled opportunities to not only experience some of America’s most isolated wildlands, but also the rich heritage of Alaskan Native cultures, past and present. Visitors to the preserve will find themselves in the midst of natural hot springs, ancient lava flows, and the largest maar lakes in the world in a land still used by local residents in the same way their ancestors have used it for generations.

Bering Land Bridge was established as a National Preserve on December 2, 1980. This designation enables the land to be federally protected, but also utilized for public hunting, gathering, trapping, fishing, and subsistence use. With a coastline just 55 miles from Siberia, it is the westernmost national park unit in the continental United States.

The preserve protects a significant expanse of land remaining from the prehistoric “land bridge,” also known as Beringia, which spanned from modern-day Asia to North America over 12,000 years ago. The bridge was up to 1,000 miles wide, and was a land mass that allowed for the exchange of human, flora, and fauna populations between continents. As the climate warmed at the end of the last ice age, sea levels rose and the land mass was closed off, separating the continents. Today, evidence of ice age species and prehistoric human settlements can be found in the preserve.

There are no roads into Bering Land Bridge, so travel opportunities can be limited. The most common access is by snowmobile, small airplane, boat, or on foot. With a growing body of information about North American natural history and indigenous cultures, the preserve offers valuable opportunities for visitors to understand and explore the vast wildlands of northwest Alaska.

Superintendent’s Welcome

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, a little known park unit with a huge story! The preserve, which is just smaller than the state of Connecticut, lies at the heart of continental crossroads that profoundly influenced the distribution of life in the Western Hemisphere.

The park headquarters are in Nome, a rural community of 3,600 residents, which is known for its gold rush history, Alaska Native cultures, and as the end of the famous Iditarod sled dog race. The preserve is a place where the rich variety of wildlife, fish, and plants have sustained the indigenous people of the region for thousands of years, and where subsistence is essential to the economic, cultural, and social existence of the region’s people. The villages of Shishmaref, Wales and Deering are located right outside the preserve boundary; residents consider the preserve part of their backyard.

The story of Beringia and that of the park is near and dear to my heart, not only because my ancestors crossed this land bridge, but also because my grandmother was originally from Russia, and I have relatives who still live in the Chukotka region. I am honored to be the superintendent of a park that has played a unique role in the history of the Americas. I encourage you to browse our website, utilize this visitor guide, and to contact us for more information. Igamsiqanaghghalek- Thank you very much!

Jeanette Koelsch
Superintendent, Bering Land Bridge National Preserve
### Commercial Use Operators

**AIR TAXI**
- **Air Juneau, Inc.** PO Box 1846 Kenai AK 99611 907-252-7888 sheila@airjuneau.com www.huntandfishalaska.net
- **Fox Aircrafts, LLC** 6049 Hart Lake Loop Wasilla AK 99654 907-301-2770 stevefox180@yahoo.com www.foxaircraft.com
- **Golden Eagle Outfitters, Inc.** PO Box 692 Delta Junction AK 99737 907-388-2225 trips@alaskawildernessexpeditions.com www.alaskawildernessexpeditions.com
- **Arctic Backcountry Flying, LLC** PO Box 924 Kotzebue AK 99702 907-442-3200 bruce lwed@hageland.com www.flyera.com
- **Northwestern Aviation, Inc.** PO Box 1010 Kotzebue AK 99702 907-442-3525 jimkincaid0@gmail.com www.alaskaonyourown.com
- **Arctic Wild LLC** PO Box 80562 Fairbanks AK 99708 907-479-8203 Sally@wildarctic.com www.arcticwild.com

**BIG GAME TRANSPORT**
- **Air Juneau, Inc.** PO Box 1846 Kenai AK 99611 907-252-7888 sheila@airjuneau.com www.huntandfishalaska.net
- **Golden Eagle Outfitters, Inc.** PO Box 692 Delta Junction AK 99737 907-388-2225 trips@alaskawildernessexpeditions.com www.alaskawildernessexpeditions.com
- **Northwestern Aviation, Inc.** PO Box 1010 Kotzebue AK 99752 907-442-3525 jimkincaid0@gmail.com www.alaskaonyourown.com
In Brief

