

Intro...

The Great Bear Rainforest

Exploratory Photo Adventure



The Great Bear Gauntlet. A female Spirit Bear patiently awaits unsuspecting salmon in a creek in the Great Bear Rainforest.
Nikon D800e with 70-200mm f4 VR @ 100mm. 0.4s @ f10. ISO 100.
© Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca



The *Into the Great Bear Rainforest Exploratory Photo Adventure 2018* offers 7 days of exploring and photographing one of the last great wildernesses on earth – the incomparable Great Bear Rainforest. This trip is about both exploration AND about photography – and having a great time! We'll travel by sailboat, Zodiac, foot, and possibly even kayak into the heart of the Great Bear, always keeping an eye out for great photo ops of our “targeted” species, including

Grizzly Bears, Black Bears, the rare white Spirit Bear, Humpback Whales, landscapes, and more. And, we'll do it all from our very comfortable and spacious mobile base camp – the 71-foot sailboat, the *Ocean Light II*.

The Great Bear Rainforest. The portion of the British Columbia mainland coast that stretches from Rivers Inlet in the south to the Skeena River in the north is often referred to as “The Great Bear Rainforest”. It is the largest tract of temperate coastal rainforest left on planet Earth. Here the coastal



The Original Big Gulp! Humpback Whales feeding along the shoreline in the Great Bear Rainforest.
Nikon D4 with AF-S 80-400mm VR @ 180mm. 1/1250s @ f6.3. ISO 1600

mountains meet the Pacific Ocean – the area is cut by hundreds of steep-sided inlets/fjords and there are countless islands. This true wilderness is rarely visited by humans and is stunningly beautiful in itself. And, it is literally teeming with wildlife, including Grizzly Bears, Black (and Spirit) Bears, coastal Gray Wolves, Wolverines, Otters, American Martens, Bald Eagles, Humpback Whales, Killer Whales (Orcas), Harbour Seals, Steller Sea Lions, many species of waterfowl and seabirds, and more! The photographic opportunities on this tour are always absolutely amazing.

About The Spirit Bear. The almost mythical Spirit Bear is a rare, white-phased form of the American Black Bear. The subspecies of Black Bear found within the Great Bear Rainforest is *Ursus americanus kermodei* – the Kermode Bear. All the black bears in the Great Bear Rainforest (of any coat

colour) are Kermode Bears. But not all Kermodes are white – only the rare Spirit Bear possesses the white coat.

Spirit Bears are not albinos. The white coat colour is caused by a recessive gene and only those bears with two copies of the gene (one inherited from the mother and one inherited from the father) have white coats. Bears that possess one copy of the recessive white coat gene and one copy of the gene for a “normal” coat have typical black coats and are carriers of the trait. The white coat colour of Spirit Bears can theoretically be found in Black Bears anywhere, but they are exceptionally rare in all parts of the Black Bears’ range. The one exception is on a small portion of the British Columbia coast where, for reasons that are only poorly understood, between 10 and 20 percent of the bears are white!

A Tour of Exploration! The *Into the Great Bear Rainforest Exploratory Photo Adventure 2018* is a true tour of photographic exploration. We'll explore the inlets, bays and old-growth forest of the spectacular mid-coast of British Columbia. We'll walk trails, explore creeks, and search for the unique mix of subject matter that only the Great Bear Rainforest can provide – Grizzly Bears, Black Bears, Spirit Bears, Humpback Whales many bird species, landscapes, and more. Due to potentially extreme weather conditions and rough terrain, and to maximize our chances of seeing a Spirit Bear, we may utilize native-built viewing platforms in certain situations.



This is a multi-faceted trip, focusing not only on the bears, but on *all* the inhabitants of the Great Bear Rainforest – and the entire ecosystem in which they thrive. While the bears are an integral part of this trip, *if your sole goal is to photograph bears (to the exclusion of other subject matter you will be presented with), this may not be the trip for you.*

2018 Trip Start and End Points: The photo tour begins and ends in Terrace, BC.

2018 Date: September 13-21, 2018, including arrival and departure days. In the Great Bear Rainforest aboard the *Ocean Light II* from September 14-21.

