

# Canada: The West

Naturetrek Tour Report

15 - 28 September 2017



Black Bear by Alan Miller



Humpback Whale by Val Golding



Orca by Alan Miller



Sea Otter by Alan Miller

Report compiled by Alan Miller  
Images courtesy of Val Golding & Alan Miller



Naturetrek

Mingledown Barn

Wolf's Lane

Chawton

Alton

Hampshire

GU34 3HJ

UK

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

E: [info@naturetrek.co.uk](mailto:info@naturetrek.co.uk)

W: [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk)

Tour participants: Alan Miller & Ken Walker (leaders) with ten Naturetrek clients

## Summary

The 2017 Naturetrek 'Canada – The West' tour group spent two weeks in stunning scenery visiting the Vancouver area and Vancouver Island, where we enjoyed fantastic vistas and wonderful wildlife. There were many highlights including close encounters with Black and Grizzly (Brown) Bears, cute Sea Otters, Humpback Whales and Orcas. Not only was the wildlife first class but we stayed in some lovely places, enjoyed delicious food and encountered excellent hospitality. The weather was generally kind to us but we did have to change plans at Ucluelet, due to rough seas. We also had a period of rain at Great Bear Lodge but, on the positive side, we did experience the real rain forest! This tour is designed to offer a whole range of wildlife experiences and we maximised the opportunities and shared wonderful experiences whilst having a lot of fun, with everyone taking home a wealth of happy memories.

## Day 1

Friday 15th September

Fly London Heathrow to Vancouver then drive to Tsawwassen

Six group members started the tour with Alan at Terminal 3, London Heathrow Airport for a British Airways flight to Vancouver on Canada's west coast. Our Airbus A380 took off at 5.50pm for the journey of 4,838 miles across eight time zones, British Columbian time being GMT -8 hours. Our route took us north to Scotland then west over Iceland and Greenland to Canada. We landed at Vancouver shortly before 7pm local time, but our body clocks thought it was around three in the morning!

Once we had cleared immigration and collected our baggage, we were greeted by Ken, our local guide, together with Imogen, Elaine and Judy M. After sorting out vehicles, we headed for Tsawwassen. Night had fallen so we watched the twinkling lights of Vancouver as we drove away from the airport.

We were soon at Tsawwassen and checked in at The Coast Tsawwassen Inn where we met the last member of the group, Jean, who was already at the inn, having arrived the day before. Due to the hour and the journey, most chose to retire and inspect their beds, although a few went to the adjacent diner for supper. Before retiring, arrangements were made for pre-breakfast birding and for the group to meet properly over breakfast the following morning.

## Day 2

Saturday 16th September

Ferry crossing to Vancouver Island then drive to Ucluelet on the west coast.

Most of us met at 6.45am and we drove to Boundary Bay for our first North American birding session. En route we spotted our first bird of the tour – a Common Starling. After parking in the car park, we next spotted our first mammal of the tour - a Rabbit. We put these reminders of home behind us and set off towards the seashore. It was a lovely morning with the sun rising in a clear sky. The tide was out exposing lots of mudflats. We heard, then found, a large group of Canada Geese. Further out we could see a number of Great Blue Herons, and further still, there were dots on the water, too far away to identify with the light behind them. We concentrated on the nearby bushes, and sightings included some lovely House Finches, numerous American Robins, a very obliging Downy Woodpecker, Yellow Warbler and Yellow-rumped 'Myrtle' Warbler. We came to

a wet area on the shore and noticed a few waders. We were able to compare the Semipalmated Plover, with its single black band, with the larger Killdeer, with its double black band. We then found a Lesser Yellowlegs and were talking through the identification features when a Greater Yellowlegs walked past it, which allowed us an excellent opportunity to compare both together. Also present was a Grey (Black-bellied) Plover and a few Western Sandpipers. The main gull on show was Glaucous-winged Gull, and we also saw American Herring Gull. Pleased with our introduction to Vancouver's birdlife, we returned to the inn for breakfast.

Over breakfast in a private room, Alan and Ken talked over plans for the days ahead. Also, everyone introduced themselves and gave their hopes and wishes for the tour. Breakfast over, we then checked out, loaded the vehicles and headed for the ferry terminal. Once we had booked in and the vehicles were in-line at the ferry waiting area, some went for a look over the bay, spotting rafts of Common Loons (Great Northern Divers) and Surf Scoters. Soon the call came to return to our vehicles and we then boarded the Queen of Alberni Ferry.

After parking we went up to the open deck. Checking around the ferry, we spotted Black Turnstone and Black Oystercatcher, together with many Pelagic Cormorants and a single Double-crested Cormorant, all on the quayside and rocks. We left our berth at 10.15am for the two-hour sailing across the Strait of Georgia to Nanaimo. The sea was calm and visibility was good. Most stayed on the Observation Deck for the crossing and notable sightings were White-winged Scoter, Western Gull, a flock of Bonaparte's Gulls and a Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua). Approaching Vancouver Island, there were a number of Harbour Seals around Entrance Island.

Soon we were disembarking and heading away from Nanaimo, north and then west towards the Pacific Rim National Park. During the journey we spotted numerous Turkey Vultures and a group of 11 Northern Ravens. We stopped for lunch at Little Qualicum Falls Park, and in trees next to the car park found a flock of Chestnut-backed Chickadees. Whilst Ken prepared our picnic, Alan took the group on a lovely circular walk crossing both the Upper and Lower Falls. An American Dipper was spotted on the river by a couple of people. Back at the picnic site, we were distracted from the food when a Red-breasted Sapsucker was found, which showed well. We then enjoyed our first tour picnic lunch.

Once back on the road we made good progress. As we drove through Port Alberni a Peregrine was seen chasing a flock of Feral Pigeons, whilst a Collared Dove was perched on a telegraph post. At 4pm we stopped at Taylor River Rest Area. As we arrived a Red Squirrel ran into the road. Again, a few spotted an American Dipper and we saw Cabbage White butterfly and a Meadowhawk species of dragonfly. Continuing on, we stopped at Wally Creek to stretch our legs and a Canada Darner dragonfly was seen.

