



Jasper and Banff Trip May 30 – June 2, 2025
SD73 International Student Program



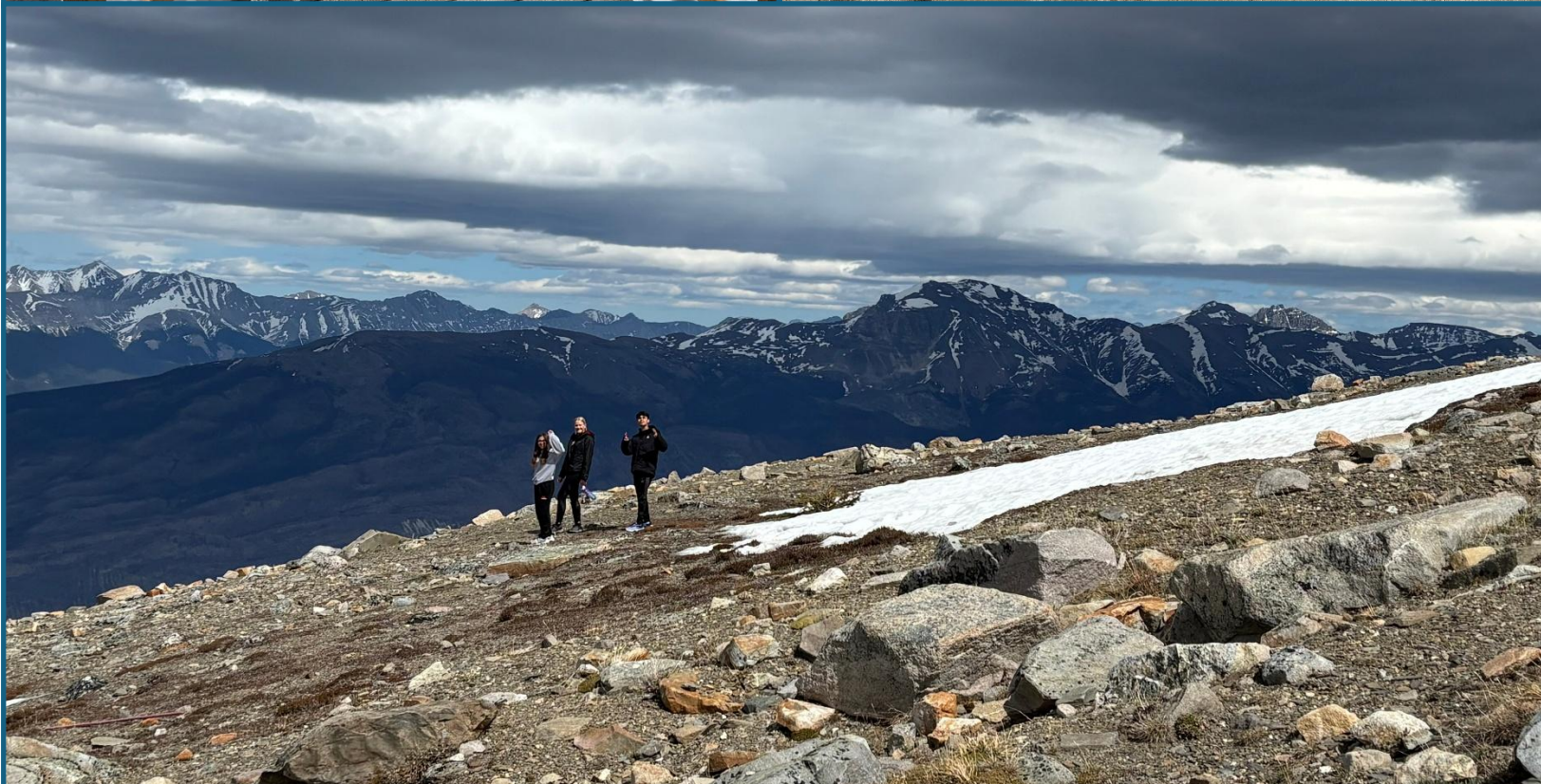
On May 30, 2025, 30 students and 3 chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00am and drove north up the Yellowhead Highway towards Jasper National Park. We had a short food and washroom stop in Clearwater and then an early lunch stop in Valemount before turning east and passing Mount Robson. We were delighted that there were very few clouds in the area, so we were able to see most of this 4000m mountain, the highest in the Canadian Rockies. We stopped for the traditional sign photo on this trip. Most of Mt. Robson can be seen to the left of the sign on the photo below.



