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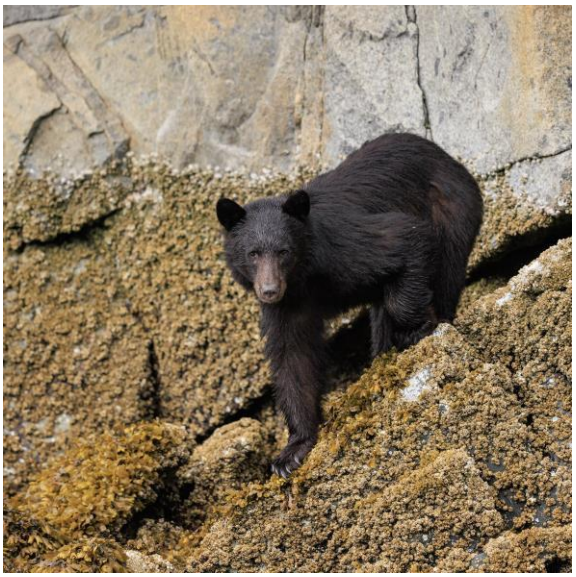
# Tour Report
# In Search of Coastal Wolves and Grizzly Bears
26 June – 6 July 2026

Coastal wolf



Black bear



Grizzly bear



Sea otters



Compiled by Bret Charman

**Friday 26 June 2026**

**Day 1:**
London to Vancouver

Our flight from the UK was scheduled to depart London Heathrow in the early evening on a particularly warm and sunny day. The flight left on time, with those on this group flight enjoying a smooth flight over the Atlantic, touching down in Vancouver ahead of our estimated time of arrival.

Upon arrival at Vancouver, we progressed through immigration with ease, soon finding ourselves in baggage reclaim. It wasn't too long before our bags appeared before us. Within another couple of minutes, we found ourselves in arrivals and were soon outside looking for the shuttle to the hotel. We had to wait around 15 minutes for the shuttle to arrive, enjoying a smooth transfer to the nearby hotel. It was here we met the majority of the rest of the group, before heading to our rooms for a very well-deserved rest.

**Saturday 27 June 2026**

**Day 2:**
Vancouver to Port Hardy

With an early start and a taxi booked, we made the ten-minute journey round to the South Terminal of Vancouver Airport. Here, we met up with the final member of the group, before checking in to our domestic flight to Port Hardy. This small town in the far north of Vancouver Island would pose as the staging post for the first part of this adventure.

Leaving on time, we departed bright Vancouver, albeit later than planned, and flew north-west, hugging the coastline of Vancouver Island. Despite warnings of poor visibility, we landed safely in Port Hardy and were met by our local guide Andrew. Within a few minutes, we had our luggage loaded into the taxi and were on our way into town. Unfortunately, having arrived late in the morning, there were still a few hours before we could check in to the hotel, and so Andrew took us all to a local café to get a coffee, while he and I had a chat about what our plans would look like for the next few days.

Once Andrew and I had a chance to chat things over and purchase a couple of pieces of kit we needed for the trip, we returned to the group and headed to the office. Here, the group was given a briefing on what to expect from our time at Wolf Camp, before being fitted with our flotation suits. These would be essential pieces of clothing for our time out on the water. Once we were all happy with our suits, there was a little free time to explore, before heading to the hotel to check in.

Staying at a First Nations'-owned hotel, we were within a short walk of the town and everybody had some time to freshen up before going for a wander. We reconvened in the pub, attached to the hotel, at 7 pm for dinner and enjoyed a good first meal together as a group. It was then we were able to retreat to our rooms for a good night's sleep.

**Sunday 28 June 2026**

**Day 3:**
Port Hardy to Wolf Camp

We awoke to a cool morning in Port Hardy, having breakfast at the hotel, before being driven down to the office to suit up in our 'stylish' new outfits. Once we were all suitably dressed, we wandered down to the jetty and boarded our high-powered boat. This would be our main mode of transport for the next five days. We had a safety briefing from our second guide, a local indigenous chap by the name of Tyler. Before we knew it, we were out on the water, leaving Port Hardy behind.

As we left the shelter of the port, the swell became a choppy mess with strong winds churning the sea swell

and giving us quite a drenching. Andrew whisked off into the shelter of some nearby islands and it was here we started to look for the wildlife found in this stunning landscape. Almost immediately we could see bald eagles and belted kingfishers along the shoreline. Moving through some spectacularly beautiful channels, the slight drizzle started to fall, limiting visibility and making everything a little on the damp side.

