

Fins & Fiddles: A Canadian Maritimes Cruise With Naturalist Journeys & Caligo Ventures

July 28 – Aug. 7, 2020

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Join Naturalist Journeys on this exciting exploration of Canada's east coast. Visit colorful fishing ports, enjoy lively music, soak in rich history, and witness incredible wildlife: whales, puffins, and more!

Explore the Canadian Maritimes by cruise ship. The islands of Canada's Atlantic coast feature a rich and diverse culture, found in small fishing communities and remote out ports. The area is well known for its Celtic traditions and the music and cuisine of the region is celebrated the world over. Historically, this is one of the most fascinating places in North America.

Our exploration of Eastern Canada's Maritime region starts and ends in the historical town of Louisbourg, situated on Cape Breton Island. The region offers a staggering abundance of wildlife, including prolific birdlife, numerous seal and whale species, and we even encounter the fabled wild horses of Sable Island. Beaches and lagoons provide viewing opportunities for numerous shorebirds and as we cruise towards the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, we hope to see the great baleen whales: Humpback, Minke, and even Blue Whale — as well as Grey and Harp Seals. These rich feeding grounds act as a magnet for wildlife.

This ship-based exploration allows us to visit places that are otherwise inaccessible or difficult to get to for land-based visitors, all achieved within a manageable time frame. Daily shore excursions with expert guides, a range of wonderful activities, and an inspired dining menu make this an ideal way to experience this enchanting region of Canada.

Itinerary

Tues., July 28
Louisbourg | Embarkation

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Cruise aboard the luxurious *RCGS Resolute*
- ✓ Explore the fabled and windswept Sable Island, home to nearly 600 wild horses, the Ipswich Sparrow and one of the largest Gray Seal colonies in the world
- ✓ Get up close and personal to a spectacular array of seabirds, including nesting Atlantic Puffin and Northern Gannet
- ✓ Hike, bike, or paddle on picturesque Prince Edward Island
- ✓ Witness the beautiful sandstone bluffs at Les Isles de la Madeleine in the Gulf of St. Lawrence
- ✓ See Gaspé Peninsula's famous Northern Gannet colony and watch for many of its 300 recorded bird species
- ✓ Enjoy Celtic music in small towns and onboard the ship
- ✓ Explore Gros Morne National Park's soaring cliffs, incredible for photography
- ✓ Enjoy boreal forest birding: Boreal Chickadee, Pine Grosbeak, Bohemian Waxwing and more

Tour Summary

11-Day / 10-Night Canadian Nature Cruise
Starting at \$4995, from Louisbourg, Nova Scotia
Airport is J.A. Douglas McCurdy Sydney Airport (YQY)



Our adventure begins in the historic port town of Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, where we board our expedition vessel, the *RCGS Resolute*. First visited in 1597 by the English, the town was fortified in 1713 by the French in recognition of its strategic maritime location. During the 18th Century, Louisbourg was the third busiest seaport in North America. For those interested, you can visit the Fort of Louisbourg before boarding the ship. We then enjoy a dinner of fresh, local seafood as we sail out past the lighthouse into the North Atlantic.

Wed., July 29 Sable Island

Located on the edge of the Grand Banks, hundreds of kilometers from the coast, Sable Island has a storied history as a ship graveyard, with more than 350 ships falling victim to the treacherous currents and sandbars surrounding the island. Sporadically inhabited by sealers, shipwreck survivors, and salvagers, the island is now home to fewer than six year-round inhabitants, a herd of wild horses, and one of the largest Gray Seal colonies in the world.