We arrived at Ucluelet at 5.30pm and checked into our home for the next three nights at the Bayshore Waterfront Inn. We met at 6.45pm and walked into the village for dinner at Matteson House Restaurant. As we walked back to the inn, plans for the next day were outlined before we adjourned after a wonderful first full day in Canada's magnificent scenery.

## Day 3

## Sunday 17th September

### Tofino and the Pacific Rim National Park (South Beach & Interpretative Centre)

Today was not the day we had planned. It started well enough when Imogen and Elaine joined Alan at 7.15am for a pre-breakfast walk and they had good views of Bald Eagles, one eating a salmon for its breakfast, Belted

Kingfisher, California Gull, Harbour Seal and a rare sighting for the island of a Black-billed Magpie. After returning to the inn to await the rest of the group, the grey overcast sky changed to light rain. We all went to The Blue Room for breakfast during which the rain increased into a downpour.

We had a whale-watching trip booked for 10.30am so, after breakfast, we went to Jamie's Tours office to be told that due to the wind and swell, the trip had been cancelled. After discussions, we transferred the booking to a 12.30pm trip from Tofino. Next, we called at the supermarket and then drove to Tofino. Once at Jamie's Whaling Station in Tofino we were told that they had just cancelled the 12.30pm trip as the latest weather forecast was now for continued wind and swell. The next available trip was the next day either from Ucluelet or Tofino. As we had a late afternoon bear-watching tour booked from Tofino, we chose that location. Thwarted by the weather, we headed to the park in Tofino where we commandeered the picnic tables in the bandstand for our lunchtime picnic. Ironically, as we had our lunch the rain stopped and the sky brightened to eventual sunshine. We checked with Jamie's in case the improving weather had changed things, but all trips were still cancelled.

We had a little over an hour at leisure and most migrated to the small park overlooking the harbour. The park was surrounded on three sides by vegetation including lots of blackberry bushes and we enjoyed good views of House Finch, White-crowned Sparrow, Golden-crowned Sparrow and Song Sparrow. Back at the bandstand, two Bald Eagles and two Northern Ravens circled overhead for a while.

At 1.30pm we set off southwards, back towards Ucluelet. As we drove, people in one of the vehicles were lucky to spot a Black Bear as it crossed the road and disappeared into the roadside vegetation. We stopped at South Beach and the Interpretive Centre and were amazed at the number of cars and people. We learned that a First Nations cultural event was taking place. We saw that whole salmon were being cooked over open wood fires on the beach. We were offered a taste, which was delicious.

With a clear sunny sky, we set off on the South Beach Trail. Some completed the whole trail, others more and others less, but it was very pleasant after the morning rain. On rocks offshore and in the sea we spotted Harlequin Duck, Brandt's Cormorant and White-winged Scoter. A Glaucous Gull passed by. On the path a Banana Slug together with numerous Black Bear scats were found. There were also a number of Canada Darner dragonflies. A little first aid was also necessary after Denis took a tumble.

Eventually we were back in the vehicles and returned to the inn at 5.30pm. After time to freshen up we met again at 6.45pm and drove to Offshore, a specialist seafood restaurant, for our evening meal.

## Day 4

## Monday 18th September

### Ucluelet (Amphitrite Point walk) & Tofino (Whale-watching & Bear-watching tours)

On today's pre-breakfast walk the highlights were close views of a second-year Bald Eagle on the ground and four California Sea Lions in the harbour. Everyone then met at 8.15am and we drove to Fetch Restaurant at Black Rock Resort for an enjoyable breakfast in lovely surroundings, with a super view out to sea. After breakfast we did our first checklist session before moving to Amphitrite Point where we walked part of the Lighthouse Loop. Interesting sightings included close views of Fox Sparrow singing in a bush, and out to sea we saw Common Loon, Pacific Loon and Brandt's Cormorant.

At 11am we departed for Tofino. Although overcast it was dry and we had high hopes for our re-arranged whale-watching trip. Once at Jamie's Whaling Station we checked in and were relieved that the tour was going ahead. At 12.45pm we boarded the Chinook Princess, skippered by Captain Scott. After a safety briefing we were on our way. Our route took us along Calmus Passage and into Brabant Channel. To our delight, we found many Sea Otters which were a joy to watch. Unfortunately, the rain began to fall. Between Whale Island and Lawrence Island we came across three Gray Whales. This species feeds along the sandy sea bottom and prefers shallow waters. Here the sea was about eight metres deep and we spent about half an hour watching them blow several times before going down to feed, and at least twice we saw tail flukes. Although the sighting was pleasing, it was hampered by the heavy rain keeping most people restricted under shelter rather than on the open decks.

On the journey to and from the whales we had a number of good bird sightings, but due to being spread around the moving boat, not everyone saw everything. Sightings included Red-necked Grebe, Rhinoceros Auklet, Ancient Murrelet and Heermann's Gull. We returned to the Whaling Station at 3.30pm, warmed up with a hot drink and prepared for our bear-watching trip. Jean decided to stay ashore and Elaine transferred to the public tour in a covered boat. The remainder of us, to much amusement, were kitted out with red full body floatation and waterproof suits before going to the jetty to meet Mark who was taking us on a Black Bear Zodiac tour. At 4.30pm we boarded the zodiac and cast off. Once out of the harbour area, we held on and had fun racing along Browning Passage to get to the inlets around Fortune Channel and Tofino Inlet to search for Black Bear.

It wasn't long before our first Black Bear was spotted. We watched it on the shore line turning over rocks to look for crabs and other food. During the course of the next couple of hours we saw five Black Bears. We also saw a couple of Harbour Porpoises, six Harbour Seals hauled out on a rock, and a Red-throated Loon. We had enjoyed a great trip and thanked Mark for his efforts.

We then drove back to Ucluelet and straight to Howlers Restaurant where we enjoyed a late dinner.

## Day 5

Tuesday 19th September

### Ucluelet to Zeballos

Today we had a reasonable distance to cover to get to our next adventure stop, so the vehicles were loaded with our baggage at 6.45am before we went to The Gray Whale for breakfast. We left Ucluelet at 8am, initially retracing our route across the island. We had a comfort stop at Taylor River Rest Area and then continued to Port Alberni, where we spotted over 30 Common Mergansers (Goosanders) on the river. Next stop was Cathedral Grove, where we walked the trail through some ancient trees, including an 800-year-old Douglas-fir standing 76 metres tall and with a girth of nine metres. During the walk we heard Pacific Wren and saw a Red Squirrel.

