



Ecotours - BC

"Grizzly Bears, Wildlife and Nature"

BC's Premier Bear Watching Specialists!



"The Bear Whisperer™"- Grizzlies and salmon - "The Cycle of Life"
Bears Through The Seasons

"The Bear Whisperer™"

Spring/Summer Grizzly Bears, Wildlife and Alpine Hiking - May 1st - August 24th.

Spring Grizzly Bear viewing is nothing short of wondrous and amazing with new life springing forth and fresh crisp air in the mountains fragrant with the scents of new growth. In early spring the bears emerge from their dens hungry and in search of food for themselves and their young offspring. We find the grizzlies on the mountain slides, in the mountain valleys where it greens up first and on the estuaries of the rivers. The early spring grasses and sedges sprouting in the lowlands and along the river banks and lakeshores draws the bears to the lower elevations where feed is plentiful after the long winter hibernation period. Watch the entertaining antics of the grizzly cubs with their mothers and the courtship of the mating pairs. Access is by 4x4, multi-passenger ATV, hiking and jetboat on rivers.

In July and August as the summer temperatures climb the grizzlies move to higher elevations into the boreal forest and the high alpine basins and valleys in the Cariboo Mountains. Viewing, at this time involves amazing hiking through mountain meadows, boreal forest and into the alpine. Some bears stay on the rivers as they await the early summer Chinook salmon run. We explore the river ecosystems by jetboat as we watch the bears, moose, deer, beaver, and other wildlife and birds and perhaps a wolf, or otter. In the later summer the bears frequent the mountain berry patches where we often share in their feast of blueberries, mountain huckleberries, raspberries, and saskatoons. In most of these areas we can access the alpine and be walking the peaks in under an hour. These areas offer excellent viewing and photographic opportunities as you walk along the high alpine peaks and ridges and view the mountain valleys below. Besides the iconic Grizzly Bears guests may also see moose, mountain caribou, black bear, mountain goats, wolves, mule deer, wolverine, lynx and a variety of mountain song birds, smaller animals and alpine plants and flowers. We are in interior temperate rainforest with unique ecosystems and ancient forests with huge trees over a thousand years old. The diversity of the landscape and the wildlife it is home to makes for an unforgettable truly Canadian wilderness adventure.

Fall/Autumn - Grizzly Bears and Salmon - August 25th - October 25th.
Mitchell River & Cariboo River - Grizzlies and Salmon - "The Cycle of Life"

August 25 – September 14; October 11 – 25;

Prime Time – September 15 – October 10

Fall grizzly bear watching on the wilderness salmon spawning rivers. It just doesn't get any better. Toward the end of August the sockeye salmon begin to arrive in the Cariboo Mountains watershed. They travel up the rivers and tributaries to the spawning redds of their birth where they lay their eggs to ensure future generations as they complete their cycle of life. These fish have traveled thousands of miles, often from the Gulf of Alaska all the way down the coast of British Columbia and enter the Fraser River, their highway to the interior spawning rivers, then up the Quesnel River and into the rivers of their birth in the Quesnel Lake watershed. This is a mighty feat of nature and is an amazing and wondrous sight to behold. The arrival of the salmon in the rivers quickly draws the grizzlies to the rivers for their fall feast at nature's buffet in preparation for their winter hibernation. The Quesnel Lake watershed hosts the one of largest sockeye salmon runs in the world with several million fish returning to the rivers on a major run year (50,000 to 500,000 on minor run years). Fall Grizzly viewing in September and October is done primarily over the salmon runs on the rivers by jetboats. We travel up the bear viewing rivers and then spend the day drifting down watching the bears and other wildlife and birds and enjoying the wilderness river ecosystem. For some rivers we access the area by 4x4 vehicles with short hikes into the river viewing areas.

The bears we view are wild and free in their natural habitat. They are not habituated bears used to being around people. We do not use viewing platforms or baiting and the bears are not in any game preserve or fenced area. It's all natural viewing. We keep in mind at all times that we are visitors in their wilderness homes. We do everything possible to avoid stressing and impacting them as they go about the usual business of their daily lives and foraging for food. They are intelligent, often playful and always very entertaining. Guests regularly comment that seeing the grizzlies in the wild is the highlight of their vacation trip.

