



APEX
EXPEDITIONS



Land of the Spirit Bears

September 14 – 26, 2015

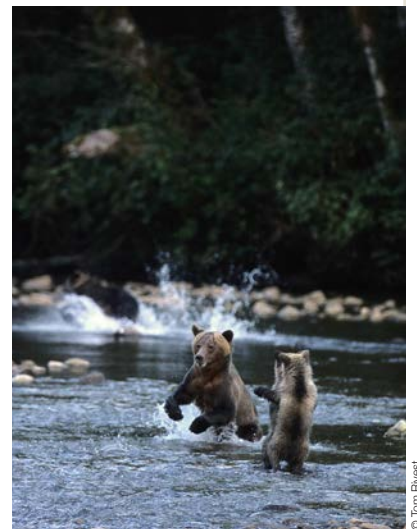




Cover: Ignacio Yullera

Expedition Overview

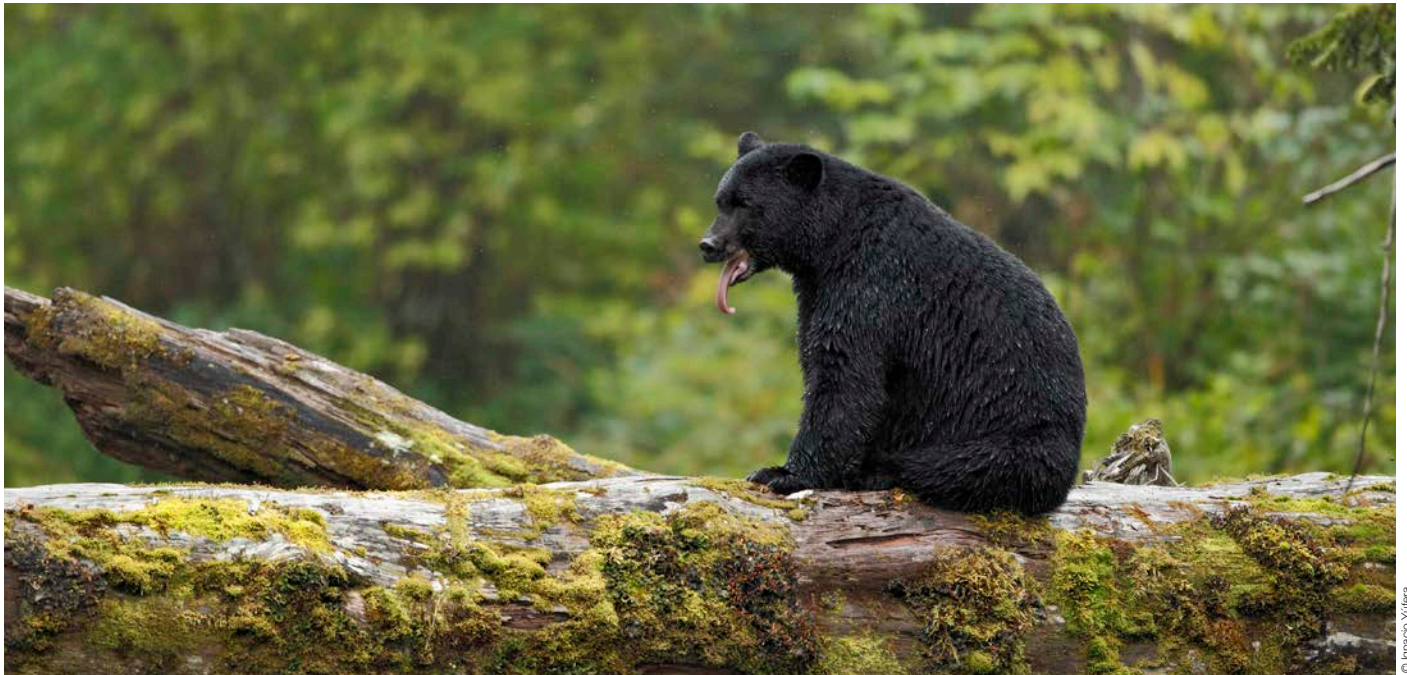
Known as Canada's "forgotten coast," British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest evokes a bygone time, with its ancient firs and Sitka Spruce towering 350 feet into the air, providing cover for its unique and mythical-seeming animal subspecies, like the white Kermode, or Spirit, Bear. All of the wildlife present when Captain Vancouver sailed here in 1793, still exists, and in abundance. Virtually roadless, it's a land of densely forested islands and mist-shrouded fjords that reach back into the glacier-capped Coastal Mountain range. Our expedition will take you along BC's central coast in search of the elusive Kermode, as well as Grizzly and black bears, wolves, eagles, and Humpback Whales. Soak up the culture of the Tshimshian and Heiltsuk First Nations people, who are working diligently to protect this, the largest remaining untouched coastal rainforest on the Pacific Coast.



