



Southeast Alaska Wildlife & Birding Tour

*with Patrick Dome and Karl Schmitt of the Casa de San Pedro
And Peg Abbott, of Naturalist Journeys*
August 18 - 24, 2016



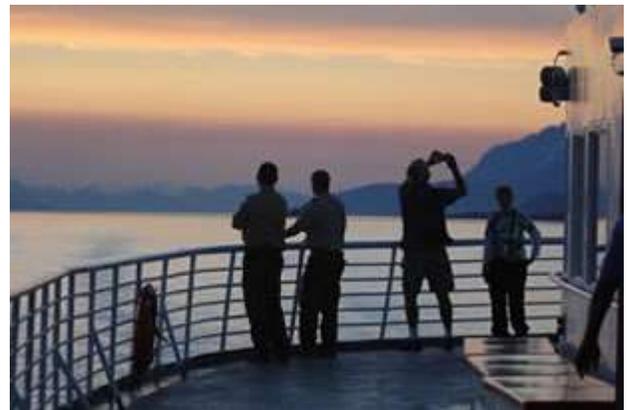
Enjoy a fabulous week in Southeast Alaska, immersed in splendid scenery where wildlife abounds. Join Karl and Patrick of the Casa de San Pedro and Peg Abbott of Naturalist Journeys for this wonderful summertime getaway. Experience all the glory of Southeast Alaska, but no, it's not a cruise!

Indulge yourself in the most scenic part of Southeast Alaska for a 5-night lodge-based stay at the fabulous Gustavus Inn. Unpack once, then enjoy ample time to wander, watch birds, pick berries, spot whales, and for those that wish, enjoy some of the best fishing possible.

Meals are fantastic, and much of the produce is from the Inn's garden. The scenery is incredible, and we are within walking distance of an artisan coffee shop, the ferry dock where Bald Eagle and other birds abound, and more.

This is a relaxed-pace tour with time to really learn, savor, and delight in the heart of Alaska's wildlife-rich Inside Passage at Gustavus/Glacier Bay.

At the end of our tour, you can opt to visit Haines and Skagway, two iconic ports of call on the Inside Passage, or book one or two days of bear viewing at prime areas accessed by small plane, where expert guides help you view bears catching salmon — this is prime time!



A Few Notes

We base our tour from the Gustavus Inn, a small lodge set right in the heart of stunning Glacier Bay National Park. Together with Admiralty Island, Glacier Bay is recognized by the United Nations as a Biosphere Reserve; in 1992 Glacier Bay was recognized as an International World Heritage Site — wow!

We access this lodge and park by air (Alaskan Airlines, a 737 connecting from Seattle), then return to Juneau on the Alaska State Ferry. You can also arrive by Ferry if in Juneau at the start.



We are proud to offer this alternative to a more conventional cruise as a way to see Southeast Alaska; one that offers true local hospitality and comfort. We want you to encounter Alaska, feel like a local for a few days, and sink your teeth into learning. If you have been waiting to see Southeast Alaska, this is a great way to do so. Visit the Gustavus Inn online (www.Gustavusinn.com), and feel free to contact Peg with any questions. To their base lodge stay we have added custom activities, some only available by charter for a truly memorable week.

It is imperative that you book early for this adventure. Summer is high season in Alaska and we have a number of bookings we must firm up — ferries, boat rides, and more!

ITINERARY

Thurs., Aug. 18 Arrival in Gustavus / Glacier Bay National Park



Gustavus is a remarkable place for us to begin! Located on a peninsula and surrounded by ocean and magnificent Glacier Bay National Park, there is no way to drive there — all part of the magic of this remote, yet comfortable place!

Alaska Airlines offers jet service direct to Gustavus, or you can travel by ferry up from Ketchikan, Sitka, or Juneau. Whichever way you choose to arrive, our tour begins on Gustavus on August 18, with a welcome gathering and dinner at the Gustavus Inn.

For locals, many of the island's pleasures are small: the marvel of flowers growing fast in summer's abundant day-length, the cozy feel of being tucked in on a rain-rich day, smells of the sea and time to fish, a walk sorting through stones on a quiet coastal beach.

The long Alaskan summer days allow us to experience the abundance, on land and sea. Try kayaking, go on a whale-watching cruise, join National Park Service rangers on an all-day cruise in Glacier Bay.

Accommodations at Gustavus Inn, Gustavus (D)



Fri., Aug. 19 Glacier Bay NP Boat Cruise / Glaciers and Marble Island Bird Rookeries

The park service describes Glacier Bay National Park as a “land reborn, a living lesson in resilience.”