2018 Price: \$6699 CAD plus 5% GST based on SINGLE occupancy accommodation during the portion of the trip in Terrace, BC. Deduct \$100 CAD for double occupancy (shared) accommodation.





Ghost of the Coast. Coastal Gray Wolves are common in the Great Bear Rainforest, but their secretive nature makes them a challenge to see, and an even bigger challenge to photograph. Nikon D4s with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/500s @ f5.6. ISO 350. © Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca

What's Included?

- All meals and accommodation in Terrace beginning on the evening of Day 1 (see Itinerary)
- All food and accommodation while aboard the *Ocean Light II*
- A highly-experienced bear guide and professional photography guide
- A great cook and crew
- Use of Zodiac® and all associated safety gear (life jackets, etc.)

What's Not Included?

- Transportation between your home and Terrace, BC at the beginning and end of the trip
- Personal belongings and equipment
- Any meals and accommodation in Terrace prior to Day 1

- Any extra personal expenses incurred because of weather, logistical delays, or missed flights
- Any gratuities for the crew of the *Ocean Light II*

What To Expect?

- Cool weather (daytime highs of about 10-15C or 50-60° fahrenheit); rain showers, with the possibility of heavy 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: In Terrace we will be staying at the Best Western Hotel. While in the Great Bear Rainforest we will be staying on the *Ocean Light II* sailboat, a 71-foot ketch.

Itinerary

NOTE: The itinerary of the *Into the Great Bear Rainforest Exploratory Photo Adventure* is designed for flexibility. This allows us to react to the ever-changing distribution and abundance of wildlife and fluctuating weather conditions. Our primary observational and photographic “target” species will be Grizzly Bears, Black Bears, Spirit Bears and Humpback Whales. We will observe and photograph other species and landscapes as opportunities present themselves.

Day 1 – September 13, 2018

Arrive in Terrace, BC on or before this day. Make your way to the Best Western Hotel to check in. You may check-in any time from 3 PM on. If you arrive early in the day feel free to sightsee or check the town out. Our first official activity will be meeting in the hotel lobby for dinner at 6:30 PM.



The Hangout. Nikon D4 with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/400s @ f7.1. ISO 640

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Day 2 – September 14, 2018

Early breakfast, followed by van transport to the *Ocean Light II* at the marina in Kitimat, BC. Following meeting the crew and guides of the *Ocean Light II* and allocating the cabins we will begin traveling south towards key wildlife viewing and photographic locations. Photographic opportunities often begin shortly after we push off!

Days 3 through 8 – September 15-20, 2018

Tour through the Great Bear Rainforest with stops in numerous locations to photograph our “targeted” wildlife species, and other species as opportunistically encountered. Humpback Whales typically frequent the inlets and bays at this time of year and we will watch and photograph these magnificent mammals when the opportunity presents itself. We will use

the *Ocean Light II* as a base, and a motorized inflatable to transfer people between the boat and the shore. Four kayaks are on the *Ocean Light II* for those wishing to enjoy the tranquility of paddling as we explore one of the last unlogged temperate rainforests in the world.

Day 9 – September 21, 2018

Breakfast on the *Ocean Light II* followed by van transport from Kitimat marina to the airport in Terrace, BC. Our time together in the fabulous Great Bear Rainforest will draw to an end, but you’ll be left with many fabulous memories and photographs!



The Blow! Killer Whales cruise the narrow inlets of the Great Bear Rainforest in search of prey. This female and her calf were part of a small pod of 5 transient Killer Whales hunting for their primary prey – marine mammals. Nikon D4 with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/1000s @ f5.6. ISO 2000. © Brad Hill – www.naturalart.ca



Fueling the Great Bear. The annual late summer and autumn spawning runs of 5 species of salmon provides the energy and nutrients that drives the entire ecosystem we know as the Great Bear Rainforest.

Nikon D600 with 24-70mm f2.8 @ 35mm. 1.0s @ f16. ISO 200

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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 work only with free-ranging wildlife subjects in natural (non-captive and non-confining) environments.
2. We engage in *PASSIVE* wildlife photography only. This means we strive to capture images of our subjects behaving as naturally as possible and without the use of “set-ups”, contrivances, or actions that could guide our subjects toward desirable settings/backdrops or elicit specific “poses”.
3. 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).
4. 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.

