

BERING SEA WILDERNESS: PRIBILOFS, KATMAI & KODIAK

ABOARD NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION
ONE VOYAGE ONLY | JULY 9, 2019



Lindblad
Expeditions



NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC

DEAR TRAVELER,
Do you know the
name Kim Heacox?

If you've traveled
with us over the



years, especially to Alaska, you
probably do; and if you love good
writing, you definitely do. If you
don't know Kim, his engaging
personality, or his work, I'm delighted
to introduce him to you here. As we
prepare to lead our first expedition
into the legendary Bering Sea, we
asked Kim, the definitive naturalist,
explorer, and Alaskan, for his
experiences and memories. I hope
his words stir your soul and motivate
you to join us. On behalf of our entire
expedition team, we look forward to
blazing an adventurous trail across
the Bering Sea with you.

All the best,

A stylized, handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Sven Lindblad'.

Sven Lindblad

MY WILD ALASKA

BY KIM HEACOX



Kim Heacox is a
former ranger in
Katmai, Denali and
Glacier Bay National
Parks. He's written 15
books, most recently
the Alaska memoirs
The Only Kayak and
Rhythm of the Wild,
the biography *John
Muir and the Ice That
Started a Fire*, and
the novel, *Jimmy
Bluefeather*, the only
work of fiction in
20-plus years to win
the National Outdoor
Book Award. Learn
more about him at
www.kimheacox.com.

Vitus Bering? Who's he? I found him deep in the windowless basement of my public library together with other great discoverers: Magellan, Drake, Cook, Vancouver, Shackleton, Scott... and Bering. Really?

I was twelve.

Hungry for adventure and wild beauty, I read about this daring Dane who sailed under the Russian flag in 1728, and again in 1741, in search of the northwest coast of North America. The Russians wanted to know where exactly America began. What was it like? Could they take possession of it? And where did Russia end?

Little did Bering know that the Aleutian Islands swing like a mammoth's tusk 1,200 miles west from the Alaska Peninsula, and cradle above them the shallow sea that would one day bear his name. A sea abounding in fish, seals and whales; a sea punctuated by treeless, flower-strewn, cliff-edged islands that host seabirds by the millions. Puffins, kittiwakes, fulmars, auklets, cormorants and murre, to name a few. A sea that didn't exist 20,000 years ago when glaciers ruled the earth, and sea level was roughly 300 feet lower than it is today, and a massive causeway, the so-called Bering Land Bridge, connected Asia and North America, providing an immigration route for the first Americans into their new continent.

Everything begins and ends here in the northernmost reaches of the North Pacific. Bering found Alaska, alright, and thanks to his capable doctor and naturalist, a feisty German named Georg Wilhelm Steller, his expedition made many

important discoveries. But neither Bering nor Steller made it back home. Their final journey is a story of discovery and loss fitting for a Jack London novel, and the best modern day expedition voyaging.

Go.

Everything here is outsized somehow, bigger in life and legend, story and song, and yet at times wondrously resilient, detailed and small. It's a world of volcanoes and birds; of blue arctic foxes and wildflower carpets and vast tidal flats and shaggy coastal brown bears and salmon streams and rafts of sea otters—that remarkable marine mammal, called “soft gold” for its prized pelt—that fetched huge prices on the Chinese market and kicked off the Russian occupation of Alaska for 126 years.

The Aleut people still live here, many with Russian names and the voices of their ancestors residing in small churches and cemeteries with white picket fences, and bald eagles that perch on the orthodox crosses while fishermen mend their nets.

This is the earth still wet with dew.

I'll be forever grateful that I found those library books that enlarged my world and lead me to this fabled island geography, an Alaska that still colors my imagination and enriches my life. I close my eyes and see them still, the volcanoes, eagles, otters and bears, and hear them, all in concert with each other. Music in the key of beauty and sea.

(continues on pages 2-8)

Pribilof Islands

Within my first few minutes on the Pribilof Islands, I saw three species of birds I'd never seen before—in the thousands: red-legged kittiwakes, least auklets, and thick-billed murre. Clouds of birds. Zooming overhead 24/7, calling out and trilling in a wonderful chorus of exuberance and new life. Add to that Lapland longspurs, snow buntings and a Pribilof subspecies of the gray-crowned rosy finch, all singing up the summer.

On the spectacular sea cliffs that rim the islands, I found a single small rocky ledge with two species of puffins, tufted and horned, each a jewel, a gem, their plumage and ornate keratin-sheathed bills like works of art. On another ledge were three species of auklets: least, parakeet, and crested. And when I reached back to get something from my pack, a blue arctic fox was 30 feet away, sizing me up.