What may appear today to be an immense landscape of flat tundra, lava fields, rolling mountains, oxbow rivers, and shallow lakes was once the sole terrestrial passage between Asia and the Americas. With seawater frozen up into colossal glaciers, the ocean floor was exposed for thousands of years, long enough for plants, animals, and even humans to move back and forth between the continents.

The Last Ice Age

This time period is also known as the Pleistocene epoch, which lasted from about 2 million to 10,000 years ago. It was a time of extreme climatic change, where prehistoric hippopotamuses lived in a subtropical England, and humans crossed the Bering Land Bridge alongside now-extinct saber-toothed cats and American lions.

Other ice age mammals that are known to have roamed this land include woolly mammoths, giant short-faced bears, and steppe bison. From cave art and fossil remains, we know that early humans observed and interacted with these creatures. Muskox and caribou were around during this time period as well. A small herd was brought over from Greenland to Nunivak Island in southwestern Alaska in the 1930s, and in the 1970s their descendants were reintroduced to the Seward Peninsula. Today the population has expanded its range into Bering Land Bridge National Preserve.

It is believed there was no single cause for the ultimate extinction of so many ice age species, but natural climate change is one known factor. As the climate warmed, glaciers melted and the sea level rose, cutting off access to Asia and changing the available resources that so many species relied on for survival. Although some human populations were migrating via boat along the coast by then, in many ways the two worlds were severed.

Today, climate change continues to cause sea levels to rise, further submerging the ancient land bridge. As the global temperature warms, sea ice has a harder time forming each season and staying frozen, so it melts into the oceans, which causes a domino effect (or feedback loop) of continuous melting and warming.

Wildlife

Due to its vast nature, it is possible to stay for days out in the backcountry of Bering Land Bridge National Preserve and never see a large mammal, but that doesn’t mean they aren’t out there. Brown bears, muskox, fox, caribou, moose, wolves, and wolverines all make their homes in the preserve, as well as a wide variety of other small mammals, insects, and arachnids. Visit the animals page on our website for more info!

Plants

Far from the barren landscape it might appear to be, in summertime the tundra is vibrant with color and plant life, home to over 300 species of vascular plants, including wildflowers, berries, small trees, and shrubs. There are also several hundred more mosses, fungi, and lichens that survive year round. Check out the plants page on our website for more info about common species you’ll find in Bering Land Bridge.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping

Because Bering Land Bridge is designated as a National Preserve, sport hunting and fishing are permitted with proper required state-issued licenses and permits.

- Bag and possession limits vary by species and by area, so always check current hunting regulations.
- Alaska Fish and Game: http://www.adfg.state.ak.us/
- Please keep in mind that some areas within the preserve are private land. Do not enter private land without the landowner’s permission.
6 Backcountry Safety

Best Practices

- For all trips, pack at least 3 days of extra food (especially if you are flying in). Rapid, unexpected weather changes may prevent you from getting out of the backcountry.
- Be prepared for extremely variable weather, by packing rain gear and multiple clothing layers all times of year. Temperatures can range from 90° to -40°F depending on the season.
- Always bring a well-stocked medical kit. Anywhere in the preserve, you are over 80 miles from Anchorage, the nearest major medical facility. Under optimal conditions, expect a minimum 4 hour wait for any emergency medical assistance.
- Leave an itinerary with someone who is not on your trip and ensure someone knows where you are at all times.
- Due to its remote location, there is no cell phone service anywhere in the preserve. It’s advisable to bring a satellite phone, Personal Locator Beacon (PLB), or other satellite tracking device.
- Call us at (907) 443-2522! Even though there are no backcountry permits required for Bering Land Bridge National Preserve, you are welcome to contact park staff just to let us know you’re there. Tell us about current conditions, what you’re doing, the name of your pilot and plane tail number, and any other information you want to relay.
- Wildlife safety is of utmost importance. Make a lot of noise so as not to surprise bears or other large wildlife; bring several cans of bear spray; use bear proof containers for food and toiletries; and cook and store food at least 100 feet away from camp.
- Respect wildlife. Aware of other visitors. Respect other visitors by yielding to other trail users, camping away from others, and being quiet so as to enjoy nature’s sounds. Respect private inholdings and allotments.

