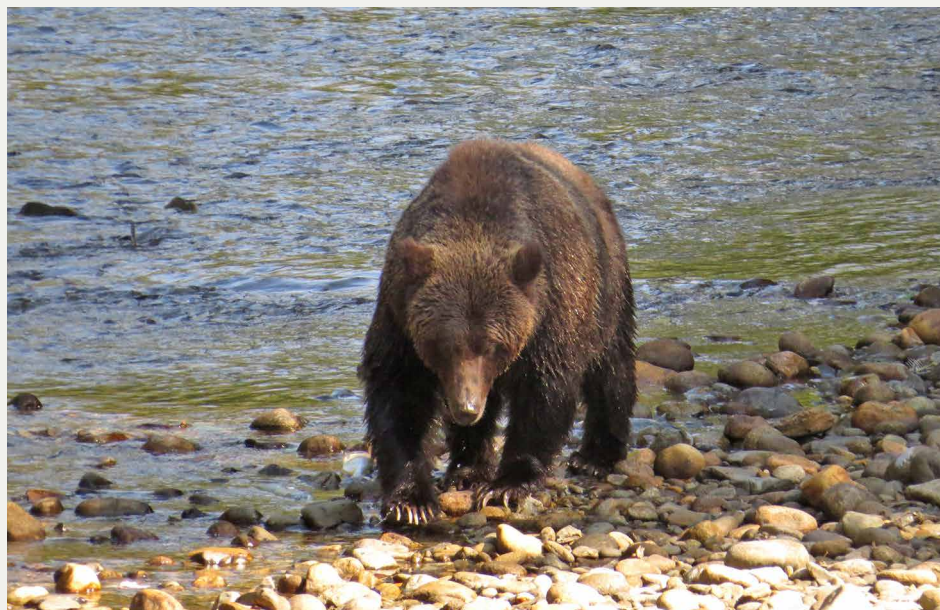


BRITISH COLUMBIA



"Vancouver Island has the fabulous mix of superb landscapes and spectacular wildlife. Forest-clad mountains tumble into the ocean and there's a myriad of channels, inlets and fjords to explore, searching for Orcas, Humpbacks, Gray Whales, Sea Otters, bears and more – do join us!"
Darren Rees

Dates Thu 4 - Thu 18 Sept 2025
Price £7,250
Deposit £1,450 Single Supp £1,200

Leaders Darren Rees and Roy Atkins

Flights British Airways, scheduled
Outbound: Morning, Heathrow-Vancouver
Inbound: Overnight, Vancouver-Heathrow

Weather Variable across the island, with wetter conditions in the west, drier on the east coast. Expect some rain (we sometimes have rain for a whole day or more) and fog is possible in the west, but generally warm and sunny with mild conditions, 14°-22°C

Walking There'll be some short easy walks on wide tracks in the forest, in some places with lots of steps. Nothing steep or strenuous, but a reasonable degree of fitness is required

Meals All included from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 14

Insects Biting insects are generally not a problem on Vancouver Island, but repellent is a good idea just in case

Boat trips Boats vary from larger boats with indoor seating areas that can hold over 40 people, to smaller uncovered boats with no facilities. All boats are excellent

Accom Double, twin and single rooms all ensuite

Group 10

Just some of what we hope to see:

Grizzly Bear	Sea Otter
Black Bear	Bald Eagle
Orca	Black Oystercatcher
Humpback Whale	Black Turnstone
Gray Whale	Rhinoceros Auklet
Pacific White-sided Dolphin	Marbled Murrelet

Vancouver Island on Canada's wild west coast – witness a seasonal wildlife spectacle with bears, birds, whales and more, in the most spectacular of landscapes.

- Boat trips in search of Orcas, Humpbacks and Gray Whales
- Grizzly Bears hunting salmon on spawning grounds
- Dall's Porpoise, Steller's Sea Lions plus Pacific White-sided Dolphin
- Black Bear, Beaver, Sea Otter and chance of Raccoon
- Harlequin Duck, Bald Eagle, Canada Jay
- Beautiful Pacific Rim Rainforest and famous Long Beach
- Stunning scenery of lakes, fjords and forests, amidst towering mountains

1-2 Arriving in Vancouver we drive forty minutes to our hotel in Delta. The following day we enjoy a visit to bird-rich Reifel Bird Sanctuary, where Sandhill Crane, Great Blue Heron, Wood Duck, Red-winged Blackbird and Northern Harrier occur. We sift through dowitchers, yellowlegs and our first American sandpipers – a great place to start the bird list. We'll also walk along Boundary Bay, looking for more shorebirds, ducks and checking those confusing American sparrows - this may prove to be the most bird-rich day of the trip.

3-6 We board the ferry to Nanaimo, checking the jetties for Pelagic and Brandt's Cormorants, Black Turnstone and Black Oystercatcher. We'll watch for wildlife on the crossing (we often see whales) then have a long drive north to our sea front lodge overlooking Johnstone Strait. The place is a haven for wildlife

and we've watched Black Bears turning rocks on the shore and glimpsed Raccoon and American Mink. We can relax and wander the grounds watching Belted Kingfisher, Steller's Jays, White-crowned and Fox Sparrows, Hairy Woodpecker and more.