The fox, hunting for eggs, disappeared into a soft fog, but then returned an hour later, and bedded down in the lush vegetation, watching me, his whiskered face framed by wildflowers—lupines, louseworts, monkshood and buttercups—sparkled with droplets of water.

I walked to a breeding colony of northern fur seals, the signature marine mammal of these islands. Belching and bellowing, they were going about their business, like the birds, fiercely determined to bring forth another generation in a changing world.

Scientists monitor the seals' numbers and reproductive rates, and make cautious conclusions, and ask us to listen, to be aware of what's going on and how we might best keep these islands vibrant and alive, the symphony they've always been.



Colony of Northern Fur Seals on rocky shore of St. Paul Island.



Clockwise from left: Horned puffins on the cliffs at Zapandi Seabird Colony, Pribilof Islands; Blue phase Arctic fox, Pribilof Islands; Red-legged Kittiwakes breed at only five to six locations in the world, all in the Bering Sea; Red-legged and black-legged Kittiwakes, Pribilof Islands.







Katmai Coast

We were supposed to get married that summer. Then Katmai National Park called with job offers for Melanie and me. "It's the most remote posting in the entire US National Park Service. You'll patrol 120 miles of crazy beautiful coastline in a 17-foot Zodiac. It's the wildest place in the world. I mean it. You'll see bears every day. It's the real Alaska. Oh yeah, and you'll stay in the old fish and game cabin in Amalik Bay. But first, you'll need to rebuild it."

We laughed. Marriage could wait. We went to Katmai and had one of the best summers of our lives.

*Every evening we had all of Alaska to ourselves. We'd make dinner (pasta again?), sit on the porch, and watch bears patrol the beach 100 meters away. We gave them names, just as Alaska author Sherry Simpson would in her profound book, *The Dominion of Bears*. But her names were better: *The Metaphorical Bear, The Hungry Bear, The Social Bear, The Fearsome Bear, The Watched Bear, The Predatory Bear* and so on. We saw them all.*

*We ran our Zodiac everywhere, hovering off shore to watch bears dig for clams, catch salmon, wrestle in the tall beach grass, play with crab buoys, and sleep in the sun. We watched mothers walking about with cubs riding on their backs. We watched sunrise light hit them in a way that made them appear lambent, as if illuminated from within. *The Luminous Bear*. We lived with bears all that summer, our wild Katmai year, and came to regard them as our neighbors. And when we left, we cried.*

We got married the next summer, 32 years ago, exchanging vows on handmade stationary patterned with bear prints, as if they, too, were part of our ceremony, part of our lives.

Peninsula Brown Bear fishing for salmon, Katmai National Park, Alaska.

Kodiak Island

I was in a Zodiac with some other people, at the tiller with the engine off, drinking up the quiet beauty as we bobbed off the wild and rocky coast of Kodiak Island when I told the story—everybody likes a good story—about the 1912 eruption of Novarupta. “It was ten times more powerful than the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens. It sent volcanic ash around the world several times, and turned day into night in the little town of Kodiak. Alaskans worried that things would never again be the same; that the fish, birds and whales would never return with their awesome life-giving abundance and determination. But you know,” I added, “nature is resilient.” And the minute I said that, a minke whale surfaced right next to us, its percussive exhale like an exclamation point.

That afternoon, we sighted killer whales, and watched strings of cormorants and murrelets winging over the cross-grained sea, returning home to feed their chicks. In nearly every direction we looked, we could say, “This is how it must have appeared 500 years ago. This is primal America, still young.”

Two-thirds of Kodiak Island is a wildlife refuge (that contains 117 salmon-bearing streams). Coastal brown bears here are among the largest in the world.

I’ve visited the town of Kodiak maybe half a dozen times, and always marveled at the people, their greasy-sleeve work ethic and firm handshakes and friendly smiles; their commitment to conserve what they have. Yes, they reap the bounty. They also make darn sure it’s there for the future.

Of all ocean fisheries in the world, only about 6% are considered healthy—not polluted or over-fished. This is one of them, the best of the best, thanks in large part to careful management by the State of Alaska and the US federal government, and willing participants.

Every Christmas, when communities all over Alaska hold their annual bird count, Kodiak often has the highest number of species. The forests here are verdant, the rivers are pure, and the bountiful sea abides.

Here, then, is a chance to see things done right, to see all things possible in a sustainable world.



*Left to right: Red-faced
Cormorant in flight over the
Bering Sea; Aerial view of Kodiak
Island, Alaska; Holy Resurrection
Russian Orthodox Cathedral.*





Orca whales are found patrolling the waters around Kodiak Island.