And who wouldn’t be inspired by this stunning place? From ground-hugging plants that began on land scraped bare by glaciers, to roaring blocks of ice calving from tidewater glaciers and crashing into the sea, a day on the water in Glacier Bay is a thrill.

Today’s tour departs from Bartlett Cove, ten miles from Gustavus, guided by NPS rangers. The waters are quiet, the boat is stable, and in the seven-hour cruise we travel the length of the bay, a round trip journey of 130 miles. In this sheltered bay, the famed explorer George Vancouver found a river of ice just 225 years ago (1794). Today one travels 65 miles to find the same ice. En route, park naturalists describe earth processes, how glaciers form, and what their future might be now that glaciers are in retreat. We look for Grizzly and Black Bears, Mountain Goat, Moose, River Otter, and Mink along the shore. Some lucky travelers have even spotted Gray Wolf and Wolverine — every day is different and, while rare, these animals are around.



Bald Eagle patrol the skies, and smaller seabirds like Pigeon Guillemot are ever watchful. About twenty miles from the glacier face we start to encounter icebergs. Throughout the day we may spy Orca, Minke, and Humpback Whales. Harbor Seals often haul out with their pups on the ice, beyond the reach of Orca.

The lower part of the bay is forested, while its upper reaches, approximately 65 miles away, stand rugged and icy, a realm of rock and ice.

It is an amazing experience to see this with experts, people who can show you both the bold and subtle changes of this landscape. Glacier Bay is a vital living laboratory for people studying climate change, but as early as 1890 John Muir built a cabin and studied the glacial landscape here, partly in an effort to understand the past glacial history of his beloved Yosemite. We pass by Muir Point and Muir Inlet on our cruise.

The Marble Island Bird Rookeries are a highlight of the day for birders. The ship passes close to the island for great binocular views of Tufted and Horned Puffins, Common Murre, Pelagic Cormorant, and Black-legged Kittiwake. The sights and sounds (and smells) are amazing! Over 300 Steller Sea Lions also

use the island to haul out and pup.

Accommodations at Gustavus Inn, Gustavus (B,L,D)

Sat., Aug. 20 Options Today: Sea Kayak Trip to Pleasant Island (with expert local guides) / Explore Gustavus – Local Hikes and Sights / Sport Fishing



The native Tlingit people traveled widely here, making summer camps to harvest salmon and selecting winter villages that provided more protection. Much of the land they lived on is now under the bay; water levels have risen with glacial melt since the Tlingit lived here at the peak of the Little Ice Age. Those opting for the sea-kayak tour wander in a remote place themselves today, crossing Icy Straits to Pleasant Island to walk trails, learn about Tlingit medicinal plants, photograph wildflowers, and listen for boreal bird songs. What a thrill to walk through an ancient temperate rainforest, where huge conifers tower above an elfin realm, all primitive plants that continue to thrive on this coastal island.

Kayakers take a picnic lunch and spend much of the day here. Scientists, including William S. Cooper, refined the theory of plant succession based on over fifty years of work in Glacier Bay. Forests like these on Pleasant Island showed them a magnificent part of the spectrum, the culmination of species assembling into forest over time. In John Muir's days, theories of continental glaciation were just emerging, and we had yet to understand the concept of plant succession. Pleasant Island is in essence a living laboratory, protected from climate extremes by being surrounded by water, and since it holds a remnant ancient coastal forest, it provides an important window into our understanding. Some of the birds we hope to see include Three-toed Woodpecker and Varied Thrush.



Those who prefer to stay in and around Gustavus can have a great day as well. Part of the charm here is taking time to walk, have coffee, and enjoy local art. We watch Bald Eagle feeding young near the ferry dock and go up the Bartlett Cove for lunch at the park's cozy lodge. Moose are sometimes seen in and around the town. Gustavus Inn has a wonderful garden and greenhouse that some may want to study (or sample) in detail. They also have bicycles we are welcome to borrow.



A special note for sport fishing enthusiasts: Fishing by charter boat, for halibut and up to five species of salmon, can be arranged. Boats typically hold six people and fill quickly, so it is advised that you book this in advance. You may fish on our Icy Bay trip, but if you want additional fishing, today is the day. This is at an additional cost, based on the duration of your outing — half or full day.

Accommodations at Gustavus Inn, Gustavus (B,L,D)

Sun., Aug. 21 Morning Whale Watch / Afternoon Hike at the TNC Reserve



We have booked enough days on Gustavus that we don't have to rush. Today is relaxing, with time to take in the stunning setting of our lodge, right at the mouth of Glacier Bay. Enjoy the Inn's library, fireplace room, and deck from which to view half the world. The Salmon River runs nearby; bikes are available for you to use any time you wish to explore; and garden flowers draw in butterflies and birds, like the Rufous Hummingbird. Glacier Bay National Park has some 240 birds on its checklist and a number of these we can pick up right around the Inn.

