

A brown grizzly bear stands on a large, moss-covered rock in a lush forest. The bear is looking down and to the right. The background is filled with dense green foliage, including ferns and moss-covered branches. The foreground shows a body of water reflecting the surrounding greenery.

# Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen

## Instructional Photo Tour 2022



**T**he *Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen Instructional Photo Tour 2022* combines pre-trip professional photography instruction with 5 full days of photographing grizzlies in the most breathtaking environment imaginable. You will be provided with the opportunity, the conceptual and creative tools, and the techniques needed to capture fantastic images of North America's top land-based carnivore – the Grizzly Bear.

**Photography Instruction.** The instructional component on this photo tour will take place in the weeks before the trip. Starting in 2022 we have taken the pre-trip photography instruction online, allowing you to take in the sessions in the comfort of your home. And, by going online and offering the instruction in the weeks before the trip you'll have time to reflect upon and digest the material long before you are face-to-face with the subjects. The two online sessions will be of benefit to all levels of photographers – from enthusiastic novices through to seasoned

professionals. I'll discuss both the technical and creative aspects of wildlife photography as well as the specifics and logistics of photographing wildlife and scenery within the Great Bear Rainforest. While the instructional material will be agnostic with respect to camera brand and camera style (e.g., mirrorless vs. DSLR) it will be assumed that most participants will be bringing either digital SLR's or mirrorless cameras.

**The Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary.** The 39,000 hectare (96,000 acre) Khutzeymateen Grizzly Sanctuary is Canada's only Grizzly Bear sanctuary and is located at the tip of a long and remote inlet on the northern coast of British Columbia. There are no roads, settlements, or even campsites in the region – it is true pristine wilderness. The bulk of the sanctuary is closed to the public – only two professional guides have licenses to lead very small groups into the heart of this majestic and globally unique ecosystem. The inlet is home to about 50 resident grizzlies, with many more passing through during the year. This remote piece of wilderness is set within one of the planet's few remaining completely intact temperate rainforests and offers a stunning, verdant backdrop to observe and photograph wild grizzlies as they interact with one another as they have for time immemorial. The bears themselves grant visitors with a very rare privilege: they allow humans completely into their rich and behaviourally diverse daily lives.



*The Khutzeymateen Estuary.* Accessible only at high tide, the Khutzeymateen estuary is a grass and wildflower covered grizzly garden (complete with water features!). We'll split our time in the field between the estuary and several of the alluvial fans found in the main Khutzeymateen Inlet.





*Stalking the Shoreline.*

Nikon D4 with Sigma Sport 150-600mm zoom @ 180mm. 1/400s @ f11. ISO 2200.

© Brad Hill – [www.naturalart.ca](http://www.naturalart.ca)

Be one of under 200 people – and far, far fewer photographers – annually gifted with the intimate experience of sharing the lives of the Grizzlies of the Khutzeymateen.

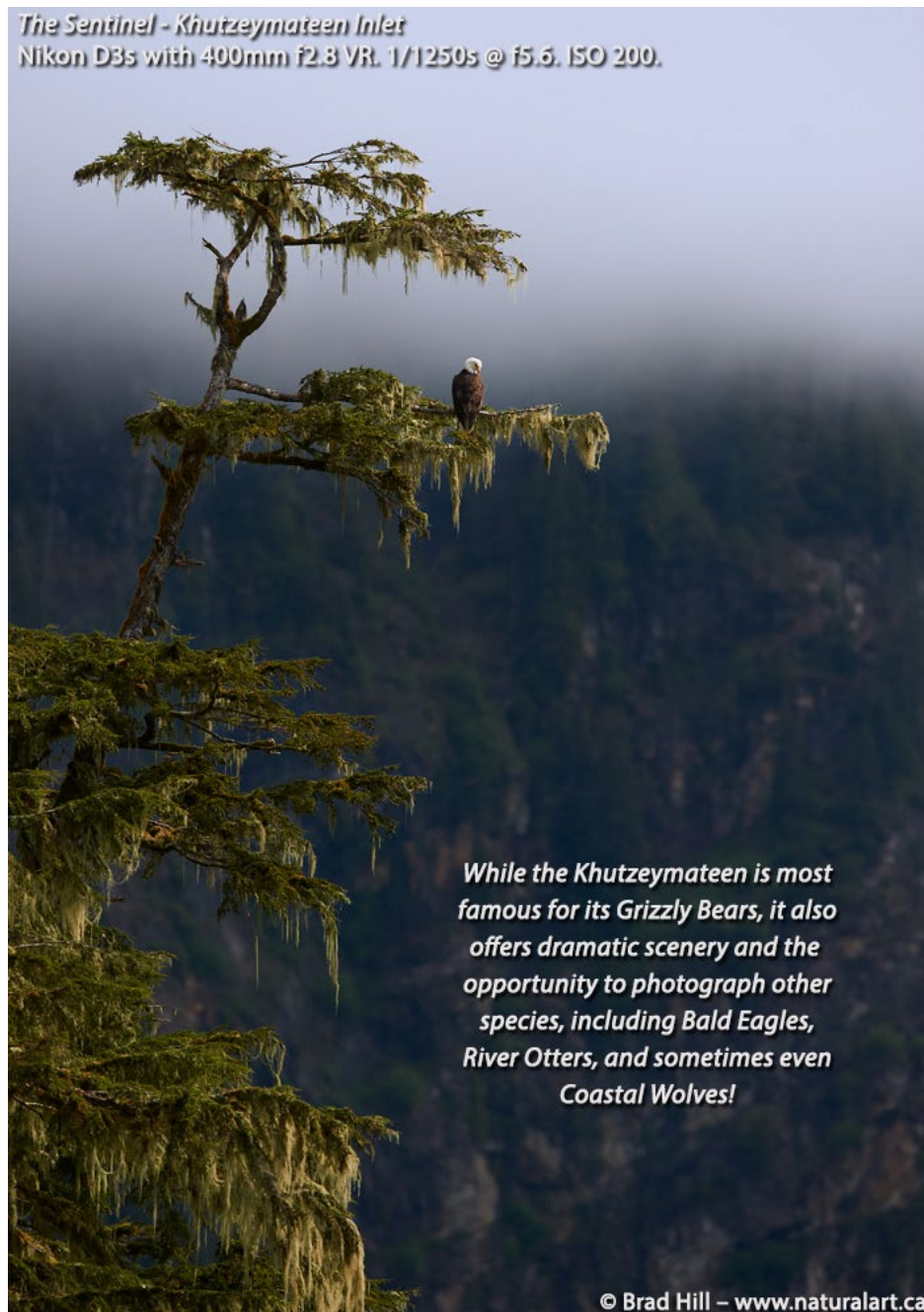
To explore and photograph this spectacular valley we will use a 60-foot Gulf Commander expedition power boat (the *Afterglow I*) as our floating basecamp and then travel into the depths of the sanctuary using a motorized inflatable Zodiac®.