Leave No Trace

1. Plan ahead and prepare. Know the regulations where you’re going, prepare for extreme weather; travel in small groups; use a map, compass, and GPS.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces. These include established trails, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow; camp at least 200ft. from water sources; walk single file on established trails and keep your campsite small.
3. Dispose of waste properly. Pack it in, pack it out. Deposit human waste 6-8in. deep and at least 200ft. from water, camps, and trails. Use biodegradable soap at least 200ft. from water for any sort of cleaning activity, and disperse any wastewater.
4. Leave what you find. Examine what you find, but leave it be. Avoid building structures, altering the landscape, or transporting invasive species. Leave natural and man-made objects where you find them.
5. Minimize campfire impacts. Use a lightweight stove for cooking, and a lantern for light. Keep fires small, put them out completely, and disperse cool ashes.
6. Respect wildlife. Observe wildlife from a distance and do not approach or feed them. Control your own pets, and protect wildlife by storing food and trash properly.
7. Be considerate of other visitors. Respect other visitors by yielding to other trail users, camping away from others, and being quiet so as to enjoy nature’s sounds. Respect private inholdings and allotments.

Bear Safety

Know what to do

- If you encounter a bear, give it as much space as possible and stay far away from it.
- If a bear approaches you, speak calmly but loudly to it and make yourself appear larger by waving your arms or holding your pack over your head. Stand your ground.
- Defensive behavior includes huffing, snorting, jaw-popping, or charging. If you see this, stand your ground! Talk calmly and loudly, move slowly away, make yourself appear larger, and be ready to use your bear spray.
- If a bear charges at you, now is the time to use your bear spray (as long as you’re upwind -- otherwise you risk spraying yourself!). Continue to stand your ground. Most charges do not end in contact.
- In the unlikely event that contact is made by a brown bear, play dead. Lie face down on the ground with your hands covering your neck and legs spread apart so the bear cannot turn you over. Do not move until the bear is gone, or unless it begins attacking vigorously. If it does begin to feed on you, fight back for your life.

Know the Signs

- Large piles of scat
- Bear tracks
- Claw marks
- Tufts of fur
- Large, dug-up areas
- Animal trails of cleared brush

Be aware

- Scan the landscape periodically. Check the horizons for any signs of large wildlife moving around in the distance over hilltops, ridges, or tundra.
- Be especially vigilant around streams, lakes, and other water sources.
- Autumn is a time when bears begin eating on the tundra, so be extra watchful.
- Spend as little time as possible in places that could put you in impassable situations with wildlife, such as dense vegetation.

In Brief

Brown bears will not typically attack, but the key is to avoid surprising the bear, approaching it, or appearing as a threat. To get to see a bear on the tundra is an incredible opportunity, so enjoy, value, and respect the animal from a distance (at least 100 yards), and your experience in the backcountry will be truly rewarding.

In the unlikely event that contact is made by a brown bear, play dead. Lie face down on the ground with your hands covering your neck and legs spread apart so the bear cannot turn you over. Do not move until the bear is gone, or unless it begins attacking vigorously. If it does begin to feed on you, fight back for your life.

Brown bear!

