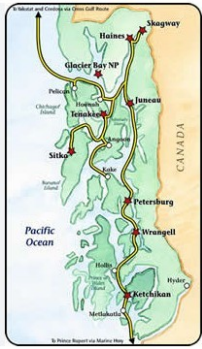


ALASKA BY WAY OF LOCAL FERRY



Our trip through Alaska was another wonderful surprise. We flew up to Seattle and then took a sea plane up to Juneau. We got a cabin on the local Marine Hwy ferry which serves transportation up and down the inland coast. You can get on and off any island you. Perfect way to travel. Cheap and close to the glaciers all the way. First stop was touring the city of Juneau and stopping at the local eatery where Tracy's only serves king crab! Juneau's main city is super clean with colorful old frontier buildings and a bit of city lined flower pots. They have pink- fire weed that gives beauty to the rugged coast. The next day we took a zodiak tour to see the Orca killer whales. We found them. A whole group in a feeding frenzy. These whales are actually in the dolphin family.

They're just beautiful but I must say just knowing they're called "killer whales" makes me a bit afraid of them. We stayed a couple of days in Juneau and then went on a Zodiac tour to Admiralty Island which has the largest density of brown bears in North America. Pack Creek tour has a viewing platform above the creek's mouth so viewers can watch bears catching salmon and eating. That was the highlight of this trip. There must have been twenty bears all swiping into the rushing river and catching fish. There were eagles too. Many eagles, some down on the edges of the river catching their own fish. What a bonanza of wildlife. And then as we were watching, we saw one bear taking her catch to a cave. We thought...could it be? Does she have cubs in that cave? YES, she did and two of them came out to show off. FUN. Two little cubs who couldn't quite get down off the high rocks but one of them actually stood up tall. Both stayed there watched and waited for mom to come back with more food. One bear would get one and then it immediately got away. I mentioned to the guide that that poor bear couldn't keep a fish and he said, "Oh no. He gets them and just wants the females that have roe". Life is good when a bear can be that picky.

Onward we went on to the Le Conte Glacier. We walked on the glacier but getting there was half the fun. We were in a little icebreaker boat and we passed icebergs of all sizes, shapes and some even with color. Some had seals peacefully resting on the slow moving sculptures. And....and we could hear the boat breaking through some of ice floating everywhere under the water. The sounds with the clear sky and cool mist was just perfect. Oh I have great photos. The whole trip was exactly as I had hoped to see Alaska. It was so vast and natural out on the water. It was quite as if it belonged only to nature. It did and I felt blessed to see a part of their world.