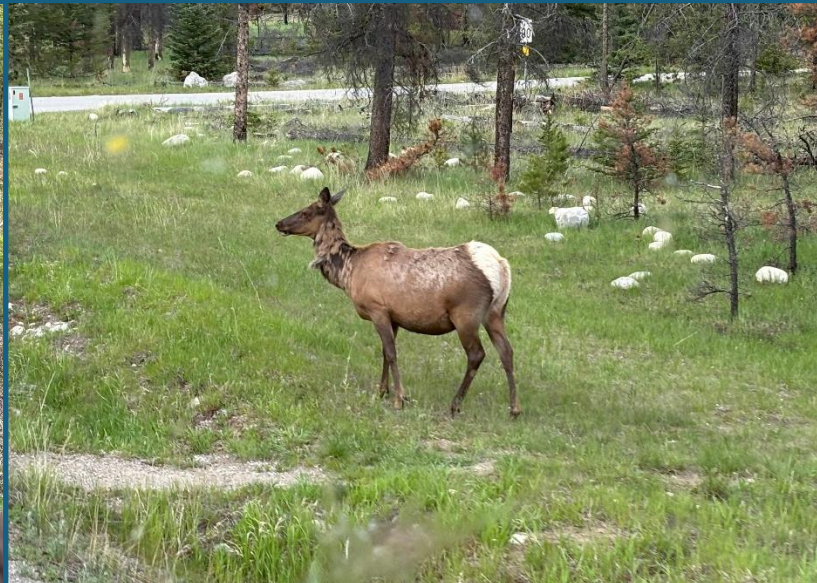
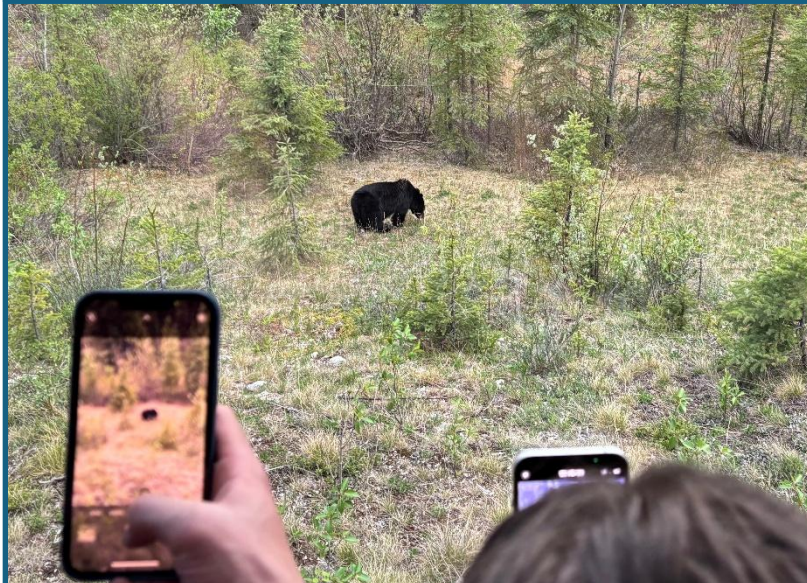
Our first stop upon arriving in Jasper was the Sky Tram. Having received a tip about a Grizzly Bear in the Jasper area, we searched a known location on the way to the Sky Tram and, sure enough, a single adult Grizzly was seen.



The view from the top of the Sky Tram was incredible and some of the students hiked a short way to the ridge at the top. The Sky Tram brings you to above the treeline and there was still some snow around up there.



We then checked into our hotel in Jasper, had almost two hours of free time for dinner and grocery shopping before meeting at 7:30 for our first dusk wildlife drive. This drive turned out to be fantastic with views of Elk, Bighorn Sheep, Mule Deer, 2 Black Bear, a female and two older Grizzly Bear cubs, and an active Bald Eagle nest.



The next morning, we did a wildlife drive from 6-8am but did not see much other than a Trumpeter Swan nest, more Mule Deer, and an Elk carcass.



After a quick breakfast we had our float tour on the Athabasca River. The river level was up so we glided along quickly.



After this we had a lunch break before our afternoon visit to Athabasca Falls. We spent around 45 minutes enjoying this falls and the surrounding area.