We do plan to walk at The Nature Conservancy's Gustavus Forelands Preserve in the morning to learn more about special habitats on the margin of land and sea. There is a 2.5-mile trail called the Nagoonberry Loop. One year we saw Gray Wolf tracks here, and in early August flocks of songbirds gather to fatten up for their journey south. We should find a good mix of birds — shorebirds along the water and boreal forest birds inland.

If it is a clear day, flight seeing is available, and a totally wonderful experience!

Tonight we enjoy another memorable meal — imagine being this close to fresh salmon, halibut, sablefish, and Dungeness crab! James Beard even named the restaurant at Gustavus Inn one of "America's Classics" in 2010!

Accommodations at Gustavus Inn, Gustavus (B,D)



Mon., Aug. 22 Point Adolphus / Icy Bay Whale Watching / Option for Fishing

Our goal today is to see Humpback Whale. In small (six-person!) fishing boats in Icy Bay, including Point Adolphus, we get out on the water for quite an adventure. Alaska is known for whale viewing, and Icy Bay is the best of the best! We travel around the bay, passing through magnificent scenery, to find pods of Humpbacks that have swum back from Hawaii (and farther!) to feed in these nutrient-rich waters. This is the largest concentration of feeding whales in Alaska!



We also look for Orca, Minke Whale, and Dall and Harbor

Porpoises, as well as Steller Sea Lion and Sea Otter. Once among the whales, we interpret their behaviors. We have great hopes of seeing them bubble-feed — grouping up under a school of fish, diving down, and rising to surround them while making a “net” of bubbles. A grand day it is!

If sea conditions are good, we may duck into Elfin Cove, a remote fishing village where homes and a few fishermen’s lodgings are connected by boardwalks. Stretch your legs, have a coffee or a beer at the bar, and enjoy the scenery!



Accommodations at Gustavus Inn, Gustavus (B,L,D)

Tues., Aug. 23 Return to Juneau / Local Sightseeing / Possible Red-eye Departures

Today we have a relaxing morning at the Inn, then head into Juneau by ferry or flight — the ferry runs three days a week, with schedules not yet announced as of January 2016. Depending on arrival time, we enjoy the highlights of Alaska’s capital city.

Here we stay in a hotel convenient to the airport; you can plan departures tonight, if needed (many flights depart in the late evening). If you have a morning flight, stay over and head out tomorrow. You may also wish to continue along the coast using the Alaska Marine Highway system to visit ports on like Sitka and Ketchikan along the Inside Passage.

We have time for one more fabulous salmon or halibut feast! Depending on the time we get to Juneau, we can also sightsee a bit or take in one of their informative museums. Our final dinner is at a favorite local restaurant. Accommodations are near the airport, to facilitate the next day early flights.





Wed., Aug. 24 Departures / Bear Viewing

Depart today,

Or! We invite you to stay on for bear viewing at peak salmon fishing time, or just to have time in Juneau to explore on your own. Peg will be going on the bear trip, a lifetime bucket-list dream for her, and she'd love some company. Details on this and more below.

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If You Wish to Stay On ...

- Join Peg for some of Alaska's most amazing bear viewing, with a Juneau-based guide service that takes us to prime salmon-fishing areas by small plane! We watch Pack Creek one day, and on the other, visit a fantastic site on another remote island. Ask for more details.
- Travel on your own to the less-touristy Haines and Skagway
Haines, 4.5 hours from Juneau. The Haines Convention and Visitor's Bureau claims the "population is 2400 – 1897 dogs, 4000 eagles (in fall), and 260 species of birds." With two or three days, you can sample local highlights, and explore the more-touristy, but fascinating, area of Skagway.



It is easy to find things to do in Haines. A local company has excursions for wildlife watching and hiking, or you can simply stroll into town for museums and shops, hike out to a beautiful beach, book a trip to see bears, experience local art and culture, and more! Intriguing are the Tlingit Totems around town and the Alaskan Art Center where you can see carvers at work. And who would not be captivated by a museum that houses hammers — yes, the Hammer Museum of Haines is a popular attraction! Haines is home to a number of acclaimed artists, a writer that contributes local

stories to NPR podcasts, and some great hikes and wildlife just out the door.

From Haines, the fast ferry takes you to Skagway, only 45 minutes away. The National Park Service has a strong presence here, interpreting this rather extraordinary era of Alaskan history — a mining boom extraordinaire. This is officially the Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park, once command center for the turn-of-the-century Klondike gold rush.

