

**Tofino Trip Report April 19-22, 2024  
SD73 International Student Program**



Thirty-one students and chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00am on April 19 and traveled south on the Coquihalla Highway towards Vancouver. We stopped briefly at a food truck and washroom break at the Zopkois Brake Check near the Coquihalla summit. We had smooth driving the entire way and pulled into the Tsawwassen ferry area around 11:45am, well ahead of our 12:45pm reserved sailing. Our mode of transportation was a cushy charter bus with a full leather interior and an extra wide aisle with 2 seats on one side and one on the other. This was the bus that the Kamloops Blazers hockey team used the previous season and still had the logos on the side. This later caused some confusion at our hostel...



On the ferry, we viewed several Harbour Seals sunning on the nearby rocks, ate Nanaimo Bars to celebrate passing through Nanaimo, and enjoyed the sunshine for our 2-hour sailing to Vancouver Island.



After arriving on Vancouver Island, we drove the 3 hours to the west side of the Island. A treat on this trip was a nice Black Bear along the side of the road. Our Hostel →



Upon arrival in Tofino, we checked in, grocery shopped, and enjoyed a fantastic sun set on the main dock in front of our hostel.

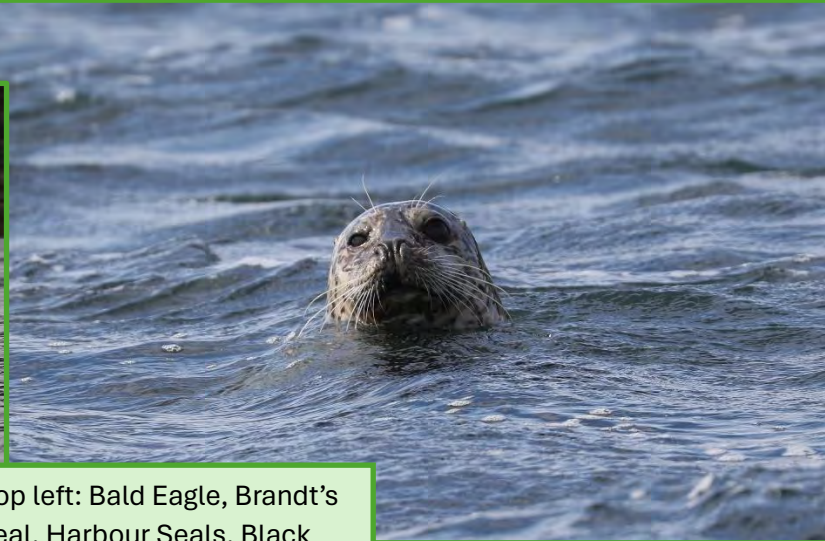


The next morning, many students met out on the dock by our hostel to enjoy a beautiful sun rise. We found some crabs, sea stars, birds, and watched a Sea Otter catch and eat many crabs right in front of us.



At 9:30am the next morning, we walked from the hostel to Remote Passages, our whale watch tour operator in Tofino. We signed waivers, had safety demonstrations, put on our wonderful red float suits and yellow raincoats, and boarded three smaller boats for our three-hour tour.





Wildlife clockwise from top left: Bald Eagle, Brandt's Cormorant, Harbour Seal, Harbour Seals, Black Oystercatcher, Sea Otter mom with baby.



After lunch, we then drove to Pacific Rim National Park and did both loops of the rainforest trail there. It was raining by then and we took advantage of the tree canopy over our head while hiking. This area has many old coniferous trees, and the hiking trails take you past them. We stopped for several photo ops along the trail.





That night we had dinner and then hung out at the hostel for most of the evening due to steady rain in the area. The next morning it was still raining. We had breakfast and left for Mackenze Beach at 9:30 just as the weather began to improve. At Mackenzie Beach we enjoyed the views, did some tidal pooling, and walked a short trail to the end of the headland there.





We then headed back to our hostel in Tofino for lunch. After lunch we boarded the bus again and drove south to Long Beach. Including some coves and other areas, Long Beach is 16 kms long. It was a treat to be there on a sunny afternoon and the students played volleyball, threw a football around, and got their feet wet in the Pacific Ocean. It was too windy for frisbees. Photos from a sunny Long Beach below.



Our bear watching tour departed at 4:45pm so we left the hostel a short time before that and walked over to Remote Passages. The weather was perfect for our 2.5 hour tour. We saw 3 Black Bears, many California and Steller Sea Lions, many Sea Otters, and various birds.





That night, some of the students and chaperones prepared nachos for everyone. We knew that we would be getting back late so had prepared the groceries beforehand for a late dinner. Seven full trays of nachos were put down by the group.