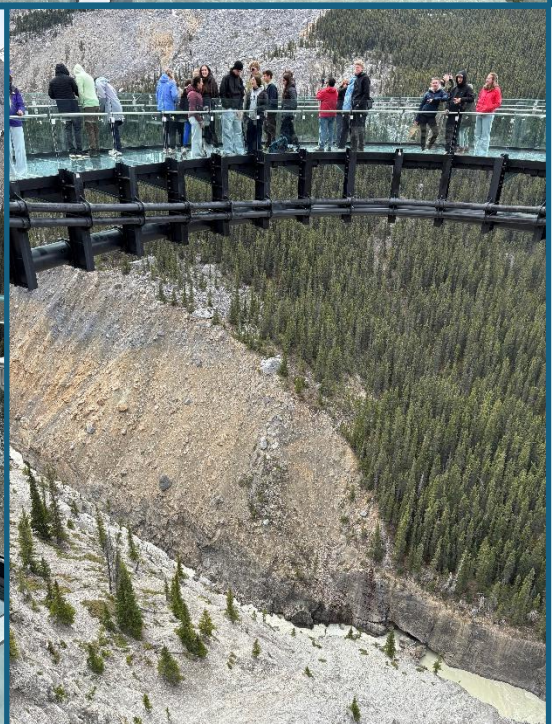
After the float tour we had some free time for grocery shopping and dinner. We left our hotel at 7:00pm in the rain for our dusk wildlife drive later that day. We saw the same 3 Grizzly Bears, a Moose, and some birds around Maligne Lake on that drive.



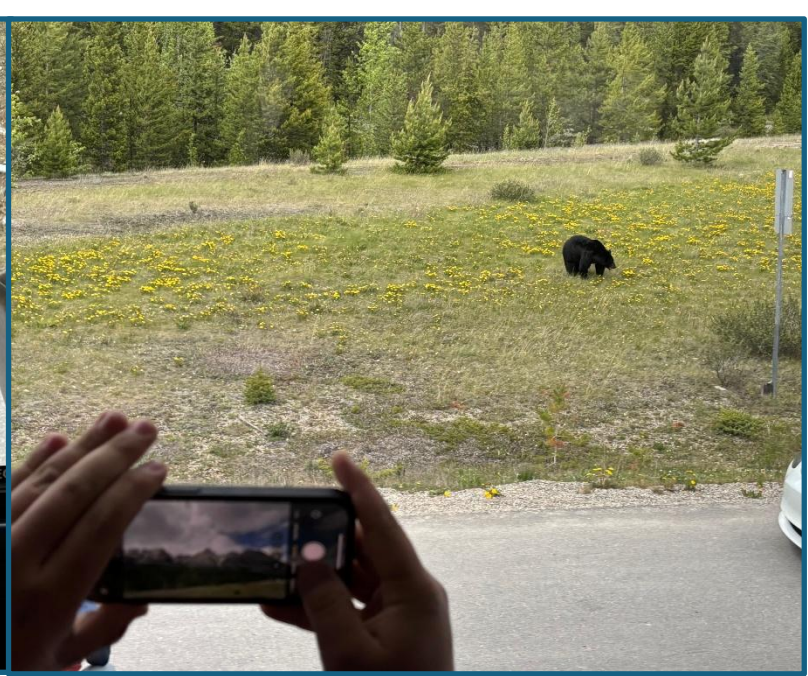
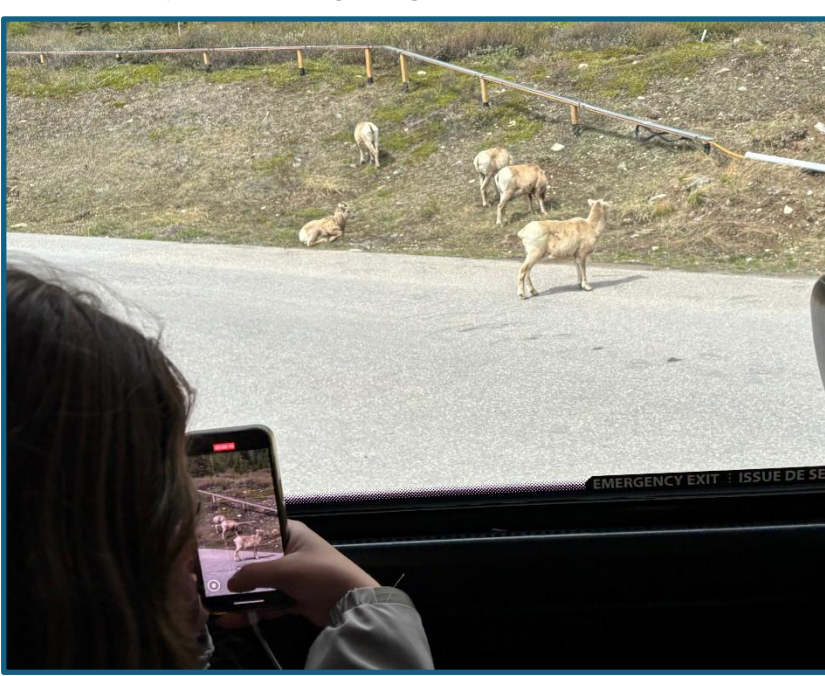
The next morning, we left our hotel at 9:00am and headed south towards Banff. We had a scheduled Columbia Icefields Adventure Tour at 11:00. This tour included riding out on the glacier with the large ice explorer buses and being able to get off and walk on the Athabasca Glacier. This tour also included walking on the Sky Walk, a glass-floored bridge that is 280m above the canyon bottom below. The temperature was cooler here and it snowed off and on.





