



# WATERWAYS

Natural History Coastal Adventures

FALL 2015

## What is Important in Life? Change?

It is important that we never stop learning and growing. Despite our desire for comfort and security we must be willing to embrace change. There is an adventure to sailing beyond the horizon, not knowing what lies ahead. Every Bluewater trip embraces this sense of adventure. Between the weather, the wildlife and guests from around the world, no trip is the same. Our wildlife are "wild life". Only experience gives us hints of their movements and patterns. The flexibility to change the itinerary moment by moment is key to our success. And so as a company, we must also learn from the world around us and embrace change. So, I am happy to announce Bluewater is planning a new vessel. It is time to provide a fresh face, improve our operational footprint and build a better sailing vessel. We are stepping out, taking a risk and looking forward to the adventure ahead.

I invite you to join us next summer for a Bluewater Adventure aboard Island Roamer, Island Odyssey or Snow Goose! Could National Geographic be wrong when they named us one of the World's 50 best tours? I encourage you to plan ahead to avoid disappointment. Some of our 2016 trips have already filled. The 2016 trip schedule is now available – [www.bluewateradventures.ca/](http://www.bluewateradventures.ca/).

Capt Randy Burke – Director

## The Season in Review

We have had a wonderful season of trips. Thank you to all who joined us! The year started with unbelievable weather – sunshine week after week.

**Haida Gwaii** – It was wonderful to reconnect with our Haida friends at the old villages in Gwaii Haanas. It is such a special experience to spend time among the old totem poles with the Haida Watchmen, learning of their culture and getting to know them. Large numbers of whales were well-offshore and our



Lindsay Janes

**Haida Watchman at Tanu where the longhouse impressions give a good sense of the old village layout.**

flexible itinerary and stable sailing ship allowed us to head out to find them. Our Wild West Coast trip benefited immensely from the calm seas, seeing a group of 40 orcas, a sea otter and a sperm whale! Seldom visited beaches yielded glass ball treasures to a few lucky guests.

**North Coast / Khutzeymateen** – The highlight was our trip with Dr. Paul Paquet and Raincoast Conservation. It was an honour to have a scientist of his standing aboard. And the diversity of wildlife was amazing – grizzlies, orcas, bubble-net feeding humpback whales. In August, we enjoyed amazing experiences with a pack of wolves.

**Southeast Alaska** – Two trips aboard Island Odyssey and five with Snow Goose gave us great bear viewing, multitudes of humpback whales



**A hike to an incredible view of Dawe's Glacier – what a day!**

and glaciers thundering into the sea. Anan Creek's magic continues – with one of the largest pink salmon runs in 'Southeast' it was non-stop bears fishing. If there was a moment without bears, simply watching the salmon try to get up the falls was mesmerizing. Pack Creek is another story; we sit among logs on the ground as Admiralty Island's brown bears chase fish and wander by. An abundance of feed fish brought over a hundred humpback whales into Frederick Sound. It was the place to be!

### Great Bear Rainforest –

This Fall 80% of our guests saw Spirit bears. 40% saw wolves (and others heard them howling). Of course, statistics don't convey the actual magical experience of such rare wildlife encounters.



Don Hall

**The Fall is the only time to see Spirit bears when salmon migrate upstream.**

We enjoyed humpbacks bubble-net feeding, fin whales on several trips and even a few "friendly" whales. It was rainy, but it was needed to ensure the salmon could get upstream to spawn.

**Grizzlies on a clear day at Mussel Inlet in Fiordland. Mothers with cubs prefer the lower estuary away from large aggressive males.**



Tom Stoeri

## Quotes from you...

"The Crew were a true highlight. I watched each Crew Member spend time with every person. I saw kindness, graciousness, interest and responsibility. Everyone came together and the laughter was contagious."

CB – Whitehorse, YT

"Fantastic ship and Crew. Spectacular wildlife including bears, whales and all manner of birdlife. This trip has been a non-stop wilderness adventure that will be difficult to top."

DG & KG – Beds, UK

"I cannot possibly contemplate not working with Bluewater in the future; they are comfortably up there with the very best local operators I have worked with in 30 years; from their office, to the boat, to their sensational staff. It would be impossible to do Alaska any better. To put succinctly I would rate that as a top five wildlife experience. Ever. That is hard currency."

PG – UK Tour Company

"Hard to think of a better built boat for experiencing this area of the world! You really have this boat fitted out for this expedition."

M & TS – Pennsylvania

# Why Haida Gwaii?

## Continental Shelf

Located on the edge of the continental shelf, the west side of the Islands drop down to ocean depths over a mile deep (nearly 2 km). This is where the big whales feed. We saw sperm whales both this summer and last. Fin whales – the second largest species – are common. Humpbacks can be found across the horizon. Albatross soar past the yacht on their oceanic journeys.