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.

Fitness Requirements of Participants

This photo tour requires an above average level of physical fitness and good mobility and balance. In all likelihood we will be hiking while 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 4 km (up to about 3 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.*** In most years our best Spirit Bear photography ops come from selected locations on islands. Access to these locations is by walking only.
- ***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®. Note that tripods can **not** be used within the Zodiac® and while it is theoretically possible to use a monopod in the Zodiac®,

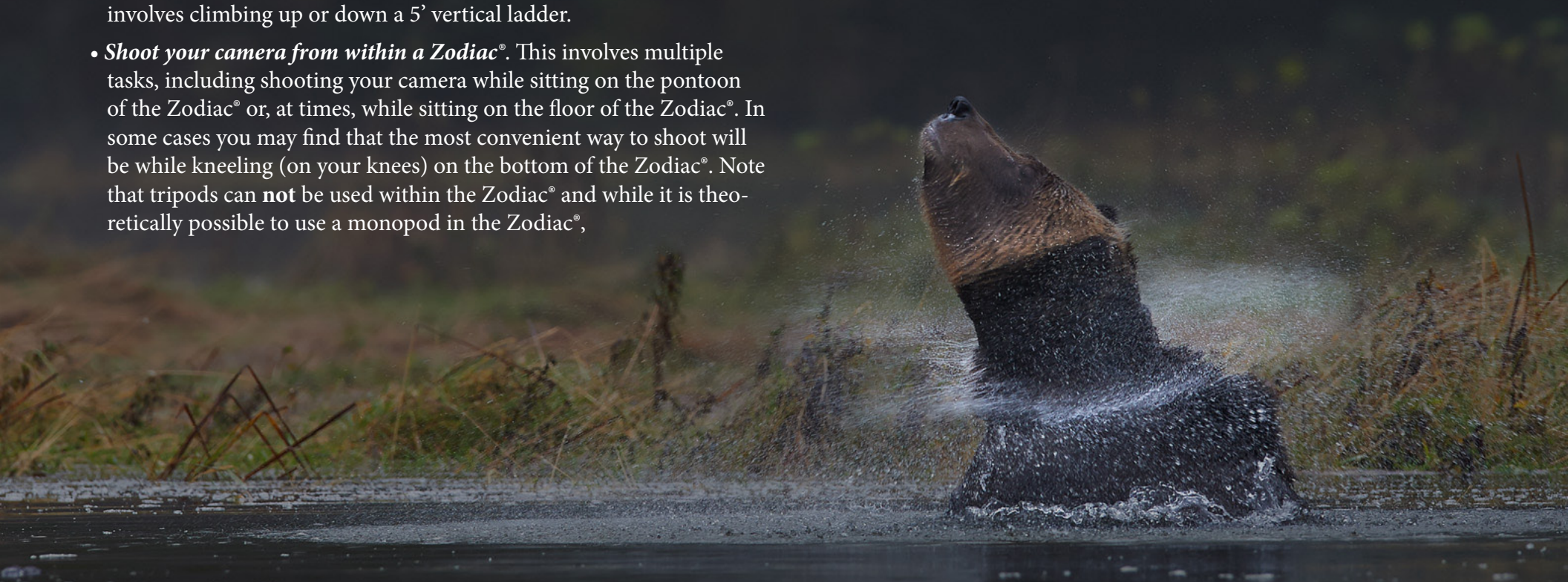
few photographers find it practical.

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

Note that on some occasions we may be walking up streams with rock bottoms and the footing may be very slippery and precarious. This will put a premium on having good balance and mobility (including when you have the weight of camera gear to carry).