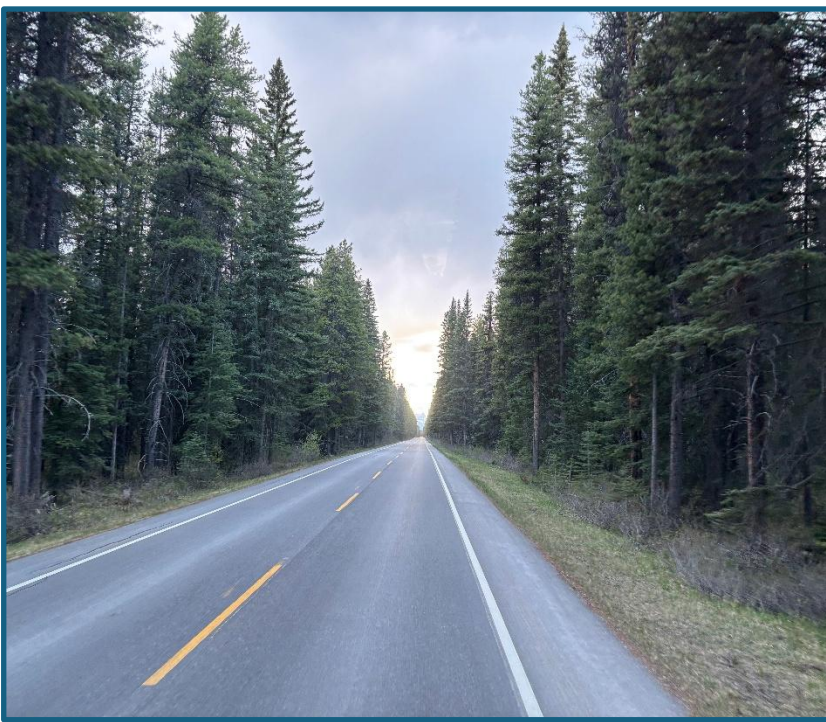


After our glacier experience, we drove the last 1.5 hours to Lake Louise, checked into our hostel, and headed to Banff for dinner and shopping. We saw some Bighorn Sheep and a large Black Bear along the road just south of the glacier and then another adult Grizzly Bear walking along the wildlife fence between Lake Louise and Banff.





We drove the Bow Valley Parkway on the way back to Lake Louise that night as a wildlife drive but saw almost nothing. The next morning we left our hostel at 9:00am and went the short distance to see Lake Louise. It was completely ice free this year and the sun was out, showing why this is such a famous lake. After this we drove back to Kamloops with a stop for lunch in Revelstoke and a few washroom breaks along the way. We arrived back in Kamloops at 5:00pm.





Photos of Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep near the Athabasca Glacier and Columbian Ground Squirrel on the Lake Louise Hostel grounds below.



My Favourite Moment

Heriberto – The time in the bus with my friends because it was the last trip of the school year and I wanted to enjoy it.

Ana – The whole trip was great but one of my favourite moments was when my friends and I had to run through the rain to not be late for the bus.

Eugenia – Spending time with my friends. For example, in the bus and before going to sleep.

Aitana – The last night by the firepit in Lake Louise when we were all playing games.

Joana – Going to Lake Louise because it was super pretty and I loved it.

Judit – Athabasca Falls because it was so beautiful and I had so much fun with my friends.

Christoph – When we saw the Grizzly Bear family because I've never seen a Grizzly Bear before and it was really exciting to see a mother with 2 cubs.

Sol – When we went to the glacier because it was sunny and warm and cold and snowy there.

Christian – Drinking the glacier water because it tasted so pure and was so cold and refreshing.

Nicolas – When we saw all the wildlife because it was nice to see and you don't get to see them anywhere else.

