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The Best 7 Wildlife Experiences In Canada You Should Do Now



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Travel



Baby fur seal BLANCHONS

As the second largest country in the world with a rich geography—ranging from the icy climate of the north to the temperate rainforests of British Columbia—Canada has an enviable abundance of amazing wildlife. Whether you want to catch a glimpse of a ghostly spirit bear, boat among belugas or laugh along with clown-like puffins, the country offers some of the best animal viewing experiences in the world. Get to know Canada's wild side with these top wildlife experiences.



Spirit Bear in Great Bear Rainforest, BC GREG SHEA/ MAPLE LEAF ADVENTURES

Spy A Spirit Bear

The stuff of legends, the extremely rare spirit bear (also known as a kermode or ghost bear) is actually a subspecies of the black bear but is born with white fur thanks to a double-recessive gene. One of the best ways to glimpse the elusive creature is to set sail with [Maple Leaf Adventures](#) on its Great Bear Rainforest cruise. The voyage gives you incredible access to British Columbia's Great Bear Rainforest, which is one of the few places on earth the spirit bear still roams. As you weave around isolated islands, river ways and breathtaking fjords you'll have the chance to see a host of other awe-inspiring creatures like black bears, grizzly bears, wolves, whales and more. It truly is a once-in-a-lifetime adventure.



Narwhal, Arctic Kingdom Floe Edge Safari MICHELLE VALBERG

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On the Edge in the Arctic

Canada has the largest population in the world of the narwhal, a fantastical whale whose long, lone tusk gives rise to its moniker “unicorn of the sea.” [Arctic Kingdom](#) offers an “Floe Edge Safari” in a spectacular corner of Nunavut. The trip explores the extraordinary ecosystem that opens up in springtime when the ice begins to melt and the frozen shore meets the open sea. The floe edge is a unique opportunity to see pods of narwhals, polar bears, seals, walrus and more. Guests at the heated tent safari camp may also visit a bird sanctuary, travel to traditional Inuit hunting grounds and kayak and snorkel among singular sea creatures.



Frontiers North Big Five Safari ERIC LINDBERG

Canada's Big Five

You don't have to go to Africa to see the big five. Canada's got its own collection of not-to-be-missed, iconic wildlife, which includes moose, black bears, bison, belugas and, of course, the polar bear. The company [Frontiers North Adventures](#) offers a one-of-a-kind, eight-day safari that takes you from the verdant forests of Riding Mountain National Park to the famed frozen tundra of Churchill, Manitoba, the epicenter of Canada's polar bear population. Guests travel by foot, plane, dog cart, bus, Zodiac boat and tundra buggy to discover some of Canada's prime animal-friendly areas and enjoy a series of unforgettable sightings of the country's most quintessential creatures.



Humpback whales GETTY IMAGES

A Whale of A Time

At the confluence of Quebec's St. Lawrence and Saguenay rivers lies the tiny town of Tadoussac, otherwise known as whale central. From May to October, as many as 13 species—like orcas, belugas, humpback and even the endangered blue whale—call the salty, wildlife-rich waters of the St. Lawrence home. At the [Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park](#) you can kayak among the leviathans with an experienced guide or go by sightseeing boat or Zodiac with [Croisières AML Cruises](#). Don't leave without visiting the marvelous [Marine Mammal Interpretation Centre](#) where you can learn to sing like a whale and see life-sized skeletons of these giants of the deep.



Bison at Elk Island National Park EEDC

Where The Buffalo Roam

Few tales of the Old West are complete without a mention or two of a buffalo, the massive beast that once dominated the prairies. Alberta's [Elk Island National Park](#) is a prime place for bison viewing and played an essential role in bringing the wood and prairie bison back from the edge of extinction. Thanks to the hundreds of free-roaming buffalo in the park, it's not uncommon for visitors to experience a traffic jam as the behemoths meander across a road. You can also [book a tour](#) of the bison handling center to learn more about the fascinating creatures. As part of the [Beaver Hills Dark Sky Preserve](#), also Elk Island offers some of the finest star-gazing opportunities in Canada.



Harp seal pup (DE AGOSTINI VIA GETTY IMAGES

Surrounded by Seals

There are few animals that can elicit a prolonged “ah” quite like a fuzzy white baby fur seal, and you’ll find bundles of these babies on Quebec’s incomparable Magdalene island (or Îles de la Madeleine as it’s known in French). This intriguing archipelago is set in the middle of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and is a favorite hang-out for harp seals. At the beginning of March, hundreds of thousands of the seals give birth on the surrounding ice floes. Imagine the jaw-dropping sight of an ice canopy peppered by an army of seals tending to a nursery of barking pups. It’s a striking spectacle.



Atlantic puffins NURPHOTO VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Pleasure of Puffins

With their big, bright beaks, clumsy flying ability and unassuming plumage, the inimitable puffin is impossible not to love. The provincial bird of Newfoundland and Labrador, the province is the ideal spot in North America to see the comedic creatures. The two main puffin viewing sites are the [Witless Bay Ecological Reserve](#) at the town of Elliston. The Reserve hosts the largest puffin colony in North America and features other seabirds that would top any birders must-see list like black-legged kittiwakes, storm-petrels and more. There are a [variety of boat tours](#) offered in the Witless Bay region, many of which combine whales and iceberg sightings with their puffin tours. At [Elliston](#), on the Bonavista Peninsula, [puffins can actually be viewed from shore](#).

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