

Photography

*When you visit the forest, take it all in and enjoy what you see,
but when go home please leave it behind, let it all be.*

A Seasonal Newsletter

www.stevewphotography.ca

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2011 The Big Launch!

2011 turned into an exciting and very busy year with some rewarding opportunities.

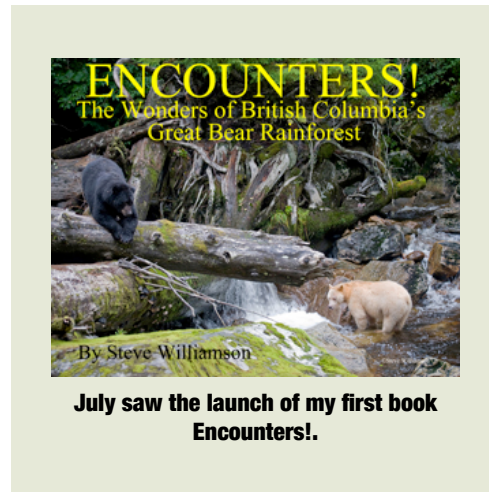
I spent the winter months at the beginning of the year completing the research and finishing touches to my first book - Encounters! The Wonders of British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest. Thanks to the proof reading skills of some friends, some minor modifications were quickly made and it finally made it to the printers in April.

The book was launched in late July at Comox Nautical Days and has been very well received. As well as being reviewed in our local paper the Comox Valley Echo, it was also taken up by the provincial daily, the Times Colonist.

The book tells of my personal discovery of the BC coast and what I learned during my first four years working with conservation charities and photographing wildlife here in BC. It is packed with over 150 photographs and stories of some of the encounters I had and anecdotes I heard from many of the people I met along the way.

An excerpt and some of the photos can be seen on my website.

With the arrival of spring I dusted off my camera gear and set off to photograph some eagles and other birds on and around Vancouver Island. With the herring spawn around this time of year, eagles will migrate up and down the coast and I just love watching them as well as photographing them.



July saw the launch of my first book Encounters!.

This also gave me the opportunity to take along a student, Dan, from our local college. Dan came and spent a week with me out in the field hoping to pick up a few 'tricks of the trade'.

It was good to have him along and looking at some of his pictures lately he's picked up a lot!

May brought the opportunity to go and work at Knight Inlet Lodge (KIL) for the entire season. KIL is an 'eco-tourism' bear viewing lodge on the BC coast, approximately 20 minutes NE as the crow flies, by float plane from Campbell River.

This was too good an opportunity to miss, not only would it give me some prime access to bears throughout the year, but also give me the chance to work alongside a great bunch of people at the same time.

In a season full of many photography highlights, seeing the first bears arrive after hibernation really stands out, as does the arrival on the estuary of the mothers with their newborn cubs.

A first, was seeing a mom & cub, that I'd watched and photographed since the cub was born in 2009, split up to go their separate ways. Only the day before I saw them curled up in the late spring sun sleeping together on the beach.

But early the next morning mom was chasing her confused cub away and quite aggressively too. It was a hard thing to witness, everyone felt for the little guy and wondered about his future. We were fortunate to get to see him throughout the year and he grew into a very handsome subadult bear. By fall, he looked well fed and hopefully should have bedded down for the winter with little trouble. I hope we get to see him again in coming years.





June saw the arrival in the mail of a nationally produced calendar - Wild BC. It featured two of my bear pictures for their 2012 calendar and viewing the quality of the other images in the calendar, I was in some exceptional company. They will also be featuring one of my Orca spyhops taken in 2011 in their 2013 calendar.



Another 2011 'first' saw a local whale watch company use one of my orca shots in their 2011 advertising campaign. The shot, an orca rising out of the water at sunset, was enlarged and used on a roadside hoarding along the main highway north from Nanaimo. It would have been difficult for anyone looking for whale watch trips to have missed it.

Late summer and Canadian Geographic informed me that a photo of a spirit bear I submitted had been selected for their 'Best Wildlife Pictures 2012 Collector's Edition' magazine. When it was published, it was even more rewarding and surprising to find it was the only spirit bear selected! (See my new blog to learn more).

Fall brings the salmon back to BC and the call of the Great Bear Rainforest (GBR) could not go unheard. So once again I boarded the Great Bear II and joined up with Trish and Eric Boyum at 'Ocean Adventures' for a cruise down through the heart of the Great Bear Rainforest.

It was a fantastic trip that included spirit, black and grizzly bears, sometimes all on the same river, humpback whales, an early morning wolf chorus, fantastic scenery and of course many eagles. If you ever want to photograph the GBR, this is the best way to do it; quiet and personal. www.oceanadventures.bc.ca



November and December as always was a very busy time and saw me attending many of the art & craft Christmas shows up and down Vancouver Island.

It is great getting out meeting everyone, telling them about my work and the GBR especially. Most rewarding is helping people to learn something new or being able to encourage youngsters to learn more about our local wildlife and its environment.

2012 will hopefully be as good as 2011. All being well, I should be returning to Knight Inlet Lodge and hope to be able to see how last years bears are doing and what new additions there are for this year, as well as the many regulars.

Also, as many people have asked for me to arrange more photography tours, I hope to have at least one trip to photograph local whales in July.

As always, I'll be at a few shows locally on the Island when I can throughout the year. So if you're out and about at the shows, please stop by and say hi.

I've just finished updating my new website, feel free to check it out. News will appear regularly on the blog page, where you can subscribe for updates and reports 'from the field' or if you'd like to come along on any of the trips I can arrange, this is where they'll be announced.

Have a great year!

Steve

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