Laura – The Saturday morning wildlife drive because of the rainbow, mountains, and light.

Svenja – The Sky Tram because it was so cool to see such a huge area from above.

Henrique – Lake Louise because the scenery was so beautiful with the lake and the surrounding mountains.

Vitoria – At the Athabasca Glacier because it will be the last time I see and touch snow here in Canada. Also Lake Louise because it was so beautiful. I always saw it on Tik Tok and now I've seen it in real life.

Maria – Lake Louise because it was so beautiful that it didn't seem real.

David – The wildlife drive when we saw the grizzlies because I've never seen grizzlies before and there were three at one time.

Lorena – The first day on the Sky Tram because I was surprised to see snow because it has been so warm in Kamloops. It was so high and we could see all of the town of Jasper.

Jonna – Seeing the mother and baby Grizzly Bears because I've never seen one.

Mia – Seeing the Moose because my grandpa loves Moose and I do to.

Kilian – When we were on the ice fields because it was really interesting to see it and it was snowing.

Florens – Going on the glacier because drinking the water was a fun experience there.

Michela – When we were in Banff because the city was so beautiful and it was surrounded by mountains.

Pietro – The drive between Jasper and Banff because I really enjoyed the view and always love to see mountains.

Nina – Seeing the first Grizzly Bear because it was so close to us.

Malte – To see the revenge on Nina when she got completely soaked after laughing at me for getting a little bit wet on the float tour.

Sven – On the mountain by the Sky Tram because you could see all the mountains around you.

Emilian – Drinking the glacial water because it was fresh and ice cold.

Tereza – Seeing all the wildlife because there was a lot of it in the Rocky Mountains.

Noelly – When we went to the glacier because it was something different. It was June and it was snowing.

Sakurako – When we went on the float tour because I've never done this before.

One Thing I Learned on the Trip

Heriberto – To appreciate nature and to discover new things about nature. For example, through the years past the snow is becoming less because the earth is becoming warmer.

Ana – How to get things done in a short time. For example, how to get ready quickly.

Eugenia – That glaciers are as deep as the Eiffel Tower.

Aitana – How currents work in a river.

Joana – That I need to manage time better. For example on Sunday we packed up, got ready, and cleaned in a very short time.

Judit – To enjoy every moment because everything finishes. I'm going to miss this trip which means it was really worth it.

Christoph – That animals and wildlife can be seen mostly at dawn and dusk.

Sol – Turquoise lakes are that colour because of the glaciers that are close to them. Also, that only happens in mountain lakes.

Christian – Glaciers can shape mountains and valleys by moving slowly.

Nicolas – That glaciers are receding so quickly.

Laura – How to react if you see a Black Bear vs. a Grizzly Bear.

Svenja – It's not that hard to see wildlife, you just have to be at the right place.

Henrique – How we can differentiate glacial ice from regular ice. Glacial ice has much less oxygen.

Vitoria – How important wildlife fences are in Banff. They are important for the wildlife and humans.

Maria – The difference of normal ice and glacial ice. Glacial ice forms over many years when compressed snow accumulates and turns into glacial ice.

David – That 80% or more of the diet of bears is vegetation.

Lorena – That ice on a glacier and ice that you see in town is not the same.

Jonna – The lady on the Sky Tram told us that the small trees there were 200 years old because they were so high.

Mia – To clap before going into the forest because it will let the Grizzly Bears know we are coming.

Kilian – That baby bears can stay with their mother for 1-2 years.

Florens – That wild fires can cause so much damage.

Michela – The difference between the ice field and the glacier. The glacier is the part that comes out of the ice field.

Pietro – How animal fences, over passes, and under passes work in Banff National Park.

Nina – Grizzly Bears are not as big in the wild as they appear to be in movies.

Malte – How dangerous forest fires actually are in Canada. How big they are able to get.

Sven – That the Columbia Ice Field is where multiple glaciers start, including the Athabasca Glacier.

Emilian – That Grizzly Bears are at the top of the food chain.

Tereza – That the Rockies are very pretty and I want to come back.

Noelly – That glaciers are melting more every year and not recovering.

Sakurako – You have to be respectful about managing time. We also need to protect animals from extinction.

Students were from the following countries on this trip:
Spain, Germany, Belgium, Czechia, Mexico, Italy, Brazil,
and Japan.

Mammal List from this trip:

Mule Deer – 14

Black Bear – 5

White-tailed Deer – 2

Grizzly Bear – 5

Elk – 13

Bighorn Sheep – 13

Moose – 1

Columbian Ground Squirrel – 20

Red Squirrel – 3