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On all our wildlife viewing tours safety is first and foremost for both the wildlife and our guests. We are especially vigilant and safety conscious on our bear viewing excursions. Our guides are experienced, qualified professionals. Knowing and recognizing bear body language plays an important role in safe viewing.

All the seasons in the Cariboo Mountains are spectacular in their mountain beauty. The splendor of autumn is particularly magical and enchanting as the withdrawal of summer heralds the coming of autumn with its crisp cool mornings and warm sunlit days.

Cariboo Mountains Park & Cariboo River Park

Meet the Cariboo Mountains "Bear Whisperer™"!

Gary Zorn has a passion for the big bears – the grizzlies. He has the distinction of holding the **first bear viewing licence** ever issued in British Columbia. We are the only bear viewing specialists that follow the bears through the seasons – spring, summer and fall – from the time the bears leave their dens until they re-den in late fall. With Gary you will meet the Cariboo Mountains grizzly bears in their wild natural habitat. Gary has devoted his life studying the social hierarchy, habits, habitat and body language of these creatures while communing with them on their turf. Grizzlies, one of the largest predatory and most solitary species, with their razor sharp claws, big demeanor, tell-tale hump over the shoulder and dished nose are unmistakable - the undisputed iconic signature species of the Canadian wilderness. From the wetlands to the alpine travel the trails of these great animals with Gary. He knows the bears intimately - their unique habits, temperaments, family units and colorings. While amongst the grizzlies, Gary thinks like a bear. As he communicates with the bears he speaks in a soft monotone, and filled with his special brand of humour, he conveys calmness but can also convey a stern command – “Hey, bear, how’s the fishin’?”. “Enough bear, back off now”. These bears are wild, free and unhabituated. With over 30 years experience Gary maintains a constant and vigilant respect for the bears. His most often repeated advice in bear viewing – “Grizzly Bears are wild animals. Remain calm. Never run from a bear.” High safety standards ensure guests enjoy this unique experience and see some of Canada's premier wildlife safely and in close proximity, ideal for photography and just experiencing nature in the raw. Whether you are viewing the bears on the rivers by jetboat going about their daily business and enjoying a salmon feast or feeding on Solomon seals (*Polygonatum multiflorum*) and grasses or grubbing out marmots in the high mountain valleys, it is an experience you will remember and treasure forever.

Observe the “cycle of life” as the clear glacial waters of the Mitchell River run red with the returning sockeye salmon. One of the life's blood rivers of the Quesnel Lake watershed and one of the major salmon producing rivers in the province, the habitat it provides is shared by the resident trout and the salmon. The salmon return from the Pacific Ocean through the Fraser River system and the Quesnel River into the watershed. They make their way to the Mitchell River, Horsefly River and tributary creeks and streams where they spawn and complete their life cycle. As the salmon return the Grizzly bears also return to the river. This adventure provides exceptional grizzly bear watching and photography opportunities as the bears feast on salmon and ready themselves for their winter hibernation. Along with the grizzlies the river is lined with eagles, bald and golden, also feasting on the salmon carcasses. This exquisite river ecosystem provides a unique study opportunity for naturalists and photographers.

The Cariboo River originates among the mountain peaks and glaciers in Cariboo Mountains Park. The glacial waters follow a rugged path of waterfalls and rapids through steep boulder strewn canyons, Cariboo River Park, and Cariboo Lake to its confluence with Quesnel River at the site of the historic gold rush ghost town of Quesnel Forks. The Cariboo River is spectacularly beautiful with amazing crystal blue-green churning waters. This river hosts the largest bodied Chinook (King) Salmon run in the interior of British Columbia making it a “grizzly bear buffet”. It is an amazing sight to see these big King Salmon, that can exceed 60 pounds, attempting to jump the waterfalls to return to their spawning grounds. The Cariboo's long runs and deep pools are also ideal habitat for it's big bull trout and rainbows. It's incredible river ecosystem provides critical habitat for wildlife, especially moose, grizzly bears, waterfowl and furbearers such as pine marten, fisher and weasels.