After a couple of hours, navigating through a narrow passage, we emerged in Bate Passage and the water was alive. The surface of the water was seemingly boiling. In fact, a huge shoal of herring was feeding just below the surface. This, in turn, brought a number of predators in for a feeding bonanza. It turned into a bald eagle photography session as these huge birds flew down to the water and plucked the fish from the water's surface.





It was amazing to see so many birds, twenty-plus, soaring through the skies before diving down to the water and snatching at the water. Most of the attempted hunts were unsuccessful, but there were a few where the birds cleanly plucked a fish out of the water, retreating into the tall trees to feed on their prize.



It wasn't just bald eagles that were making the most of the glut of food available to them. There were a couple of harbour porpoise, surprisingly brazen, Steller's sea lion, rhinoceros auklets galore and humpback whales in the channel too.





What a great start to our time in this stunning part of British Columbia. As the eagle activity died away, we spent some time focusing on the whales. However, photographically speaking, the sightings were a little limited, and this was due to the fact that they were feeding on fish close to the surface. Except for regular blows, we were mainly treated to views of the tell-tale humped backs of the whales, with flukes increasingly rare.



After some time enjoying the whales out in the middle of the channel, it was time to head for the shelter of a nearby inlet, where we were treated to a delicious lunch as the sun tried to burn through the low cloud cover. It was also a good spot to see coastal wolves, and as we sat there, we hoped for a glimpse of these stunning canids. Although the wolves were undoubtedly a target species, everybody was keen to

photograph any of the wildlife we found here. After finishing lunch, we sat and waited to see if the wolves might make an appearance. It was then we saw a humpback breach out in the main channel once again. Our guides, Andrew and Tyler asked if we wanted to go out and check it out. It was a pretty easy decision and we were soon on the move, hoping for some standout photography of this breaching whale.

Unfortunately, by the time we were out in the middle of the channel, the whale (which we had now worked out was a large calf) had stopped its antics. Instead, we watched as the calf and its mother moved around feeding in much the same manner as before. The day was flying by, but we really needed to set ourselves up in camp, and so it was time to make our way towards wolf camp. We got a little distracted on the way though, as there were so many sea otters. Some of these otters were remarkably cooperative and we enjoyed some excellent opportunities to capture some striking portraits, including of a mother and her large pup.



Spending a little time with a mother and her pup, the whole group were presented with some beautiful moments, enabling us to capture some fantastic images. With Andrew's expert skills at the helm, we managed to hold our distance from the otters, which prevented them from diving away.





Sea otters, once hunted to the brink of extinction for the fur trade, the sea otters have made a remarkable comeback across much of the Pacific coastline of North America. They are slowly returning to much of their former range, making the most of the prevalence of their preferred foods (shellfish) and, in turn, helping restore the natural balance to this delicate marine ecosystem.

And so, it was time to head to camp and unload our luggage, supplies and the equipment we would need for the next four nights on an uninhabited island. Pulling into the bay, we moved ourselves and all the necessary pieces ashore, before having a little time to settle in and familiarise ourselves with our new home. With plans to head out again this afternoon, before dinner, there was a little time to unload our luggage in the tents and then reconvene on the beach.

It was now a beautiful day, with the sun doing its best to burn through the clouds. We started with more sea otters, with a mum and her young pup a particular highlight. Instead of close-up portraits, it was great to capture some shots of her in the large kelp forests.



Our main focus on the boat trip was searching for wolves, so we kept a constant watch on the beaches. Even so, the sea otters offered more excellent photographic opportunities. By now, the afternoon sun was shining across the water, its surface glistening in the relative warmth. Beyond the kelp beds, the waves were crashing on the shore, but no wolves came into view. Out in the channel, humpback blows could be seen in the distance, while we also got our first views of Dall's porpoise.

The best photographic opportunity, though, was undoubtedly when we stumbled upon a juvenile bald eagle perched on a rock. Andrew helmed the boat perfectly in position, just as the eagle took flight. Water droplets flew off the wings as the bird launched into the air, the primary flight feathers looking like fingertips as they spread in the air. Everybody fired off a burst of images, capturing this moment in all its glory. Having the open boat makes all the difference in scenarios like this.



Before we knew it, it was time to head back to camp, while the tides were still favourable. The group had a little downtime before dinner, with some of us wandering a little down the beach and just a short way into the forest beyond. The forest here was like that of a land lost in time. A forest as it should be. Huge old trees lay fallen on the forest floor, enveloped in moss and a thick understorey growing up towards the light.



