

The Pacific Rim Explorer

Instructional Photo Tour 2019

The *Pacific Rim Explorer Instructional Photo Tour 2019* combines a day of professional photography instruction with four full days of exploration and photography within British Columbia's amazing Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. On this unique photo tour you'll be provided with the opportunity, the conceptual and creative tools, and the techniques needed to capture striking images of spectacular land- and seascapes and a diverse array of wildlife. And, we'll do all this while traveling among hundreds of islands and islets on the classic and spacious 70-foot schooner, the *Passing Cloud*.

Photography Instruction. The Instructional Photo Tour begins with a day of photography instruction by a well-seasoned professional wildlife photographer – Brad Hill. The session will be of benefit to all levels of photographers – from enthusiastic novices through to experienced

professionals. We will discuss both the technical and creative aspects of nature photography as well as the specifics of photographing the types of scenery and wildlife we're most likely to encounter during the trip. While the instructional material will be agnostic with respect to camera brand and camera style (e.g., point & shoot vs. SLR) it will be assumed that most participants will be bringing either digital SLR's or mirrorless cameras.

Photography instruction will also take place during our time on the *Passing Cloud*. This instruction will be less formal and on a "time-permitting" basis. The topics will vary, depending on both the specific interests of, and requests made by, those on the trip. It could include sessions on digital workflow topics, including raw image processing through to discussions on field-techniques and camera gear.



Resting in Peace. A male Sea Otter strikes an iconic pose while resting. Sea Otters have recently re-colonized the region after a nearly century-long absence

Nikon D4 with Nikkor 80-400mm f4.5-5.6 VR @ 400mm. 1/800s @ f7.1. ISO 320

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The Region – And Our Expedition At A Glance. Our expedition will explore the wildlife, wilderness and the rich Nuu-chah-nulth cultural heritage of Barkley Sound and the Broken Group, which is an archipelago of more than 300 islands and islets. This region has long been considered the crown jewel of Pacific Rim National Park and can only be accessed by boat.

Spring is simply a spectacular time to discover the many wonders of Pacific Rim National Park Reserve. While aboard the *Passing Cloud* and through both shore walks and zodiac excursions we'll explore the vast diversity of the Broken Group's many islands, beaches, shores, old-growth rainforests, rocky intertidal zones, kelp forest communities, estuaries and fjords of this incredible region. We've scheduled our adventure early in the season in the hope of catching the impressive herring spawn phenomenon which, in turn, attracts an absolute feeding-frenzy of species, including emerging black bears from hibernation, bald eagles and other birds of prey, several species of whales, seals, both Steller and California sea lions, sea otters, and an incredible array of seabirds. We also hope to catch the tail end of one of the longest migrations of any mammal – the grey whale, that pass through these waters from mid-March to early May.

A Tour of Exploration! Like almost all our photo tours, this is a multi-faceted trip, focusing not simply on a single species of wildlife, but on *all* the inhabitants of the Barkley Sound region – and the entire ecosystem and land- and seascapes in which they thrive. While viewing and photographing coastal and marine mammals are an integral part of this trip, we will be approaching this trip *with an attitude of finding and capturing any form of natural beauty and natural art we can find*. This may include many species of wildlife and birds, intertidal scenes, landscapes, seascapes, and more!

2019 Trip Start and End Points: The photo tour starts and ends in Ucluelet, BC.

2019 Dates: April 3-9, 2019, including arrival and departure days. Aboard the *Passing Cloud* schooner from April 5-9, 2019.

Black bears visit the shoreline to forage on grass, sedges and shellfish.



Rhinoceros Auklets – which are actually a species of puffin – are a common but beautiful part of the avifauna in the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve.



Nikon D3s with 600mm f4 VR. 1/3200s @ f5. ISO 640

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2019 Price: \$3799 CAD plus 5% GST.

2019 Photo Tour Leader: Brad Hill

What's Included?

- All meals and accommodation in Ucluelet beginning on the evening of Day 1 (see Itinerary)
- A full day of professional photography instruction at the beginning of the trip and multiple informal instructional sessions during the course of the trip
- All food and accommodation while aboard the *Passing Cloud*
- A highly-experienced crew, wildlife guides, chef and a professional photography guide
- All First Nation, Conservation, Park, and Stewardship fees
- Use of onboard gear and resources, including rubber boots!
- Use of Zodiac® and all associated safety gear (life jackets, etc.)

What's Not Included?

- Transportation between your home and Ucluelet, BC at the beginning and end of the trip
- Personal belongings and equipment
- Meals and accommodation prior to Day 1 of the photo tour
- Any extra personal expenses incurred because of weather, logistical delays, or missed flights
- Any gratuities for the crew of the *Passing Cloud*

What To Expect?

- Cool and rapidly “changeable” weather (daytime highs of about 10-15C or 50-60° fahrenheit) with some light and moderate rain
- Mostly calm seas, but with some short-duration bouts of rolling water
- Hearty, healthy and delicious food
- Always warm, always dry floating basecamp!
- A truly unique and once-in-a-lifetime experience!