This island is also an important stopover for numerous migratory bird species as they make their way to and from the High Arctic regions. While migrants are not going through in July, the island is a national park and bird sanctuary and is the only known nesting place for the Ipswich Sparrow, a subspecies of the Savannah Sparrow. Arctic Tern and the less-abundant Common Tern nest here by the thousands, with a few pairs of Roseate Tern possible to see as well. Both Great Black-backed and Herring Gulls nest here too. Small freshwater ponds occur between dunes stabilized by grasses, and on them we may find broods of American Black Duck or Red-breasted Merganser, with Least Sandpiper often feeding along the grassy sides. American Golden, Black-bellied, and Semi-palmated Plovers greet us on the beach; marine mammals include both Harbor and Gray Seals. Other birds we may encounter include Double-crested Cormorant, Spotted Sandpiper, Red Knot, and Ruddy Turnstone. Conservationists have worked hard to keep exotic plants at bay and to rid the island of feral rats, rabbits, and cats. Seabirds such as Atlantic Puffin, Great and Manx Shearwaters, and Northern Fulmar like the mixing effect of being at the edge of the Continental Shelf, where the mighty Gulf Stream Current collides with the southward flowing and colder Labrador Current.

And of course, we look for the fabled wild horses of Sable Island, thought to descend from horses left by the Acadians in the middle of the 19th Century. Pony-sized and hardy, these pretty horses make for a fantastic scene deep in the islands grasses, thick manes blowing in the ocean breeze.



Thurs., July 30 Baddeck—Nova Scotia

We return to Cape Breton and continue our exploration of this beautiful island by stopping in Baddeck, a village in Victoria County. Watch for Atlantic Puffin and Razorbills as we explore. Other species include Black Guillemot, Great Cormorant, and some very impressive and active Bald Eagle. At sea we may pick up Black-legged Kittiwake and Northern Gannet.

Situated on the northern shore of Bras d'Or Lake, Baddeck is considered by many to be the beginning and end of the Cabot Trail. The summer home of Alexander Graham Bell, which is now a National Historic Site, the village is bustling and vibrant, yet maintains its quaint appeal. Throughout the summer, Baddeck is known for lively street festivals, fireworks, Celtic music, and food. We take our time to explore the village today, taking in the sites, smells, and sounds of this picturesque point of interest.

Fri., July 31 Prince Edward Island

This morning, we are anchored off Greenwich, Prince Edward Island. Today we have plenty of options and we split into several directions to explore this enchanting location. For the history buffs a visit to Charlottetown, the capital and largest city on Prince Edward Island, is a must. For those looking to explore the natural beauty of PEI, a visit to the national park is in order. Look for the Greenwich dunes that became a part of the park in 1998 to protect the iconic area. The parabolic dunes are a rare occurrence in North America and offer a variety of bird species and uncommon marsh and woodland plants for visitors to discover. Additional activities include a deeper exploration of beaches surrounded by the famous red cliffs—try your hand at kayaking or simply take a long walk along the sand. Arriving back to the ship after a busy day, we enjoy a dinner of fresh Atlantic seafood as we navigate north towards the Magdalen Islands.

Sat., Aug. 1 Les Iles de la Madeleine

Sculpted out of sandstone, Les Isles de la Madeleine in the Gulf of St. Lawrence are home to unique fishing communities with beautifully maintained waterfront houses and boats, flowing grassy meadows, and sandstone shorelines sculpted by the elements. In addition to the traditional fishing and sealing culture found in the islands, we encounter a wide diversity of bird and sea life. Europeans first discovered the islands in the mid 15th Century, though it's thought indigenous Miikmaq had been visiting for centuries to hunt. Quebecois and Acadian culture features strongly in the local cuisine, craft, and language. Fishing is still the main occupation here — lobster, rock crab, scallops, mussels, and other fish—and there are about 13,000 year-round residents on this remote archipelago.



The island's gentle terrain is a cyclist's paradise, while the sea kayaking and stand up paddle boarding opportunities through sea arches and into sandstone sea caves are superb. Otherwise you might enjoy a seabird and whale-watching cruise in the zodiacs and on land, birding in the myriad lagoons, wetlands, and dunes. Photographers love the brilliant and rugged red-rock shorelines and in the harbor the kaleidoscope of brightly painted commercial fishing boats.

Sun., Aug. 2 Gaspé Peninsula

At Bonaventure Island we drop the anchor near the town of Percé and explore the island by zodiac. This location has a rich natural, historic, and geological heritage. Sculpted over time by the sea, the island is situated at the tip of the Gaspé Peninsula. The outstanding flora and fauna, including its famous colony of Northern Gannets, make this location a highlight. Common Murre and Black-legged Kittiwake are also plentiful. The island is forested: almost 300 different species of birds have been recorded as visiting, migrating to, or living on Bonaventure Island.