Rachel Elliott

**Totems at SGang Gwaay are a UNESCO World Heritage Site**

Legacy totem. For many the highlight is SGang Gwaay the ancient village and World Heritage Site featuring some 18 slowly fading, historic poles.

## Canadian Galapagos

The Islands are frequently referred to as the "Canadian Galapagos". Isolated 100km off the coast, the name refers to the fact for 10,000 years animals and plants have developed separately from their mainland cousins. Mostly animals grow larger or smaller but

## Haida Gwaii

The name of the islands translates as "Haida Homeland". This is where the Haida First Nation has lived for over 10,000 years. Their culture and art is iconic to Canada featuring monumental cedar carved totem poles. Our trips start with the fabulous Haida Heritage Centre with its 6 standing poles, visit Windy Bay and the newly raised

# Khutzeymateen – Canada's Only Grizzly Bear Sanctuary

To start can we help you feel comfortable with this name? It is pronounced Kootz-A-Mateen. And like most off the beaten path, exotically named places it is well worth the effort to visit. Spring time in the vast Khutzeymateen estuary provides an experience we don't get elsewhere. The grizzly bears come out of hibernation and all congregate to feed on estuary sedge plants and dig for clams. Researchers estimate there are some 60 grizzlies in the protected



some plants are found no where else in the world. Large carnivores are completely absent. The Haida Gwaii black bear is the largest sub-species in North America and has developed a large lower jaw for crunching up shellfish in the intertidal. Peregrine falcons are the largest of their kind, tiny saw-whet owls the smallest.

## Birding

One quarter of the nesting seabirds in British Columbia nest on the Islands. In May and June there are thousands of birds nesting – sometimes on a single island. Eagles are everywhere,

colourful puffins common. Wildlife wonders like the flight of two day old ancient murrelets chicks abound.

## These are 'Mystical Isles'

Long referred to as the Queen Charlotte Islands they hold a special place in the hearts of many Canadians. The largest environmental battle in Canadian history created the Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve. Today, it is the only area protected from peak to ocean floor. These seldom visited Islands inspire a journey into history, true wilderness and uplift the spirit.



Randy Burke

**Moss covered old-growth forests create a soft repose to "absorb the experience".**



Erin Boyle

**Haida Gwaii has the highest concentration of nesting bald eagles in Canada.**

area. This coincides with the mating season and it is the only time we get to observe large males – quite an impressive sight! The Khutzeymateen is jointly managed by BC Parks and the local Tshimshian First Nation. First Nation 'Park Rangers' greet visitors and monitor bear viewing. \$50 per guest per day from your trip fees supports their program. Our trips combine bear viewing with whales and some incredible exploring by kayak and afoot on the outer islands. In June, wild flowers are in bloom – lovely red columbines, wild roses and rice root.

**Local Tshimshian First Nation guides talk about their history and culture. Left: A large male grizzly.**



Lindsay Janes

# Special 2016 Trips

**Conservation Voyage** – We are thrilled to announce our third Conservation Voyage with the Raincoast Conservation Foundation. Join Raincoast’s senior scientist, Paul Paquet **August 20-26** to experience the amazing marine mammals and grizzlies off Northern Vancouver Island. Raincoast is working to eliminate trophy hunting of grizzly bears by buying out the guide/outfitter’s commercial hunting licenses in the southern Great Bear Rainforest – the focus area of this trip. Dr. Paquet is an internationally recognized authority on mammalian carnivores and brings a wealth of knowledge including seminal studies of bears and wolves of the British Columbia coast. Learn about the interface between ecological theory and conservation, and the incredible work Raincoast Conservation ([www.raincoast.org](http://www.raincoast.org)) is doing to protect grizzly bears, wolves and orcas along the British Columbia coast.

“I loved listening to his stories – he’s a fount of information and so committed & passionate about Raincoast. He’s an inspiration. I learned so much more than I’d hoped.” *SR – Vancouver*



A slow, careful approach to wildlife in the zodiac promises great viewing experiences – especially with Lindsay navigating!

**Wild West Coast** – Island Odyssey returns to the west coast of Haida Gwaii **June 25-July 2** in conjunction with the Burke Museum and art historian, Dr. Robin

Wright. This trip is not for the faint of heart. The weather is unpredictable and the itinerary exposed to the open Pacific Ocean. We plan to visit a variety of old Haida villages, explore wild beaches, and enjoy the incredible beauty of this rugged coast – a place few will ever visit.

Bear researcher and retired Utah State professor, Dr. Barrie



Island Odyssey under sail



Tom Stoeri

A grizzly bear with Island Odyssey at anchor beyond. Nothing compares with sharing an estuary with these beautiful animals.

Gilbert returns to the **North Coast / Kluwatemateen** June 5-9.

It is amazing to travel with someone with his depth of experience, knowledge and caring for the animals. This condensed 5-day trip will focus on the bears and whales, with less time to explore the outer islands.