From our base we have two boat rides into one of the richest marine ecosystems in the world. A maze of islands and channels is the bewildering backdrop to a marine variety show like no other – the surface can be covered with seabirds - Common and Pigeon Guillemots, Rhinoceros Auklets, Sooty Shearwaters and dainty Red-necked Phalaropes, testament to the richness of the water. Bigger things will be chasing the fish... this is our best chance for Orcas and we hope to encounter resident groups at close quarters. Even larger are the Humpback Whales that sieve their bounty from the sea, showing their patterned tails when



"Highlights from previous trips include Orcas spy-hopping and surfing the wake of our boat, breaching and pec-slapping Humpbacks, playful White-side Dolphins and bear families gorging themselves on salmon – it will be a joy to return and add more amazing wildlife encounters!" Darren Rees



they dive. Smaller marine mammals include Dall's Porpoise, Sea Otters, Steller's Sea Lions and busy Pacific White-sided Dolphins. With so much on offer we'll enjoy a double-dose of wildlife-watching on the water.

On land we'll birdwatch at a nearby estuary, where Bald Eagles are in tree-tops; Red-necked Grebes, Common Loons, Harlequin Ducks and Surf and White-winged Scoter in the water; shorebirds and Savannah Sparrows along the beach. We'll visit Telegraph Cove, a picturesque harbour with shops and a superb marine wildlife museum and have an evening looking for shy Canadian Beavers on a nearby pond – always a delight to see.

7-9 After breakfast we head for Campbell River - another great area for birding, with shorebirds, grebes, divers, maybe Pacific Merlin and Bonaparte's Gull too. We'll visit the sub-alpine forest of Mount Washington in search of friendly Gray Jay, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Varied Thrush and Red-breasted Sapsucker. If it's sunny we may be lucky and see the rare, endemic Vancouver Island Marmot catching some rays before hibernating for winter.

Our main focus will be our quest for Grizzly Bears - each autumn they gather at rivers where salmon are spawning, to gorge on the season's bounty. We'll have a full-day heading across by boat to a picturesque inlet, where First Nation guides will take us to purpose-built viewing platforms. We hope for great close-up views of the bears walking the banks or fishing mid-stream – a joy to experience.



10-12 Our long and spectacular drive to Tofino on the west coast is broken at Cathedral Grove to enjoy the astonishing Douglas Firs – some of the tallest trees on the planet. We'll visit beautiful Pacific Rim National Park, a magical landscape of lush temperate rainforest and open beaches. Pacific Wren, Steller's Jay and Chestnut-backed Chickadees are amongst the few forest birds - beaches hold flocks of Sanderling and Least and Western Sandpipers and offshore are Red-necked Grebes, Surf Scoter, Pacific Loons and Marbled Murrelet.

We have two more exciting boat trips from Tofino. We'll head into scenic Clayoquot Sound, another mix of islands and rocky outcrops with a spectacular mountain backdrop. We'll search for enigmatic Gray Whales plus huge Steller's Sea Lions. The following day we'll search the sheltered inlets for rafts of Sea Otters, hoping for close up views of these sociable, endearing animals. We'll scan the shores of remote, uninhabited islands looking for beach-combing Black Bears and there's great birding too: Brandt's and Pelagic Cormorants, Heermann's Gull, Rhinoceros Auklet, Pigeon Guillemots, Black Oystercatcher, Surfbird and maybe Wandering Tattler.

13-15 Returning to Vancouver we'll visit Stamp River to watch salmon migrate upstream and leap the falls – we may see American Dipper or a last bear? Our last night will be in Delta and on the following day we may have time for a last visit to Boundary Bay, before our flight home, arriving London Day 15.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2** Fly to Vancouver. Full day birding local area and George C. Reifel Bird Sanctuary
2 nights Tsawwassen Inn
- Days 3-6** Ferry to Vancouver Island, then drive towards Port McNeill and our hotel overlooking Johnstone Strait. Two boat trips to look for Orca and Humpback Whales
4 nights Hidden Cove Lodge
- Days 7-9** Drive to Campbell River. A full-day boat trip to Grizzly Bear fishing grounds and birding Mt Washington
3 nights Anchor Inn
- Days 10-12** Transfer to Tofino on the west coast, with two boat trips and walks in the Pacific Rim Rainforest
3 nights Tofino Resort
- Day 13** Return to Vancouver
1 night Tsawwassen Inn
- Days 14-15** Birding Boundary Bay before flight back to London in afternoon, arriving in London on Day 15

Darren Rees: Grizzly Bear
Elaine George: Orcas
Stephen Batt: Humpback Whale
Julian Sykes: Steller's Sea Lions, Steller's Jay
Christine Maughan: Sea Otters