

# Marine Mammal Explorer

*2016 Detailed Information Packet*



*Ocean Light II Adventures*

An August Oceanscape – in beautiful Blackfish Sound



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## Marine Mammal Explorer

The northern tip of Vancouver Island is an incredibly rich and abundant wildlife area. During the summer months it is home to a wide variety of marine mammals as the Pacific Ocean delivers nutrients to the numerous channels and inlets of the region. Orcas (or Killer Whales), dolphins, porpoises and sea lions assemble to feed on the Pacific salmon that are returning to their natal rivers. Humpback Whales and coastal seabirds feed on the nutrients stirred up by the strong tidal currents. The area is also home to a strong and prosperous native culture, the Kwakwaka'wakw who have made this part of the coast their home for over ten thousand years.

## The Orcas of Johnstone Strait

The waters of Johnstone Strait are considered the best place in the world to observe the Orca. In the early years Orcas were thought to be merciless killers and were hunted. Since the 1970's scientific research and intensive study has shown the Orca to be a highly intelligent animal capable of complex vocal communication and advanced social behaviours.

Orcas have a strong sense of family and travel in matriarchal groups called pods. In the summer months when the waters are rich with salmon and other marine life, the whales congregate in large numbers. Along the western shore of Johnstone Strait is a small bay called Robson Bight. The Orcas frequent Robson Bight for its special rubbing beaches where they sink to the shallow bottom and slide along the smooth pebbles of the beach. Robson Bight itself is protected and closed to visitors but we can watch the whales from a distance as they access the Bight and move with them as they travel to other locations. We also hope to see Humpback Whales as well as sea lions, sea otters, grey whales, dolphins, porpoises and more. Through the use of a submerged hydrophone we hope to hear both Orcas and Humpbacks vocalizing. We may encounter marine mammals at any time during the trip as they travel large distances each day. We may even have the chance to hear Orcas swim past as we are anchored for the night.

Steller Sea Lions on haul-out rocks



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## 2016 Dates & Prices

**Dates:** • July 30 - August 6 • August 13-20  
• August 6-13 • August 20-27

**Availability:** Please email us (adventure@oceanlight2.bc.ca) to check availability on any of the trips above.

**Price:** \$3399.00 CAD plus 5% GST per person from Port McNeill, BC.

NOTE: Payment schedule and cancellation policies are on page 7 of this package.

**Number of Participants:** Maximum of 9

**Number of Crew:** 2

### What's Included?

- The services of a fully qualified skipper and crew
- Use of all gear available on board
- All meals from Lunch Day 1 to Breakfast Day 8 (B = Breakfast; L = Lunch; D = Dinner)

### What's Not?

- Gratuities for crew (optional and/or discretionary, but always appreciated!)
- Transportation between your home and Port McNeill, BC.
- Personal belongings and equipment as per "Clothing & Equipment List"
- Accommodation in Port McNeill on night prior to trip
- Excess baggage charges en route to Port McNeill

## Itinerary

You must arrive in Port McNeill prior to Day 1 for an early morning start on the first day of the trip. This itinerary is a sample only – the exact itinerary of your trip will be dictated by factors such as weather, tides and group interest, with the crew working within the parameters of safety, time and the highlights of the area.

### Day 1 – L/D

Our journey will depart from the coastal resource town of Port McNeill. Once on board the *Ocean Light II*, we will head towards Johnstone Strait and the Robson Bight Ecological Reserve. This area is regarded as one of the best places in the world to observe Orcas in their natural habitat.

### Days 2 to 4 – B/L/D

Over the next several days we will hope to see the whales hunting, feeding, and playing as they travel through these scenic waters. We will take time from whale watching to visit with the local whale researchers who make this resident population of Orcas the most studied and understood in the world. The researchers will help us understand the complex social behavior of resident Orcas and point out the issues facing Orcas with regards to their food supply and habitat.