Bear spray demonstration.
In Brief

Serpentine Hot Springs is one of the most visited areas in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve. With a gravel airstrip, hot springs piped in to an enclosed bathhouse, and a bunkhouse open year round, Serpentine offers an accessible way to experience the unique and remote wildness of this region. Frequent by travelers and locals alike, Serpentine is a place of both cultural importance and geological significance. Visitors come to Hot Springs Valley to observe wildlife, bathe, relax, and hike among the extraordinary granite spires, also known as “tors,” which tower over the landscape. The Inupiaq word for Serpentine Hot Springs is Iyat, which means “cooking pot” or “a site for cooking,” and with one step into this steamy oasis, you can easily see how it got its name. For centuries the hot springs have been recognized as a place of spiritual healing and tradition, a quality that continues to be valued and respected by all who visit.

Serpentine has something different to offer every season. In summer, mild temperatures provide ideal weather for hiking through the tundra. In fall, the slopes are teeming with wild berries and ablaze with brilliant colors. In winter, the bathhouse offers a steamy escape from the frigid conditions outside. And in spring, the land is transformed into a rainbow of wildflowers.

Things to Know:

- The water temperature in the hot spring outside of the bathhouse can reach a dangerous 170°F. Use the bathhouse for bathing and soaking instead.
- The water from the river contains high levels of coliform bacteria, so be sure to boil or filter it before consuming.
- Leave the spigots running inside the bathhouse at all times, as turning them off would cause the tub to dry up and shrink, resulting in structural damage.
- Serpentine Hot Springs is protected as a cultural resource and should be treated with respect as such.
- Please observe “Leave No Trace” ethics as much as possible, and leave Serpentine Hot Springs cleaner than it was when you arrived!

Features

Secondly to the hot spring, the large granite spires, known as tors, are one of Serpentine’s most unique features. Created through volcanic forces causing magma to cool into soft granite underground, erosion slowly scoured away the softer layers and left hard granite monoliths exposed on towering ridgelines.

Wildlife including raptors, songbirds, brown bears, caribou, muskox, red fox, beavers, and moose can be sighted by the watchful eye. Hundreds of species of plants, mosses, lichens, and fungi are also found here.

The Bunkhouse:

- The building is a barracks-like structure divided into 3 rooms that sleep about 12 people. First come, first served.
- The two living areas each contain:
  - Six bunks with thin mattresses (bring your own sleeping bag)
  - A large kitchen table with benches
  - A 3-burner Coleman stove (bring your own stove fuel)
  - A heat stove (bring your own oil or wood)
  - Cookware, dishes, kitchen utensils, cleaning supplies
  - The middle room of the bunkhouse is used to store gear, firewood, tools, cleaning supplies, water filters, and other miscellaneous items.
  - The two living areas each contain:
- There is an outhouse approximately 100 feet west of the bunkhouse, near the air strip.
- The bathhouse covers a redwood tub used for soaking.
- The tub is fed directly from the hot spring and the cold stream outside, and spigots can be adjusted to control the temperature in the tub.
- Some non-perishable emergency supplies may be available, so please leave these for others in need.
- Recycling is available for aluminum cans in the bunkhouse, but please pack out any other trash you accumulate during your stay.

How to get there:

Summer/Fall: Located approximately 30 miles from the end of the Kougarok Road, Serpentine can be accessed via aircraft, by hiking, or by non-motorized vehicle. Private planes or flights chartered through authorized air taxis are permitted.

Winter/Spring: When there is adequate snow cover, Serpentine may be accessed by plane with proper skis or by snowmobile. If traveling from Nome by snowmobile, visitors should be prepared to make a two day trip each way.

Geographic Coordinates: 65.8569N, 164.7142W

Web Exclusive

Check out Serpentine Hot Springs on Youtube!
http://youtu.be/JXAGodqRR2c
Archaeological sites are protected so others may enjoy the same experience of discovery. It is vital to leave features, artifacts, and natural history, and to the heritage of modern Inupiaq communities. For this reason, it is illegal to alter, destroy, or remove archaeological and historic resources.

