



# BEAR VIEWING EXPERIENCES

FROM VANCOUVER ISLAND



# THE BEARS OF COASTAL BC & VANCOUVER ISLAND



## An Ecosystem of Giants

Vancouver Island is the gateway to a vast temperate rainforest of ancient cedars and misty estuaries. While the island is home to black bears, the rugged mainland inlets across the Johnstone Strait reveal the heart of grizzly territory, and some of North America's most iconic wildlife concentrations.

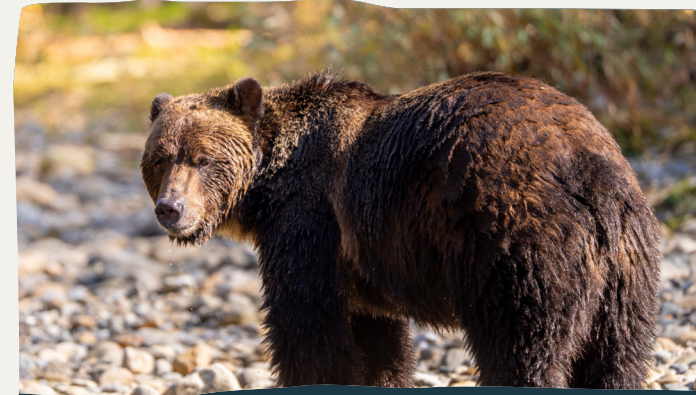
[www.forthethebears.com](http://www.forthethebears.com)

## The Viewing Experience

Guests can witness bears through a variety of expedition styles and lengths, including land-based viewing or via marine tours that navigate the deep channels of coastal British Columbia. In addition, Humpback whales, Orcas, Steller sea lions, and Bald eagles can be spotted during tours.

# LIFE IN THE RAINFOREST

Coastal bears follow a critical annual lifecycle: emerging from winter rest to graze in spring estuaries, foraging for summer berries and shellfish, and finally gathering at autumn rivers to gorge on spawning salmon. This allows them to build the fat reserves needed to repeat this seasonal rhythm.



## Grizzly Bears

### Distinguishing Features

Dished facial profile, prominent shoulder hump, and long, straight claws. Colours range from blonde to dark brown, often with silver-tipped "grizzled" fur.

### Behaviour

Masters of the river system; primarily found in mainland estuaries and glacial mountain ranges.

### Diet

High-energy diet of sedge grasses, roots and tubers, shellfish, scavenged marine mammals, and spawning salmon.



## Black Bears

### Distinguishing Features

Straight facial profile and large, pointed ears; lacks a shoulder hump. Primarily black in colour but can appear as cinnamon or white (including the elusive subspecies, the Kermode bear, otherwise known as the spirit bear).

### Behaviour

Highly adaptable, agile climbers; the primary bear species found on Vancouver Island.

### Diet

Berries, salmon, insects, and succulent plants, supplemented by foraging for intertidal crabs and shellfish.

# THE BEST TIME TO VIEW



## Spring (April - June)

Bears emerge to forage in estuaries, regaining their strength with cubs in tow. Late spring marks the mating season, offering rare views of the dramatic social posturing of large males.



## Summer (July - Mid-August)

Bears roam between forests and shores to gorge on berries and shellfish. Viewing focuses on low tide zones where bears scavenge for prey when not in the shade of the rainforest.



## Autumn (Late August - October)

Peak season for high-density viewing as bears gather at rivers to feast on salmon. Witness active fishing, from powerful lunges in the rapids to quiet "snorkelling" in the calmer pools.

# MAP LEGEND

- Operator Locations
  - Observation Zones
- 1 Bute Inlet
  - 2 Broughton Archipelago Marine Park
  - 3 Clayoquot Sound
  - 4 Desolation Sound
  - 5 Discovery Islands
  - 6 Knight Inlet
  - 7 Orford River
  - 8 Smith Inlet
  - 9 Toba Inlet



Smith Inlet

8

Minstrel Island



Farewell Harbour

Glendale Cove



2

6

Telegraph Cove



1

7



Sonora Island

9

5

4

Campbell River



3

Tofino



Homfray Channel



CBVA-Certified Operators:

# DAY TRIP EXCURSIONS

Perfect for travellers based in regional hubs like Campbell River, Telegraph Cove, or Tofino. These full-day or half-day expeditions offer marine wildlife tours with expert guides.

CBVA-Certified Operators:

# LODGE EXPERIENCES

Stay in the heart of the habitat. These remote, world-class lodges offer multi-day programmes designed for deep immersion into the lives of coastal bears.



**Big Animal Encounters**  
biganimalencounters.com

Covered vessel and zodiac bear viewing expeditions to Bute Inlet in partnership with Homalco First Nations guides.

**Location:**  
Campbell River

**Observation Zone:**  
Bute Inlet

**Getting Here:**  
Campbell River

**Operating Season:**  
April to October



**Campbell River Whale Watching**  
campbellriverwhalewatching.com

Carbon-neutral marine excursions and Indigenous-owned grizzly tours into Bute and Toba Inlets.