As you watch the cycle of the salmon and the antics of the native wildlife you are likely to see many species of birds including ducks, geese, blue herons, trumpeter swans, dippers (water ouzels), loons, whiskey jacks (gray jays), sapsuckers, woodpeckers, grouse, swifts and many more. Native wildlife in the area includes the mountain grizzlies, mountain goats, mountain caribou, mule deer, moose, black bears, and a host of smaller furbearers such as otters, beavers, lynx, wolf, wolverine, pine martens, chipmunks, squirrels and more. Don't miss this natural history wilderness adventure. This is one of the few places on earth where this cycle of life remains in tact in the wild – untamed and undisturbed.

Picture yourself on the shore of Quesnel Lake, the deepest fjord lake on earth, with the sun rising over the snowcapped mountain peaks to illuminate the brilliantly colored yellows, oranges and reds mixed in with the shades of green of the surrounding forests. The crisp, lightly frosted morning comes alive with the sounds of nature and woodland life surrounded by magnificent snowcapped mountains, ancient forests with trees over 1000 years old, wildlife, birds, unique eco-systems, and outstanding beauty. Ecotours-BC has many unforgettable scenes like this.

We use jetboats to access the rivers and then quietly drift down river giving you an up close and personal view of the rivers, the ecosystems and the wildlife inhabitants. It is a unique and very safe way to view bears and enjoy the wilderness rivers in the Cariboo Mountains.

Come and join Gary and Ecotours – BC for this unique experience. Hear his engaging and often humorous bear stories and learn about these magnificent animals from his knowledge and experience in the world of the great bears. A truly Canadian wilderness adventure this is not just a grizzly bear viewing trip. It's a pure intimate experience with nature – one that has the power to enlighten and redefine one's inner self.

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About Ecotours-BC and The Cariboo Mountains Adventure

In the heart of British Columbia in the Cariboo Mountains surrounding the deepest fjord lake on earth is the rare temperate rainforest found nowhere else on earth. In the Quesnel Lake watershed, which drains some 12,000 square kilometers of land, water is the essence of the sustainability of the vibrant and abundant life forms found within it. Through spring and summer the high alpine explodes in a kaleidoscope of color as the wild flowers burst into full bloom – asters, glacier lilies, solomon's seal, monkey flower, Indian paint brush, wild rhododendron, mountain harebell and a myriad of others. The lush valley bottom ecosystems provide food and shelter for countless species, including Grizzly Bears and black bears, water fowl, furbearers, ungulates, butterflies, and a whole other plant world. In the rivers of these valley bottoms the bull trout and rainbow trout share their habitat with the salmon – sockeye, coho and Chinook. This natural place – remote, wild and endlessly green – refreshes your soul and cleanses your inner spirit.

Ecotours – BC is a grass roots outdoor adventure guide service offering extraordinary wilderness experiences. Grizzly bear watching and wildlife viewing is our specialty. Situated in the heart of one of the most unique and diverse areas on earth, the Quesnel Lake watershed has its own unique micro-climatic zone on the western slopes of the Cariboo Mountains. Experience it first hand with our capable, knowledgeable guides including local experts, people recognized nationally in their fields of expertise whether it be entomology, botany, biology, bryology and ornithology. Whether you come for the sheer pleasure of observing nature and life in this unique ecosystem, or whether you are a novice or amateur naturalist or a research expert, you will find much to challenge your interests when you join us on an ecotour in the Cariboo Mountains.

The Cariboo Mountains watershed area includes a unique cross section of biogeoclimatic zones, which make it a rare and interesting nature study. The region runs the gamut from Old Growth interior cedar – hemlock to Engelmann spruce – subalpine forests, and including northern spruce, willow and birch of the subalpine zones and alpine tundra of the high mountains. This results in a very mixed climate ranging from warm and dry summers to crisp, beautiful sunny autumn days long, cold winters and short, cool, growing seasons in portions of the area. This cross section also creates an unusually productive area for plant and animal life. It makes the wetlands a particularly rich staging area and home habitat for a varied and numerous bird population of over 250 species. This area also is rich in history. It is the heart of the 1860's Cariboo Gold Rush and there are many authentic and interesting historical sites remaining from the gold rush days.

