



All photos by Diana McPherson



ALASKA

Wildlife Photography and Citizen Science with Diana McPherson

August 6 – 14, 2022

Discover the natural wonders and photogenic beauty of the “Last Frontier” – Alaska! Perhaps no place fills the senses more than Cordova, Alaska’s hidden treasure. Cordova is a small, coastal town surrounded by glacier-carved mountains and nestled at the head of Orca Inlet in Eastern Prince William Sound. The area provides endless photographic opportunities with its wildlife, rich wetlands, lush forests, and countless waterways.

Explore the natural grandeur not only with wildlife photography, but also hiking, kayaking, boating, and flightseeing. Each day you’ll enjoy hearty meals – home-cooked with local ingredients and plenty of fresh seafood – and stay in a cozy ecolodge.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Seek out wildlife along the Copper River Delta as you take a canoe ride down the Alaganik Slough.
- Fly to explore Egg Island, a barrier island hosting a variety of bird species.
- Take a boat trip to the panoramic Orca Inlet to see the world’s largest population of sea otters.
- Hike through three complete ecosystems on the Heney Ridge Trail, where birds and wildlife can be spotted.
- Kayak the tranquil waters of Orca Inlet, surrounded by snow-capped mountains and home to eagles, sea otters, and seals.
- Participate in a discussion on global warming before heading to the Sheridan Glacier for an ice trekking excursion.



All photos by Diana McPherson

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

AUGUST 6 - ANCHORAGE

Upon arrival in Anchorage travel on your own by shuttle to the hotel. Meals are not included on your arrival day. *Overnight at Comfort Inn Ship Creek or similar.*

AUGUST 7 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, have some time to explore Anchorage. Alaska's most populated city began as a tent settlement; then, in 1915, a government land auction jumpstarted development into a town. The historic downtown, site of the 1915 auction, is approximately 15 minutes' walking distance from the hotel. In the afternoon, take the shuttle to the airport for the quick afternoon flight to Cordova. Cordova is inaccessible by road from any other Alaskan towns, so flight or ferry is the only way to travel there. Upon arrival, meet your guide and transfer to the lodge, enjoying some initial sights along the way, including swan nests on the delta and Cordova's town center. Please note: All activities are subject to accessibility, road conditions, and weather. A suitable alternative will be arranged if any activities are cancelled for reasons outside our control. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BD)*

AUGUST 8 - CORDOVA

Today enjoy a scenic hike through the Heney Ridge Trail for excellent birdwatching, wildlife spotting, and rainforest exploration. Hike through three complete ecosystems in

the trail's seven-mile route, including spruce-hemlock forest and muskeg areas. The hike culminates on the Heney Ridge itself, with gorgeous views of the Copper River Delta, Prince William Sound, and Kayak Delta below. As this activity is the most strenuous of the program, there will be additional guides to accommodate different levels of hikers in the group. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

AUGUST 9 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, take a boat trip to the panoramic Orca Inlet, where you will have the opportunity to see the world's largest population of sea otters and observe their interactions within the pod. Your guide for the day has been involved in sea otter studies for 15 years. Afterward, stop at a remote beach for a short hike to explore tide pools. Then head to Hinchinbrook Island for lunch at another beautiful secluded beach. After lunch, visit a kittiwake



colony to observe these nesting sea birds. In the late afternoon, return to town and visit the Cordova Historical Museum and Eyak Museum and Cultural Center. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

AUGUST 10 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, depart for a full day tour of the Copper River Delta, including the highlight of the day, a float tour down the Alaganik Slough. Keep an eye out for moose, eagles, and bear as you travel by bus through the scenic Chugach National Forest to the 27-mile point of the Copper River Delta Highway. After a brief break to explore the dunes of the Copper River and a discussion about the Salmon habitat and commercial fishing seasons, you will travel back to Mile 22 and the site of the Sacred Eyak Village site of Alaganik. A quick introduction to some medicinal plant uses for local plants and handouts will be provided for participants to identify plants on their own. Then, you and your guides will launch canoes and float from mile 22 to mile 17 on the Alaganik Slough, where birding opportunities and wildlife viewing experiences abound. See areas where the USFS attempted to help restore the Dusky Canada Goose and Tundra Swan populations by anchoring nest islands in the ponds, and experience the dynamic delta ecosystem up close and personal from your view at water level. Finally, have an opportunity to hike a boardwalk birding path at the mile 17 ramp. Keep your eyes peeled on the return trip to town, as wildlife viewing opportunities continue until your return to the lodge. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*



