



Anan Wildlife Observatory FAQs

How do I buy a permit?

Guided Trips: Most Anan visitors use an authorized guiding company. These companies provide transportation and permits. The guide companies list is linked on this website.

To help you plan your trip, Anancalendar.com shows the calendar for Anan operators from July 5 -August 25. It displays each authorized guide company and their available permits for each day. Contact an authorized guide directly to arrange permit and passage to Anan Wildlife Observatory.

Non-Guided Trips: For individuals who have their own boat/floatplane to arrive at Anan, there are 12 private permits available for purchase for each day on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). The 12 private daily permits for the season become available on **February 1st at 8 am (AKST)**. Permits are not required outside of the July 5th -August 25th peak season. Only persons who will not use any type of commercial service at Anan (those arriving with their own means of transportation and visiting without any hired escort) should purchase permits on [recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov). Additionally, four daily passes will become available in-person at the Wrangell District Office during the season. Contact the District Office for more information on these in-person permits at 907-874-2323.

When are passes required?

Passes are required July 5th to August 25th. Visiting hours are 8am to 6pm. Visitors are not permitted up the trail before 8 a.m. or after 6 p.m. to give the bears time when people are not present.

Why do I need a pass?

Over the years, Anan Wildlife Observatory has been receiving more and more visitors. The Forest Service studied this trend to determine the impact of increased visitation on bears using the area to feed. It was determined that 60 visitors per day gives the maximum number of visitors the best viewing environment while protecting the bears.

What is the best time of the year to visit Anan?

The best time to view bears is during the salmon run. The start and end dates of the salmon run change from year to year. Typically, July through mid-August is a great time to go.

Will I be escorted by Forest Service Rangers while at Anan?

No. Forest Service staff will greet you at the trailhead during permit season and provide you with a brief safety orientation. There is also a staff member located at the observatory most of July and August.

What facilities are available?

At the trailhead, there is a small kiosk and two outhouses. The wildlife observatory is accessed by a half-mile, 30" wide gravel trail with some steps and bridges. The total trip to the viewing platform and back requires a one-mile walk. The end of the trail is somewhat steep and needs to be walked without stopping due to the bear activity near the viewing platform. Be sure to assess your physical abilities and health needs before

attempting this trail. At the observatory you will find a partially covered deck, photo blind, and a primitive toilet.

What should I wear?

Be prepared for cold, rainy weather. Dress in several layers of warm clothes with a waterproof layer. Be aware that you will disembark the plane or boat in a tidal area so wear waterproof boots if possible. The sun does shine here from time to time; so sunglasses and sunscreen are sometimes desirable. It can get buggy as well.

What should I know about bear safety?

Please check out this Safety in Bear Country website from the [Alaska Department of Fish and Game](#).

Can I bring a firearm or pepper spray?

Yes, you can. But if you decide to bring a firearm or pepper spray, make sure that you are competent and comfortable with its use. Exercise caution when considering use of firearms or pepper spray, as the bears in this area are typically more tolerant, less aggressive, and often come closer than bears elsewhere.

Can I bring food?

No. Food and drink are prohibited past the trailhead from June 15th to September 15th by Forest Order. All food and flavored drinks (except water) should stay on your boat or plane. There is a bear proof food locker at the trailhead where food can be stored while visiting, but all food must be eaten at the trailhead. It is vital for everyone's safety and for the safety of the bears that the bears do not associate people with food. This also applies to gum, candy, and tobacco products. Pack out any trash or water bottles.

Can I bring my dog to Anan?

No. Dogs are prohibited by Forest Order from June 15th to September 15th.

Is camping available?

No. Camping is prohibited by Forest Order from June 15th to September 15th. You can rent the Anan Bay recreation cabin which is located ½ mile from the Anan Trailhead. For reservation information, go to www.recreation.gov

Is it possible to paddle to Anan from Wrangell?

Yes. Anan Wildlife Observatory is about 30 miles from Wrangell. A great place to stop for the night in between would be the Berg Bay cabin. It is approximately 22 miles from Wrangell and 8 miles from Anan. For reservation information, go to www.recreation.gov

Where can I anchor my boat?

The anchoring can be tricky as Anan Bay features a large tidal flat, a steep drop-off, and sandy ocean floor bottom. To find a spot to anchor use your depth finder and be aware of the large tidal shifts that will happen. A 40' mooring float is located in the bay and open to use by the general public and guide services on a first-come, first-served basis. Vessel limit on the float is a maximum of 30 feet long with a 30" draft. You then need a smaller craft to access the trailhead in the tidal flats. It is day-use only unless you are renting the cabin.