During the evenings we will anchor among the numerous islands and bays of the Broughton Archipelago. Here we may see a Black Bear foraging through the rich intertidal or Great Blue Herons fishing atop the abundant kelp beds. These islands provide us the

Sea otter numbers are rebounding around northern Vancouver Island



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opportunity to paddle one the *Ocean Light II* kayaks and explore our calm protected anchorage.

Visiting this area would not be complete without learning more about the history and traditions of the local native people (Kwakwaka'wakw). If the group is interested we can take a walk through one of their ancient village sites or take a tour through the U'mista Cultural Centre in the modern village of Alert Bay. The Kwakwaka'wakw proudly express their culture with breathtaking carvings, songs and dance.

### **Days 5 to 7 – B/L/D**

We will travel toward northern Vancouver Island in search of more marine mammals. Wildlife congregates in the nutrient rich northern Johnstone Strait region where Queen Charlotte Sound meets Queen Charlotte Strait. Many marine mammals travel this route including transient killer whales, humpback whales, grey whales, sea lions, seals, porpoise and dolphins, and sea otters.

We will focus on wildlife viewing but we will also have opportunities to kayak, fish, beachcomb and explore.

### **Day 8 – B**

Our journey will end in Port McNeill and you will depart with memories of a spectacular area abundant with the wonders of nature.

## **More About the Trip**

**The Boat.** The *Ocean Light II* is an Ocean 71' ketch and is thought by many to be the perfect B.C. Coast charter yacht. With fourteen Atlantic crossings, the

*Ocean Light II* has the pedigree and comfort to make any sailing experience with her one to remember. It has a spacious, well maintained interior of mahogany, authentic Douglas Fir and white enamel.

The layout offers 5 separate guest cabins that are closed off from the rest of the yacht. A berth will be assigned to each person upon arrival. There are two heads, a shower and the interior is all newly remodeled. The main salon located below deck is a spacious 14' x 17', which seats twelve comfortably while still leaving space to move about freely. There is ample deck space and she is very comfortable under sail. *Ocean Light II* features all of the extras expected: 19' hard bottom inflatable, six kayaks as well as an extensive library for your enjoyment.

For more information about our boat – including images of the interior – just visit this page on our website:

<http://www.oceanlight2.bc.ca/html/about/boat.html>

**The Crew.** Chris Tulloch will be the skipper/guide for this trip. He has 23 years of experience on the coast and specializes in marine mammals. Jenn Broom provides invaluable assistance as crew, guide and cook – she has 25 years of coastal experience and she'll make you feel at home aboard the *Ocean Light II*. *Ocean Light II Adventures* and her crew continually contribute a tremendous amount to the conservation of our endangered wilderness areas.

**Meals.** We take special care in preparing nutritious and delicious meals. All meals will be prepared aboard the sailboat and will include fresh seafood, homemade soups, breads and salads. Wine is served with dinner,

Humpback whale sightings – such as this one in 2011 – are becoming increasingly common in Johnstone’s Strait



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and you may bring your own drinks to be consumed in moderation and only when the anchor is down for the night. We will not tolerate excessive drinking on our vessel. Clients have the option to assist in food gathering and meal preparation. If you have particular dietary restrictions, please let us know well in advance.

**What About the Weather?** Weather along the coast in late summer and fall can be variable. We can expect to have all weather conditions, warm sunny days and cool rainy days. Typically, in the late summer, fog is common in the mornings. Fog and ocean breezes make it feel colder so come prepared for all conditions.



Pacific White-sided Dolphins in pursuit of a salmon

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## Logistics, Details, & Policies

We have prepared the following information for you to help organize your end of the trip and assist in maximizing your experience.

### Traveling to Port McNeill

**If You're Driving.** From Vancouver, take the BC Ferry between Horseshoe Bay and Nanaimo and then drive on the Island Hwy 19 north from Nanaimo, BC approximately 350 km to Port McNeill.

