

Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen 2020

4-Day Photo Op Photo Tour



The *Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen – 4-Day Photo Op Photo Tour 2020* is geared toward the intermediate to advanced wildlife photographer who is primarily interested in photographing the Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen and who would prefer to forego any formal instruction. This tour is two full days shorter than the instructional photo tour and thus may appeal to those with slightly less time at their disposal. Those attending will spend four full days photographing the Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen in a very small group of like-minded individuals and with a highly-experienced bear guide and professional photography guide at their service. The opportunities offered by this tour to capture breathtaking images of North America's top land-based carnivore – the Grizzly Bear (*Ursus arctos*) – are absolutely unsurpassed.

The Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary. The 39,000 hectare (96,000 acre) Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary is Canada's only grizzly bear sanctuary and is located at the tip of a long and remote inlet on the northern coast of British Columbia. There are no roads, settlements, or even campsites in the region – it is true pristine wilderness. The bulk of the sanctuary is closed to the public and only two professional guides are allowed to lead very small groups into the heart of this majestic, globally unique ecosystem. The inlet is home to about 50 resident grizzlies, with many more passing through during the year. This remote piece of wilderness is set within one of the planet's few remaining completely intact temperate rainforests and offers a stunning, verdant backdrop to observe and photograph wild grizzlies as they interact with one another as they have for time immemorial. The bears themselves grant visitors with a very rare privilege: they allow humans completely into their rich and behaviourally diverse daily lives.



The Khutzeymateen Estuary. Accessible only at high tide, the Khutzeymateen estuary is a grass and wildflower covered grizzly garden (complete with water features!). We'll split our time in the field between the estuary and several of the alluvial fans found in the main Khutzeymateen Inlet.

Psssst! Don't Look Now, but...

Nikon D800 with 400mm f2.8G VR. 1/400s @ f5. ISO 400



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Be one of under 200 people – and far, far fewer photographers – annually gifted with the intimate experience of sharing the lives of the Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen.

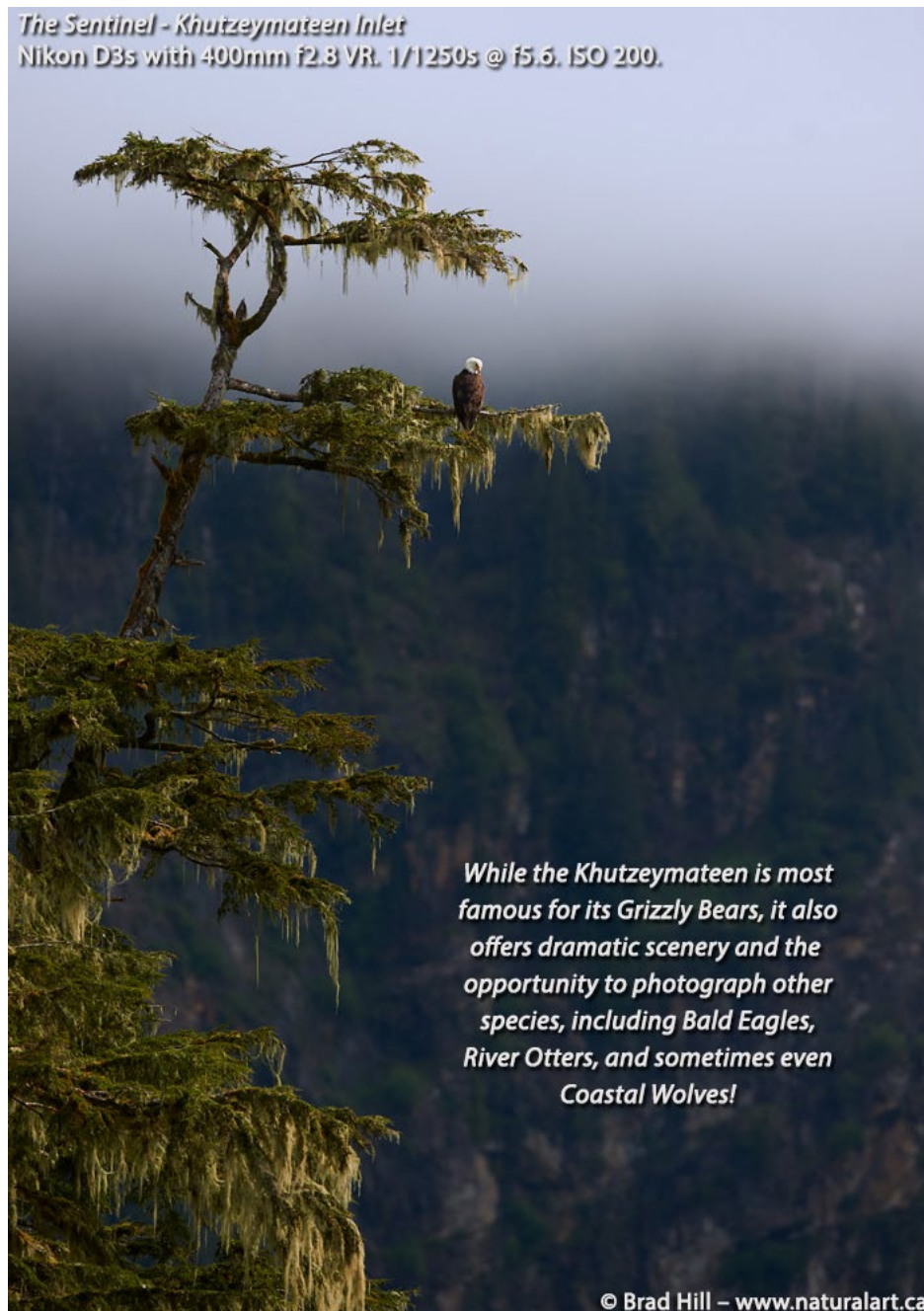
To explore and photograph this spectacular valley we will use a 71-foot sailboat (the *Ocean Light II*) as our floating basecamp and then travel into the depths of the sanctuary using a motorized inflatable Zodiac®.