**About the Photography “Style” On This Photo Tour.** On this trip – as on our other photo tours – this is a “*photography in true wilderness*” experience. This means we will spend the bulk of our time in isolated and remote

wilderness and away from other humans (and other photographers). We’ll have to “track down” our subject matter without the help of other outfitters, spotters or real-time online apps listing recent sightings (i.e., there is no “network of sightings” for us to plug into!). Additionally we’ll have no “set-up” situations where we can set up in a specific location ahead of time and with the knowledge that a certain species will predictably appear and pose for us! The advantage of our “*photography in true wilderness*” approach is that it produces a far more unique and personalized experience and it can often lead to more original and compelling photos. A possible downside is that it means we don’t know the specifics of the shooting conditions ahead of time and thus may put more onus on the photographer to



*The Sentinel - Khutzeymateen Inlet*  
Nikon D3s with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/1250s @ f5.6. ISO 200.



*While the Khutzeymateen is most famous for its Grizzly Bears, it also offers dramatic scenery and the opportunity to photograph other species, including Bald Eagles, River Otters, and sometimes even Coastal Wolves!*

© Brad Hill – [www.naturalart.ca](http://www.naturalart.ca)

make snap technical and creative decisions in a field setting. This means it may challenge – and encourage you to expand – your photographic skills more than other photo tours do!

**Our Wildlife Subject Matter:** While this is a *photography-in-true-wilderness* trip, we are definitely headed into a target-rich environment! Grizzlies are the dominant terrestrial mammal in this region and our primary target, but there are other species that we may encounter and, when the opportunity presents itself, photograph.

Here's a quick run down of both our “*most likely*” wildlife subjects and our “*less likely but possible*” wildlife subjects:

**A. Most Likely Subjects** (50% or greater probability of encounter):

- Grizzly Bears
- Black Bears
- Harbour Seals
- Bald Eagles
- Great Blue Herons
- Harlequin Ducks
- Herring Gulls
- American Mink
- Canada Geese
- Asst'd shorebirds
- Asst'd songbirds

**B. Less Likely But Possible Subjects** (<50% probability of encounter):

- Killer Whales
- Coastal Gray Wolves
- Humpback Whales
- River Otters
- American Marten

**2022 Dates:** May 23 to May 29, 2022.

**2022 Price:** \$7,499 CAD plus 5% GST.

**What's Included?**

- All meals and accommodation in Prince Rupert beginning on the evening of Day 1 (see Itinerary)
- Pre-trip online professional photography instruction
- Float plane transportation both into and out of the Khutzeymateen
- All food and accommodation while aboard the *Afterglow*
- A highly-experienced bear guide and professional photography guide

*Ghost of the Coast.* Coastal Gray Wolves are not rare in the Khutzeymateen, but their secretive nature makes them a challenge to see or photograph. Nikon D4s with 400mm f2.8 VR. 1/500s @ f5.6. ISO 350. © Brad Hill – [www.naturalart.ca](http://www.naturalart.ca)