© Tom Rivest

Photos: (Cover) Kermode, or Spirit, Bear, *Island Odyssey*, Grizzly Bears.





© Ignacio Yáñez

Itinerary

Monday, September 14: Vancouver / Bella Bella

Fly this morning from Vancouver to Bella Bella, a remote island village in central British Columbia, the traditional home of the Heiltsuk First Nation and the “Gateway to the Great Bear Rainforest”. A shuttle will meet you at the airport and take you to the marina where you board the water taxi for the *Shearwater Resort*, located on its own island just west of Bella Bella. Settle in for a welcome dinner and overnight.

Tuesday & Wednesday, September 15 & 16: Land of the Spirit Bear

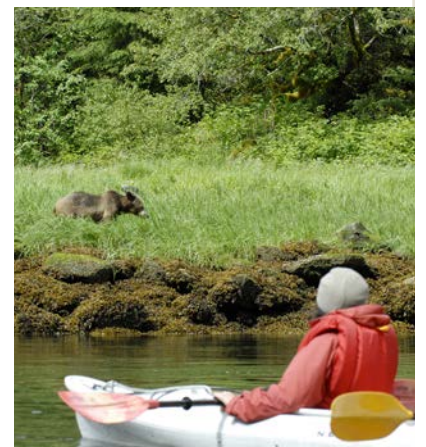
After breakfast, board the *Island Odyssey*, the custom 68-foot ketch that will be our home base for the next seven nights. After settling into your cabin, head up on deck as we set sail, heading into one of the largest temperate rainforests in the world, the Great Bear Rainforest, whose name is a promise of the stellar wildlife viewing that lies ahead. Our expedition heads north through a labyrinth of stunning fjords and ancient moss-draped woods along the shores of Princess Royal Island. Animals to look for include black and Grizzly bears, deer, wolverines, Coastal Black Wolves, and nesting populations of Golden Eagles, Bald Eagles, and the endangered Marbled Murrelet. Each night will be spent in a different secluded anchorage.

Thursday & Friday, September 17 & 18: Spirit Bear Conservancy

The northern portion of Princess Royal Island is the best-known area for spotting the rare Kermode Bear, or what the local Gitga’at people call *mooksgm’ol*, the Spirit Bear, a walking contradiction—a white black bear. Neither albino nor Polar Bear, the Kermode is a subspecies of the American Black Bear, in whose population about ten percent has white or cream-colored coats due to a recessive gene. In the protected area of the Kitasoo Spirit Bear Conservancy, keep your eyes peeled for these ghostly, revered creatures. Nearly half of the remaining 400 Kermodes known to exist, live right here on Princess Royal Island, but they remain elusive, and viewing them takes patience. If the wind is up, we could sail into Principe and Whale



© Hubert Kang



Photos: American Black Bear, Longhouse, Klemtu; Kayers view a Grizzly Bear.



