



POINT REYES FIELD SEMINARS
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**Glacier Bay Natural History Cruise—
Whales, Bears, Birds & Ice
July 9-14, 2010**

*with David Wimpfheimer and Ronn Patterson
aboard the Delphinus*

TRIP OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION:

Southeast Alaska is one of the world's most dynamic regions. The dense forests here support large numbers of bears, eagles and other wildlife. The rich waters teem with salmon, whales, porpoise, seals and other marine mammals. Amidst the coastal mountains, huge glaciers march to sea, and Glacier Bay National Park is one of the best locations to experience them. This trip wonderfully combines these amazing glaciers, a huge diversity of wildlife and dramatic coastal scenery. all interpreted for you by an experienced naturalist.

SCHEDULE:

Day One:

Our discovery of this majestic region will begin in Hoonah, on the south side of Icy Strait, a wide glacial fjord. From our comfortable vessel, the Delphinus, we will enjoy views of the dramatic glacial mountains surrounding us. Bald eagles sit prominently on spruce snags while a Dall's porpoise swims by our vessel. Sitka spruce and hemlock cloak the mountains here, part of the largest temperate rainforest in the world.

Our first stop will be Bartlett Cove, the headquarters of Glacier National Park, which provides us with the only trails in this otherwise wilderness-based park. We'll take a walk in a lush forest replete with numerous sink ponds and deep carpets of velvet moss. Small streams, perhaps with spawning salmon or harlequin duck, run through the area. The eerie, flute-like sounds of varied thrush seep through the forest while a sooty grouse, or even a bear may enliven our visit. The tidepools in this rocky shoreline contain colorful sea stars and giant sea anemones, adding yet another dimension to our explorations.

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(Day One, continued...)

Alaskan summer days are wonderfully long, and we will take full advantage of the extra time. After Bartlett Cove, we'll visit the Marble Islands, where glaucous-winged gulls, pelagic cormorants and common murre nest. We'll also have the rare treat of viewing the wonderfully colorful and comic puffins—both tufted and horned—that are the island's main attraction. The rich intertidal zone provides feeding habitat for black oystercatchers and surfbirds, and the islands are also a favorite haul-out site for harbor seals and Steller sea lions. Our long, full day comes to an end in Sandy Cove, where we'll drop anchor for the evening.

Day Two:

John Muir described Glacier Bay as the “grandest place on Earth.” The glaciers have retreated about 6.5 miles in the last 200 years. When John Muir built his cabin here in 1892, the inlet that now bears his name was covered with thousands of feet of ice. From our anchorage at the mouth of Muir Inlet, we'll cruise up this narrow fjord, where countless waterfalls plunge down rock walls to where the McBride and Muir glaciers are today. We'll experience this process of succession in reverse, as we approach rock that has only recently appeared from under the melting ice. Skiff rides will allow us to approach icebergs closely, but safely. The intense blue of the dense, glacial ice is an otherworldly color that defies description. On shore, we'll walk close to pieces of ice that have formed wonderful shapes. There will be opportunities to walk on the glacier, as well.

Nearby, we'll have the opportunity to view a colony of black-legged kittiwakes. These handsome gulls are one of the most charismatic of all Alaska's seabirds. We'll retrace our route through the inlet and back to Glacier Bay to continue our explorations.

Day Three:

Morning finds us near the Reid Glacier, a finger of ice descending from the immense Brady Icefield. We'll have the unique experience of exploring an alpine meadow, where delicate white anemone grows alongside dwarf fireweed and dryas.

We'll spend the afternoon in Tarr Inlet approaching both the Margerie and Grand Pacific Glaciers. The stark, icy peaks of the Fairweather Range tower thousands of feet above us. Closer by, mountain goats nimbly climb along the cliff faces. We'll anchor for the evening in Johns Hopkins inlet, which was carved into existence by the immense Johns Hopkins Glacier.

Day Four:

The Johns Hopkins and the Lamplough Glaciers, at the upper end of the park, will be our focus for most of the day. For birders, this is the best place to see the Kittlitz's murrelet, a seabird endemic to Alaska. In addition to skiff rides, we'll take a gradual hike above the Lamplough Glacier. After exploring the northern part of Glacier Bay, we'll head back out of this part of the park. Depending on time and interest, we may stop again at Bartlett Cove for a ranger talk and slide show.

By late afternoon, we'll head out the mouth of Glacier Bay, an area frequented by Minke whales. Sea lions and harbor seals are resident, too, and both have rookeries on several islands here. Icy Strait is also regularly visited by orcas. This area is part of the territory of the famous “J-pod of the North,” known for being playful, shore-loving and curious! Sighting of moose and even wolves are frequent along the coast here.