About the Photography “Style” On This Photo Tour. On this trip – as on our other photo tours – this is a “*photography in true wilderness*” experience. This means we will spend the bulk of our time in isolated and remote wilderness and away from other humans (and other photographers). We’ll have to “track down” our subject matter without the help of other outfitters, spotters or real-time online apps listing recent sightings (i.e., there is no “network of sightings” for us to plug into!). Additionally we’ll have no

“set-up” situations where we can set up in a specific location ahead of time and with the knowledge that a certain species will predictably appear and pose for us! The advantage of our “*photography in true wilderness*” approach is that it produces a far more unique and personalized experience and it can often lead to more original and compelling photos. A possible downside is that it means we don’t know the specifics of the shooting conditions ahead of time and thus may put more onus on the photographer to make snap technical and creative decisions in a field setting. This means it may challenge – and encourage you to expand – your photographic skills more than other photo tours do!

Our Wildlife Subject Matter: While this is a *photography-in-true-wilderness* trip, we are definitely headed into a target-rich environment! Grizzlies are the dominant terrestrial mammal in this region and our primary

The Sentinel - Khutzeymateen Inlet
Nikon D3s with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/1250s @ f5.6. ISO 200.



While the Khutzeymateen is most famous for its Grizzly Bears, it also offers dramatic scenery and the opportunity to photograph other species, including Bald Eagles, River Otters, and sometimes even Coastal Wolves!

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target, but there are other species that we may encounter and, when the opportunity presents itself, photograph.

Here's a quick run down of both our “*most likely*” wildlife subjects and our “*less likely but possible*” wildlife subjects:

A. Most Likely Subjects (50% or greater probability of encounter):

- Grizzly Bears
- Black Bears
- Harbour Seals
- Bald Eagles
- Great Blue Herons
- Harlequin Ducks
- Herring Gulls
- American Mink
- Canada Geese
- Asst'd shorebirds
- Asst'd songbirds

B. Less Likely But Possible Subjects (<50% probability of encounter):

- Killer Whales
- Coastal Gray Wolves
- Humpback Whales
- River Otters
- American Marten

2020 Dates: May 28th through to June 2nd, 2020.

2020 Price: \$5149 CAD plus 5% GST.

What's Included?

- Float plane transportation both into and out of the Khutzeymateen
- All food and accommodation while aboard the *Ocean Light II* in the Khutzeymateen (see Itinerary for details)
- A highly-experienced bear guide and professional photography guide
- A great cook and crew
- Jaw-dropping scenery and fabulous bears!

What's Not?

- Transportation between your home and Prince Rupert, BC
- Personal belongings and equipment
- Any meals and accommodation in Prince Rupert prior to Day 1
- Excess baggage charges from airlines

Ghost of the Coast. Coastal Gray Wolves are not rare in the Khutzeymateen, but their secretive nature makes them a challenge to see or photograph. Nikon D4s with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/500s @ f5.6. ISO 350. © Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca



- Any extra personal expenses incurred because of weather, logistical delays, or delayed departures of chartered or scheduled aircraft
- Any gratuities for the crew of the *Ocean Light II*

What To Expect?

- Cool weather (daytime highs of about 10-15C or 50-60° fahrenheit); rain showers are likely but usually short-lived (and sunny skies are NOT uncommon at this time of year)
- Totally calm water at our floating basecamp – seasickness is not an issue on this trip
- Very long hours of daylight (giving us ample time in the field)
- Unsurpassed Grizzly Bear photography opportunities
- Hearty, healthy and delicious food
- Always warm, always dry floating basecamp!