Here you can book a boat and rail package to one of North America’s most scenic train rides – from Skagway up to White’s Pass and the Canadian Border. From Skagway at sea level, White’s Pass is an almost 3000-foot climb. The railroad route parallels the famed Chilkoot Trail. Pass



brilliant peaks, waterfalls, deep gorges, and the railroad’s own impressive trestles and tunnels. The forty-mile ride takes about 3.5 hours roundtrip, so you have time upon return to explore historic Skagway at your leisure. Join an interpretive walk (five times daily by the National Park Service) or just roam the boardwalks.



You will not feel alone in Skagway;

in mid-summer it can be congested with several huge cruise ships at the pier, but it’s a vital part of Alaskan history and for some, a “must-see” adventure.



PLAN AHEAD!

Protect yourself with [Allianz Travel Insurance](#) Offset your [Carbon Footprint](#). Show us the receipt and we'll take 50% - up to \$50.00 - of your carbon offset fee off your final payment.



COST OF THE JOURNEY

Cost of the journey is \$3650.00, based on double occupancy, from Gustavus, Alaska, departing Juneau, Alaska. Cost of the journey includes: accommodations for 6 nights (5N Gustavus Inn, 1N Juneau; all meals as specified in the itinerary (B=breakfast, L=lunch, D=dinner); park entrance and other activity fees for activities described in the itinerary including a boat tour of Glacier Bay National Park, a half-day narrated whale-watching trip and an all-day seabird, scenery and whale-watching boat tour in small fishing boats from Gustavus. It also includes return to Juneau, either by flight or ferry. You may participate in an all-day sea-kayaking adventure, additional flight-seeing, and fishing as you select, at additional cost.

Your journey includes a Naturalist Journeys' guide as well as local professional guide services, tour hosts from the Casa de San Pedro, pre-departure materials and miscellaneous program expenses.

Costs do not include: round-trip airfare to Gustavus, Alaska, departing Juneau, Alaska – both cities served by larger airplanes of Alaska Airlines. The tour cost does not include items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone, drinks from the bar; or gratuities for luggage handling or personal services.

Single supplement for the journey: Please note that Gustavus Inn is a small Inn with a short season, and they will not readily accommodate singles. We do block two single rooms that share a bath, upstairs at the Inn that do not require additional cost. Full rooms with private bath here can be arranged, but cost will be high. If this is REALLY important to you please contact our office and we will inquire. For the night in Juneau, single rate will be an extra \$125 with taxes included.

Group size: Maximum of 12, minimum of six. The cost of the journey is

based on 8 participants, with fewer than 8, a small-group surcharge (typically \$100-300 per participant) may apply, or we may request that you pick up the cost of a few additional dinners in lieu of that surcharge.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

Alaska Airlines serves the Alaska-state run Gustavus Airport (GST). Our lodge is close to the airport (as is everything in this remote, but incredibly scenic village!) so you may arrive on a flight that works for you. Please feel free to coordinate this with others of the trip or with our office as you make your flight plans. Departures from Juneau (JNU) either on a red-eye flight or late ferry Aug. 23 (we refund your final night hotel if so) or for most, leave at any time convenient on Aug. 24. If staying on for bear-viewing, plan on two extra day or two, details provided with booking.

PHOTO CREDITS:

Pg. 1: Southeast Alaska Scenic and ferry, Peg Abbott, Grizzly Bear, Bud Ferguson.

Pg. 2: Sea Otter, Bud Ferguson, Scenic View, Peg Abbott.

Pg. 3: Enjoying Gustavus, Black Kittiwake and Glacier, Humpback Whales Breathing, Peg Abbott.

Pg. 4: Kayakers, Humpback Whale Tails, Peg Abbott, Pleasant Island, Carol Bratman.

Pg. 5: Bald Eagle, Bud Ferguson. Walking to Town and Gourmet Food, Peg Abbott

Pg. 6: Icy Bay Scenics and Steller Sea Lion, Peg Abbott. Elfin Cove Entry, Carol Bratman.

Pg. 7: Girls on the Train, Peg Abbott. Aerial View of Glacier, Battery Point Beach, Haines, Carol Bratman. Hotel Halsingland, courtesy of Hotel Halsingland.

Pg. 8. Skagway White Pass Railroad, Haines-Skagway Fast Ferry; Totem Pole and Birding, Peg Abbott

Pg. 9 Peg on ferry and flower by Carol Bratman

Pg. 10 Lunch fare in Juneau, Peg Abbott.