Birder and great naturalist, Christopher DiCorrado returns to lead an amazing voyage at the height of the bird nesting season in **Gwaii Haanas** – May 17-25.

Experience the wonder of nesting ancient murrelets, Peale’s peregrine falcons, unique sub-species of heron and owl, black-footed albatross and the highest concentration of nesting bald eagles in

Canada. You don’t have to be a birder to enjoy this fabled archipelago at its wildlife best.

Rob Lott from the Whale & Dolphin Conservation Society returns to share his 20 years of experience with the northern resident orcas – **August 13-19**. Experience this wildlife filled area focusing on Johnstone Strait, Knight Inlet and the Broughton Archipelago, off **Northern Vancouver Island**.

Our plans for special leaders next summer are just getting underway. We expect long-time resource guides Captain Gold, Sherry Kirkvold, Rachel Elliott and Lindsay Janes to all return. More announcements are coming as plans are finalized.



Natalie Bowes

A colourful Tufted Puffin flies by the yacht in Gwaii Haanas.



Rob Lott

A large male orca’s dorsal stands 6 feet above the water off Northern Vancouver Island.

## Special Offer!

Until December 15th, you can book a 2016 trip at our 2015 prices. Call our office 1-888-877-1770 or email us at [explore@bluewateradventures.ca](mailto:explore@bluewateradventures.ca) to confirm details and book your 2016 summer adventure now.

## Need More Info?

If you want to find out more details about a particular trip please contact the Bluewater office. Call toll-free 1-888-877-1770 or email at [explore@bluewateradventures.ca](mailto:explore@bluewateradventures.ca).

We are happy to answer your questions and share our experience.

*“Life is not measured by the breaths you take, but the moments that take your breath away.”*

– Anon





Leon Werdinger

## Quotes from you...

"Another truly staggering trip on the Island Odyssey with Bluewater Adventures. Incredible crew, fantastic guests, unbelievable weather and oh, the wildlife."

*Rob Lott – Whale & Dolphin Conservation Society, UK*

"Every trip ashore was memorable in different ways but all had a spiritual power that will endure. I am now a proud tree hugger!"

*JJ – Calgary, AB*

"The crew was fantastic. From the moment we stepped aboard the crew did all they could to ensure that every wish the passengers had was met. The breadth and depth of knowledge and willingness to share information and stories was one of the most wonderful aspects of the journey." AB – British Columbia

"Loved the solitude of an individual kayak in a secluded cove."

*J&JC – Washington, USA*



H Kang

## Our Fare Afloat

We are very proud of the quality of food served on all our trips. Our chefs all share a passion for what would best be called a "fusion" menu – a brilliant variety of flavourful, healthy meals. All fish is caught locally from sustainable seafood populations. We work with suppliers in each community to ensure money is going into the local economy. Each chef has their own unique style. Fresh, tasty and colourful! It is always a pleasure, but never a surprise to read guest comments on Bluewater chefs!

"I don't have sufficient adjectives to describe the miracles performed in the galley."

*JD – UK*

"Fantastic, nourishing, healthy & indulgent – perfect mix."

*BD – Seattle, WA*

"Beyond superb and really appreciated attention to gluten free with delicious options."

*LJ – Vancouver, BC*

The giant tail flukes of a humpback whale as the animal dives right behind one of our zodiacs



R Burke



R Burke

Humpback whales explode out of the sea during coordinated bubble-net feeding on small fish

## The Changing Environment

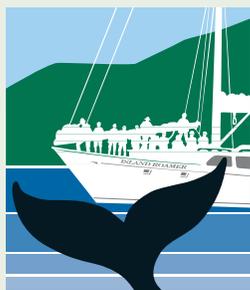
The US Forest Service just reported that Alaska's glaciers are losing 75 billion tons of ice each year. Last winter, hundreds of dead juvenile Cassin's auklets washed up on the shores from California to the Alaskan border. Then a record number of California sea lion pups stranded, suffering from starvation. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration states that a "warm blob" in the North Pacific – 3 degrees warmer than regular ocean temperatures – is affecting the 'productivity' of the ocean. Warmer surface temperatures are negatively affecting the tiny zooplankton – the primary food source for marine birds, fish and baleen whales. The phytoplankton is also responsible for the breakdown of carbon dioxide and the majority of oxygen production in our atmosphere. An increase in North Pacific Ocean temperature has been recorded about every decade, but this year's unexpected mortality event is the worst one to date. California is now in year 4 of a drought. British Columbia and Southeast Alaska experienced a drought this summer – great to have all the sunshine, but lucky that rain returned for the fall salmon migration. The Climate Change Conference for the world's leaders starts in Paris on November 30.



Rick Hulbert

Beautifully carved and painted Haida canoe paddles at the Haida Heritage Centre in Skidegate

## Join us – We're Social



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## Save Trees, Receive the Newsletter by Email

As part of our commitment to the environment, we are now using email as much as possible. If you would prefer to receive "Waterways" by email please let us know

