

Tongass National Forest Roadless Areas

North Etolin Roadless Area on Etolin Island



Photo: John Schoen

This roadless area is located on Etolin Island in the Tongass National Forest of Southeast Alaska. The Tongass has many Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs). These protected areas have high biological value, meaning they provide important habitat to one or more species, like the Alexander Archipelago wolf.

North Etolin Roadless Area



Key to Symbols

-  Core Areas of Biological Value
-  Large Roadless Areas (2003 Inventory)
-  Salmon streams
-  Other streams
-  Roads
-  Past Clearcuts





Local Resident Spotlight

Alexander Archipelago Wolf

The mountainous landscape in the **North Etolin Roadless Area** is quite variable, with steep drainages, rounded knobby summits, and sharp crests. The steep slopes and well-drained soil is the perfect growing medium for cathedral forests of Sitka spruce, hemlock, and both red and yellow cedar. Within these dense forests, wolves and other animals make their homes.

The wolf found in the **North Etolin Roadless Area**, and in Southeast Alaska generally, is the Alexander Archipelago wolf, a smaller, coastal subspecies of the gray wolf. These wolves rely on their primary prey, the Sitka black-tailed deer, and both species benefit from large intact old-growth forests in the **North Etolin Roadless Area**. Deer and wolves make their home within these protected landscapes in the Tongass National Forest and because healthy connectivity exists between these areas, they are able to thrive.

Photo: Dave Shaw

Facts on the Tongass National Forest

- There are **16.7 million** acres of Tongass National Forest lands in Southeast Alaska.
- There are **9.3 million** acres of roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest.
- **168** breeding bird species, **82** land mammal species & **5** salmon species use the forests and habitats of Southeast Alaska.
- Industries reliant on fish and wildlife populations and healthy forest ecosystems employ **over 30 times more people** in Southeast Alaska than the timber industry.
- **1.5 million** people visit Southeast Alaska annually with **~600,000** participating in wildlife viewing and bird watching.
- **109** named roadless areas in the Tongass National Forest (2001).
- Up to **12%** of the country's stored carbon found within national forests is captured in the Tongass.
- It costs about **\$160,000–\$500,000** per mile to construct new roads on the Tongass.
- There is a **\$68 million** maintenance backlog for existing Tongass logging roads.
- **5,000 miles** of logging roads already exist on the Tongass.

The importance of the Roadless Rule

The 2001 Roadless Rule protects wild places in our National Forests across the country. Roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska have exceptional wilderness value and areas of high biological value. About half of the big old trees on the Tongass have already been felled for logging, but the Roadless Rule helps protect about half of what is left. Roadless areas are home to salmon, spruce grouse, goshawks, bears, wolves, and many other birds and wildlife. Roadless areas provide humans with opportunities for fishing, hunting, bird-watching, backpacking, and wilderness solitude.

The Roadless Rule operates on the Tongass to protect this roadless area and others from roadbuilding and logging. But efforts to chip away at these protections are underway, and the Tongass roadless areas are threatened by a rollback that specifically targets the big old trees that wildlife call home. Join us in advocating for protecting the Alexander Archipelago wolf's home and use this map and factsheet to write specific comments when the time comes. Stay tuned for an action alert in your inbox, or find out how to sign up at ak.audubon.org/take-action.

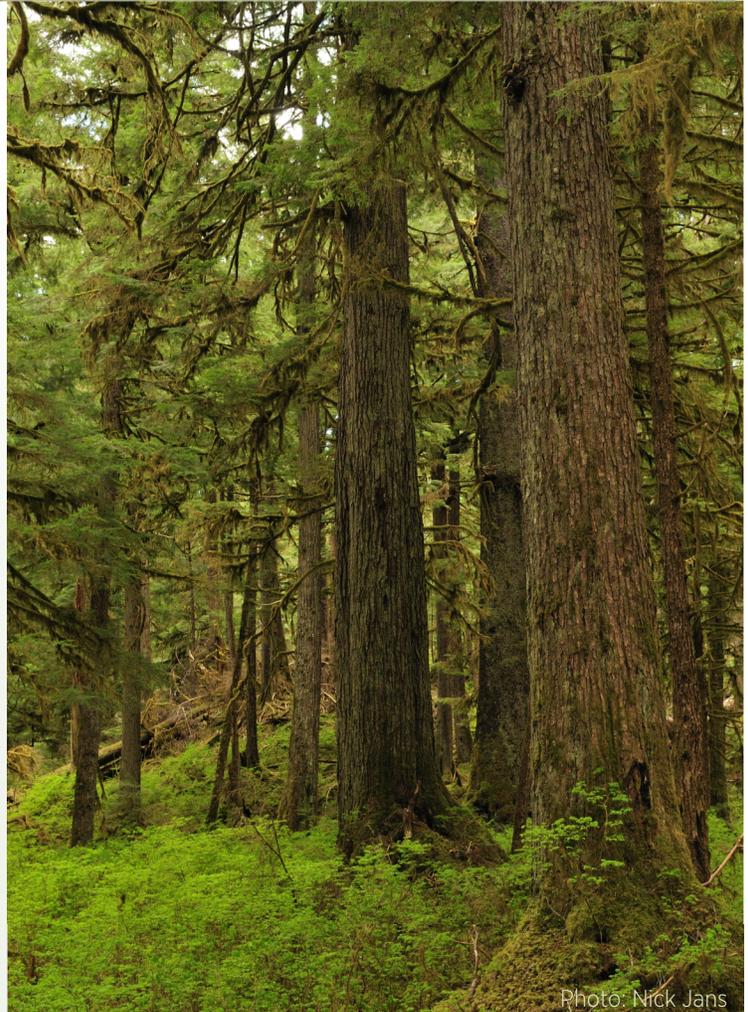


Photo: Nick Jans



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Where is the Tongass National Forest? It is located in Southeast Alaska and is the largest National Forest in the United States. It is also the last remaining old-growth temperate rainforest in the world.