Evidence of human activity from times in the last several hundred years has been found along the shoreline. These sites represent an invaluable link to our cultural traditions. For this reason, it is illegal to alter, destroy, or remove archaeological and historic resources.

Changes to the landscape over time can easily be seen in the erosion that is slowly eating away at the tall bluffs. On the higher part of the shoreline, archaeological sites are being surveyed to understand the impacts of this erosion, how much has been lost, and how much can be preserved.

Evidences of human activity from the Arctic Small Tool tradition (about 2,250 BC) to more recent times in the last several hundred years has been found along the coast. These sites represent an invaluable link to our cultural and natural history, and to the heritage of modern Inupiaq communities. For this reason, it is vital to leave features, artifacts, and the environment as you find them so others may enjoy the same experience of discovery. Archaeological sites are protected by law and those who damage them are subject to fines.

In the summer, the coastal region is fragrant with the salty sea breeze and the zest of Labrador tea on the tundra. The Chukchi coast is an ideal place to observe the crossroads of the Asiatic-North American Flyway, the migratory route of birds that pass between the continents every spring and fall. Here you have the opportunity to see both North American and Asiatic species as they stop over on their epic journeys.

In addition, one of the few remaining active reindeer herds on the Seward Peninsula is managed from the village of Wales along the western coastline. Herds can occasionally be seen throughout the tundra or on the beaches of the Chukchi Sea. Keep an eye out when you’re flying over or hiking in this region.
Kuzitrin and the Twin Calderas

**Features**

**With extensive lava fields** to the north and the Bendeleben Mountains to the south, Kuzitrin Lake is nestled in a strikingly beautiful region of the preserve. The Twin Calderas are situated about 1.3 miles from the western end of the lake, and hardened lava flows extend across the soft tundra. Although the calderas are now inactive, they were originally formed by the emptying of underground magma chambers in a violent eruption.

For centuries, this area has been used by local populations for subsistence purposes. The ground is littered with caribou remains, and ancient herding drive lines can be identified along the slope down to the lake. Artifacts and features may be encountered in this area; please respect the resources and leave them as you find them for others to enjoy, and for scientific study. Archaeological sites are protected by law and those who damage them subject to fines. In addition, if these are moved, the evidence can become contaminated or the original location of the artifacts can be lost or disturbed, effectively destroying any opportunity to piece together the past.

**How to get there:**

**Summer/Fall:** About 90 miles northeast of Nome, Kuzitrin is accessible by float plane landing in the lake, by non-motorized vehicle, or by foot. The Devil Mountain Maars are about 130 miles from Nome.

**Winter/Spring:** Accessible by snowmobile.

**Geographic Coordinates:** 65.385278N, 163.215278W

---

Maar Lakes

**In Brief:** The record-breaking sizes of the maar lakes in Bering Land Bridge National Preserve can be attributed to the permafrost layer on the Seward Peninsula. This creates an especially violent eruption when it comes in contact with magma. These range in size from 13,000-26,000 feet in diameter and can be nearly 1,000 feet deep.

Although some maars erupted as far back as 200,000 years ago, the Devil Mountain Maars are among the youngest maars in Alaska, created about 20,000 years ago during the last ice age. The Devil Mountain Maar is the largest maar in the world, created by the eruption of Devil Mountain Volcano, which occurred about 10,000 years ago. The Devil Mountain Maar is the largest maar in the world, created by the eruption of Devil Mountain Volcano, which occurred about 10,000 years ago.

**How to get there:**

**Summer/Fall:** The maar lakes are accessible by float plane landing in the lakes, by non-motorized vehicle, or by foot. The Devil Mountain Maars are about 130 miles from Nome.