An afternoon visit to the community of Percé provides a window into the rich fishing culture of French-Canada. Scenery is stunning, with the region's red cliffs reaching 75 feet in height. Zodiac cruising, sea kayaking, and stand up paddle boarding are all activities that can be undertaken here, weather permitting. Percé Rock is a Canadian Migratory Bird Sanctuary. Great and Double-crested Cormorants both have active nesting colonies here.

Mon., Aug. 3 Anticosti Island

At the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, far to the north (360 miles from Quebec City) where the river water mixes with Arctic waters and the more temperate Atlantic waters, lies Anticosti Island. We plan to hike along the beaches near the eastern end of the island followed by a zodiac cruise along the cliffs at East Point. We hope to observe several species of shorebirds and seabirds, as well as whales and seals, which are frequent visitors to the island's waters. Many early ornithological expeditions stopped here, curious to map out the life forms of this large and remote island.

The island is mainly limestone, and there are numerous streams and rivers. The north side of the island has cliffs almost 400 feet high, which are frequented by Black Guillemot. Forests are mainly White Spruce, Black Spruce, and Balsam Fir. Common and Red-throated Loons both breed here, as do northern Boreal Forest songbirds



including Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Blackpoll and Bay-breasted Warblers, Common Redpoll, and Pine Grosbeak. Bald Eagle soaring along the shoreline, deer in the woods, and whales just offshore are all common sights here.

Tues., Aug. 4 Gros Morne National Park

Sailing into majestic Bonne Bay, in the heart of Gros Morne National Park, the cliffs soar up out of the water and are covered in a green blanket of tuckamore forest—windswept spruce sculpted by the ocean breeze. At Woody Point we are welcomed ashore by a delegation from the community before hiking up to the excellent interpretation center. From there, various guided walks take us into the World Heritage-listed Tablelands and to the lookout for a view over much of the park! A boreal wetland landscape, featuring dramatic rock ridges, pitcher plants, Boreal Chickadee, Blackpoll Warbler, White-throated Sparrow, and perhaps even a Moose could all be encountered as we explore. With luck we could find Willow Ptarmigan. The twisting mountain road to Trout River makes for a challenging bike ride with our guides; a paddle along the shores of Bonne Bay is another great option.

Wed., Aug. 5 Francois, Newfoundland

The community of Francois, on the south coast of Newfoundland, was settled in the late 1700s. Francois' rich fishing heritage also included operation of a whale factory in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Known as an "out-port" and accessible only by boat or from the air by helicopter, Francois has a deep harbor, which is navigable year-round.

When entering Francois harbor, we are first greeted by one of the few remaining manned light stations on the coast of Newfoundland. Once past the light, the narrow opening leading into the steep-walled rocky fjord amazes us. This is a spectacular location and for many, a highlight of the trip.

Thurs., Aug. 6 Saint-Pierre et Miquelon

Saint-Pierre et Miquelon are a small group of islands situated off the south coast of Newfoundland. They were first settled by the French in the early 17th Century and today the islands are the sole remaining vestige of France's once vast North American empire. Walking down the streets feels like taking a stroll through a provincial French town. There's an excellent Atlantic Puffin colony here and, if weather permits, we cruise in the

zodiacs to see these colorful birds. Tonight we enjoy a special dinner attended by the Captain to mark the end of our voyage through Canada's spectacular Maritime Region.

Fri., Aug. 7 Louisbourg, Nova Scotia

We sail back to Cape Breton across the mouth of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, heading again for the historic port of Louisbourg. We disembark in the morning and, while some of us head to the airport, another option is to add a few extra days in Cape Breton to enjoy one of the gems of Canada's East Coast.

Ship Details: *RCGS Resolute*



In November 2018, a purpose built polar expedition vessel RCGS Resolute joined the *Akademik Ioffe* and *Akademik Sergey Vavilov* under our operator's banner to offer the most capable, safe, and exclusive expedition cruise fleet in the industry.