**If You're Flying.** Pacific Coastal Airlines offer daily service between Vancouver's south terminal and Port Hardy. 1-800-663-2872 or [www.pacificcoastal.com](http://www.pacificcoastal.com).

Port McNeill is 50 km south of Port Hardy and Rainbow Express Taxi offers a shuttle/taxi service between the airport and Port McNeill. The cost is approx \$40 Cdn with discounts for additional passengers (up to 5). Reserve in advance at 1-250-956-8294.

**If You're Taking the Bus.** Greyhound Canada offers buses from Vancouver to Port McNeill. The journey including the ferry takes about 11 hours. 1-800-661-8747 or [www.greyhound.ca](http://www.greyhound.ca)



## Traveling to/from The Ocean Light II

The *Ocean Light II* will be located just off the municipal dock in Port McNeill on the first morning of your trip. We will pick you up at the dock at 9 AM and transport you to the boat. The trip will finish at the same point (after breakfast on the final day).

## Traveling to Port Hardy (Airport)

If you flew into Port Hardy at the beginning of the trip, your best option to get back to the airport is via Rainbow Taxi – their phone number is 1-250-956-8294.

## Accommodation During the Trip

**On Board the *Ocean Light II*.** Each person has a berth assigned upon arrival. There are three double cabins with single beds and two double cabins with double beds.

**In Port McNeill.** Black Bear Resort (1-866-956-4900) – this newly built property is nicely appointed. It offers free parking but no on-site restaurant. It is a short walk from the municipal dock where you will start and finish your trip. It is a fine place for the night prior to your trip.

Haida Way Hotel (1-800-956-3373 and haida@pm-hotels.com) – across the street from the Black Bear Resort and features rooms with 2 double beds and has free parking and a restaurant.

**In Vancouver.** Coast Vancouver Airport Hotel (604-263-1555, or toll-free from Canada and the USA 1-800-663-1144).

## Baggage Weight Limits & Extra Gear

The maximum weight for personal baggage is 75 lb. per person, including camera gear. If you are traveling before or after the trip please arrange to leave extra baggage at your hotel in Vancouver or Port McNeill.

### IMPORTANT NOTE ON BAGGAGE WEIGHT:

The 75 lb weight limit referred to throughout this information package applies ONLY to the portion of your trip that is aboard the *Ocean Light II*. It is entirely possible that if you use an air carrier for other segments of your trip they will have different baggage regulations and weight restrictions. Please ensure you check with your airline(s) to determine your ultimate weight and baggage restrictions and DO NOT assume that the 75 lb limit applies to all legs of your journey.





## Payment Schedule

A deposit of \$1000.00 CAD is due at time of booking. Balance of full payment including GST is due 120 days prior to trip date. Payment options:

1. By cheque. Please make payable to Ocean Light II Adventures and mail to:  
  
Ocean Light II Adventures  
#363 - 1917 West 4th Ave  
Vancouver, BC V6J 1M7
2. By Email (Interac e-Transfer) – For Canadians only. Send to [adventure@oceanlight2.bc.ca](mailto:adventure@oceanlight2.bc.ca)
3. By International Wire Transfer. A \$15 transfer fee per transaction will be added to total cost.

## Cancellation Policy

**More than 365 days prior to tour.** Full refund on deposit.

**365 days to 120 days prior to tour.** Deposit less \$200 CAD.

**119 days to 60 days prior to tour.** 50% of trip cost.

**59 days or less prior to tour.** No refund.

**NOTE:** We highly recommend that you take trip cancellation insurance. It costs approximately 7% of the trip price and covers you for most cancellations. Ask your travel agent or insurance agent about your options.