BERING SEA WILDERNESS: PRIBILOFS, KATMAI, AND KODIAK

13 DAYS/12 NIGHTS—ABOARD *NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION*

PRICES FROM: \$16,230 to \$31,250 (See page 9.)

JUL. 9: ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, U.S./ NOME/EMBARK

Arrive in Anchorage and fly to Nome, Alaska. Embark *National Geographic Orion*. (D)

JUL. 10: AT SEA/CROSSING THE BERING STRAIT

Spend the first day at sea crossing this iconic body of water. If conditions permit, we may stop at the very remote Little Diomed Island, in the center of the Strait. (B,L,D)

JUL. 11: PROVIDENIYA, RUSSIAN FEDERATION

At the western limit of the rich transboundary area known as Beringia, Provideniya is often called “The Gateway to the Arctic”. It’s the administrative center where we will conduct our clearance in Russia. Visit the excellent museum, and witness a traditional Yupik dance. (B,L,D)

JUL. 12-14: AT SEA/PRIBILOF ISLANDS, U.S.

A naturalist’s paradise, the Pribilof Islands welcome three million seabirds and a million marine mammals each summer as they arrive to breed. Go ashore at St. Paul to explore, and at St. George go by Zodiac to view puffins, kittiwakes and red-faced cormorants, as well as a northern fur seal rookery. (B,L,D Daily)

JUL. 15 & 16: UNALASKA/ALASKA PENINSULA

This morning, arrive at Dutch Harbor, site of a

fierce WWII battle and now one of the world’s most important fishing ports. Continue to the Baby Islands, just east of Unalaska, where dynamic tides offer exciting potential to spot sea otters and fur seals, both from the ship’s deck and from Zodiacs. Continue along the eastern shore of the Alaska Peninsula, with time for exploration and wildlife watching. (B,L,D Daily)

JUL. 17: SHUMAGIN ISLANDS

Go ashore on Unga Island to explore incredible tundra and the scattered remains of a unique petrified forest of sequoia trees that were buried in a volcanic mudslide nearly 25 million years ago. (B,L,D)

JUL. 18: KATMAI NATIONAL PARK

Spend today exploring the shorelines and waters of coastal Katmai National Park & Preserve, known for its abundant brown bear population. This area provides countless opportunities to watch and photograph bears digging for clams at low tide, or fishing for salmon in the creeks. (B,L,D)

JUL. 19: KODIAK ISLAND

The second largest island in the U.S., Kodiak is best known for its brown bears and its fishing industry. Less well known is its unique mix of Native Alutiiq and Russian-American history. Join your Undersea Specialist for a “dock walk” among the commercial fishing



boats in Kodiak’s inner harbor. Photograph the beautiful Holy Resurrection Church on a photo walk, or peruse native art and artifacts at the Alutiiq Museum. Later, explore one of the island’s outer bays by Zodiac. (B,L,D)

JUL. 20: EXPLORING THE KENAI PENINSULA

Nearly 40 glaciers flow out of Kenai’s Harding Icefield, so the opportunities for exploration abound. Cruise one of the ice-scoured fjords to the face of a tidewater glacier, while searching for wildlife along the way. (B,L,D)

JUL. 21: SEWARD/DISEMBARK/ ANCHORAGE/HOME

Arrive in Seward this morning, transfer to the airport in Anchorage for flights home or onward. (B)



Parakeet auklets, Pribilof Islands.

EXPEDITION DETAILS

DATES: 2019 Jul. 9

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC PHOTOGRAPHER

Join Ralph Lee Hopkins on this departure.

[Learn more at expeditions.com/photo](http://expeditions.com/photo)

SPECIAL OFFER:

Book by Oct 31, 2018 and receive **FREE ROUND-TRIP** airfare from Seattle. (Seattle-Anchorage-Nome-Anchorage-Seattle) Plus, we will cover your bar tab and tips to the crew.



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ORION

The state-of-the-art *National Geographic Orion* is a modern, fully stabilized, ice-class vessel with a reinforced hull.

CAPACITY: 102 guests in 53 outside cabins. **OVERALL LENGTH:** 338 ft. **REGISTRY:** Bahamas.

PUBLIC AREAS: Outdoor café, lounge with bar, restaurant, sundeck, reception desk, observation lounge and library, global gallery, fitness center, sauna, and marina platform.

MEALS: All meals are served in a single seating with unassigned tables for an informal atmosphere and easy mingling. The cuisine is international with local flair.

CABINS: All cabins feature ocean views, private facilities, climate controls, and a flat-screened TV. Equipped with Ethernet and Wi-Fi connections and USB ports for mobile devices. Some cabins have French balconies.