Designed for comfort, *RCGS Resolute* is modern, well appointed, safe and ice-strengthened. From small group sessions to briefings for all passengers, we have public spaces onboard the ship ideally suited for each and every need. Two separate bar and lounge areas featuring 180 degree views and a wonderfully stocked library provides ideal places to relax or catch up on some reading. The sumptuous meals prepared for you by our culinary team are enjoyed in either of our two dining rooms, one of which features our popular bistro menu offering quick and easy meals for those prioritizing time out on deck. Both dining rooms have ample and open seating paired with modern furnishings and large picture windows with 180-degree views. Other facilities



include our theatre style presentation room, gift-shop, gymnasium, wellness center, Jacuzzi, sauna and steam room, and salt water pool.

Cabin Categories

One Ocean Suite | \$10,895 The One Ocean Suites are situated on Deck 6 and offer an indulgent amount of space. Sleeping quarters feature a queen size bed with upgraded linen/pillows. Included is a comfortable sectional lounge with matching club chairs, a large desk, expansive floor to ceiling cabinetry, and spacious washroom facilities with both a shower and bathtub. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. These suites provide easy access to the ship's bridge, the bistro, and outdoor observation spaces. The panoramic observation lounge and recreation facilities are located nearby on Deck 7.

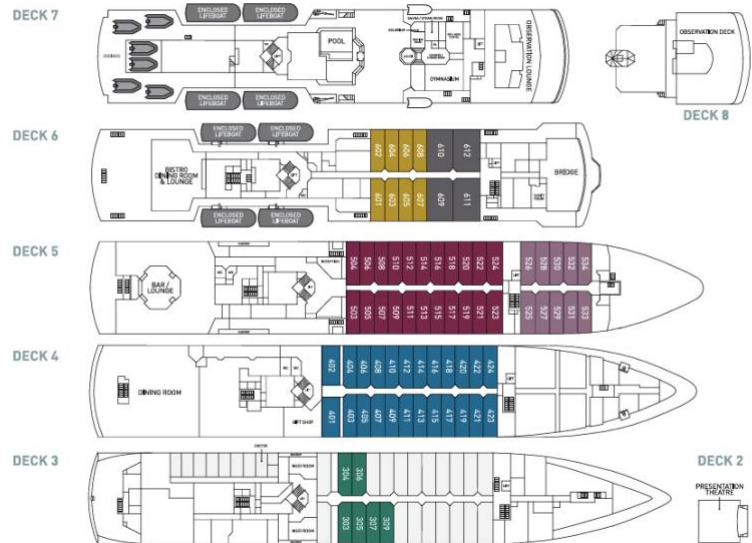
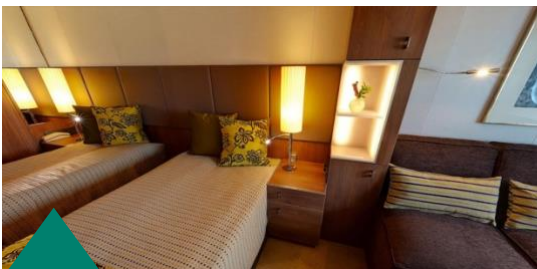
Shackleton Suite | \$8,995 The Shackleton Suites are situated on Deck 6. Suites include the comfort of a sectional lounge, writing desk, substantial floor to ceiling cabinetry, and washroom facilities with shower. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. Sleeping quarters feature the option for either a queen or two single beds with upgraded linen/ pillows. These suites provide easy access to the ship's bridge, the bistro and outdoor observation spaces. The forward panoramic observation lounge and recreation facilities are also located nearby on Deck 7.

Superior Plus Cabin | \$7,695 Superior Plus cabins are located midships on Deck 5. They are spacious and well-appointed with the option for either a queen or two single beds. A comfortable lounge is placed by the large picture window, writing desk and chair, ample floor to ceiling cabinet storage, and private washroom facilities with shower. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. Centrally located on the ship, these cabins provide easy access to the aft observation lounge featuring 180 degree views and the ship's dining areas.