## Clothing & Equipment List

The following is a list of the clothing and equipment you will need on your expedition. It is of utmost importance that you follow this list accurately for your own comfort and well-being. The proper preparation is a vital factor in an expedition's success. When selecting

your clothing, keep in mind the following principles about staying warm and dry:

**Layering.** It is very effective to wear layers of clothing to stay warm, as the air trapped between the layers acts as an insulator. Layering also allows you to regulate your body heat by adjusting the number of layers, depending on the temperature and your activity level. There are 3 main layers: **Transfer** which is the layer next to your skin; **Insulating** which is the main warmth layer(s); and, **Protective** which is the outer layer to protect you from wind, rain, and other elements.

**Keeping Dry.** Wetness increases the loss of body heat and is uncomfortable, so it's important to stay as dry as possible. Some clothing is hydrophobic, and therefore, stays dry (ie, synthetics such as polypropylene, polyester, capilene, and natural fibres such as wool and silk). Clothes made of these materials make great expedition clothing. Be careful of other materials (e.g., cotton and down), because they are absorbent and stay wet. Also, avoid overdressing as it can cause excess perspiration and therefore wetness.

Some of the terminology in your clothing list may be unfamiliar to you, so here is a short glossary:

**Polypropylene:** A lightweight synthetic fabric that transfers moisture away from your skin.

**Capilene:** Another polyester material similar to polypropylene and manufactured by Patagonia.

**Pile:** A polyester fabric that is lightweight and soft. It is warmer than wool per pound, insulates even when wet, and dries quickly. Also referred to as fleece, Polarplus, and Synchronilla.



# Ocean Light II Adventures

**Gore-tex:** A laminated fabric manufactured to be waterproof and breathable. It is a very good fabric for foul weather protective gear, such as rain jackets and pants; however, extended exposure to salt water will damage it. Coated Nylon is a very good alternative. If you do bring Gore-tex on this expedition be sure to wash it in fresh water and mild soap when you return home.

Please pack your gear according to the following list keeping in mind that storage space aboard the *Ocean Light II* is limited. The maximum weight for personal baggage is 75 lb. per person, including camera gear. If you will be traveling at either end of your trip we suggest that you leave any extra clothes and items at your hotel. This clothing list was designed for an 8-day stay on the *Ocean Light II*.

*Please pack all your gear in one medium-sized (or two smaller) soft duffle bag(s) – no hard luggage please. The room required to store hard luggage may reduce the amount of usable space in your berth.*

## Footwear:

- 1 Pair Shoes for boat use ONLY – lightweight runner, deck shoes or sandals (with non-marking sole)
- 1 Pair Rubber Boots – knee high (if possible)
- 3 Pairs Wool or thermal socks
- 1 Pair Lightweight Hiking boots or walking shoes

## Headwear/Handwear:

- 1 Wool or pile (fleece) hat
- 1 Sun hat or visor
- 1 Rain hat
- 1 Pair Warm, waterproof gloves

## Upper Body:

- 3 T-shirts – long or short sleeve
- 1 Light wool or fleece pullover/sweaters
- 2 Heavier wool/fleece pullover/jackets
- 1 Lightweight/compact wind jacket

## Lower Body:

- 2 Pair Shorts
- 2 or 3 Pair Pants (1 wool or pile)
- 1 Pair Long underwear – e.g., capilene
- ? Pair Underwear (your call!)
- 1 Bathing suit

## Outerwear:

- 1 Rain Jacket
- 1 Pair Rain Pants

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Please ensure your rain wear will keep you dry for long periods in the heavy rain.**

Steller Sea Lions – The Welcoming Committee!



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# Ocean Light II Adventures

A Super-pod of Pacific White-sided Dolphins



## Additional Required Essentials:

1	Sleeping Bag	1	Laptop Computer
1	Pillow case and sheet (to cover boat upholstery as washing linens on board is very difficult).	1	Personal media player (e.g., iPod)
1	Personal toiletries kit	1	Drawing pad or journal
1	Towel and face cloth	1	Book/reading material
1 Pair	Sunglasses (with neck cord)	1 Pair	Ear plugs
1	Sunscreen and lip salve	1	Bug repellent or bug net
1	Small day pack for shore excursions		
1	Water bottle		