**Location:**  
Campbell River

**Observation Zone:**  
Bute Inlet & Toba Inlet

**Getting Here:**  
Campbell River

**Operating Season:**  
April to October



**Eagle Eye Adventures**  
eagleeyeadventures.com

Covered vessel and zodiac bear viewing expeditions in partnership with Klahoose Coastal Adventures.

**Location:**  
Campbell River

**Observation Zone:**  
Bute Inlet & Toba Inlet

**Getting Here:**  
Campbell River

**Operating Season:**  
May to October



**Berry Island Wilderness Lodge**  
farewellharbour.com

A remote, boat-access lodge providing small-group grizzly and black bear viewing within Broughton Archipelago Marine Park.

**Location:**  
Farewell Harbour on Berry Island

**Observation Zone:**  
Broughton Archipelago Marine Park

**Getting Here:**  
Via Boat from Alder Bay

**Operating Season:**  
June to October



**Great Bear Lodge**  
greatbearlodge.com

Floating lodge based in Smith Inlet offering biologist-led grizzly bear observation from special viewing blinds.

**Location:**  
Floating Lodge in Smith Inlet

**Observation Zone:**  
Smith Inlet

**Getting Here:**  
Via Seaplane from Port Hardy

**Operating Season:**  
May to October



**Klahoose Wilderness Resort**  
klahooseresort.com

An Indigenous-owned resort offering all-inclusive cultural and wildlife experiences in Desolation Sound.

**Location:**  
Homfray Channel

**Observation Zone:**  
Desolation Sound & Toba Inlet

**Getting Here:**  
Via Boat/Seaplane from Campbell River  
Via Boat transfer from Lund Harbour

**Operating Season:**  
May to October



**Homalco Wildlife & Cultural Tours**  
homalcotours.com

Indigenous-owned tours in Campbell River offering guided grizzly and immersive storytelling tours in Bute Inlet.

**Location:**  
Campbell River

**Observation Zone:**  
Bute Inlet & Toba Inlet

**Getting Here:**  
Campbell River

**Operating Season:**  
April to October



**Nomad Adventure Guides**  
nomadadventureguides.com

Boat-based wildlife safaris with black bear viewing and temperate rainforest ecology tours within Clayoquot Sound.

**Location:**  
Tofino

**Observation Zone:**  
Clayoquot Sound

**Getting Here:**  
Tofino

**Operating Season:**  
May to October



**Tide Rip Grizzly Tours**  
tiderip.com

Daily covered-boat excursions to the estuaries of Knight Inlet for grizzly bear observation.

**Location:**  
Telegraph Cove

**Observation Zone:**  
Knight Inlet (Glendale Cove)

**Getting Here:**  
Telegraph Cove

**Operating Season:**  
May to September



**Knight Inlet Lodge**  
grizzlytours.com

Floating lodge in Glendale Cove providing boat-based and platform-based grizzly bear viewing in high-density habitat.

**Location:**  
Knight Inlet

**Observation Zone:**  
Knight Inlet (Glendale Cove)

**Getting Here:**  
Via Seaplane from Campbell River

**Operating Season:**  
May to October



**Sailcone's Grizzly Bear Lodge**  
grizzlybearwatching.com

Remote lodge in Knight Inlet offering multi-day grizzly bear observation, focused on the estuaries and river systems.

**Location:**  
Minstrel Island

**Observation Zone:**  
Knight Inlet

**Getting Here:**  
Via Seaplane from Campbell River

**Operating Season:**  
May to October



**Sonora Resort**  
sonoraresort.com

Luxury resort in the Discovery Islands providing guided grizzly tours in Bute Inlet in partnership with Homalco First Nation.

**Location:**  
Sonora Island

**Observation Zone:**  
Discovery Islands & Orford River

**Getting Here:**  
Via Water Taxi from Campbell River  
Via Helicopter from Vancouver

**Operating Season:**  
May to October



# COMMERCIAL BEAR VIEWING ASSOCIATION OF BC

## Leading the Way in Responsible Bear Viewing

The Commercial Bear Viewing Association (CBVA) was formed in 2001 to promote sustainable bear viewing in British Columbia. The mission is to aid in the protection of wild bears and their ecosystems while providing world-class, educational experiences for guests.

## Why Choose a Certified Operator?

When you book with a CBVA member, you are supporting operators who follow established best practices that place the well-being of bears and the health of their ecosystems first. Members undergo training and certification to ensure that viewing practices include:

- Commitment to bear conservation and habitat protection.
- Professionally trained guides with specialized ecology certification.
- Ethical viewing distances and noise-reduction protocols.

## Stay WildSafe

### Respecting the Wildlife

WildSafe is a proactive conservation strategy that encourages efforts by communities to reduce negative human-wildlife interactions. By following WildSafe principles, you help keep BC's bears wild and safe.

Never feed wildlife, keep a respectful distance, and always follow your guide's instructions to ensure a safe environment for both humans and bears.

### Plan Your Journey

Discover more about our operators, our conservation programmes, and how to plan your ethical bear viewing adventure.



### Scan the QR Code

For more information regarding bear viewing, scan the QR code or visit:

[www.forthethebears.com](http://www.forthethebears.com)