Channels, looking for playful Steller Sea Lions, porpoises, Orcas, and the always-fascinating Humpback Whales who often congregate in these waters on their summer migration. Sea kayaks are available for those who want to get out into the fray. At low tide, be sure to explore the shoreline for pools teeming with colorful life.

Saturday & Sunday, September 19 & 20: Princess Royal Island

At nearly 900 square miles, Princess Royal Island is the largest island on B.C.'s northern coast, and among the most remote and rugged on earth. The island has no permanent residents, no maintained roads, no trails, and some of the most biologically productive coastal rainforests on the planet, harboring some of its oldest and largest trees, including Sitka Spruce, Red Cedar, Western Hemlock, and Amabilis Fir. Spend two days at the island's northern end, visiting creeks and estuaries and keeping an eye out along the shore. Khutze Inlet has a beautiful river valley, an abundance of bird life, and some of the best spots to view bears. Accessible only to boaters, Bishop Bay Hot Springs, located in the intriguingly named Devastation Channel, is a magnificent place for a soak.

Monday, September 21: Fiordland Conservancy

Heading east this morning, feast your eyes on the staggering scenery of the Fiordland Conservancy, a large marine park dedicated to protecting the glacially gouged fiords that characterize this portion of Canada's Pacific coast. Located in the Kitimat Range of the Coast Mountains, Fiordland Conservancy harbors lush estuaries at the base of sharply plunging glacier-topped mountains. Salmon spawn in the many coastal rivers and creeks, attracting Grizzlies and black bears. Visit the native village of Klemtu to see the new longhouse that was recently built by the local community.

Tuesday, September 22: Bella Bella / Great Bear Nature Lodge

Bid farewell to the Island Odyssey this morning, and head to Bella Bella airport for a scenic flight via Port Hardy to *Great Bear Nature Lodge*. Accessible only by sea-plane, this is a fully self-contained floating lodge in the middle of the spectacularly remote Nekite River Valley. It is one of the rare places on earth where bears solidly outnumber humans. The area is home not only to black and Spirit Bears, but half of Canada's remaining Grizzlies, and Grizzly viewing will be the focus of the next three days. Geography, the abundance of salmon this time of year, and a knowledgeable staff of wildlife biologists provide an exceptional opportunity to see and learn about them. Spend the afternoon on a wildlife viewing session, followed by a wilderness-gourmet dinner and overnight at *Great Bear Nature Lodge*.

Wednesday & Thursday, September 23 & 24: Great Bear Nature Lodge

The salmon run is at its peak in late September, and it is at this time that the area sees the largest number of Grizzlies each year. It's also the best season for seeing cubs, as they have recently begun eating the solid food their mothers catch for them. Viewing blinds and platforms have been built at the most populous spots on the river to allow for safe viewing of the bears as they fish. Keep an eye out for the Grizzlies' different fishing styles - some methodically swipe under riverbanks with their paws, while others charge through the river after salmon.

The bears are generally most active in the early morning and late afternoon, so the two daily viewing sessions take place at these times. Between these sessions, go on an interpretive rainforest hike or take a boat excursion to explore the glacier-carved inlet. The area is home to many mammals, including Grey Wolves, river otters, Pine



© Ignacio Yllera



© Patrick McCloskey



© Tom Rweist



© Margaret Luehring

Photos: Kermode Bear, American Black Bear with salmon, *Great Bear Nature Lodge*, Morning excursion.



Martens, and mink, and the salmon run attracts a great number of Bald Eagles, Buffleheads, Barrow's Goldeneye, Belted Kingfisher and other fish eating birds.

Friday, September 25: Great Bear Nature Lodge / Port Hardy / Vancouver

Enjoy a parting session with the bears, lunch and an afternoon activity at Great Bear Nature Lodge. Transfer by floatplane to picturesque Port Hardy on the northern tip of Vancouver Island. Our hotel is situated on the waterfront with views of the Glen Lyon River mouth where spawning salmon and majestic Bald Eagles are often spotted. Gather this evening for a farewell dinner and overnight at *Glen Lyon Inn*.