It was soon time for dinner, and we started by enjoying a baked brie and bread down on the beach. We were all alone on this wild isle, enjoying delicious food and great company. What a fabulous first full day in search of the elusive coastal wolves.

**Monday 29 June 2026**

**Day 4:**
Wolf Camp

After a fabulous first night in the comfortable bell tents, and in particular, the incredibly comfortable beds, we met for breakfast in the camp kitchen area by the beach. Fresh coffee and hot water for tea were ready. The perfect way to start the day. It was overcast once more, and a strong wind was blowing from the north-west, but we were well prepared for the day ahead.

Once breakfast was done, we went to load up the boat with everything we would need for the day, but unfortunately, we had a bit of a disaster as the boat got stuck in the shallow water. Despite our best efforts, the boat was well and truly stuck.

We would have to wait at least an hour for the tide to rise enough to free the RIB, and so we went with Andrew to check out the old denning site of the coastal wolves. The previous year, the wolves had chosen to den right by the camp and so it was only a short distance until we were clearly in prime wolf denning territory. There were signs all over that the wolves regularly visited this spot, with plenty of scat and even the remains of sea otter skulls and shellfish too. By the time we had found the actual den site, it was time to return to the boat and see if we could float her back to deeper water. We were in luck, and it was time to head out on the water and start our first full day in the area, keeping our eyes peeled throughout for any sign of a wolf. We had special permission from the local nation to land on an island and spend time on a beach where the wolves seemed to be most active. This, hopefully, would give us the opportunity to photograph the wolves on land.

We moored the boat up, climbed onto the pontoon, and started the 2.5 km walk to the spot where we hoped to watch the wolves from. As we wandered along the foxglove-lined track, there were plenty of very recent signs of wolf activity. There was fresh scat, several deposits in fact, alongside a number of tracks on the damp mud. It was all activity from within the last 24 hours – now we just had to hope that they would show themselves. Emerging out onto the dark sands of the beach, we walked the final couple of hundred metres. Alas, despite our patience, sat underneath a rocky headland with views across bays either side of us, no wolves emerged by the time we were ready for lunch. Those of the group that wanted to headed back to the boat for lunch (as we didn't want to take food with us and alter the wolves' behaviour), where we were treated to a delicious bowl of soup.

As we returned to the rocky headland, the sun was out, and we had been joined by a small number of harlequin ducks. These gorgeous birds were resting on some rocks on the foreshore, to one side of where we sat, while we continued our vigil. The group's patience deserved reward, but today was not to be our day. Undoubtedly in the right spot, we'd have to return the following day and hope our luck changed. We had to return to Wolf Camp, ensuring we made our landing with the cooperative tides.

After a long day out in the fresh sea air, we were treated to another delicious meal provided for us by our camp chef and all-round superstar, Maya. As the light started to fade, the sun was setting over the small bay, with a small island providing stunning silhouettes as the sky turned to orange. There are few places in the world where you are left with such a sense of isolation – in the best way possible.



**Tuesday 30 June 2026**

**Day 5:**
Wolf Camp

Waking before dawn, we enjoyed breakfast around the kitchen area, before suiting up and heading down to the beach. Our plan was similar to the day before, but this time we managed to ensure that the boat didn't beach and it wasn't too long before we were underway. As we made our way through the channels and passages, we came across a number of humpbacks once again, as well as the usual sea otters and bald eagles too.

Everybody had fine-tuned the transition from boat to shore, and we were quickly walking across the island and on then out on the grey sands of the beach once again. There had been more signs of wolf along the way, but they didn't seem as fresh as the previous day. We settled in the spot by the rocky headland once more. Hoping a wolf would wander onto the beaches at low tide, we were perfectly placed to see and photograph them when they made an appearance.

Sat there, out of the buffeting wind, we saw many fox sparrows as they flew to and from the beach, catching the flies and springtails from the seaweed along the shore. They were returning to their nests with beaks full of bugs. While we were sitting here, we were also treated to the magical sight of rufous hummingbirds as they darted around in their constant search for food. The harlequins were also about again, feeding along the rocky shoreline at our end of the beach.

Sitting in place all morning and into the afternoon, we were unfortunately not rewarded with any sightings of the wolves. They must have been close, but for whatever reason, they were refusing to show themselves. Returning to camp, we were treated to another excellent lunch prepared by Maya, with some downtime this afternoon while the tide was high.