## ***What's Not Included?***

- Transportation between your home and Prince Rupert, BC
- Personal belongings and equipment as per "Gear Lists"
- Any meals and accommodation in Prince Rupert prior to Day 1
- Excess baggage charges from airlines
- Any extra personal expenses incurred because of weather, logistical delays, or delayed departures of chartered or scheduled aircraft
- Any gratuities for the crew of the *Afterglow*

## ***What To Expect?***

- Cool weather (daytime highs of about 10-15C or 50-60° fahrenheit); rain showers are likely but often short-lived (and sunny skies are NOT uncommon at this time of year)
- Totally calm water at our floating basecamp – seasickness is not an issue on this trip

- Very long hours of daylight (giving us ample time in the field)
- Unsurpassed Grizzly Bear photography opportunities
- Hearty, healthy and delicious food
- Always warm, always dry floating basecamp!

***Accommodation:*** While in Prince Rupert (night of May 23) we will be staying at the Eagle Bluff Bed & Breakfast.

While in the Khutzeymateen we will be staying on the *Afterglow*, a spacious 60' Gulf Commander expedition power boat.

## **Sample Itinerary**

This is only a sample itinerary and how we actually spend our days when we're in the Khutzeymateen may differ from below. Two factors interact to influence how we spend each day – the location of bears and the timing of the tides (we can only access some areas – such as the channels in



*The Crossing.* Female Grizzly leads her cubs across the Khutzeymateen Estuary at high tide  
Nikon D2x with 200-400mm f4 VR @ 250mm. 1/750s @ f4. ISO 200.



© Brad Hill – [www.naturalart.ca](http://www.naturalart.ca)

the estuary – during high tides). Both of these factors change day-by-day.

### ***Day 1 – May 23, 2022.***

Arrive in Prince Rupert. Make your way to the Eagle Bluff Bed & Breakfast to check in and stow your gear. You may check-in any time during the day. If you arrive early in the day feel free to sightsee or check the town out. Plan on assembling at the Eagle Bluff at 6 PM for an informal “meet & greet”. Shortly following this we will head out for dinner together.

### ***Day 2 – May 24, 2022.***

Early breakfast at the B&B, followed by an early float plane trip into the Khutzeymateen. Following meeting the crew and guides of the *Afterglow* and allocating the cabins, we will spend as much time as possible out in the Zodiac® photographing the bears. Photography instruction during our time in the Khutzeymateen will be offered very informally and will largely be based on the questions and photographic issues faced by the

participants. Note that it is very difficult to offer any instruction when actually working with the bears as we will have to remain as motionless and quiet as possible.

### ***Days 3 through 6 – May 25 to May 28, 2022.***

In the Khutzeymateen. Full days of bear photography and opportunistic photography instruction.

### ***Day 8 – May 29, 2022.***

Breakfast on the *Afterglow* followed by our return float plane trip back to Prince Rupert. After which our adventure together ends!

## **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 engage in *PASSIVE* wildlife photography only. This means we strive to capture images of wildlife behaving as naturally as possible and without the use of “set-ups”, contrivances, or any actions that could guide the subjects toward desirable settings and/or backdrops or elicit specific “poses”.
2. 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).
3. 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.



Psssst! Don't Look Now, but...

Nikon D800 with 400mm f2.8G VR. 1/400s @ f5. ISO 400



© Brad Hill - [www.naturalart.ca](http://www.naturalart.ca)

4. We strive to always consider both the individual and collective effects our photographic activities can have on our subjects. This includes being aware of the total time spent with the subjects. This means we will often break contact and withdraw from the subject, especially if there is any indication that our presence is impacting on the subject's behavioural routine (including activities such as feeding, resting and/or sleeping, caring for its offspring, etc.). This consideration is always important and may become even MORE important if multiple photographers or groups of photographers are working with the same subject.

Those participating in our photo tours are expected to conform to these rules of photographer conduct.

All images in this trip brochure and the Natural Art Images website

([www.naturalart.ca](http://www.naturalart.ca)) were captured following these *Wildlife FIRST* rules of photographer conduct.

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

[seminars@naturalart.ca](mailto:seminars@naturalart.ca)



*The Magical Khutzeymateen Estuary. The Khutzeymateen estuary has been referred to as the "Garden of the Grizzlies". It's an apt description!*





*Grizzly Cub – Brown on Green!* Grizzlies of both sexes and all ages are found in the Khutzeymateen. In most years females avoid bringing first year cubs into the estuary owing to the threat posed by large male bears.













*From Sea to Snow-covered Peaks.* An aerial view of the fabulous Khutzeymateen Inlet – including the *Ocean Light II* sailboat...our home in the Khutzeymateen!  
Nikon D4 with 70-200mm f4 @ 70mm 1/1600s @ f5.6. ISO 100.  
© Brad Hill – [www.naturalart.ca](http://www.naturalart.ca)