SPECIAL FEATURES: Zodiac landing craft, kayaks, ROV (Remotely Operated Vehicle), underwater video camera, crew's nest camera, laundry, full-time doctor, National Geographic photographer and Lindblad-National Geographic certified photo instructor, undersea specialist, video chronicler, wellness specialist.

Prices are per person, double occupancy unless indicated otherwise.

CATEGORY 1: \$18,590

Main Deck with oval window #316, 318-321

CATEGORY 2: \$21,990

Main Deck with oval window #302-312, 314, 315, 317

CATEGORY 3: \$26,250

Upper Deck—Suite with window #401-412, 414-419

CATEGORY 4: \$28,450

Bridge Deck—Deluxe suite with window #511, 515

CATEGORY 5: \$33,970

Bridge Deck—Suite with balcony #501, 503-506, 508

CATEGORY 6: \$39,300

Bridge Deck—Owner's suite with balcony #502, 507, 509*, 510 *Cabin 509 has two windows in lieu of balcony.

CATEGORY 1 SOLE OCCUPANCY: \$27,890

Main Deck with oval window or two portholes #301, 322, 323

CATEGORY 3 SOLE OCCUPANCY: \$39,390

Bridge Deck—Suite with two windows #512

Note: Sole occupancy cabins available in Categories 1 and 3. Shared accommodations available in Categories 1 and 2. Note: Third person rates available at one-half the double occupancy rate in designated triple occupancy cabins.

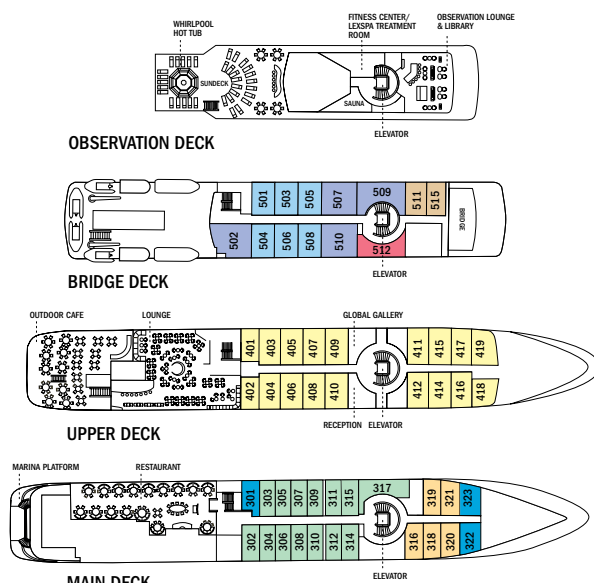
Sample airfares: Round trip Seattle/Anchorage: Economy from \$400; First class from \$900. Charter airfare: Anchorage/Nome from \$305.

For Reservations: Contact your travel advisor or Lindblad Expeditions

1.800.EXPEDITION (1.800.397.3348) **WWW.EXPEDITIONS.COM**



From top: Spacious Category 3 cabin; main lounge.



Terms & Conditions: For complete terms and conditions please visit www.expeditions.com/terms

Free Air: Must book by October 31, 2018. Free air is Seattle-Anchorage-Nome, Anchorage-Seattle, and is based on round-trip group economy flights that must be ticketed by Lindblad Expeditions. In the case that Lindblad's group flights are no longer available at time of booking, we reserve the right to issue a credit. This offer is valid for new bookings only, subject to availability at time of booking, and may not be combined with other offers.

Costs Include: All accommodations aboard ship or in hotels per itinerary or similar, all meals and beverages aboard ship (except certain super-premium brands of alcohol), shore excursions, sightseeing and entrance fees, special access permits, transfers to and from group flights, use of kayaks, tips (including gratuities to ship's crew), taxes and service charges, services of a ship physician and services of our expedition staff. Unused services or items included in our programs are non-refundable.

Not Included: Extensions, passport, visa, immigration fees, meals not indicated, travel protection plan, items of a personal nature, such as e-mail, voyage DVD, laundry.

Sample Airfare: Seattle/Anchorage and Anchorage/Seattle: Economy from \$400; First class from \$900, are subject to change. We will gladly assist in making your air arrangements for a \$50 per person service fee.

Advance Payment: \$2,500 due at time of booking.

Responsibility and Other Terms & Conditions: Certain provisions concerning, among other things, limitations of Lindblad Expeditions' and the National Geographic Society's liability for loss of property, injury, illness or death during the voyage will be provided to all guests on the ship's ticket sent prior to departure, and are also available on our website at www.expeditions.com/terms, or upon request.

By registering for a trip, the guest agrees to all such terms and conditions.

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RAC-078

FREE ROUND-TRIP AIR

FROM SEATTLE | BOOK BY OCTOBER 31, 2018

SEE PAGE 9 FOR DETAILS.