With a little time to catch up on some sleep, we reconvened at the beach for an afternoon boat trip. This time, we decided to focus our search on the shores of some of the other islands in the area. Heading west, and then south, we found the humpbacks which we had seen on the previous days, still busy making the most of the glut of food available to them. We also had porpoise and a noisy sea lion come by the boat, but photography opportunities were a little limited.



It was fascinating though as we watched a humpback lunge feeding right along the shoreline. The whale was seemingly forcing the fish against the rocky foreshore, and lunging at the fish once they were trapped. This behaviour wasn't exclusively carried out by one whale, but by at least two different individuals. It was incredible to see this behaviour, as well as tail slaps and more familiar surfacing and the accompanying blows.

In these waters, we stumbled upon a patch of forest along the water's edge which was seemingly a roosting site for more than ten bald eagles. There were eagles in the trees, as well as flying back and forth over the channel. This is part of the joy of this remarkable habitat. You never know what it is you're going to see. With the evening running away from us, it was time to turn back towards camp and enjoy another culinary feast prepared by Maya – freshly made ramen.

**Wednesday 1 July 2026**

**Day 6:**
Wolf Camp

Having had no luck on the previous two days with the wolves, we stepped it up another level. This morning, we were up even earlier and ready to go, deciding to take some cereal bars with us instead of having breakfast before we set off.

Our routine was now well regimented, and we soon found ourselves approaching the beach. Along the way, there had been yet more fresh signs of wolf activity and so Tyler went down onto the sand first to check it out. He gave us the all clear and we started to walk down the beach in near silence. The tension was palpable. Suddenly, from the trees, a wolf started to call. It wasn't a bark or a howl, but something in between, and it was just a magical sound. The wolf was probably within 30-40 metres of us, but completely hidden by the dense forest beyond the edge of the sand. At first, sitting still in the middle of the beach, we waited as the calls continued to ring out. However, it seemed as though the wolf wasn't going to settle and so we moved down toward the water before continuing to the headland once more.

We spent the morning watching and waiting, praying that the wolf's curiosity would get the better of it. However, the wolf's patience outlasted our own as we were heading off once the tide on the rise. It seemed that once again lady luck was against us and we had to leave the island without any visible wolf activity.

Maya had another feast prepared for us by the time we got back to camp. Having only had a light breakfast, everybody tucked into yet another hearty lunch. It wasn't too long before we headed out on the water once again, but this time we were going to explore the coastline with the wolf activity using the boat.

Setting off from camp, we worked our way along the beaches and coves, keeping a beady eye out for any sign of wolves as they scoured the tide line for any sign of food. We enjoyed great views of more humpbacks, as well as a particularly obliging rhinoceros auklet.



Without any wolves to start with, we set off to a sea lion haul-out, where we enjoyed great views of them all sat atop the rocks being hit by the rolling swell. They were mainly females, with the odd male dominating a section of the different rocks they were resting on.



We spent a fair bit of time moving around the rocks, trying to keep a safe distance so as not to disturb them. It was amazing to see so many hauled out together, with sea lions of all sizes (and ages) taking refuge from the rolling swell. Once we had finished watching and photographing the sea lions, we continued round to the bay where we had been waiting for the wolves on the headland. Andrew dropped the anchor, and we sat and waited. While we were here, harlequin ducks dabbled along the water's edge, while a harbour seal came and had a look at us (with another resting on a nearby rock). We could then hear the blows of the Steller's sea lions as they frolicked among the kelp and around the rocks in their search for fish.

Sitting there, everybody scanned the shore. Checking every beach, we hoped that at last our patience would be rewarded. Maybe, just maybe, today would be the day we would find our first sea wolf. Alas, on this occasion, we struck out once again. And so, we had to head back to camp before the light faded and whilst the tide was still favourable. Upon our arrival in camp, another delicious meal had been prepared by Maya, and we were soon suitably fuelled for another night in our cosy bell tents.

