

Coastal Rainforest Photographic Safaris

'Puffins and Pelagics' Tour

June 13 - 17, 2024





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General overview of Coastal Rainforest Photographic Safari tours

As every good wildlife photographer knows, it takes many hours of patient watching for the best photographic opportunities to present themselves. These unique wildlife focused tours aim to provide exactly that.

These exclusive multi-day wildlife photographic safaris have been created by Lutra Wildlife in association with Coastal Rainforest Safaris to provide enthusiastic wildlife photographers and naturalists with the best possible opportunities to immerse themselves in the scenic beauty, and wealth of wildlife spectacles, that abound in the waters of Northern Vancouver Island.

Our multi-day boat charters - with up to 9hrs on the water - allow us to schedule and direct the days to make best use of the light, weather, tides, and wildlife. The boats used are stable, fast, and capable of getting us to some of the greatest wildlife watching areas in the world, as well as keeping us there as long as we need.

Each of our multi-day safaris will have a general focus that is best suited to the wildlife interest around at that time of year, and in addition to this, each tour will be kept flexible enough to take advantage of any good wildlife and photographic opportunities that present themselves each day.

The Wildlife

The rich coastal waters and dense rainforests of Northern Vancouver Island are famed for the wealth of wildlife that they sustain, and from our base in Port Hardy, our tours will have excellent access to some of the best wildlife hotspots the island has to offer. Whether our ambitions take us miles offshore, exploring ocean upwellings and rolling pacific swells in search of seabirds, or deep into the sheltered inlets and islets of the Broughton Archipelago in search of whales and bears, each day should provide numerous potential opportunities to observe and photograph a variety of iconic species typical of the Pacific Northwest. Black Bears, Sea Otters, Humpback Whales, Killer Whales, Pacific White-sided Dolphins, Porpoises, Sea Lions, Bald Eagles, a plethora of seabirds and possibly even Coastal Wolves and Grizzly Bears, all are all possible targets for every one of our tours in this amazing area.

Our Charters

The boats we charter for our daily excursions are large, open, 33ft Titan RHIB's with suspension mounted, individual seating (not bench seating) so that people can get up and move into the best position possible when good photographic opportunities arise. These boats provide a relatively comfortable and stable platform for photography. They are fast and built for offshore use, giving us great access to areas that many smaller day boats cannot get to. These boats accommodate 12 passengers but our charter will be limited to a maximum of 8 guests (and 2 naturalist/photographic guides) to ensure that everyone gets the best photographic opportunities possible. Two-piece floatation suits are provided to keep everyone warm, dry and safe whilst out on the water and the boat is also equipped with an onboard toilet to ensure everyone stays comfortable during our full day excursions.



Seabirds and Coastal Wildlife photographic safari

Dates: June 13th -17th, 2024

Tour focus : This tour aims to provide 3.5 days of intensive day boat excursions (up to 9hrs each day) in search of seabirds and other wildlife. It is hoped that an appropriate weather window in the 4 day period will provide an opportunity for excursions further offshore to search for Puffins and/or other pelagic seabirds.

Group size – 6-8 guests per group + Naturalist/photographic guide and boat captain

Prices - The cost for the tour is \$3800 CAD per person. The cost of the tour plus 5 nights hotel accommodations is \$4200 CAD per person, based on a 2 person share, and \$4600 CAD with a single supplement.

Tour price includes all tips and taxes (excluding evening meals and refreshments and transport costs to and from Port Hardy).

Start/ Finish - This tour starts and finishes in Port Hardy (North Vancouver Island). The group will meet in Port Hardy on evening of June 13th, ready for a morning departure the following day. The last boat excursion, and tour end, will be in the afternoon of June 17th Port Hardy. All day boat excursions start and end in Port Hardy.

Getting to Port Hardy - Port Hardy is serviced with daily flights from Vancouver International Airport. It is also accessible by road, with the drive from Nanaimo to Port Hardy takes approximately 4 ½ hrs.

Accommodations – Comfortable harbourfront hotel provides easy access to the boats, estuary, oceanfront walks and a variety of coastal and forest wildlife.

Meals – The hotel provides a buffet style continental breakfast and lunches are provided for each of the daily boat excursions. Evening meals are not included in the cost of this tour but are available in the hotels restaurant, pub and in other restaurants around the town.

Boat charters – This tour includes 3 full day boat charters and one half day excursion on the final day of the tour. All efforts will be made to plan our daily focus to best work with the weather. Any charters cancellations that must occur will result in a partial refund (see our cancellation and refund policy).

The Activities – Daily activities will be scheduled to make best use of the weather and/or tides. During the first three days of our tour we will hope to get an appropriate weather window to allow for some offshore excursions towards the north west coast of the island in hopes of photographing Tufted and Horned Puffins as well as a plethora of other seabirds and pelagic wildlife. If weather conditions inhibit our ambitions to venture offshore, alternative daily excursions may opt to explore the more sheltered wildlife rich coastlines to the south and east of Port Hardy in search of seabirds and other wildlife such as, black bears, wolves, sea otters, seals, sea lions, Pacific White-sided dolphins, Dall's porpoise, Orca, Humpbacks, bald eagles. The last day of the tour will be a slightly reduced excursion to allow enough time for people to prepare themselves for their journeys home.

Land-based activities – Land-based activities in the area will be limited in favour of the scheduled boat based charters booked for this tour. However, the area provides ample opportunities for to short local walks and excursions to see a variety of other coastal wildlife and the hotels we use are well situated, close to the water, for wildlife watching.