## First Aid Kit:

**NOTE:** Your guides will carry an extensive wilderness first aid kit. However, you should bring the following items for your own personal use:

1	Pain reliever (e.g., aspirin)
1	Mild anti-inflammatory (e.g., Ibuprofen)
1	Personal medication kit, including Gravol or Sea Bands

## Optional Items:

1 Kit	Camera Gear
1 Pair	Binoculars

## Camera Information:

Your camera gear deserves special attention. First, before you leave home, make sure it is insured for any accidental damage as well as loss or theft. On the trip, it is best kept in a waterproof case or pack. Check with your local diving stores and larger camera stores for the various models available. It is crucial to keep gear dry. We strongly encourage you invest in a rainproof cover for your camera – both AquaTech and Think Tank Photo make excellent models that fit most cameras.

We encourage you to bring plenty of memory cards and/or ample hard-drive space or storage devices – the area is exceptionally photogenic and you may easily experience once-in-a-lifetime scenes. Polarizing filters are often used to reduce glare when shooting scenes that include water or wet subjects. Feel free to bring a tripod or monopod – they can be useful when using long telephoto lenses from the deck of the *Ocean Light II* or when we go ashore. The boat has regular household outlets (120V) for charging batteries and laptop computers.

Female Orca with Young Calf



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**Important Note:** In consideration of the crew and other guests, please leave behind cosmetics, strong scented deodorants, perfumes and anything else with a pleasant or overpowering scent.

**Equipment Suppliers:** If you are unable to obtain good outdoor equipment locally, consult the following list for mail-order suppliers.

Mountain Equipment Co-op: [www.mec.ca](http://www.mec.ca)

REI Recreational Equipment Inc.: [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)

Steller Sea Lions – Family Chat



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## Environmentally Concerned Organizations

*Ocean Light II Adventures* has the privilege to operate in some of the world's wildest places. As such we support certain environmental organizations, either by working directly with them, or by offering financial or promotional support. Some that we feel are worthy of your interest and support are:

*Pacific Wild:* [www.pacificwild.org](http://www.pacificwild.org)

*Raincoast Conservation Society:* [www.raincoast.org](http://www.raincoast.org)

*Cetacealab:* [www.cetacealab.org](http://www.cetacealab.org)

*OrcaLab:* [www.Orcalab.org](http://www.Orcalab.org)

## Reference Materials

Reading before visiting an area always makes the experience a richer one. The *Ocean Light II* is equipped with a large reference collection of literature pertaining to the human and natural history themes of the area. The following list is supplied for your pre- and post-trip reading:

### Marine References:

*Marine Mammals of British Columbia* by John K.B. Ford. Victorial BC: Royal BC Museum, 2014.

*The Beachcombers Guide to Seashore Life in the*

Sea Otter...with Golden Coat



**Pacific Northwest** by Duane Sept. Harbour Publishing. 1999.

**Marine Life of the Pacific Northwest** by Andy Lamb and Bernard Hanby. Harbour Publishing. 2005.

## Plants and Flora Reference:

**Plants of Coastal British Columbia** by Jim Pojar and Andy Mackinnon. Lone Pine Publishing. 2004.

**Plants of Haida Gwaii** by Nancy Turner. Sono Nis Press. 2010.

## Bird Reference:

**The Sibley Field Guide to Birds of Western North America** by David Allen Sibley. Knopf Publishing, 2003.

## Emergency Contact

Outbound emergency calls can be made with the satellite phone. The best way for family or friends to contact you is to send an email to [adventure@oceanlight2.bc.ca](mailto:adventure@oceanlight2.bc.ca) - we check this daily for messages. Alternately they could leave a voicemail message at 604-328-5339.

If you miss a flight and will miss the arranged boat transfer, send an email or call the cell phone number above and leave a message. We will work to get you on board at the first possible opportunity.

Killer Whales Swimming into Paradise