**Thursday 2 July 2026**

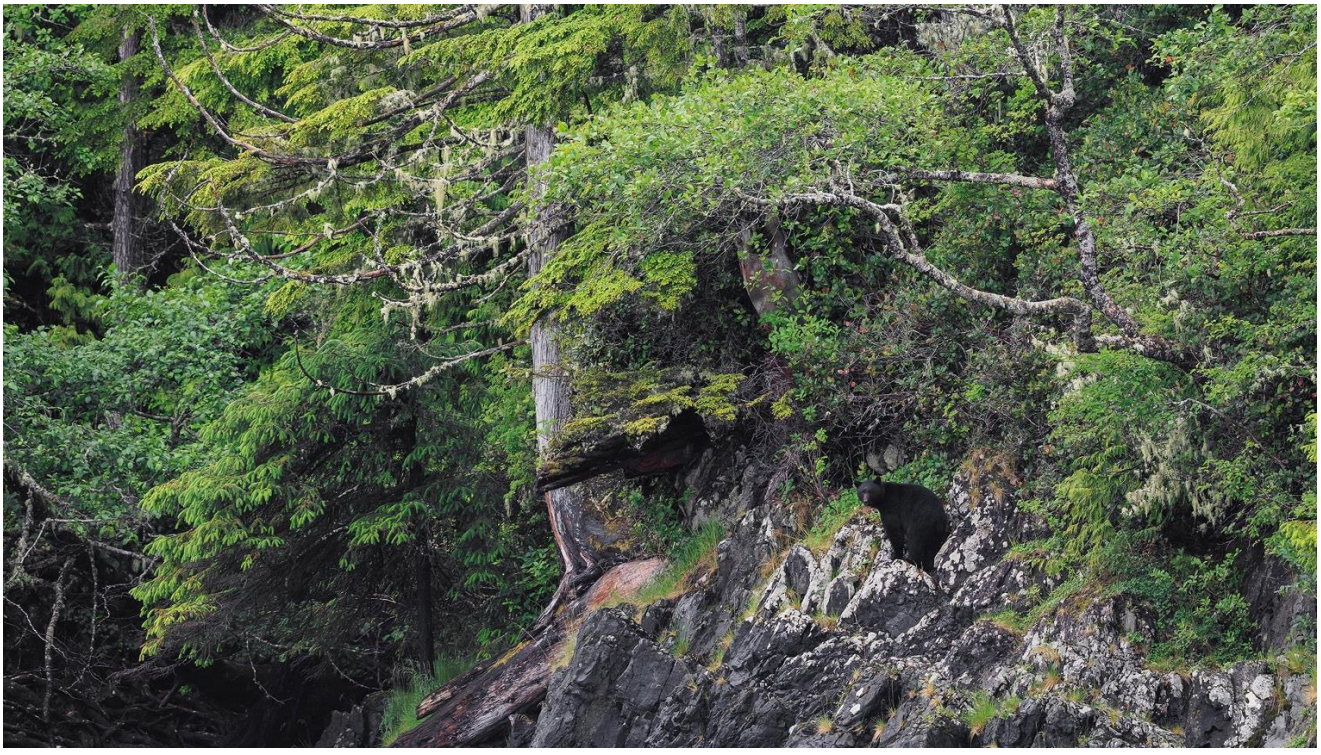
**Day 7:**
Wolf Camp to Port Hardy

This morning was our last chance to find the coastal wolves, and with that in mind, we headed out early once again this morning. Having been unlucky with our time on land, despite getting incredibly close, we decided to focus our efforts on finding a wolf from the water. And so, we set off to the area where we knew there had been regular wolf activity. Passing the sea lion haul out, we continued to the bay, where we anchored ourselves with great views across the beaches.

Unfortunately, it was now that the weather set in. It was a relentless wall of rain. We sat in the zodiac, in our waterproof flotation suits (and umbrellas), doing our best to keep warm and dry. Our main priority was protecting our camera gear and waiting for the wolves to appear. We were sat there for quite some time, hoping for a sighting of a wolf. Nothing showed, and instead, we had to make do with the company of curious sea lions and the odd harbour seal too.



We sat there patiently, waiting as the rain continued to fall. Eventually though, with morale fading, Andrew and I decided that maybe the best approach was to work our way along the coastline and see what we could find. The wolves kept themselves hidden away, but instead we stumbled upon a shy black bear.



Not far from the bear, where an old grey whale carcass had washed ashore, we found a huge number of bald eagles, as well as turkey vultures, making the most of the last of this valuable prize. One of the bald eagles was particularly obliging, and we were able to capture some great shots of it in its rainforest environment.



We headed out into the main channel and enjoyed the humpbacks as they blew each time they surfaced, while the odd dive gave us a fluke, but as we slowly made our way back to camp, Andrew suggested we explore one last stretch of coastline. It was here we found a group of sea otters. Despite already seeing and photographing hundreds of these charismatic mammals, everybody wanted one last chance to add to their portfolios. Andrew expertly moved us into position.