For more information about this amazing trip contact Brad Hill at:

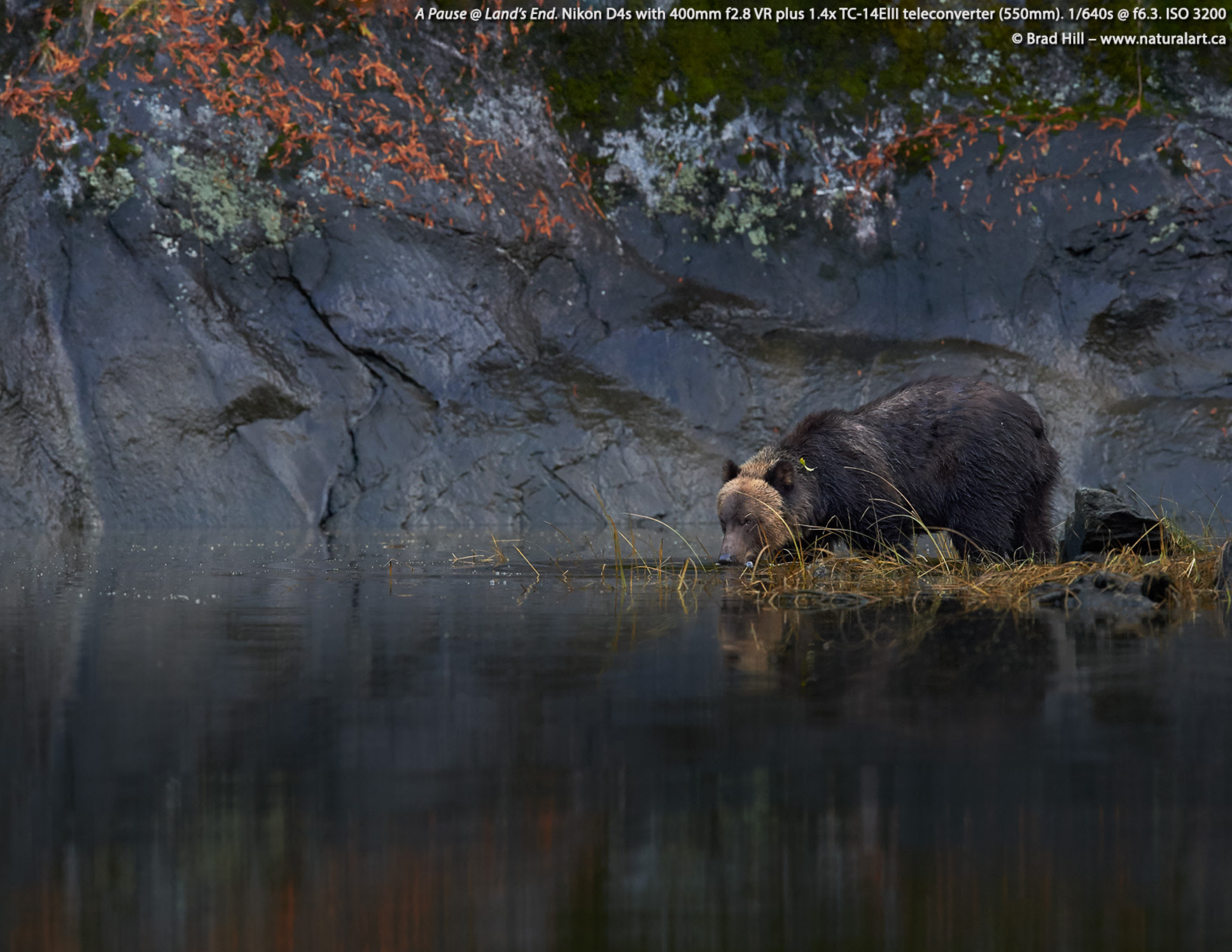
seminars@naturalart.ca



Shake it Up! Adult male Grizzly pausing in his pursuit of prey for a quick shake.

Nikon D4 with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/400s @ f6.3. ISO 560.

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Undiscovered & Unnamed Falls. Finding places and scenes completely removed from human influence – and possibly never photographed before – is an increasingly rare and special treat on our overcrowded planet.

Nikon D800e with 70-200mm f4 VR @ 78mm. 3s @ f11. ISO 100

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Coming & Going. Humpback whale surfacing and blowing and abruptly doing a deep dive.