Why Ecotours-BC?

We are often asked what is unique about our tours. The pure intrinsic value of tours with Ecotours-BC lies in your total immersion and connection with nature. Experience the natural world and wild creatures in their natural habitat with all your senses. We put you on the inside of the forest - seeing with the eyes of the forest – and you become one with nature and the wild creatures. It is a pure natural nature connection engaging all your senses. It's pure joy. And when you look back at the pictures you have taken its not just a picture of a bear or a moose or a bird or a mountain peak, or the ancient forest it's an experience that brings back the complete lifetime memory of the adventure and maybe even a life changing moment.

Note: Our lodge offers a comfortable retreat for your wilderness bear/wildlife viewing excursion. We recommend you allow a minimum of at least 2 days (3 or more is better) so that you have the best opportunities to see the bears and wildlife. We request that you arrive at the lodge the evening before your tour begins for an orientation session and also because of our early morning starts. Guests need to ensure they are prepared for all types of weather with warm clothing, full rain gear – pants and jacket - and waterproof footwear. Please let us know of any special dietary requirements, physical impediments or medical conditions we should be aware of at time of booking.

Packages Include: Accommodations, meals, guides, necessary motorized equipment (boats, motors, vehicles), orientation and interpretive information, house wine or beer with dinner. Depending on the trip chosen guests need to bring camera (preferably with a telephoto lens), memory cards/film, a good pair of binoculars, sturdy footwear, backpack, day pack sack, hat, rain gear, gloves, clothing that can be layered – fleece or wool is best, personal toiletries.

Not Included: International airfares, staff appreciation gratuities, liquor, applicable Canadian taxes, Wilderness Stewardship Levy, ground transport from/to Williams Lake airport is available. Single supplement is 30%. (Recommended gratuities for staff – 10% of package cost.)

Payment & Cancellation Policy: Bookings are confirmed with a 50% deposit with the balance due 60 days prior to arrival. In the event of cancellation 60 days prior to your scheduled arrival, and we can rebook your reserved space, the deposit can be applied for an alternative date in the same season or the following year. All payments are final and nonrefundable. Payments may be made by bank transfer (recommended), or personal cheque. Prices are subject to change without notice. Bookings confirmed with a deposit are guaranteed.

Note: Ecotours – BC reserves the right to cancel or modify services as weather and local conditions warrant without notification in the interest of safety of all concerned. We view wild animals in their natural habitat. The animals are totally wild and unhabituated. This is natural wildlife viewing of animals in their natural habitat. There are no viewing platforms, no baiting and the animals are not enclosed in any wildlife preserve. With natural wildlife viewing there are a number of variables that are out of our control including weather conditions,

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natural instincts and movements of the wildlife, and human capabilities. We do not guarantee wildlife sightings but do our best to take guests to optimal locations giving them the best opportunities for viewing wildlife. Guests are required to sign a waiver of liability prior to participation in activities.

Important Trip Planning Notes – Being prepared is an important part of maximizing your wilderness adventure experience and making it an unforgettable experience. At the time of booking we provide you with a recommended equipment list to assist you with packing for your tour with us. Please note we do not accept liability for any circumstances which may result in the failure/cancellation of your holiday arrangements which may be due to unusual or unforeseeable circumstances or events beyond our control or that we, our agents, suppliers and associates could have anticipated or avoided. We do not carry health, life, or personal property insurance for guest benefit. As of March 2016 international travelers to Canada require an **Electronic Travel Authorization (eTA)**. Please visit the Government Of Canada Immigration Website for more information - <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/visit/eta.asp>.

Insurance: You need to purchase trip cancellation insurance as well as extended medical insurance to cover life and health care risks while in Canada, emergency evacuation insurance (please ensure it includes wilderness activities), and personal property insurance to insure your personal belongings against loss/damage. Proof of insurance is required prior to trip commencement.

Custom packages of longer or shorter duration can be formatted to suit you or your group's itinerary. Please inquire for family/group rates and availability. References available on request.