With everyone busy photographing these giant mustelids, Andrew and Tyler continued to scan in some desperate chance that we might find a wolf. Astonishingly, in a rather quizzical manner, Andrew said 'wolf'. Then, with a little more urgency and assuredness, he said it once again. There, around 500 yards away, was a lone wolf trotting along the beach. We had already scanned here, but there seemed to be no sign of life. Suddenly it was all hands on deck, so to speak, as everyone got themselves into position to photograph a coastal wolf. Here was one of the world's rarest canids, trotting brazenly along the shore without a care in the world.

Our first views were definitely distant, but we didn't want to push our luck. And so, we stayed a little way out, slowly making our way closer to shore. We got to a point where we were able to capture images of the wolf in this landscape of transition. The harsh, bleak landscape of the beach, with the lush, green forest behind. What an absolute joy. What a privilege. Finally, after all of our hard work, our patience, and the expertise of our guides, we finally had a coastal wolf in one of the most remote corners of Vancouver Island. Quite simply, it was a moment we would never forget.



The moment seemed completely surreal, particularly having missed them on the previous days.



Bit by bit, Andrew expertly manoeuvred the boat as close to the shoreline as he dared. Keeping the boat stable and allowing the group to capture a wealth of stunning images as this wolf patrolled the beach in its endless quest to find food.





We worked our way into some great positions for photography, with the wolf moving around, completely undisturbed by our presence. This meant that we got to build up a stunning portfolio of imagery in a variety of different areas along the beach.



It really was worth every moment sat waiting in the days before this. We couldn't have asked for a more cooperative wolf, nor could have asked for such a beautiful individual. We were well and truly blessed. The best moments included when it stopped on a ridge of shingle, with the rich forest behind, and also when it came right down to the water's edge, obviously searching for any morsels of food. Quite simply, it had all been worth it.



Eventually, the wolf disappeared into the forest and we headed to another cover where we hoped it might appear. The wolf didn't show itself again, but it was amazing to see the joy on everyone's faces. We had left it to the last possible moment, but we had hit the jackpot. With tides being cooperative, we headed back to camp for lunch (and to pack up our things). We enjoyed one final, excellent meal together at Wolf Camp, before helping to move everything down to the beach and then get it loaded into the boats.

By mid-afternoon, we were on the water and making speedy progress south towards the town of Port Hardy. It started to rain again as we made our way back, but within an hour we were back in the office and taking off our waterproof flotation suits. What a fabulous five days we'd had exploring the thriving environs of the region's rainforests, beaches and waterways. Ending with the wolves, without a doubt the obvious highlight, but we'd enjoyed some truly exceptional wildlife encounters throughout our time here.

Once we were ready, Andrew shuttled us to the hotel in two groups, where we were able to check in to our rooms. Everybody made the most of the facilities, enjoying long hot showers and using the air conditioning drying function to dry out our sodden waterproofs. Once everybody was suitably refreshed, we met in the pub (attached to the hotel), where we enjoyed a delicious meal as well as a few drinks to celebrate our success.

**Friday 3 July 2026**

**Day 8:**
Knight Inlet

We awoke to an overcast morning, but the worst of the rain had seemingly passed. Meeting in the hotel lobby for 6.30 am, we were too early to make the most of the hotel's breakfast. Instead we hopped aboard the minibus and drove the half an hour south to the town of Port McNeill. We would be spending the next two days exploring the maze of waterways that make up the Great Bear Rainforest. Using a superb, high-speed boat, with plenty of viewing space (but also with a warm, comfortable cabin), we would be focusing

our efforts on grizzly bears. However, with so much wildlife in this part of Canada, we would make the most of any opportunities that presented themselves to us.

Once we reached Port McNeill, we signed in at the office, where we met our guide Hannah and had the opportunity to fill up thermos mugs with tea or coffee; we were soon wandering down to the jetty. As we boarded the Mayumi, a fantastic vessel and perfect for our requirements, we met our skipper for the next couple of days - Andrew. Heading out of the harbour and towards the east, our main focus was to just get to Knight Inlet where we could start our grizzly bear watching. We sped across the water, with sea otters and even humpbacks being spotted as we went. It was once we were well and truly underway that Hannah served us our breakfasts, all catering to each individual's dietary requirements – all very impressive.

Upon our arrival at Glendale Cove in Knight Inlet, we disembarked Mayumi and climbed into a large skiff. This is where bears come down to the rocky foreshore as they search for a glut of shellfish exposed at low tide. It wasn't long before we came across a bear and her growing cub.