Saturday, September 26: Vancouver

After breakfast, transfer to the air terminal for our domestic flight to Vancouver. Connect with onward international flights back home in the afternoon.



© Margaret Leohane

Photos: Humpback Whales, Grizzly Bear.



© Tom Pivest



Your Expedition Leader



Kevin Clement

Not many people can say they have lived inside Denali National Park, but Kevin Clement is one. Nowadays, however, he spends most of his time guiding eco-tourism and adventure travel trips on all seven continents.

Kevin has served as the Denali Foundation instructor for natural history and as a trainer for the Park's staff of naturalists. As a Certification Instructor for the Wilderness Education Association he led month-long outdoor leadership courses under the auspices of the University of Alaska. He has lived in several other national parks and has guided groups in whitewater rafts, on cross-country skis, by sled dog, and on foot, earning certifications in scuba diving, swiftwater rescue, and wilderness medicine, as well as a Coast Guard Master's license. Most recently he's been running a sea kayaking program in Antarctica—a place he has visited more than 50 times.

And as he always has, he still draws and paints. His first career was as an illustrator, and his work has appeared in various juried art shows, several times winning juror's or people's choice awards. He never travels without his sketchbook. Or his sense of humor.

"Kevin is the consummate Renaissance Man, possessing a poetic and artistic take on the world that adds a fascinating dimension to his interpretation as you explore alongside him."

– Judy M., Hawaii



Expedition Details

Land of the Spirit Bears September 14 – 26, 2015

\$12,770 Per Person Rate

On Request Solo Rate

13 Days Trip Length

12 Guests Group Size

Vancouver / Vancouver Start/End

Included

Apex Expeditions' rates include all accommodations; all meals, activities and excursions as described in the itinerary; air within Canada, as noted in the itinerary; services of an Apex Expedition leader and local guides throughout the itinerary; select beer and wines at dinner, all gratuities; airport transfers; permits and entrance fees; all taxes.

Not Included

Costs not included in the price of your Apex expedition include travel to and from start and end point of trip; premium brand drinks and liquor; travel insurance (Trip Cancellation and Interruption as well as Emergency Medical and Evacuation insurance); airport departure taxes; excess baggage fees; passport and/or visa fees; items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, souvenirs, etc.); and independent travel arrangements pre- or post-trip.

Payments & Terms

20% of the trip cost will confirm your place on the expedition. The final balance is due 150 days prior to departure. All prices are quoted in U.S. dollars and must be paid in U.S. dollars. Per person pricing is based on double occupancy. The solo rate is paid by participants who specifically request single accommodations and is subject to availability. If you are traveling alone and wish to share accommodations, we will try to match you with a roommate of the same gender. However, if a roommate is not available, the published solo rate will be charged. Upon confirming your reservation you will be required to pay the published Solo Rate, if we are able to pair you with a roommate, the applicable difference will be refunded at the time that the final trip payment is due for all participants. Please note that solo accommodations are limited and cannot always be guaranteed throughout. For our full set of Terms & Conditions, please visit our web site at www.apex-expeditions.com.

One-of-a-kind adventures to the world's most fascinating places. Join us.



© Patrick McCroskey



Reservation Form

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Person 1: (Primary Contact)

Passport Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Mailing Details:

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP Code: _____ Country: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Double Solo

Person 2: (If applicable and at same address, otherwise please submit a second Reservation Form.)

Passport Name: _____

Preferred Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Email Address: _____

Deposit Information:

- My deposit check is enclosed (20% of total tour fare)
 Charge my deposit to my: VISA MasterCard American Express

Card #: _____ Expires: _____ CCV Code: _____

Name on Card: _____

Signature: _____

**Please return this completed form to Apex Expeditions.
E-mail: info@apex-expeditions.com or Mail: 3275 36th Ave SW, Seattle, WA 98126**

