

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Soaring Eagles, Spyhopping Whales and Snow White Spirit Bears

An Aboriginal view of British Columbia's Wildlife

(Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) ---British Columbia offers up an abundance of spectacular wildlife viewing opportunities, set within a pristine wilderness that soothes the mind and soul. Travelers' spirits recharge while paddling in the orca realm, viewing dolphins, porpoises, eagles, seals and sea lions. And during the fall, visitors are rewarded with views of black bears, grizzly bears and eagles feeding on the spawning salmon.

Wildlife viewing with Aboriginal tour operators offers the opportunity for visitors to view whales, marine life, bears and bald eagles and many other species, as well as enjoy interpretive forest, desert and beach walking tours, all enhanced through their unique cultural perspective.

The First Nations of British Columbia consider the living creatures around them as kin to be respected. Because of their relationship with the land and all within, they offer a unique perspective to wildlife and nature tours. They introduce guests to nature and share the interpretation of their culture, legends and traditions. While enjoying all the comforts of modern life, visitors begin to see the nature around them differently, understanding the inter-relationship of all things as the indigenous people always have.

Along the west coast and Inside Passage of British Columbia, visitors can join interpretive sea kayak tours and cruises through scenic, sheltered waters that have year-round resident and migratory whales such as humpback, gray, orca and minke whales; or take an interpretive nature walk along the shore looking for starfish, shellfish and sea-urchins while learning about historical methods of harvesting. Evenings are spent in comfortable lodging, in locations where the sky is blanketed with starlight, undiminished by city lights.

The Great Bear Rainforest is an area that is rich in biodiversity, where the Kitasoo Xaixais people have lived in harmony with nature for thousands of years. This region is a treasure of nature, a land of ancient temperate forests and exotic species of wildlife, including the magnificent and elusive Kermode, or Spirit Bear. This bear is a unique subspecies of the North American black bear which is white or cream-coloured. The mid-coast region of British Columbia is the only place in the world where this species of bear can be found. Visitors who come to the Great Bear Rainforest travel in small groups by motorboat, explore the cultural and ecological wonders of the area and sleep in cozy wilderness cabins. With luck, the elusive Spirit Bear will make an appearance!

In the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast region of central British Columbia, a guided hike or exhilarating jetboat ride takes guests through the spectacular scenery of a semi-arid desert canyon carved by the mighty Chilcotin & Fraser Rivers, surrounded by mystical

hoodoo formations and sweet smelling sagebrush. Wildlife such as Big Horn Sheep, Bald and Golden Eagles, Black Bear and Mule Deer are common sights throughout the region. Visitors can also experience First Nation culture in the region, sampling traditional foods, visiting ancient pictographs, sand dunes, old village sites and experiencing traditional Salmon dip netting first hand.

The Aboriginal Tourism Association of British Columbia (ATBC) website provides information on the diverse indigenous peoples in each region, including an introduction to culture, history, and heritage. Many Aboriginal-operated tour experiences including wildlife viewing can be found on this website. Additionally, accommodation, cultural centres, restaurants, cultural events and festivals are featured, along with travel information and suggested itineraries to assist tourists with their vacation planning to British Columbia. The website also offers an opt-in for the bi-monthly e-newsletter and brochures featuring ATBC members are available upon request.

For more information on the array of Aboriginal wildlife and nature viewing experiences available in British Columbia, visit www.aboriginalbc.com.

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Media Contact:

Nora Weber

TerraCom Communications Group

P: 604 504 4457

E: noraw@terracomgroup.net