Accommodation: While in Ucluelet we'll be staying at the Black Rock Oceanfront Resort.

This trip is being offered in association with *Outer Shores Expeditions*. While in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve we will be staying on their classic 70-foot wooden schooner – the *Passing Cloud*. Please be aware that you will be sharing a berth with one other person while on the *Passing Cloud*.

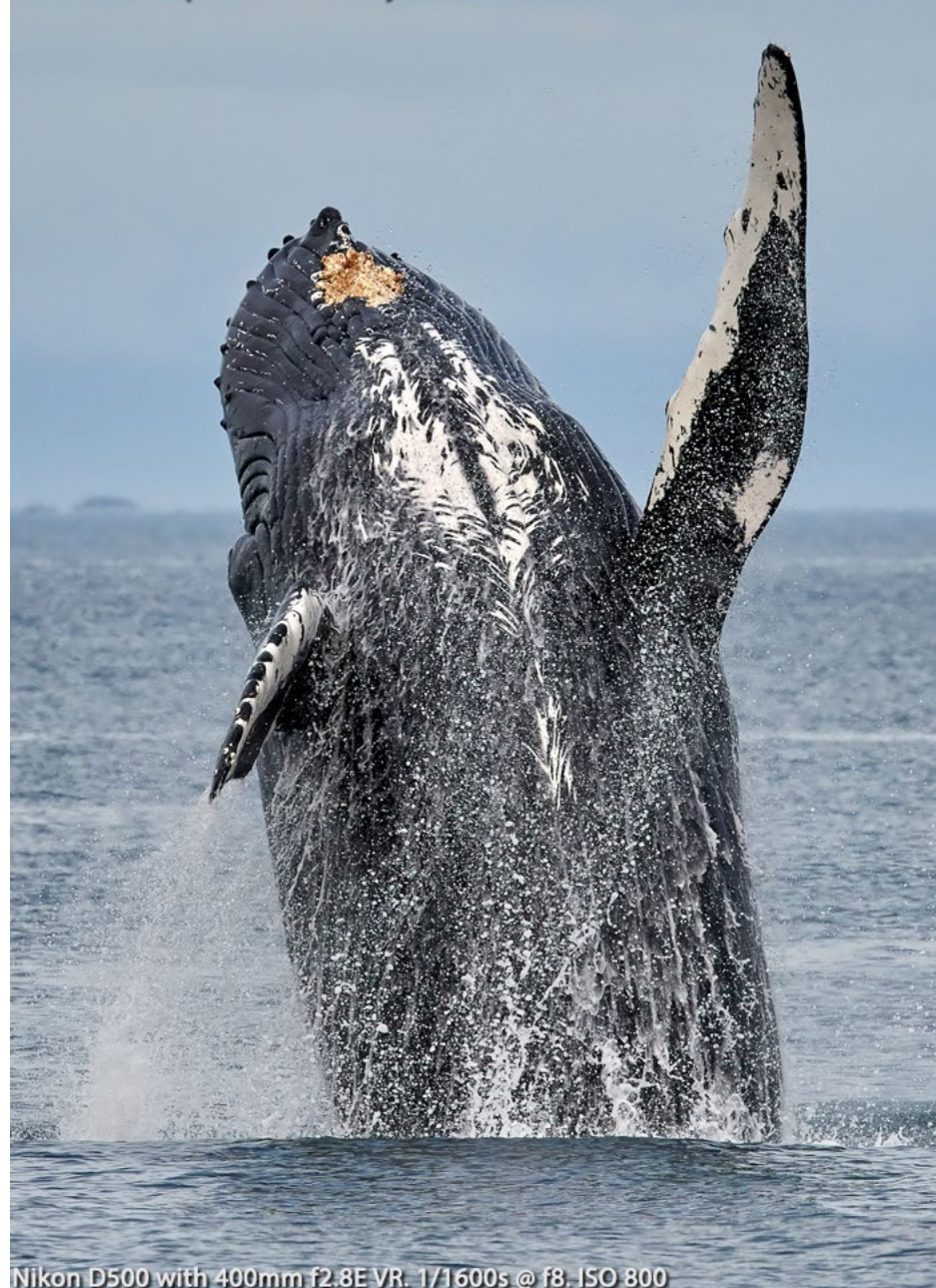
Fitness Requirements of Participants

This photo tour requires a moderate level of physical fitness and good mobility. We will be walking/hiking a number of times on this trip and we will be shooting images from the deck of the sailboat, from within a Zodiac®, and on shore. To participate in this trip you should be able to perform the following tasks:

- ***Be able to hike up to 2-3 km (up to 2 miles) on uneven, slanted and potentially slippery terrain and/or over some obstacles that could be up to a meter or slightly more high (e.g., large fallen logs) – all while carrying your own camera gear.***
- ***Be able to easily move between the sailboat and the Zodiac®.*** This involves climbing up or down a 5' vertical ladder.
- ***Shoot your camera from within a Zodiac®.*** This involves multiple tasks, including shooting your camera while sitting on the pontoon of the Zodiac® or, at times, 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 gear list. Note that tripods can **not** be used within the Zodiac® and while it is theoretically possible to use a monopod in the Zodiac®, few photographers find it practical. The obvious 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.