It was fabulous watching this beautiful bear, sporting a short summer coat, as she weaved her way through the seaweed and mussel-covered boulders. The dexterity she showed as she flipped these huge rocks over (seemingly with ease) was remarkable, while seeing the cub run around and demonstrate the same behaviours as its mother was equally rewarding. The group were able to capture a wealth of imagery as Andrew held the skiff in place, providing exceptional opportunities to build an entire portfolio of imagery. This was exceptional bear watching and they weren't at all bothered by our presence.

We spent a couple of hours watching the bears in total, but there were near-limitless opportunities to photograph them as they continued to feed and make the most of the exceptional moments afforded to us.



From the cubs' antics to the mother's determination to find as much food as possible, it was a delight.





Before we knew it, our two hours with the bears were nearly up. There are strict controls in place to give the bears time to themselves, allowing them to go about their business without any onlookers. With that in mind, we headed back to Mayumi and moved off to find somewhere to enjoy our lunch. We pulled up at a lovely jetty, with the warm sun shining down on us. Hannah set up a lovely table at the back of the boat, and we were able to enjoy a delicious lunch in this beautiful spot.

From here, we went in search of some more wildlife, with a Pacific loon our first notable sighting. We photographed a couple of birds as they flew by the boat. But it was a couple of black bears that really stole the show. The first one was a little skittish; as soon as we tried to approach, it backed off into the forest. However, the second black bear we stumbled upon was far more approachable, and our photographic rewards were exceptional.





We worked our way closer, with Andrew's expert skills at the helm keeping us in the perfect spot, despite the strong currents caused by the changing tides. We found it feeding on the rocky shoreline.



The bear was completely relaxed in our presence, occasionally glancing up in between finding small morsels of food in the rocks. After a little while, it disappeared into the forest, but quite simply, because it ran out of shoreline and it had to head back into the trees.





Starting to wind our way back towards Port McNeill, Andrew told us about his nation and their land. It's yet another tragic tale of a people nearly wiped off the map, losing their homes and having their children taken away from them. His passion for his nation, the stunning wilderness he considered to be his home and the beautiful culture was something that the whole group would remember for years to come. It left a powerful mark, and it was a real honour to hear his and his people's story.

The whole time we headed back west, we kept our eyes peeled for wildlife. There were two notable photographic highlights, with a bald eagle perched in a beautiful old tree, posing perfectly. It was just one of those magical scenes. The other highlight was several humpback whales, with two coming particularly close to us and others breaching in the distance.



What a fabulous first day on the water with Andrew and Hannah; we really couldn't have asked for more.



**Find out more about our In Search of Coastal Wolves & Grizzly Bears trip or contact us**

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The afternoon had flown by, and with the whale activity dying down, it was time to head back to port. On arrival at the jetty, we disembarked and wandered up to the office. We had around half an hour before our taxi arrived and drove us the half an hour back to Port Hardy. What an exceptional day!

We enjoyed an excellent meal in the fine dining restaurant attached to the hotel, before retiring early to bed, giving us plenty of time to rest before another full day out on the water.

**Saturday 4 July 2026**

**Day 9:**
Knight Inlet

Our routine was the same today as the previous day, being picked up at 6.30 am and then making tea and coffee before boarding Mayumi. We had Hannah and Andrew once again (the dream team), setting off bright and early. It wasn't long before we had humpbacks breaching, tail slapping and pectoral fin slapping ahead of us. Having left early, we were able to enjoy and photograph the whales as they went about their business.



What a fabulous way to start the day. We then had to set off for Glendale Cove to ensure we would be there for when the bears would be feeding on the shore. Enjoying another smooth sailing, at speed, we climbed across to the skiff and set off to see if we could find some bears. There were three bears visible today, with the mother and cub busily feeding on the sedges away from the beach, while another older female was busy feeding on the rocky foreshore.

Starting off, Andrew moved us through the shallow waters to where the mother and cub were, but realising we couldn't get any closer, we decided to continue round and focus our efforts on the bear searching for shellfish. Today was another exceptional encounter and the photographic opportunities couldn't have been much better. This bear was a master of flipping huge boulders, and she showed off all her foraging skills. We were treated to some wonderful moments, plus particularly close encounters. What luck.



You could see she was an old girl, but her strength and experience were also clear to see.



We spent the two hours revelling in every moment, with cameras whirring away as everyone fired off shot after shot. We were incredibly lucky with the weather once again, soft cloud cover providing fantastic lighting conditions.