**Winter/Spring:** Accessible by snowmobile.

**Geographic Coordinates:** 66.394722N, 164.488333W

---

Things to Know:

- Exercise caution when hiking on lava flows and the calderas, as there are large spaces between rocks and open pits that could be a falling hazard. Abundant lichens cover hidden holes.
- Freshwater from Kuzitrin Lake should be filtered or boiled before consuming, as it may contain harmful levels of bacteria.
- Be aware of wildlife in the area – Kuzitrin is home to wolves, brown bears, fox, moose, and caribou – exercise extreme caution by making a lot of noise when hiking.
Imuruk Lake

In Brief
The IMURUK LAKE AREA ENCOMPASSES about 1,100 acres of the southeast region of the preserve. In addition to brown bears, moose, wolves, and fox, wolverines can also be found around Imuruk Lake, as well as small mammals such as muskrats, arctic ground squirrels, shrews, and lemmings. Evidence of human activity from as far back as 6,000 years ago has been uncovered nearby as well.

Features
IMURUK LAKE IS ABOUT EIGHT miles long and no more than 10 feet deep, with surrounding rolling hills ranging in altitude from about 150-1,800 feet. Located just north of the Benedeleben mountain range, granite and metamorphic rocks make up the larger hills. The surrounding vegetation is typical of the tundra, and includes willows, alders, dwarf birch, and cotton grass tussocks.

Fossil evidence of prehistoric mammals has been found as well. Woolly mammoths, steppe bison, and horses, as well as ancient plant matter in the older sediments of Imuruk Lake, have revealed some of the prehistoric past of Bering Land Bridge.

More recently, Alaska Native populations inhabited the Imuruk Lake area up until about 1850, using it for caribou hunting and other subsistence activities. In the early 1900s it was also used for some gold mining. Today it is enjoyed by locals and outside visitors for hunting and recreational purposes.

How to get there:
Summer/Fall: Approximately 100 miles northeast of Nome, and about 60 miles south of the Arctic Circle, Imuruk Lake can be accessed in the summer by float plane landing in the lake, by non-motorized vehicle, or by foot.
Winter/Spring: Accessible by snowmobile or plane with snow skis.

Geographic Coordinates:
65.5977N, 163.2005W

Kayak paddles found near Imuruk Lake

Imuruk Lava Beds

In Brief
The VOLCANIC BASALT FIELDS of the preserve are the result of eruptions from about 75 vents (small volcanic cones) in the region. Covering more than 100,000 acres, the lava fields provide an opportunity to watch vegetation recapture a landscape that has been totally devastated by harsh natural processes. The largest vent is the Lost Jim Cone, which is relatively recent in geological history, formed less than 2,000 years ago.

Features
ALTHOUGH THE MOST RECENT vents erupted in the 1600s, some date all the way back to about 5 million years ago, even earlier than the last ice age. Also known as the Lost Jim Lava Flow, the Imuruk Lava Beds are made up of Pahoehoe flows, meaning the top layer cools and hardens while the bottom continues to flow, creating an ever-changing landscape over time, forming a ground cover of swirling, folded patterns.

The Lost Jim Cone, named for a USGS surveyor who got separated from his group while mapping the area in 1947, extends over 17 miles westward from its source. Made of olivine basalt, the lava is anywhere from 10-150 feet thick, originating at a 100-foot high cone. The next youngest feature is known as the Camille lava flow, which spread about 24 miles from its vent.

How to get there:
Summer/Fall: Accessible by bush plane, float plane to land on the lake, on foot, or by non-motorized vehicle.
Winter/Spring: Accessible by snowmobile or plane with snow skis.

Geographic Coordinates:
65.4886N, 163.2969W

Planes cannot land on the lava flows – landings should be made on the nearby tundra or on Imuruk Lake, with the the lava fields accessed by foot.
- Make sure to have durable footwear, as the lava beds are sharp and can tear up most materials.
- Exercise caution when hiking across lava beds. There are often large gaps between boulders that can present falling hazards.