Moving on, we drove to Oyster Bay Shoreline Park on the east coast for our picnic lunch. Whilst Ken prepared lunch, Alan went with the group for a walk and we noted Northern Flicker and Savannah Sparrow in the scrub, Bald Eagle and Grey Plover on the shore, and Horned Grebe, Common Loon and Surf Scoter on the sea. We then returned to the picnic tables to enjoy a delicious picnic.

After lunch we still had a distance to travel so we pressed on, making a stop at Sayward Junction before turning onto an unpaved road, lasting 42 kilometres, into Zeballos. Along this road we stopped at two lakes and on the

first we added Common Goldeneye to our trip list, while on the second we found two American Dippers, to the delight of Jane and Colin. During the journey many Turkey Vultures had been spotted and the final tally was 45 birds. Also of note was a Red-tailed Hawk sat on a roadside pylon. We arrived at the Cedars Inn, Zeballos shortly after 6pm and were greeted by Christina. We settled in to our rooms and met later for dinner, with a warning of not to go out alone as Black Bears had been seen in the village today!

## Day 6

## Wednesday 20th September

### Zeballos (Sea Otter boat trip and wildlife drive)

It dawned clear and still so everything looked good for our Sea Otter trip. A check of the entrance porch, where the light had been on overnight, revealed a couple of moths: a Large Yellow Underwing and an unidentified micro. We had breakfast at 8am and then some drove and others walked to the harbour. Colin came across a Cedar Waxwing feeding young, and numerous Starlings were seen on the walk down. At 9.30am we met Dan and joined him on his 28-foot open Skiff, the Nootka Express, for what was to be a superb trip on the waters around the Zeballos and Esperanza Inlets.

After leaving Zeballos harbour, we saw Harbour Seals and Red-breasted Mergansers before a Black Bear was spotted on the shore. We drifted towards the shore and watched it for some time before it wandered into the vegetation and out of sight. Continuing, we saw the first of many Bald Eagles and Belted Kingfisher. We arrived at a fish farm and, as we cruised around it, we spotted lots of Surf Scoters, Pelagic Cormorant, Black Turnstone and Great Blue Heron. Further on, we saw a few Sea Otters, four California Sea Lions and two Harbour Porpoises.

Eventually we came to an area with lots of kelp, close to the open ocean and we found a large raft of over 50 Sea Otters. We stayed with these endearing mammals for some time as they were not too bothered by our presence. We got very close to the raft which allowed for some excellent photographic opportunities.

It was now nearing 12.30pm so we landed on Nootka Island for a break to stretch our legs. There were a few gulls at one end including California Gull and Ring-billed Gull, together with numerous Savannah Sparrows.

As we headed back towards Zeballos the bird sightings reduced which gave us time to enjoy the magnificent scenery. We did spot the odd Marbled Murrelet on the water but they were not obliging and kept diving, but on the rocks we found a few large flocks of Surfbirds, numbering over 100 each, which allowed us to approach very close. One group also contained about 50 Black Turnstones.

Nearing our destination, a call of "whale ahead" caused everyone to get excited. There was no 'blow' but we saw a Humpback Whale arch its back and then dive, showing a tail fluke. We waited and after five minutes it appeared again briefly before diving. A last sight was a 'blow' in the distance. Happy with what we had seen, we continued into Zeballos Harbour at 2.30pm after a wonderful five-hour trip in perfect conditions. We thanked Dan very much for the trip before returning to the inn for a very late lunch!

At 4pm most of the group went on a wildlife drive around the estuary, finishing at Resolution Bay. A highlight was walking along the rocky shore and pretending to be bears turning over the rocks. We were amazed at the hit rate for finding a crab under a rock, which was almost 100% under the larger rocks. We also watched two large

Sea Blubber jellyfish in the water from the pier. Eventually it was time to return to the inn which we reached at 6.30pm. Meanwhile Jane and Colin had been for a walk around the village and had come across three Black Bears; a mother with two cubs.

We met again at 7.30pm for dinner, reliving our Sea Otter experience which had been enjoyed by all. Before eating, plans for the next day were outlined and afterwards there was the opportunity to update the tour checklist before retiring to bed.

## Day 7

Thursday 21st September

### Zeballos to Port McNeill. Whale-watching trip.

We had breakfast at 6.30am and then said goodbye to Christina and the Cedars Inn before setting off for Port McNeill. We stopped en route for a look at Nimpkish Lake which was very atmospheric in the morning sun. Then there was a comfort stop before reporting to Mackay's tour office. Once checked in, we boarded the Naiad Explorer for a whale-watching trip on the north-west side of Vancouver Island. Captain Bill from Mackay's Whale Watching Tours welcomed us aboard, and at 10am we departed Port McNeill Harbour and headed into Broughton Strait. The sea was flat calm, there was no wind and the sun was shining – perfect!

As we powered along the Strait we passed a few birds: mainly gulls and Common Murre (Guillemot), but a couple of Marbled Murrelets, Cassin's Auklets and White-winged Scoters were good spots. As with this type of public cruise and people finding their 'spot' around the boat, not everyone saw everything, but we all saw the main shows well. First, we visited a haul-out of Steller's Sea Lions on a small bare island, a matter of yards from the coastline. Over 100 were on the rock and a number were in the surrounding water. In the distance we could see a Humpback Whale repetitively tail slapping, so we headed in that direction. It stopped as we neared but we were side-tracked from looking for it when we realised there were Pacific White-sided Dolphins all around us. We could see them breaking the surface and some came to our vessel to ride the bow-wave which was fun to watch. Eventually they charged away making an interesting spectacle. Very happy with our dolphin sighting, we headed a short way to where another boat and some canoeists were watching a pod of Orca (Killer Whales). In total there were 14 mammals and they were very relaxed and lazily moving slowly along. We stayed with this pod for some time and even took the opportunity to have our lunch of fish chowder whilst watching them.