AUGUST 11 - CORDOVA

This morning take a 10-minute flight, traveling Alaskan-style, to explore Egg Island. This barrier island hosts a wide variety of bird species, including the largest population of Glaucous-winged Gulls found anywhere. During your exploration and short hike of the island, participate in an ongoing study or gather data for a local biologist. After lunch, take a short hike along the beach. Return to the lodge in the early afternoon for a kayaking adventure in Prince William Sound. As you paddle through Orca Inset, take in majestic views of snow-capped peaks and be on the lookout for eagles, sea otters, and seals. In the late afternoon, attend a

discussion on the life cycle of salmon and their importance to the Cordova economy. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

AUGUST 12 - CORDOVA

After breakfast, your guide will give a talk on plate tectonics and the geological characteristics of the region. The Prince William Sound area has undergone dramatic changes in recent decades, largely due to the Great Alaskan Earthquake that struck in 1964. Lasting four minutes and 38 seconds, the 9.2-magnitude earthquake ruptured 600 miles of fault line in an instant, and ultimately gave conclusive evidence to seismologists about the existence and behavior of plate tectonics. Look at specific, unique geological formations and rock samples, then engage in a discussion on global warming before heading to Sheridan Glacier for an ice trekking excursion. Sheridan Glacier is one of the most accessible glaciers in Alaska, and after a short hike through the moraine, you'll find yourself standing on ancient ice. View crystal blue caves and jagged crevasses and an ever-changing terrain, then assist the Prince William Sound Science Center by placing monitoring stations on the ice to help collect data on glacial melt rates and movement. *Overnight at Orca Adventure Lodge. (BLD)*

AUGUST 13 - ANCHORAGE

Enjoy the morning at leisure before transferring to the airport for your flight back to Anchorage. Upon arrival in Anchorage, you

will be met by a driver who will take you to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC) in Portage. Dedicated to conservation, research, and education, the AWCC is a wildlife sanctuary that takes in and rehabilitates injured animals on 200 acres of natural habitat. Most cannot be fully released into the wild, and thus serve as ambassadors for the preservation of their species. Return to Anchorage to explore the historical downtown, including the Museum of History and Art. You will have time for dinner on own before transferring to the airport for your flight home. *(BL)*

AUGUST 14 - ARRIVE HOME

Arrive home.



ABOUT YOUR LEADER



Diana McPherson

Diana is a wildlife and conservation photographer based in Richland, Washington. In addition to art shows and exhibits, her images have appeared in Nature Photographer and

New Mexico magazines, Willow Creek Press calendars, the Sierra Club's Day Hikes in the Santa Fe Area guide book, and *Whale Tales: Human Interactions with Whales (Vol 2)* book. Her passion for wildlife photography stems from a love of animals at a young age. "I still have the first shark book I bought at the book fair in elementary school."

Diana has a strong research background with marine mammals, shorebirds, invertebrates, sharks, elk, and raptors. She has worked with all ages as an environmental educator, traveled through the Caribbean as a SCUBA instructor, and worked on reef fish research in Belize. Diana enjoys combining her main passions of photography, biology, and environmental education by getting people involved as citizen scientists.

LAND PRICING

\$2,965 (based on minimum 10 participants)

Cost includes flights within Alaska, accommodations, activities, and meals as indicated in the itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, local transportation, full-time guide for the duration of the program, and departure tax.

Does not include round-trip airfare to Alaska, tips and gratuities, alcoholic beverages, or items of a personal nature. Holbrook can assist with your flight arrangements if desired.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip, add \$495 per person. A \$500 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable minus a \$300 cancellation fee until May 3, 2022, at which time final non-refundable payment is due.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL

Visit holbrook.travel/mcpherson-ak22 or contact Sandy Schmidt at 877-907-5360 or schmidt@holbrooktravel.com.