Geographic Coordinates:
65.5977N, 163.2005W

Lava flows cover over 100,000 acres in the preserve

Despite its harsh past, these basalt fields are now home to many burrowing rodents, insects, lichens, mosses, and dozens of species of vascular plants. Caribou are known to frequent the area to eat the lichens. As you hike across this region, you will find yourself traversing a gently rolling landscape of broadly-domed summits and volcanic cones. You may even find small lava tubes and caverns carved out by the volatile liquids and gases that created the ground you are standing on, but do not enter these spaces, as the rock is unstable and highly hazardous.
Wales

How to get there:

Summer/Fall: Located 111 miles northwest of Nome, Wales is accessible via charter or commercial airline from Nome.

Winter/Spring: Accessible by snowmobile or charter or commercial airline.

Geographic Coordinates: 65.609170N, 168.0875W

Subsistence

- **Subsistence** is the practice of obtaining resources directly from the land or sea for survival, rather than sport.
- In the spring and fall, sea mammal hunting takes place as communities harvest whale, walrus, and seal.
- Berries, roots, and greens are harvested from the tundra in late summer and fall, and wild game such as caribou, moose, bear, muskox, ducks, and ptarmigan are hunted in the fall and winter.
- Fishing takes place throughout the summer, and fish can often be seen hanging to dry on racks in camps and villages. In winter, ice fishing is done on frozen lakes and rivers.

Things to Know:

- Both Shishmaref and Wales are dry towns: sale or importation of alcohol is prohibited.
- In coastal villages, summers are usually foggy with temperatures averaging 40° to 50°F; winters average from -12° to 2°F with about 30in. of snow.
- The Chukchi Sea is typically frozen mid-November to mid-May.
- Be respectful and aware of the subsistence lifestyle; many locals supplement their living by selling art, including carvings, beading, and sewing.

Muktuk, anyone?

Get to know the local cuisine! Inupiaq culture has some of the most unique food in the world, and while you’re not likely to find these dishes served in restaurants, they are commonly consumed in many private households.

- **Muktuk**: whale skin and blubber, eaten raw, pickled, or breaded
- **Akutug**: (a.k.a Eskimo Ice Cream) Wild berries mixed with seal oil and reindeer or caribou fat.
- **Avarruq**: Thin strips of whale flukes, eaten frozen or raw.
- **Stink Flipper**: Seal or walrus flipper buried and fermented for several months, prepared, and eaten frozen.

Shishmaref

Location on Sarichef Island

Located on Sarichef Island in the Chukchi Sea, Shishmaref is 5 miles offshore from the mainland. With a population of 563, it is one of the larger Inupiaq villages on the Seward Peninsula. Residents rely heavily on traditional subsistence practices, harvesting sea mammals, fish, birds, and large game throughout the year to meet most of their food needs. Sometimes known as the “friendliest village in Alaska,” Shishmaref has been inhabited for about 400 years and has seen many changes over that time.

Climate change is a very real and immediate issue for the village. As erosion eats away at the island, entire households have been evacuated and buildings swallowed by the sea; melting ice makes winter hunting a perilous affair; and it is feared that the eventual relocation of the village will result in the loss of the culture, dialect, and traditions that make the community what it is today.

There are two general stores in Shishmaref. Most homes and buildings do not have plumbing or running water. When visiting the village, be prepared with your own supplies, as variable weather can delay travel and resources may be limited.

Web Exclusive

Check out Local Perspectives on Climate Change in Bering Land Bridge:

[http://youtu.be/OJEvNES5wC4](http://youtu.be/OJEvNES5wC4)

How to get there:

Summer/Fall: 126 miles north of Nome, and 100 miles southwest of Kotzebue, Shishmaref is accessible via charter or commercial airline from Nome.

Winter/Spring: Accessible by snowmobile or charter or commercial airline from Nome.