Next, we crossed Broughton Strait to an area alive with birds. We saw gulls circling which indicated a shoal of fish and, to our delight, we watched as Humpback Whales kept surfacing with mouths open to catch their dinner. This spectacle and the experience of being surrounded by whales blowing and surfacing went on for some time. We saw at least 10 whales in action, and it was a magical encounter.

The birds were not to be outdone today and some good sightings were of Ancient Murrelet, Parasitic Jaeger, Fork-tailed Storm Petrel and Red-necked Phalarope. Eventually we had to drag ourselves away from this area of wonderful experiences and head back to Port McNeill, berthing at 2.45pm.

After thanking Captain Bill and the crew for a superb trip, we walked to Mugz café for a coffee, over which we reminisced and looked at some of the photographs taken by group members. We then returned to the vehicles and, after stopping to view what is described as The World's Largest Burl (a massive growth on a tree stump), we headed to our accommodation at Black Bear Resort where we checked in.

We met again at 6.30pm and drove to Cluxewe Resort where we had a short walk before dinner. It was a beautifully calm evening and we walked next to the shore through the campsite. We watched Harlequin Duck, Red-necked Grebe and Horned Grebe on the sea, Black Turnstone on the rocky shore and four Surfbirds flew by. Once at the restaurant, a Bald Eagle flew by and a Red Squirrel was spied on a log near the door. It was a pleasant atmosphere inside the restaurant and we all enjoyed our dinner.

## Day 8

Friday 22nd September

### Telegraph Cove; Quatse River Hatchery; flight to Great Bear Lodge

Today we had a leisurely start to allow everyone time to repack luggage to take on the small aircraft for our flight to Great Bear Lodge later in the day, on which we were only allowed 13kg per person. After breakfast we loaded the vehicles and departed at 9am.

After calling at the supermarket, we drove a short way south and turned off towards Telegraph Cove. One vehicle stopped at a viewpoint to see the massive logging operation in Beaver Cove before we all arrived at Telegraph Cove. We had an hour to soak up the atmosphere of this preserved settlement around a small harbour, with many buildings being on stilts over the water. The sea was at low tide and as we started our visit, a movement was seen on the wooden jetty in the harbour. To our delight we watched four River Otters playing on the boardwalk and occasionally entering the water and climbing out again. Eventually they moved off, so we walked around the boardwalk to the museum where some had a look at the whale exhibits. The end of the boardwalk looked out across Johnstone Strait and, whilst scanning, we watched a line of Pacific White-sided Dolphins heading south.

Leaving Telegraph Cove, the second vehicle stopped at the logging viewpoint before we drove to Quatse Salmon Hatchery at Port Hardy. We enjoyed a picnic beside the river and had time for a wander, during which Colin found a Brown Creeper. We then moved to the Quatse Salmon Stewardship Centre where the manager, Jeannine, showed us around and explained about the process of rearing salmon to provide stock for three local rivers.

At 2pm we drove to Port Hardy Seaplane Base where we said goodbye to Ken. After completing personal paperwork and stowing excess baggage, we were transported to Port Hardy airport from where we flew in two 'Flying Goose' seaplanes (capable of take-off and landing on both land and water) to Great Bear Lodge to start the next part of our adventure, much anticipated by many of the group. With good visibility, the two planes took us on the direct route, and shortly after 3.30pm we were all at the floating lodge at Nalos Landing, Smith Inlet, being given a warm welcome by owners Tom and Marg and the staff. With rooms allocated, we were soon having refreshments whilst Taylor briefed us on lodge etiquette and safety. The last job was to issue everyone with an all-in-one quilted suit and full waterproofs for use during the stay.

Around 4.30pm we boarded the lodge buses (old school buses) and set off along the old logging track running alongside the Nekite River. As we approached the covered blind (hide), three bears were seen on the shingle bank opposite the hide. We quickly and quietly exited the buses and were soon safely seated in the blind overlooking the river and shingle. Three Grizzly (Brown) Bears, a mother and two young cubs, were opposite and, as we watched, the mother was busy moving stones and scraping the ground beneath looking for salmon eggs. Whilst she was doing this the cubs were playing.

We watched, entranced, at the spectacle many of us had dreamed about and hoped for, which was now a reality in front of our eyes. Things got better as a big bear with a honey-coloured face appeared upstream, and then another big bear came into view downstream. These bears went out of view and then two young bears, a male and a female, independently appeared. One of them passed in front of the hide only feet away from us before crossing the river. We wondered if there might be a confrontation but the mother looked up at these two bears but appeared unconcerned. We later learned that they were believed to be offspring from the mother two seasons ago so we were looking at a related group of five bears!

We spent two-and-a-half hours in the hide and during the whole time, bears were in view – a brilliant start to our time at Great Bear Lodge. Light was fading as we re-boarded the buses, but we were held up as a bear was crossing the track behind us! For our first activity we had seen eight different Brown Bears – wonderful.

As we set off back to the lodge full of chatter (we had to sit quietly in the hide), people in the lead bus had a couple more experiences when firstly two Varied Thrushes and a Hermit Thrush took it in turns to fly in front in the vehicle's light and land on the track, being pushed along for several hundred metres. Then, nearing the lodge, we spotted an American Marten on the track which also ran in front of us for some time and at one point turned round to look at us giving an excellent view in the headlights.

Back at the lodge it was a quick hand wash and then to dinner where we enjoyed a meal of delicious salmon.

## Day 9

Saturday 23rd September

### Great Bear Lodge

After a clear starry night, the day dawned still with a little mist over the water, making it very atmospheric. A few wandered around the decking before breakfast, where Song Sparrow was seen around the flower tubs, six Harbour Seals in the water, and Pauline spotted three River Otters on a log. Over breakfast some spotted another River Otter.

At 8am we set off in the buses and returned to the same blind we had visited the night before. Just before reaching the blind we spotted two Brown Bears on the opposite side of the Nekite River so we stopped to watch them. There were also another two bears much further upstream so we went to the blind, made ourselves comfortable, and watched and waited.

