

PRE-MIGRATORY ALASKA WHALES IN FALL ODESSEY!

One of the most fantastic and unique whale photography safaris found anywhere in the world!



You don't have to be a photographer to appreciate and enjoy this incredible adventure!



Please see reverse for more excitement!

Alaska is a place of many wonders year round. Each season brings new surprises. Our late fall photography adventures present a fabulous and unique opportunity to photograph humpback whales in a winter setting. Just as spring marks the arrival of a new season with the return of migrating wildlife, fall and early winter witness the departure of those species as they move to winter ranges around the globe.

Our fall whale expeditions are to a beautiful, secluded bay on Admiralty Island National Monument to an extraordinary pre-migratory staging area where we find at least 100 to 200 humpback whales gathering in late fall prior to their departure to Hawaii for the winter months.

The nutrient-rich channels of Southeast Alaska are the summer home of one of the largest concentrations of humpback whales found anywhere, and their migration is the longest of any mammal on earth. The incredible humpback whales that we enjoy observing for so much of the summer have a very interesting, little understood ritual prior to their long travel to the tropics for courtship and giving birth to a new generation of humpback whales.

It is not known if the concentration of whales that we find in November and December is strictly related to a high forage abundance of krill and herring or if there is a social behavior aspect that triggers the whales which are typically widely distributed throughout Southeast Alaska to concentrate annually in such a great numbers in this particular location.

The sheer quantity of whales found here present an incredible opportunity to observe and photograph these magnificent whales in a very uncommon setting. The winter backdrops in a low-light angle setting found only at this time of year, produces opportunities to capture one-of-a-kind images.

As the season progresses to the winter solstice, the sun nears its lowest declination casting a transcending illumination on a forest of whale spouts. The magic shooting hour can last all day, as this remarkable concentration of whales passively feed on an ultra rich abundance of krill. Tall plumes of whale spouts rise high one after another to hang gloriously backlit in the cold still air. Then the namesake back-arching roll as the group begins individually fluking up for the next deep dive into the rich layer of krill lying a hundred feet or more below the surface.

It's the season's final feast for these giants to pile on blubber. When they leave Alaska, they will fast until returning in spring.

Limited to only four to six participants, this adventure is a rare opportunity for nature photographers, whale enthusiasts and anyone who appreciates the wonders of nature.

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We'll also take another fantastic side trip to Tracey Arm and Sawyer Glacier to add another inspirational photographic diversion. How many images of Tracey Arm in winter have you seen? The Tracy Arm fjord is a spectacle rarely witnessed as it is draped in its winter garb of snow and ice. Mountain goats are forced from the high rugged alpine mountaintops to the lower band of mountains between about a 300 foot elevation to sea level.

During summer these hearty animals are typically observed as white specks way up there and are now actual intriguing long white-coated picturesque animals at near eye level.

Our location for this exciting adventure has another wonderful surprise; here we will also find the winter home to tens of thousands of Long-tailed ducks and more great photo opportunities! The Long-tailed ducks reside at their summer nesting grounds in the far north of Alaska and the Arctic. They are just arriving to our fall wonderland of whales just when the whales are making their departure to Hawaii for the winter - an ironic trade of seasonal homes.

The Long-tails are incredibly fascinating to observe and photograph as they dive on the very krill that the whales are foraging on at average depths of nearly 300 feet. The ducks gather in huge rafts of many thousands and ALL dive at the same time. The cacophony of calls, (these ducks were formally known as 'Old Squaws' for their funny perpetual calls), disappear when the birds dive and all is silent and quiet for a matter of four to five minutes before the ducks resurface once again all in unison. Photo opportunities abound while we observe another of nature's true beautiful wonders.

Humpback Pre-migration Gathering

Schedules

2011

7 days/6 nights Oct. 27 - Nov. 2
9 days/8 nights Nov. 8 - 16
8 days/7 nights Dec. 1 - 8

2012

7 days/6 nights Nov. 8 - 14
8 days/7 nights Nov. 11 - 18
8 days/7 nights Dec. 1 - 8

2013

7 days/6 nights Nov. 8 - 14
8 days/7 nights Nov. 11 - 18
8 days/7 nights Dec. 1 - 8