Day Five:

Just outside the mouth of Glacier Bay lies Dundas Bay, a wild estuary that contains a rich mosaic of the habitat types found in Southeast Alaska, including emergent forest, muskeg, estuary and river flat. We'll walk along meadows often carpeted with acres of purple lupine, red paintbrush, yellow monkeyflower and white cowparsnip. Wildlife abounds here, including grizzly and black bears, moose, wolves, sea and river otters. This

combination of the best wildlife viewing and flower displays makes a trip to Dundas Bay especially memorable.

In the afternoon, we'll continue cruising through Icy Strait, where we should see the area's most famous residents, the humpback whales. These graceful creatures take advantage of the plentiful food supply generated by the glacial melt. Watching these giants lunge out of the water and frolic with each other is one of the trip's highlights, and we should have unparalleled viewing and photographic opportunities. Sea otters are also numerous in this dramatic strait. Their density here is one of the highest in the entire state. We'll also see more puffins, as well as eagles, jaegers, scoters and marbled murrelets.

One of Southeast Alaska's most charming and isolated communities, Elfin Cove, is found here, and we'll have the opportunity to visit it before anchoring for the evening.

Day Six:

Our cruise aboard the Delphinus will end in Hoonah shortly after breakfast. However, the trip is not over yet! One last surprise awaits us, as we'll be treated to a three-hour van tour through the northern part of Chicagof Island, where we'll experience both the natural and human history of the region. Our guide will be an Alaskan native, who will share with us stories of the island's subsistence heritage. Many sightings of black and grizzly bear are made in the island's forest clearings, where they feed on ripe berries. We'll also be on the lookout for beaver, eagles and other birds.

After returning to Hoonah, we'll say our goodbyes and reflect on our trip. Although your trip fee does not include hotel stays in Hoonah or Juneau, there is much more to see and do here, so we recommend extending your stay, if possible. Further information about the area's attractions will be sent upon registration.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Meeting Place and Time:

This trip meets in Hoonah, Alaska at noon on July 9, 2010. The Delphinus will be available for boarding at noon. Our cruise will depart once everyone is on board and lunch is underway.

How to get to Hoonah:

Participants will make their own flight arrangements to Juneau from the Bay Area, along with reservations for the shorter flight from Juneau to Hoonah. Wings of Alaska (www.wingsofalaska.com) services the Juneau to Hoonah leg, and also provides van service from the airport in Hoonah to the dock where the Delphinus will be waiting for you.

You will need to arrive in Juneau no later than July 8 in order to make our noon launch time on July 9. We recommend extending your stay by spending a few days in either Juneau or Hoonah before or after the cruise. Remember that hotel stays are not included in the trip fee. Further information about accommodations in Juneau and Hoonah will be provided upon registration.

If you choose to use a travel agent to arrange your flights and accommodations, the following company is familiar with our itinerary:

Dalianes Travel
Agent: Bev
(800) 462-2937
bev@dalianes.com

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Boat Information:

The Delphinus is a 50-foot custom trawler that has been retrofitted for educational use. The boat features sleeping quarters below, an indoor “living room” with windows for relaxed viewing, and upper and lower viewing platforms outside.

For your comfort and enjoyment, this trip will be limited to 8 participants.

Ronn Patterson, the boat’s captain and owner, has over 30 years of experience leading natural history cruises to Alaska. His extensive knowledge of the area and smooth handling of the vessel will allow you to sit back and enjoy what you came for—unparalleled viewing of Glacier Bay’s spectacular scenery and abundant wildlife. Ronn hires only the friendliest and most experienced crew so that your trip is not only safe, but memorable and enjoyable.

The Delphinus features a professional chef to thrill and excite your palate. The chef is happy to customize the menu to satisfy your individual needs and requirements. All meals while on the boat are included in your trip fee.

Payment and Cancellation Information:

The fee for this trip is \$2645, and includes accommodations aboard the Delphinus on the evenings of July 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13, as well as meals while on the boat. A \$500 deposit is required to reserve your space. A refund, less a \$200 processing fee per person, will be given if we receive notice of cancellation 90 days prior to the trip’s departure date.

The remainder of the trip fee is due by April 10, 2010 (90 days prior to the departure date.) If we do not receive payment in full by this date, your spot will be relinquished to someone on the waitlist, and we will refund your deposit, less a \$200 processing fee per person. Cancellations made after April 10 will result in a refund only if we are able to fill your space. Once your space is filled, we will issue you a refund less a \$500 processing fee per person.

We highly recommend travel insurance to protect your investment.

In the event that we are required to cancel the trip, we will notify you as quickly as possible and your entire fee will be refunded. However, we cannot reimburse you for any airfare or hotel reservation expenses lost as a result of the cancellation. **Therefore, we strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance.**

Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have questions:

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