

Eagles & Songbirds

Homer, Alaska

February 17-21, 2024

Arrival

February 16, 2024

Air

There are daily flights from Anchorage via Ravn Alaska. The Homer airport code is HOM. Normally you can book a flight straight to Homer with a stop to change planes in Anchorage. Please email your itinerary as soon as you book your flight. When checking in at Ravn Alaska in Anchorage, please note that Ravn air will not Gate check your camera back from the tarmac level where the plane is. They will ask for your bag at the check in counter which is on the first level. That means they will send it down for the conveyor belt. Ask that it be hand walked down to the plane. I gate check my Think Tank "Airport Security" for the flight and have done dozens of time with no issue.

Car

Expect the drive from Anchorage to take about 4 + hours but possible dangers include ice, snow, avalanche and the possibility of animals on the road so driving to Homer in winter is not recommended.

Departure

February 22, 2024

The workshop will end after the evening session on February 21, 2024. We will try to have a dinner together on the evening of Feb 21.

Transportation

Taxis are waiting at the airport for the 5 min drive to the hotel. If they are not waiting, please give them a call.

Cole's Cab: 907-299-6448

Kostas Taxi: 907-399-8008

Nicks Taxi: 907-399-5553

I will have a large van to take us to the shooting locations each day.

Note: some folks may wish to rent a vehicle so that they can photograph on their own during free time. Mention my name to get a discount. They will pick you up at the airport when you arrive.

Rent a car: Adventure Alaska Car Rentals 1368 Ocean Drive, Homer, Alaska 99603

Email: rent@adventurealaskacars.com Local Phone: 907-235-4022 Toll Free 1-800-882-2808 In Anchorage 1-877-227-0650

Hotel

The recommended hotel for the workshop is the Land's End Resort at the end of the Homer spit. The hotel offers a free hot breakfast each morning. Wireless Internet access is free. Rooms are already blocked for this tour. Be sure to mention that you are making an **Alan Murphy workshop reservation**. There should be no problem extending your stay.

Heidi Loop and Rachelle Frazier (Contact People)

Land's End Resort

4786 Homer Spit Road

Homer Alaska, 99603

PH: 907-235-0457

FAX: 907-235-0421

EMAIL: heidi@endofthespit.com

EMAIL: groups@endofthespit.com

Land's End Resort, 4786 Homer Spit Road, Homer, Alaska 99603 <http://lands-end-resort.com/index.html>

Reservations: 1-800-478-0400

Front Desk: 907-235-0400

Please remember that accommodations are not included in the workshop fee.

Outerwear

It's important to dress in layers with a waterproof outer layer for this workshop. Bring gloves and head protection to stay warm, good quality boots are especially important. I always bring 2 layers of gloves, head and face protection, all with extra pairs and waterproof boots designed for low temperatures. There is a good outfitter in Homer if you have any problems locating good quality gear in your area.

There are opportunities to get into the water to get a low angle perspective when shooting the eagles grabbing fish. If this is your desire, then I suggest full waders. Most people shoot sitting on the edge of the boat or on the beach when we are on land.

Packing & Gear

For the eagles on the boat, you will want to hand hold. (We can bring tripods in case we go on the beach, but no tripods to be setup on deck)

- A 200mm lens on a full frame is the best focal length.
- For the songbirds you will need at least a 500mm lens, plus TC.
- Do bring a wide-angle lens for the eagle and landscapes.
- If you are bringing a 500/600/800mm lenses a good tripod and gimbal tripod head are recommended.
- Flash is not required on this workshop, but you are welcome to bring it.
- Rain cover for your main lens and body would be a good idea. I recommend the Lens Coat rain covers.
- External hard drive for backup, I rely on 2 x 1TB Western Digital drives.
- Lots of Flash memory, do not underestimate how much memory you will need when shooting the eagles. It's best to have more than you need. I carry at least 192 GB of memory cards.
- It is very possible to shoot 5000 images in one two-hour eagle session.
- Flash card reader, USB or Express slot type. I use the Lexar Professional USB 3.0 Dual-Slot Reader.
- Shutter cable release for your camera

Final Payments

Please remember that all workshop balance fees are due by December 17, 2023. Please contact me if you need to know your balance.

Final payments can be made by credit card at the following link:

<https://www.alanmurphyphotography.com/payment>

Itinerary

Our workshop base and headquarters is the Land's End Resort Located on the Homer spit in Homer Alaska. Located 223 miles southwest from Anchorage Alaska, Homer is on the shore of Kachemak Bay on the southwest side of the Kenai Peninsula. Its most distinguishing feature of the town is the Homer Spit where our hotel is located. The spit is a narrow 4.5-mile long gravel bar that extends into the bay on which is located the Homer Harbor. We will be using a charter boat based in the Homer harbor for trips out to photograph eagles each day. Anchor Point is the location of our songbird photography. Anchor Point is a 35 min drive from the hotel

Kachemak Bay is one of the premier Bald Eagle photography locations in the US and my favorite eagle photography location on the planet. Large numbers of habituated eagles gather there each year making for some amazing photographic opportunities, only limited by your creativity.

We will be traveling by charter boat to the best areas outside Homer for daily photography sessions. After breakfast at our hotel each morning we schedule-- depending on tides and weather--either two 2-hour boat trips or one 4-hour boat trip each day of the tour (both times are approximate depending on weather conditions). We may exceed those time limits when conditions warrant it at no additional cost. We do lots of the photography from the boat and plan to spend some time on land to do both perched and flying birds. You should head home exhausted with the best Bald Eagle images of your life (unless we encounter unexpectedly bad weather). We have chosen our dates carefully with regards to weather. Temps should be moderate too cold with a mix of sun, clouds, and some snow and ice is likely. That said we are going to Alaska and the weather can change very quickly.

There can also be great opportunities just steps from our hotel. The beaches on the spit can give you great opportunities for groups of eagles dining on various washed up food items. We may also have opportunities to photograph scoter, Long-tailed Duck, geese, Eider, and Sea Otter in the bay.

We will spend two days in Anchor Point (35 minutes from Homer) on private property photographing many Boreal species of birds at a feeder. We will be doing setups with dramatic perches for these very tame birds. Species include, Pine Grosbeak, Gray Jay, Boreal and Black-capped Chickadee, Common Redpolls, Woodpeckers and many more. Steve and Michelle Friend are the owners of the songbird property. Steve is a great birder and photographer. He will be feeding the birds all winter in preparation for us. He also collects perches for me. Steve is a great Northern Lights photographer and will let you know if the Northern lights will be present. Michelle will be cooking us lunch each day we will be with them. Either fresh caught Halibut or Moose, along with salad etc. Their house with a warm fire is just a few feet from where we shoot should you need to go inside to warm up.

3 days of Eagle shooting and 2 days shooting the songbirds.

What's Included

Lots of eagles, field instruction, (classroom instruction, photography presentations, and image critiquing should the weather ground us from going out). Ground transportation from the hotel to the dock. All boat fees and boat-related expenses but for the tips. Access fees and lunch for songbird property. Breakfast at the motel.

Tips

Tips are generally \$100 per person for the boat captain and at your discretion for the songbird property owner. We will gather up tips on the last day. The restaurant opens an hour early each day for us so plan on leaving a tip for the waitress before we head out.