Superior Cabin | \$7,495 Located forward on Deck 5 the Superior cabins have the option for either a queen or two single beds. Features include a comfortable lounge adjacent to the large picture window, writing desk and chair, ample storage, and private washroom facilities with shower. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. These cabins provide easy access to the forward stairs leading up to the bridge on Deck 6 and the forward observation lounge located on Deck 7.

Twin Private Cabin | \$6,495 Spacious and well-appointed, these cabins are situated on Deck 4 and have the option for either a queen or two single configured beds. Features include a comfortable lounge adjacent to the large picture window, writing desk and chair, ample storage, and private washroom facilities with shower. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. These cabins provide easy access to the main dining room on the ship, as well as the gift shop.

Main Triple Deck | \$4,995 These cabins are a popular choice for solo travelers willing to share, a family, or a group of friends travelling together. Located on Deck 3, cabins feature three single beds, one of which can convert to a sofa and lounge during the day. These cabins feature a writing desk and chair, ample storage, and private washroom facilities. A flat screen entertainment system is also included. These cabins provide easy access to the expedition room and gangway.



Cost of the Journey

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The cost of the cruise is \$4995 - \$10,895 based on cabin type. There is an option to add on a guided kayaking program with instruction.

Tour price includes airport transfers to and from the ship, all meals on board the ship with daily afternoon tea and 24-hour tea, coffee, hot chocolate in bar/lounge plus in cabin tea and coffee making facilities, professional guide services, port fees and permits, and miscellaneous program expenses. Kayaking program available at an extra cost—must be reserved at the time of booking your voyage (there are limited spots available) and you must have some prior paddling experience.

Cost of the Journey, continued

Tour cost does not include airfare to and from Sydney, visa and/or passport expenses, pre- or post-cruise hotel accommodation unless noted in the itinerary, personal expenses such as laundry, telecommunication (ie. email, satellite phone), drinks from the bar, and gratuities for luggage handling or other services, baggage, cancellation or medical travel insurance related expenses (travel insurance is mandatory on all voyages), a voluntary gratuity at the end of the voyage for expedition staff and ship crew (suggested amount: \$US12 – 15 per day).

Travel Information

We recommend you arrive in Sydney, Nova Scotia on July 27 or earlier at the J.A. Douglas McCurdy Sydney Regional Airport (YQY). The tour begins in Louisbourg. We have a hotel booked for you in Sydney if you wish to use it, for August 7. Flights typically route through Toronto. From the hotel we are driven to the fort and then the dock. **The hotel is an additional expense of approximately \$150 per room, including breakfast.** If you wish to visit Halifax and then take a short flight to Sydney, many routes go through Boston or New York. You can drive from Halifax to Sydney, too, about five hours.

You must arrive in Nova Scotia in time to be at the dock by 1:00 PM on July 28. Plan flights out in the mid-afternoon of August 7; we dock in the morning and want to make sure you have enough time to get to the airport to catch your flight.

Photo Credits

Atlantic Puffin, Tony Beck, courtesy One Ocean Expeditions (OOE); Hiking Battle Harbor, Peg Abbott (PA); Boat with Canadian Flag, Greg Smith (GS); Sable Island Ponies, Jocelyn Pride, courtesy OOE; Moose, PA; Orchid, GS; Merlin, GS; Humpback Whale, GS; Louisbourg Fortress, Willy Waterton, courtesy OOE; Sable Island, Naturalist Journeys Stock; Semipalmated Plover, PA; Gray Seal, Naturalist Journeys Stock (NJS); *Akademik Sergey Vavilov*, PA; Black-legged Kittiwake, PA; Bald Eagles, Sandy Sorkin (SS); Northern Gannets, Jocelyn Pride, OOE; Common Murre, GS; Double-crested Cormorant, GS; Humpback Whale Fin, GS; *Akademik Sergey Vavilov*, PA; Blackpoll Warbler, PA; White-tailed Deer, Hugh Simmons Photography; Pine Grosbeak, SS; *Akademik Sergey Vavilov*, Deck Plan, Cabins, courtesy OOE.

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