It was amazing how fast the time passed by. It is easy to get lost in the moment, particularly with such a cooperative and captivating subject. Once again, as our time was up, we headed off to find somewhere for lunch. We checked a couple of spots on the way, in case we stumbled upon any more bears (or even wolves for that matter), but all was quiet, and so we continued on and enjoyed another hearty lunch.

As a collective, the group made the decision to go in search of more grizzlies after lunch, and so, Hannah and Andrew concocted a plan for our journey back towards Port McNeill. We explored some waterways that we had already had a quick look around the day before, but this time with a particular focus on finding bears. Amazingly, they spotted a mother and her two cubs on a beach. She hadn't been seen in a couple of weeks (previously at Glendale Cove), and so they were delighted. We made our approach and were immediately rewarded with fantastic views of this very relaxed bear and her charming cubs.



She wasn't at all bothered by us, nor were her cubs for that matter; they just carried on feeding without a care in the world. Andrew did superbly well, constantly fighting the strong currents to ensure the group was in the best position possible to photograph this charming family. It was great to watch the bears in a different spot, going about their business with just us for company.

We were able to photograph them for a prolonged period of time, capturing some wonderful shots as they searched the rocks for shellfish, as well as feeding on the sedges just above the tide line. It was an amazing spot by Hannah in the first place, and to have them all to ourselves made it all the more special.

The mother, once she found a good spot, concentrated her efforts there, while one of the cubs, determined to get every last mollusc from the beach, hardly moved. The other cub, though, stuck much closer to mum and followed her example. All the while, the group was able to continually capture some stunning imagery.



It was a wonderful way to spend a little more time with the grizzlies found in this coastal rainforest.



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There was still quite a way for us to go to get back to Port McNeill, and so with the bears slowly retreating into the forest, it was soon time for us to start moving through the maze of channels once again. Andrew wanted to show us an old village site for his nation, with a couple of rooves still just visible through the trees. His dream was to take his people back and build their lives here once again. It was another very moving conversation and I think we all felt a great deal of sympathy and sorrow for the tragic history of his people. This stuff is always hard to hear, but the First Nations people here are wonderful and so in tune with the natural world. Therefore, it is so important we hear their stories and hopefully help them towards a brighter future. On a brighter note, we found a fantastic bald eagle perched up on a rocky outcrop and we were able to capture some stunning photographs as it took flight.



We were heading back out into the main channel, closing in on Port McNeill, when Hannah and Andrew spotted a whale watching boat that was stationary. We paused, trying to work out what it was they were watching when we suddenly saw a large dorsal fin. It looked like an orca fin – it was an orca fin! What luck. We spent the last hour or so of our time exploring this stunning part of the world, watching a family of orcas as they cruised through the channels.

There was a large bull, as well as two mothers and their calves. We didn't want to get too close, giving them plenty of space as they just carried on their way. What a fabulous and unexpected way to end our trip (the orcas aren't seen that often at this time of year), but soon it was time to head back to the shores of Vancouver Island one last time. We pulled into the jetty and were soon ashore, wandering up the gangway and back to the office, where we waited a little while for the taxi to pick us up.

As was now familiar to us, the journey took around half an hour and we were dropped off at the hotel with a little downtime before dinner. We met back up in the pub and enjoyed an excellent final evening meal together, as well as some celebratory drinks after such a successful trip. What an adventure we'd had and what incredible wildlife encounters we'd enjoyed.

**Sunday 5 July 2026**

**Day 10:**
Port Hardy to Vancouver; fly UK

We woke this morning and were able to enjoy the hotel's breakfast. We had a mid-morning flight from Port Hardy to Vancouver, and so it was a relatively leisurely start. It was a brighter, warmer day, and after everyone had checked out, we enjoyed a smooth transfer to the airport.

As soon as we arrived at the airport, we were able to get everyone (and their luggage) checked in right away. The flight left on time, and we enjoyed a beautiful, smooth flight south towards Vancouver. Once we had landed and collected our luggage, we took the free shuttle bus to the International Terminal. It was here that the group split up and started to say our goodbyes. Two of the group were heading south to Seattle, while another was flying back to the UK the following day; that meant there were three of us on the group flight direct from Vancouver to London.

We had plenty of time before we could check in, so we grabbed some lunch and relaxed in the seating area by check-in. As soon as we could check in, we did and progressed quickly through security. We enjoyed a smooth flight back to the UK (after watching England play Mexico in the World Cup).

**Monday 6 July 2026**

**Day 11:**
Arrive UK

We arrived safely back in the UK on time and once our luggage had arrived, we said our goodbyes and wished each other a safe journey home.

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