Some of us got a surprise when an American Marten walked past the front of the hide, at one point pausing to look up at us. Then we were treated to the two bears that we had seen upstream walking down on our side and getting to a point immediately in front of us before they crossed the river to the opposite shingle bank. This pair moved a little downstream before passing back in front of us, giving prolonged views. Whilst they were downstream, a bear showing worn fur on her upper back came into view on the shingle.

Birds were very active this morning, and we saw at least six immature Bald Eagles, one flying low over the shingle causing all the gulls to take flight. A Belted Kingfisher was active around us, a few Common Mergansers flew by, and a few saw a Sharp-shinned Hawk which landed near the top of a tree opposite before flying off.

After another fabulous session, we returned to the lodge for a delicious lunch before our afternoon 'mystery activity'; a walk through the rain forest. Initially we walked along the roadway with regular stops where lodge guides Taylor and Blakeley explained the forest, its trees and the ecology of the area. We also found some Banana Slugs and learned about their interesting lifestyle and the effects of the slime. We then turned off along a bear trail where we were shown a bear rubbing post, and the usefulness of decomposing salmon and other vegetation was explained. We then retraced our steps back to the road where the lodge buses were waiting to take us back. Once back at the lodge, we had the chance for a short relax and afternoon tea before our next adventure.

At 4.30pm we set off along the old logging road again, but this time to the open blind; a platform next to the river without sides or roof. As we approached it we saw three Brown Bears, a mother and two cubs, on the road. As we reached the platform, a bear was on the shingle nearly opposite. We settled ourselves down and for the next two-and-a-half hours there was a bear in front of us. For the first two it was the bear which was there on our arrival. We watched it excavate the shingle bed in a number of areas and eat the hidden salmon eggs it had unearthed. We saw it fishing and we saw it pick up a Chum salmon and heartily consume it. Another bear came into view near the platform. As it crossed to the shingle, the first bear showed some signs of agitation and slunk away. The second, bigger, bear then moved about in front of us fishing and digging for salmon eggs.

In addition to the bears, we saw both immature and adult Bald Eagles flying downstream, seven Common Mergansers swam by, in the bushes were four Yellow-rumped 'Myrtle' Warblers, and amongst the gulls were a few Mew Gulls which were new for the trip. As we drove back to the lodge we all agreed it had been a most interesting and enjoyable session.

Once back at the lodge we enjoyed a delicious dinner of braised beef followed by pecan pie before retiring for the night with high hopes for the next day.

## Day 10

Sunday 24th September

### Great Bear Lodge

Today dawned still with a little mist and cloud. Around the lodge ten Harbour Seals and two Song Sparrows were seen before we had a typical Canadian breakfast of pancakes with maple syrup and crispy bacon.

Our first activity was to revisit the covered blind for bear watching, so at 8am we boarded the lodge buses for the journey to the blind. As we approached it, two Brown Bears were spotted, one in the middle of the river with just his head and front legs showing whilst it munched on a salmon. We settled into our seats but as no bears were on display, some checked the gulls on the shingle bank and five species were noted: Ring-billed, Mew, California, American Herring and Glaucous-winged Gulls. Also, two adult Bald Eagles were in the trees opposite our position.

We became aware of a bear upstream on our side making its way slowly towards us. Eventually it reached the blind and waded into the river, took a salmon and returned to a position immediately in front of one end of the blind where it ate the salmon. We had to keep still and silent so as not to flush it and people at one end had amazing views whilst others were not so lucky. As it was finishing, a fisheries vehicle stopped on the track which caused the bear to freeze for a moment and then retreat away from the sound of the engine and it moved away

out of sight. Two other bears were sighted during the session but both were some distance away downstream. During the morning it began to drizzle which gave a real impression of the rainforest in action.

On the way back to the lodge we stopped twice to discuss bear behaviour. At the first stop we were shown a stomp trail (for foot scenting), a rub tree (for back scenting) and a bear highway (a cut to the next river system). At the second stop we were shown a wallow used by bears in the spring to mud bathe and leave scent. We then returned to the lodge for lunch.

Our next activity was a boat outing around the inlet. Wearing full waterproofs due to the drizzle, at 1pm we assembled for a briefing and then boarded the lodge boats, four of us in one and three in another (some opted out). Both crews saw slightly different things but the bear experience was good for everyone. First, we moved around the inlet and into the large area of sedges. Some took time to look at the wonderful mosses and lichens growing on the trees and to discuss the usefulness of the sedges for the bears. We then went upstream a short way along the Nekite River. A Black Bear was seen at one side and then three Brown Bears at the other. Initially it was good to compare both species, and then it was fun to watch the Brown Bears. It was a mother and two young cubs, possibly the ones we had seen on our first outing. The mother was making her way upstream near the tree-lined shore in about three feet of water. The cubs were trying to keep up with her by swimming and clambering over fallen tree trunks. It was delightful to watch. Eventually we left them alone and moved back downstream.

We met a boat containing two men who were doing a dual role of Fisheries Department Salmon monitoring and Bear research. We talked for a while before moving back through the sedge beds and to the lodge. During our outing we spotted many birds including four Bald Eagles, two Sharp-shinned Hawks, 101 Canada Geese, seven Common Mergansers, an American Dipper and a Red-necked Grebe. We also added to our sightings list two Green-winged Teal and three American Wigeon. We returned wet but happy, and ready for a warm drink!

Replenished with afternoon snacks, we set off at 4.30pm for the viewing blind. Although it rained throughout this session, it didn't spoil our enjoyment. The bears feasted on salmon and we enjoyed our visual feast. It started with the first bus occupants seeing two Black Bears, a mother and cub, on the roadway. Once settled at the hide, a Brown Bear with a lovely honey-coloured face appeared just downstream, and then another bear appeared just upstream. The latter was joined by a second bear and we think it was a pair of three- to four-year-old siblings. We watched the brother and sister for some time and it was interesting to watch the interaction between the pair, with the brother more dominant. Eventually all three bears were lost from view, but then a bear walked upstream under the front of the blind only feet away from us. Before we had finished smiling, a second did exactly the same! A few moments later one of them swam across the river to the shingle. By this time the river level had risen considerably with the rain and some of the shingle was submerged.