Fitness Requirements/Needs of Participants

This photo tour is not excessively physically demanding and there is no hiking involved. However, to fully enjoy and participate in the trip there are a few physical tasks you should be able to perform. These include:

- ***Being able to easily move between the sailboat and the Zodiac®.*** This involves climbing up or down a 5' vertical ladder without assistance.
- ***Shooting your camera from within a Zodiac®.*** This involves multiple tasks, including shooting your camera while sitting on the pontoon of the Zodiac® and while sitting on the floor of the Zodiac®. In some cases you may find that the most convenient way to shoot will be while kneeling (on your knees) on the bottom of the Zodiac®. This is the reason knee pads are included as optional items on the trip's gear list. Note that neither tripods nor monopods can be used within the Zodiac®. The consequence is that you must be able to ***hand-hold the camera/lens system*** that you will be bringing and using on this photo tour.

Rough-housing in the Khutz!



Nikon D5 with Nikkor 180-400mm f4E @ 560mm. 1/2000s @ f5.6. ISO 2000

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On some occasions it WILL be possible to stand in the Zodiac® when shooting, but you will be shooting while sitting or kneeling far more frequently. A degree of flexibility and/or suppleness can make your time in the Zodiac® far more productive and enjoyable!

Sample Itinerary

This is only a sample itinerary and how we actually spend our days when we're in the Khutzeymateen may differ from below.

Please Note: Due to the early meeting time and float plane trip into the Khutzeymateen on the first full day, you must arrive in Prince Rupert prior to Day 1 of your expedition. Which means you must arrive in Prince Rupert any time on the 28th of May, 2020.

On the itinerary below B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner.

Day 0 – May 28, 2020

Arrive in Prince Rupert, BC.

Day 1 – May 29, 2020 – L/D

An early morning float plane flight from the Seal Cove float plane dock takes you to the *Ocean Light II* and her crew who await at the head of the Khutzeymateen Inlet. Brief meet-and-greet with the crew and guides followed by an orientation to the boat, and then off to view and photograph the Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen.

Days 2 to 4 – May 30 to June 1, 2020 – B/L/D

The daily itinerary will remain flexible so that we can maximize bear viewing and photography opportunities. We will spend the majority of each day in the Zodiac® viewing and photographing bears. Depending on the tides, our time will find us in some area of the inlet viewing and photographing what could be any number of animals including grizzly and black bears, seals, eagles, geese, ducks, and herons. At dusk, after the

evening's activities, you will return to the boat to enjoy a hot drink and dinner while reflecting on the day's events (and reviewing your images!).

Day 5 – June 2, 2020 – B

The float plane will arrive in the morning for your return trip to Prince Rupert. Our time together in the fabulous Khutzeymateen will draw to an end, but you'll be left with many fabulous memories and photographs!

Our Ethical Stance – *Wildlife FIRST!*

Wildlife conservation is the primary reason for our involvement in wildlife photography. As such, *we place the welfare and value of our subjects above the value of any photograph of them.* This philosophy is embodied in our *Wildlife FIRST* rules of conduct that guide our actions during all our photo tours. These four simple ethical rules state that:

1. We engage in *PASSIVE* wildlife photography only. This means we strive to capture images of wildlife behaving as naturally as possible and without the use of “set-ups”, contrivances, or any actions that could guide the subjects toward desirable settings and/or backdrops or elicit specific “poses”.
2. We do nothing intentional to alter or influence the behaviour of our subject(s) for the purposes of photography. This means we do not engage in any form of luring or baiting (or any other form of food supplementation). Additionally, we will not use any form of sound to alter the behaviour of the subject for the purpose of photography (including using predator and/or prey calls, vocal clicking, or making any other sound to encourage the subject to look at us).
3. We always allow the wildlife subject – regardless of the species – to determine the distance it is comfortable with between itself and us. This principle not only serves to reduce the stress on the subject, but it also allows photographers to capture the subject behaving in a more natural, and often more interesting, fashion.
4. We strive to always consider both the individual and collective effects



our photographic activities can have on our subjects. This includes being aware of the total time spent with the subjects. This means we will often break contact and withdraw from the subject, especially if there is any indication that our presence is impacting on the subject's behavioural routine (including activities such as feeding, resting and/or sleeping, caring for its offspring, etc.). This consideration is always important and may become even MORE important if multiple photographers or groups of photographers are working with the same subject.

Those participating in our photo tours are expected to conform to these rules of photographer conduct.

All images in this trip brochure and the Natural Art Images website (www.naturalart.ca) were captured following these *Wildlife FIRST* rules of photographer conduct.

For more information about this amazing trip contact Brad Hill at:

seminars@naturalart.ca

The Magical Khutzeymateen Estuary. The Khutzeymateen estuary has been referred to as the "Garden of the Grizzlies". It's an apt description!



Grizzly Cub – Brown on Green! Grizzlies of both sexes and all ages are found in the Kutzeymateen. In most years females avoid bringing first year cubs into the estuary owing to the threat posed by large male bears.







From Sea to Snow-covered Peaks. An aerial view of the fabulous Khutzeymateen Inlet – including the *Ocean Light II* sailboat...our home in the Khutzeymateen!
Nikon D4 with 70-200mm f4 @ 70mm 1/1600s @ f5.6. ISO 100.
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