Geographic Coordinates: 66.2556N, 166.0722W
Youth Perspectives

In Brief
FOR THE YOUTH OF THE SEWARD PENINSULA, SERPENTINE HOT SPRINGS PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE PASSING OF TRADITIONS FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT. JUNIOR HIGH AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM THE NATIVE VILLAGE OF SHISHMAREF SHARED THEIR EXPERIENCES AT THE HOT SPRINGS THROUGH WRITING AND ART. CHECK OUT WHAT THEY SAW AND REPORTED ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES!

“Serpentine Hot Springs is a beautiful place to visit. There are many things to do there such as riding, relaxing in the bath house, hunting caribou, or just enjoying the view. When I went to the hot springs, I had a chance to learn how to butcher a caribou. [We] also hunted ptarmigan, it was a lot of fun.”

“It's not all about the bath tub, it's also about experiencing the nature and having a great time with friends and family!”

“Serpentine Hot Springs is a very fun place to go. I went there last winter and I had a blast. I went to the hot tub... the beaver dams, climbed the big drummer, went sliding and riding. I hope people that didn’t go there experience how fun it is to be there. I'm hoping to go there again this year!”

“Serpentine Hot Springs is a favorite rock formation among many youth. I remember seeing ptarmigan, lots of willows, moose. I remember sliding and going in the hot tub.”

“Serentine Hot Springs is a beautiful place to visit. There are many things to do there such as riding, relaxing in the bath house, hunting caribou, or just enjoying the view. When I went to the hot springs, I had a chance to learn how to butcher a caribou. [We] also hunted ptarmigan, it was a lot of fun.”

“When I was there last winter and I had a blast. I went to the hot tub... the beaver dams, climbed the big drummer, went sliding and riding. I hope people that didn’t go there experience how fun it is to be there. I’m hoping to go there again this year!”

When I was at Serentine, I walked around and saw how the land was formed. I also swam in the pool. I had a great time there!”

“The ‘drummer’ is a favorite rock formation among many youth.”

Bering Land Bridge Visitor Center
Visitor Center Hours:
June 1st - August 31
Monday-Saturday 9-5
Sept 1 - May 31
Monday - Friday 10-4:30

Visitor Center Street Address:
214 Front Street
Nome, AK 99762

How to get there:
The visitor center for Bering Land Bridge National Preserve is located in the Sitnasuak Building in Nome, Alaska. Nome is not connected by road to other parts of Alaska, so access to the town is primarily through commercial airlines. Open year round, the visitor center is about 90 miles south of the preserve border. It offers exhibits and films about Bering Land Bridge, as well as visitor and school programs. Ranger-led hikes are offered throughout the summer, and with the Iditarod finish line just down the street, mid-March is a special time of year for cultural events as well. Even if you can’t make it to the preserve itself, stop by the visitor center to stamp your National Park passport, pick up free visitor information, and check out the Alaska Geographic Bookstore.

Climate Averages in Nome:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Average high (°F)</th>
<th>Average low (°F)</th>
<th>Precip. Inches</th>
<th>Snowfall inches</th>
<th>Hours of Daylight*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>-1.8</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>4:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>-2.3</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>7:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>10:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>13:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>43.0</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>16:57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>53.9</td>
<td>40.6</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>21:21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>58.6</td>
<td>46.6</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>22:09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>45.2</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>18:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>37.2</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>14:36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>11:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>7:56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>4:51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of daylight hours on the first day of each month

For More Information

Find us on...

Facebook
facebook.com/beringlandnps

Flickr
flickr.com/bering_land_bridge

Twitter
twitter.com/beringlandnps

Superintendent
Jeanette Koelsch

Chief of Interpretation
Jennifer Thelen

Preserve Information
907-443-2522

Preserve Email
bela_interpretation@nps.gov

Preserve Website
www.nps.gov/bela

Mailing Address
National Park Service
PO Box 220
Nome, AK 99762

Contact Information

Month Average high (°F) Average low (°F) Precip. Inches Snowfall inches Hours of Daylight*