Whilst all this activity was going on, the gulls and crows were feeding on the fish remains left by the bears. Then an immature Bald Eagle landed for its supper. Whilst the gulls and crows had only managed small morsels at a time, the eagle ripped great chunks of fish off the carcass to consume.

After a wonderful evening's viewing we set off back, only to be halted by a Brown Bear on the roadway, so we had to stop and give way. Our last sighting was a Varied Thrush flying in the lights of the vehicle. Eventually we arrived back at the lodge for dinner.

Over dinner we recounted our favourite moments of a day which had been full of memorable sightings and experiences. After dinner we were shown a number of video clips taken from remote cameras set up around the lodge.

## Day 11

Monday 25th September

### Great Bear Lodge, return flight to Port Hardy and drive to Port McNeill

Today was our last day at Great Bear Lodge. After heavy overnight rain, the day dawned cloudy with a little drizzle. Harbour Seals and a Red-necked Grebe were spotted before breakfast. After breakfast we again boarded the lodge buses and made our way to the covered blind. Along the road we noticed a number of waterfalls which had not been there on our previous drives. Also, people on one bus had fun catching a large moth which was active in the vehicle. Once at the blind we noticed that the water had risen, covering more of the shingle opposite, and was flowing much faster. Three Brown Bears, a mother with two yearling cubs, were around the shingle and in the water. Whilst the mother could stand in the water, the two cubs had to paddle hard to stop being swept away downstream with the current. It was fun to watch the cubs as they moved around mum and went to the bank and tried to find their way through the riverside vegetation as mum fished in the river. They all came together a few times to eat salmon.

Birds were active in the faster current, especially the Common Mergansers and American Dippers. A Sharp-shinned Hawk was harassed by the Northwestern Crows and several juvenile Bald Eagles sat in the surrounding trees. There were lots of gulls, so it was a good use of time to check them out. They were mainly American Herring Gulls but one flew in with more white than black in the upper wing tips and almost white lower wing tips. It showed a heavy yellow bill with an orange gonydeal spot and strong pink legs. This was our first Thayer's Gull – although these have now been 'lumped' with Iceland Gulls (*Larus glaucooides*) as a sub-species

At one point a bear appeared upstream and, being very aware of the bear family on the shingle, floated quietly past the family and our hide with only the top of its head showing. It reappeared again once the family had moved on, closely followed by a much larger bear which twice effortlessly caught salmon in front of us and enjoyed a substantial meal. No sooner was each carcass left when a group of noisy gulls moved in for the fresh remains. Then two immature Bald Eagles landed, causing the gulls to fly off and first one and then the other eagle enjoyed the salmon remains. They were still feasting when time was called and we returned to the lodge after a very enjoyable bear-watching session.

Over the lunch break we packed our bags before our last mystery activity; a boat trip to Walkum Bay and Creek. This time we were spread across four boats. The rain had stopped and the inlet was calm and mirror-like with good visibility good. Some saw a Black Bear; others noted Bonaparte's Gull, Chestnut-backed Chickadee and a confiding American Dipper. We also looked into Pirates Cove which was atmospheric with the waterfall in full flow.

Unfortunately, our time at Great Bear Lodge was coming to an end so we returned to the lodge for coffees and cookies and waited for the seaplanes. At 3.30pm the first aircraft arrived, soon followed by the second, so we said our thanks and goodbyes to Marg and the staff before we were loaded onto the seaplanes for the return flight to Port Hardy airport. We had good flights, with some in one aircraft seeing a whale blow whilst crossing

the Johnstone Strait. We enjoyed the views but there was a little sadness at leaving such a unique and wonderful place.

Both planes landed in convoy about 4.15pm and we were transported back to the float-plane office to collect our stowed excess bags, and to be reunited with Ken after his break. We were also joined by Chris, an extra local guide who was helping Ken for the last two days of the tour. We drove back to Port McNeill and the Black Bear Resort and were soon checked in for the night. We met again at 6.55pm and walked across the road to the Northern Lights restaurant for our evening meal.

## Day 12

Tuesday 26th September

### Port McNeill to Tsawwassen via Vancouver ferry

The day dawned clear and still and, although mainly a travelling day, our list of sightings increased dramatically. We had breakfast at the Resort, packed the vehicles and were on our way by 8am. The roads were quiet and we made good progress with the only sightings of note being two Red Squirrels that ran across the road in front of us. At 10am we stopped for a coffee and leg stretch at Tammy's Café. On a nearby, small lake lots of dragonflies were active and a Common Merganser was spotted.

We reached our lunch stop at Comox Valley Visitor Centre shortly before midday and enjoyed our picnic on the adjacent tables. Once refreshed we continued down the scenic coastal road and stopped at Englishman's River estuary. On the sea were Common Loons, Pacific Loons, Red-breasted Mergansers and Harlequin Ducks, and on the estuary, we spotted Blue-winged Teal, Mallard, Canada Goose, Killdeer and two Least Sandpipers which took some time to identify due to the light. Also, a Merlin flew overhead, carrying prey in its talons.

Our next stop was Buttertubs Marsh on Jingle Pot Road, just north of Naniamo. The sun was shining and the temperature had risen to a pleasant 22°C. We spent a pleasant hour and a half walking along the track around the marsh and adding a host of new trip sightings. First was a large American Bullfrog next to the start of the track. New birds included Wood Duck, Red-winged Blackbird, Anna's Hummingbird, Cooper's Hawk, Pacific-slope Flycatcher and Chipping Sparrow.

We reached Naniamo Ferry Terminal at Duke Point in plenty of time for our 5.45pm ferry. The Queen of Alberni ferry left on time and the crossing was smooth. As we set off, most were assembled at the front of the ferry. About an hour into the crossing, three Humpback Whales were spotted. We saw them 'blow' several times before they dived, one giving a full tail fluke. As the sun went down there was a lovely sunset and as we approached the ferry terminal the lights on the land twinkled.

After landing at Tsawwassen at 7.45pm we drove to The Coast Tsawwassen Inn, our home for the night. Rooms were allocated and we quickly freshened before going next door to Browns Socialhouse for our last group dinner. After the peace and quiet of Vancouver Island the noise and loud music was too much for some, so we relocated to Mario's Restaurant further along the road where we enjoyed our last dinner.