On some occasions it WILL be possible to stand in the Zodiac® when

Blast Off! Humpback Whale early in a breach. © Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca



Nikon D500 with 400mm f2.8E VR. 1/1600s @ f8. ISO 800

While common on all sides of Vancouver Island, Harbour Seals are exceptional photographic subjects!



Nikon D5 with 500mm f4 lens. 1/1250s @ f5. ISO 220

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

NOTE: The itinerary of the *Pacific Rim Explorer Instructional Photo Tour 2019* is designed for flexibility. This allows us to react to the ever-changing distribution and abundance of wildlife and fluctuating weather conditions. While we will place some emphasis on observing and photographing some of the higher profile coastal wildlife species (including Black Bears, Humpback and Grey whales, Killer Whales, Sea Lions, Sea Otters) we will watch and photograph other species and landscapes as they present themselves to us. Here's an example of how our time together might look!

Day 1 – April 3, 2019

Arrive in Ucluelet, BC. Make your way to the Black Rock Oceanfront Resort. You may check-in any time from 4 PM onwards. If you arrive early in the day feel free to go for a walk or check out the facilities. Our first official activity will be a meet-and-greet in the lobby at 6 PM followed by dinner together.

Day 2 – April 4, 2019

Photo instruction. After breakfast we'll spend 4 to 5 hours in a class-room-style instructional session on modern digital photography, with special emphasis on both the technical and creative aspects of wildlife photography. We'll pay particular attention to the nuances of photographing wildlife in a *coastal environment* as well as the specifics and etiquette of shooting from the close quarters of a reasonably small inflatable Zodiac®. The late afternoon activities are not firmly scheduled – options could include an extended question-and-answer session on photography, roaming the region to sightsee, getting some exercise, or, if you wish, some free time.

Day 3 – April 5, 2019

After breakfast we'll meet the crew of the *Passing Cloud* in front of the Ucluelet Aquarium. While our luggage is being transported aboard we'll do a short tour of the aquarium. We'll then board the boat in time for a late morning snack (or early lunch!). You can then settle into your accommodations and we'll set sail for Barkley Sound. As we head through Macoah Passage we'll be on the lookout for spawning herring and the Grey Whales, sea lions, seabirds that congregate to feast on this nutritional bonanza! We'll likely anchor just outside the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve where we have a good chance of spotting coastal black bears.

Day 4 – April 6, 2019

An early morning Zodiac® excursion will have us exploring an estuary and salmon stream. We may also explore a forest in search for Black

Bears that come here in spring to feed on sedges and shellfish. By lunch we should be back aboard the *Passing Cloud* and traveling into the Broken Group of Islands where we'll spend time exploring in the Zodiac®.

Days 5 & 6 – April 7-8, 2019

Exploration of the Broken Group Islands! We'll be keeping eagle-eyes out for Humpback and Grey whales, harbour porpoises, Orcas, and more!

We also hope to encounter some of the newest arrivals to Barkley Sound – Sea Otters that are re-colonizing this region after an absence of nearly a century!

Day 7 – April 9, 2019

In an effort to squeeze every last drop out of this expedition we will take a final morning shore walk or Zodiac® excursion before heaving anchor and heading back to Ucluelet. Of course, we'll keep our eyes open for more sea otters, whales and seabirds as we return to port to say our reluctant farewells!



The Blow! This female Killer Whale and her calf are part of a small pod of 5 transient Killer Whales hunting for their primary prey – marine mammals. While not common in the Barkley Sound region, transient Killer whales can be seen there any time throughout the year.

Nikon D4 with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/1000s @ f5.6. ISO 2000. © Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca

Getting the Evil Eye! Steller Sea Lions on a haulout rock. Both Steller and California Sea Lions are drawn into Barkley Sound and the Pacific Rim National Park Reserve by the large spring herring spawn



Nikon D5 with 180-400mm f4 @ 370mm. 1/1600s @ f6.3. ISO 1100.

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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 compendium 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

A Smoky Sentinel. Bald Eagles are a ubiquitous part of the landscape on the BC coast. This one was photographed during the "smoky season" of 2018. Nikon D5 with 180-400mm f4 @ 560mm. 1/800s @ f5.6. ISO 900.



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The Region We'll Explore on This Photo Tour

Where Rock Meets Sand! Many of the western-most islands and shorelines on the BC coast offer a beautiful mix of beach, forest, and rock!
Nikon D850 with Sigma 24-70mm f2.8 Art @ 35mm. 1/125s @ f11. ISO 64. © Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca



Beauty in the Beast. Humpback breaching along rocky shoreline.

Nikon D5 with Sigma Sport 150-600mm @ 550mm. 1/1250s @ f7.1. ISO 4000. © Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca



