



Photographing Polar Bears and Arctic Wildlife in Churchill, Canada with Gregory Sweeney

29 October – 3 November 2020

\$ 4,800 (USD)

Every October and November, polar bears congregate in the Churchill area to await the return of the sea ice and access to their preferred prey: the ringed seal. This is one of the largest congregations of polar bears and is very easily to access from Churchill and the surrounding wildlife areas. It is the perfect opportunity for photographers and wildlife lovers to experience bears as well as close encounters with arctic foxes, caribou, and snowy owls in their habitat.



We will be based at the Churchill Northern Study Centre along the Hudson Bay coastline and venture out to photograph polar bears and other wildlife each day and perhaps see Northern Lights and spectacular night skies from their viewing decks and observatory dome. The Centre also has a library, recreational spaces, and active research facilities.

We tour the Churchill Wildlife Management Area for 1 day on a tundra vehicle with an outside observation deck experiencing the tundra, boreal forest, and marine biomes and their wildlife. Not all bear tour companies in Churchill have the required permits to explore the full Wildlife Management Area, but we will travel with those that do possess one of the few permits for the year. The specialized vehicles go where no other vehicle can navigate and you get a real sense of the arctic landscape that is home to the polar bear during this season.



We will also have a private van for traveling around Churchill's wild areas for 2 of our days. These days we can make our own pace and also concentrate on other species if we wish while looking for more bears. On our arrival day in Churchill we will have a half day tour planned. On this day we can view wildlife, the local museum, and artist shops.

The Northern Studies Centre is surrounded by wilderness and immersed in the beauty of this area. We often see wildlife right outside our windows and can enjoy the night sky and on a lucky occasion, the Northern Lights. This trip is limited to 8 guests and photography host, Gregory Sweeney, will accompany you.



Itinerary

We will meet in Winnipeg; stay overnight in an airport hotel then fly in the early morning to Churchill. Once in Churchill we transfer to the Northern Studies Centre located 23km outside of Churchill inside the Wildlife Management Area. The Centre will be our base for the 3 nights while we enjoy the arctic wildlife. After lunch at the facility and meeting its researchers, We will venture out until late afternoon in our van to see wildlife and highlights in town. After dinner we have time for stargazing and night photography. With luck the northern lights will be active. We will have 3 full days of full day photography outings. After our 3rd night at the Centre we have a full day out photographing, then catch a late flight back to Winnipeg. We stay in a hotel for the night and guests will depart on their own schedule the next morning.

Oct 29: Meet in Winnipeg. Stay in Hotel

Oct 30: Flight from Winnipeg to Churchill. Transfer to Studies Centre, ½ day van tour

Oct 31 Private Van tour for Wildlife and bears

Nov 1: Private Van tour for Wildlife and bears

Nov 2: Bear buggy for the day in the Wildlife Management Area

Return to Churchill. Flight to Winnipeg. Hotel

Nov 3: Depart from Winnipeg airport hotel

(The schedule for van and bear buggy are to be determined and may not occur in the order stated above)



a typical tundra vehicle



Using a Private Van and local guide allow us to photograph outside (if safe)

Trip Fee Includes

Flight to/from Churchill with transfers to and from the CNSC
1 day on tundra vehicle looking for bears and other wildlife
2 days on private van tour for bears and wildlife
½ day tour in private van around town and for wildlife
3 nights at the Northern Study Centre in shared accommodation
Meals while at Northern Study Centre including lunches - meals in Winnipeg, dinner on last day while in Churchill, or during transfers and travel not included
2 nights hotel in Winnipeg (before and after)
Northern Studies Centre membership and tour
Photographer mentor and tour leader

Does not Include

Airfare to/from Winnipeg
Meals and drinks in Winnipeg
Dinner, drinks, and other food while not at CNS Centre or in addition to that provided by the CNSC on wildlife drives
Gratuities for drivers, Study Centre personnel (no gratuity for host is necessary)
Donations, visa fees, phone & Internet charges, laundry, winter clothing rental

Group Size

7 Guests max

Please Note:

There will be other people/groups on the tundra vehicle including our group.
There may be other photo or visitor groups at the Northern Studies Centre during our stay.

Travel Planning

Guests should arrange to fly into the Winnipeg Airport (YWG) on 29st October (or before) and fly out on the 3rd November (Flying out on the 2nd after 11pm is possible, but risky due to frequent delays leaving Churchill)

Accommodation at the Churchill Northern Studies Centre



The Churchill Northern Studies Centre



Reception / Lobby



Outside Observation Deck

The Churchill Northern Studies Centre was founded in 1976 and is an independent, non-profit research and education facility. They provide housing, logistical, workspace, and equipment for scientific researchers working on a range of topics of interest to northern science. The building is situated along the Hudson Bay seacoast and is seeking LEED certification for its low environmental impact construction and operation.

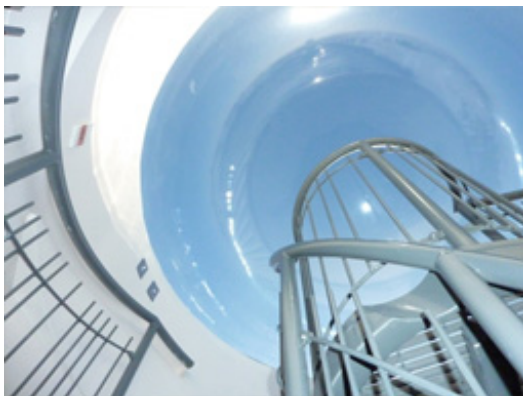
All accommodation at the Centre is shared in 21 guests rooms- up to 84 guests . The rooms have a maximum of four people assigned per room in two bunk beds. During this busy season no private rooms will be available. The rooms also have bedside lights, multiple electric plugs, 4 closets and ample desk space.



Guest Room

The Centre has private shower rooms, laundry available (extra cost), communal male/female segregated washrooms with water saving features.

It is a spacious facility and has many places to relax including a heated observation dome, lounges, cafeteria, audio/video lounge, fitness room, and outdoor observation deck.



Meals are prepared and served in the Centre's cafeteria. Vegetarian, low-salt, gluten-free, and other dietary needs are supported to the best of their ability. The CNSC is a fragrance free workplace: Thank you for not wearing any cologne, after shave, perfume or perfumed products.



Cafeteria

To more photos and a virtual tour of the Churchill Northern Studies Centre try this link:

<https://www.churchillscience.ca/about/the-centre.cfm>