## Day 13

## Wednesday 27th September

Tsawwassen to Vancouver Airport via Reifel Bird Reserve and Iona Beach Regional Park.

With an overnight flight in prospect for most of the group, we had a later breakfast taken in a private room. As this was our last opportunity for a group meeting, it was conducted after breakfast and the tour was debriefed and memories of two weeks spent in Canada were shared. Afterwards we collected our bags, loaded the vehicles and departed.

Next, we drove to Reifel Migratory Bird Sanctuary, arriving just after 10am. We spent a magical few hours around the reserve and were delighted with a host of interesting sightings. As we arrived we saw Anna's Hummingbird on the nectar feeder near the reception building. We did a complete circuit of the reserve and started at the pond behind the visitor centre, where we saw Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Long-billed Dowitcher, Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Mallard. Moving further along the pathway we saw our first Black-capped Chickadees and House Sparrows. Along the path at the eastern edge we were delighted when Black-capped Chickadees took seed from the open hand and even cap peaks. It was fun to watch them collect the seed and eat it in the nearby bushes. We also saw Spotted Towhee, Dark-eyed Junco and Golden-crowned Sparrow. Wood Duck came onto the path with the numerous Mallards, and some spied a Hairy Woodpecker.

At the Observation Tower we saw many noisy Red-winged Blackbirds, some repeating the chickadee trick of taking seed from the open hand. At this point Ken and Chris returned to the vehicles to prepare the picnic, and whilst walking back, they spotted an American Mink. The rest of us continued with Alan on the marsh-view path back to the visitor centre. We spotted a small flock of Pine Siskins, a Northern Harrier hunting over the extensive reed bed, and at one point, landing near a pool, and on a shallow pool edge we saw a Semipalmated and a Least Sandpiper close together which was useful for comparison. Another new sighting was American Coot. Eventually we made our way to the picnic area where Ken and Chris had laid out lunch, which we enjoyed sitting in the sun. After lunch thanks were expressed to Alan and Ken for leading the tour, and then we had a free hour before we had to leave. Some visited the shop and most wandered and enjoyed the sun. Some interesting finds included Pied-billed Grebe, Ring-necked Duck, Downy Woodpecker, Eastern Grey Squirrel and Red-eared Slider (Terrapin).

At 2.30pm we departed from Reifel and drove to Iona Beach Regional Park near the airport. At Iona Beach we had a pleasant time walking around the ponds and looking out to sea. There were lots of birds on view and our last new bird species was Caspian Tern. We also saw a distant Turtle.

Reluctantly, we had to head to Vancouver airport where we said goodbye to Judy M who was staying on in Vancouver for a few days, to Ken who was thanked again for his sterling work in sorting out the logistics which allowed the tour to run smoothly, and to Chris for his help at the end of the tour. For the rest of us it was time to go through the airport procedures and await our flight.

Our overnight BA flight took off on time and once in the air, we settled down for our flight back to London Heathrow Airport.

## Day 14

Thursday 28th September

Arrival at London Heathrow Airport after overnight flight from Vancouver

Flight BA84 touched down at 2.20pm after a good flight. We passed through immigration and collected our baggage, and after goodbyes, another Naturetrek adventure came to an end.

A group is only as good as the people who form it and thanks must go to members for their teamwork which enhanced the overall enjoyment of the trip. Most members were there for the wildlife experience rather than 'listing', so checklists took a back seat to the enjoyment of watching wildlife. We shared an enjoyable time in Canada, seeing many new species and sharing many new experiences in a spectacular environment.

## Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit [www.naturetrek.co.uk](http://www.naturetrek.co.uk) to sign up.

## Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!



Grizzly Bear by Alan Miller



North American River Otters by Alan Miller



Pacific White-sided Dolphin by Alan Miller

## Species Lists

Birds (✓=recorded but not counted; H = heard only)

	Common name	Scientific name	September												
			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
1	Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	100+							20		101		24	✓
2	Wood Duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>												6	10
3	Gadwall	<i>Mareca strepera</i>	1												✓
4	American Wigeon	<i>Mareca americana</i>										3		3	✓
5	Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	✓								✓	✓	✓	12	✓
6	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>												2	✓
7	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>													✓
8	Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>													✓
9	Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas carolinensis</i>										2	1		✓
10	Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	2												3
11	Harlequin Duck	<i>Histrionicus histrionicus</i>		8					12					5	
12	Surf Scoter	<i>Melanitta perspicillata</i>	40		✓	5	50	✓							
13	White-winged Scoter	<i>Melanitta deglandi</i>	1	2					30						
14	Black Scoter	<i>Melanitta americana</i>			500+										
15	Common Goldeneye	<i>Bucephala clangula</i>				2		1							
16	Common Merganser	<i>Mergus merganser</i>				30+				7	11	10	30+	1	
17	Red-breasted Merganser	<i>Mergus serrator</i>					20	3						5	
18	Red-throated Loon	<i>Gavia stellata</i>			1										
19	Pacific Loon	<i>Gavia pacifica</i>			1									2	
20	Common Loon	<i>Gavia immer</i>	20		12	2	7	4						6	
21	Fork-tailed Storm Petrel	<i>Oceanodroma furcata</i>						4							
22	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>													2
23	Red-necked Grebe	<i>Podiceps grisegena</i>			15		1	16		1	1	2			
24	Horned Grebe	<i>Podiceps auritus</i>				20		6							
25	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	9		5	6	4	2	1	1	1	1	5	20	
26	Brandt's Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax penicillatus</i>		6	✓			✓						✓	✓
27	Pelagic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax pelagicus</i>	75	✓	✓		✓	✓						✓	✓
28	Double-crested Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>	100	1	✓		✓							✓	✓
29	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	12		1	45								19	

	Common name	Scientific name	September												
			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	
30	Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>									1	3	1		
31	Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>												1	
32	Northern Harrier	<i>Circus hudsonius</i>													1
33	Bald Eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>		4	3	1	9	3	2	10	11	8			1
34	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>				1	1								
35	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>													4
36	Black Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus bachmani</i>	1	5	2										
37	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	1			2									
38	Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	20												
39	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	10										6	4	
40	Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>													100+
41	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	1												25
42	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	1												4
43	Black Turnstone	<i>Arenaria melanocephala</i>	2	6	6		50	6							
44	Surfbird	<i>Aphriza virgata</i>					300+	4							
45	Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>													1
46	Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>	20		50										
47	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>											2	1	
48	Red-necked Phalarope	<i>Phalaropus lobatus</i>						500+							
49	Bonaparte's Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus philadelphia</i>	30									3			
50	Heermann's Gull	<i>Larus heermanni</i>			1										
51	Mew Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>								4	4	✓			
52	Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>					2				3	✓			
53	California Gull	<i>Larus californicus</i>		1	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓			
54	Glaucous-winged Gull	<i>Larus glaucescens</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
55	Western Gull	<i>Larus occidentalis</i>		2	2	✓									
56	Glaucous Gull	<i>Larus hyperboreus</i>			1										
57	Thayer's Gull	<i>Larus glaucoides thayeri</i>										2			
58	American Herring Gull	<i>Larus smithsonianus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
59	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>													3
60	Parasitic Jaeger	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>	1					1							
61	Common Murre	<i>Uria aalge</i>			6			1000+							

	Common name	Scientific name	September											
			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
62	Marbled Murrelet	<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>					4	✓						
63	Ancient Murrelet	<i>Synthliboramphus antiquus</i>			1			10						
64	Cassin's Auklet	<i>Ptychoramphus aleuticus</i>			2			✓						
65	Rhinoceros Auklet	<i>Cerorhinca monocerata</i>			2			✓						
66	Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓
67	Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1										2	6
68	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>						2						
69	Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>											2	3
70	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>		2	9	1	4	2	1			6	2	
71	Red-breasted Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus ruber</i>	1											
72	Downy Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates pubescens</i>	1											1
73	Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Leuconotopicus villosus</i>												1
74	Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>		1		3				1			1	3
75	Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>											2	1
76	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1			1								1
77	Pacific-slope Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>												1
78	Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	5	3	2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
79	Black-billed Magpie	<i>Pica hudsonia</i>		1										
80	Northwestern Crow	<i>Corvus caurinus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
81	Northern Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	11	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓			3	✓	
82	Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla cedrorum</i>						2						
83	Black-capped Chickadee	<i>Poecile atricapillus</i>												30+
84	Chestnut-backed Chickadee	<i>Poecile rufescens</i>	4									4		
85	Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>											2	
86	Pacific Wren	<i>Troglodytes pacificus</i>				H								1
87	Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>								1				1
88	Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	6	6		✓	✓		✓				✓	✓
89	Varied Thrush	<i>Ixoreus naevius</i>								2		1		
90	Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>								1				
91	American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	✓		1	4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
92	American Dipper	<i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>	2			2						1	3	
93	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>												✓

	Common name	Scientific name	September											
			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
94	House Finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	8	6									1	
95	Pine Siskin	<i>Spinus pinus</i>												6
96	American Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga aestiva</i>	1											
97	Myrtle Warbler	<i>Setophaga coronata</i>	1							4		1		
98	Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>											3	30+
99	Red Fox Sparrow	<i>Passerella iliaca</i>	2		2				1					
100	Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	1	3	2					1	2	2	1	10
101	White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>		4									1	
102	Golden-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>	2	2				2	2				2	12
103	Dark-eyed Junco (Oregon)	<i>Junco hyemalis oregonus</i>					1						2	12
104	Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	✓	6	2	12	✓	✓		3		3	✓	12
105	Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>											1	2
106	Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>											3	10

## Mammals

1	European Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	1											✓
2	Vole sp.	<i>Myodes sp.</i>												1
3	Eastern Gray Squirrel	<i>Sciurus carolinensis</i>												1
4	Red Squirrel	<i>Tamiasciurus hudsonicus</i>	1			1		1				1	2	
5	American Black Bear	<i>Ursus americanus</i>		1	5		4				3	2		
6	Brown Bear (Grizzly)	<i>Ursus arctos horribilis</i>							8	10	14	7		
7	Sea Otter	<i>Enhydra lutris</i>			40+		75+							
8	North American River Otter	<i>Lontra canadensis</i>							4	4				
9	American Marten	<i>Martes americana</i>							1	1				
10	American Mink	<i>Neovison vison</i>												1
11	Steller Sea Lion	<i>Eumetopias jubatus</i>						100+						
12	California Sea Lion	<i>Zalophus californianus</i>			4		4							
13	Harbour Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	✓	1	7		25	1		6	10	✓	✓	
14	Pacific White-sided Dolphin	<i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i>						500+	30+					
15	Orca (Killer Whale)	<i>Orcinus orca</i>						14						
16	Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>			2		2							
17	Humpback Whale	<i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i>					1	20					3	

	Common name	Scientific name	September											
			16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
18	Gray Whale	<i>Eschrichtius robustus</i>			3									
19	Mule Deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>		3		1								

## Other Taxa

1	Canada Darter (Dragonfly)	<i>Aeshna canadensis</i>	1	3									2	
2	Meadowhawk (Dragonfly) sp.	<i>Sympetrum</i> sp.	1											
3	various Dragonfly species									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Cabbage White (Butterfly)	<i>Pieris rapae</i>	1	1									✓	
5	various Cricket & Hopper sp.		✓			✓		✓					✓	✓
6	Large Yellow Underwing (Moth)	<i>Noctua pronuba</i>					1	2						
7	Woolly Bear caterpillar	<i>Pyrrharctia isabella</i>						✓						
8	various Moths & Caterpillars							✓	✓		✓		✓	
9	Banana Slug	<i>Ariolimax columbianus</i>		✓				✓	✓		✓			✓
10	Sea Blubber Jellyfish	<i>Cyanea capillata</i>					2						1	
11	Moon Jelly	<i>Aurelia labiata</i>											✓	
12	Hermit Crab sp.	<i>Paguroidea</i> sp.		✓										
13	Shore Crab sp.							✓						
14	Sculpin sp.	<i>Cottoidea</i> sp.		✓										
15	Red-eared Slider	<i>Trachemys scripta elegans</i>												1
16	Turtle sp.													1
17	American Bullfrog	<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>											1	
18	Frog sp.													✓



Kitted out for our bear-watching zodiac trip by Alan Miller