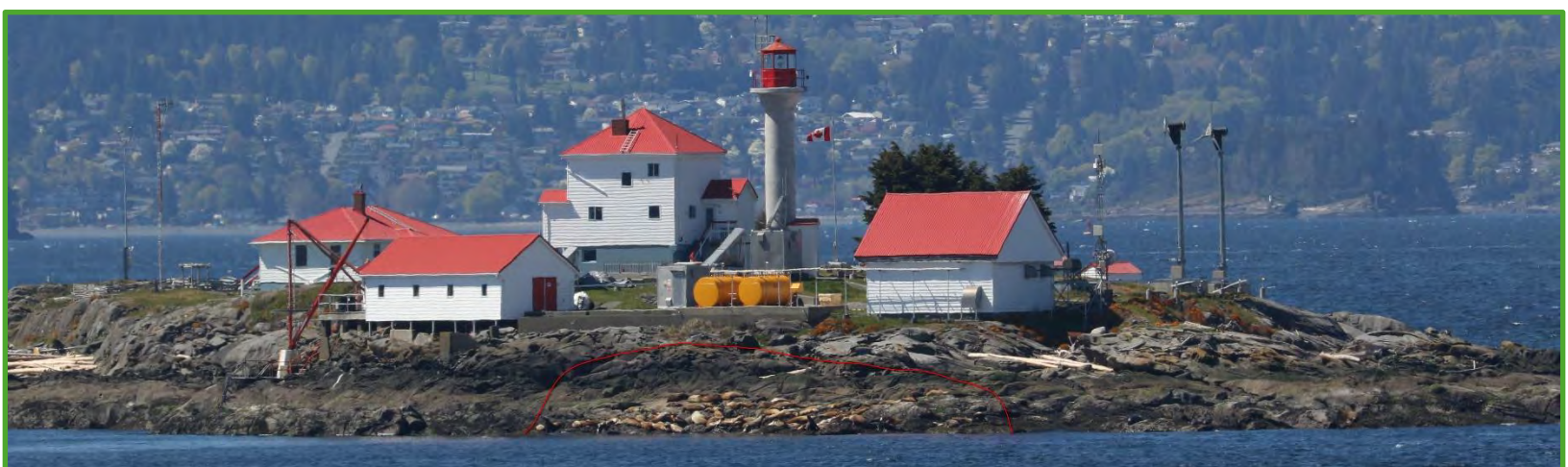


We left the hostel the next morning at 7:00am and turned east towards Nanaimo, the ferry, and back to Kamloops. We were slightly ahead of schedule, so we had time for a 30-minute stop at Cathedral Grove – MacMillan Provincial Park. This park, situated between Port Alberni and Nanaimo, offers a few loop trails through gigantic Douglas Fir and Western Red Cedar trees.



The rest of the trip went smoothly, with an on-time ferry at 12:45pm and clear roads back to Kamloops. We arrived back home around 8:00pm.

Sea Lions seen from the ferry leaving Nanaimo below.



### **Favourite Moment from the Trip:**

Stefania – Seeing the Pacific Ocean for the first time and whale watching even if I fell asleep on the boat.

Mattia – Bear watching because it was the first time I saw a bear in the wild.

Giulio – Whale watching because it was fun to go so fast on the boats.

Alice – Bear watching because I love the ocean and I really loved seeing nature (the trees and animals).

Chiara – Bear watching because it was my first time going so fast in a boat and I loved the fact that the islands were so high and full of trees. Also seeing a bear so close.

Neele – Bear watching because of the beautiful float suits that we wore.

Maite – Bear watching because everything is so different from where I live. The animals, and the trees. It was really good to see the wildlife that I never thought I would be able to see.

Auriane – Bear watching because we got to see a lot of animals I've never seen before and the weather was perfect.

Finn – Whale watching because the ride in the waves was a lot of fun.

Sasha – Bear watching because of all the life. That area is full of life and it was beautiful to see.

Beatrice – When we were cooking Nachos because we were altogether working together to make something for all of us.

Malina – Bear watching because the weather was perfect. The nature was so peaceful. I was sitting on the front of our boat and it felt like a roller coaster.

Siham – Bear watching because I saw a lot of wildlife and learned a lot about sea lions, bears, and sea otters.

Zazie – Bear watching because the scenery was beautiful. It was peaceful, the conditions were very good, we saw a lot of animals, and I was beside Mr. Beeke in the boat.

Mailys – Bear watching because the landscape was breath taking and the wildlife was incredible. And it was sunny.

Stella – Bear watching because I saw a lot of wildlife life in their natural habitat.

Zihan – Bear watching because it was a new experience for me. It was really exciting because it was like a roller coaster. I also saw some wild animals and they were cute.

Lotta – Searching for the whales because of the big waves. I was sitting the front of the boat so it was really fun.

Lucia – Getting in the Pacific Ocean for the first time even though it was freezing.

Minori – Seeing the animals because the bears were cute. I also liked hiking.

Mizuki – Whale watching because it was so wavy and I liked to see the cute sea otters.

Yuzu – Riding the boat because the big waves and wind. The driver was so handsome.

Emma – The sunset and the bear watching because the landscapes were really cool.

Fanny – Reading at the beach and sitting on the front of the boat while bear watching because we were going so fast and the waves were big.

Camilla – Watching the sunrise and both whale and bear watching because you could really feel alive in those moments.

Sophie – running with friends into the ocean together. Also singing and dancing in the streets.

Loreto – The sunset and bear watching because it was fun and the sunset was beautiful.

Leyre – Being on a boat for both the whale and bear watching because I like being in the ocean.

### **One Thing I Learned on the Trip:**

Stefania – To enjoy the little things such as being together with my friends.

Mattia – the history of Tofino and the different cultures there.

Giulio – That whales go so close to the coast and can use their tails to help search for food.

Alice – When whales die, they go to a beach and become food for other animals.

Chiara – How to appreciate wildlife more. There were so many birds and animals that I've never seen before.

Neele – The difference between sea lions and seals. Sea lions are able to push themselves up and seals cannot.

Maite – Eagles have binocular and monocular vision so they can roll their eyes individually to look for food and that their vision is 7X better than us.

Auriane – Bear go the sea at low tide to find food. Sea Otters never leave the ocean and they sleep together holding hands.

Finn – Gray Whales are coming up the west coast to eat in different bays on their way to Alaska.

Sasha – Black Bear eat crabs and shell animals in the intertidal zone.

Beatrice – You can have fun with people you don't know and speak a different language than you.

Malina – Eagles mate for life. You can tell if a bear is male or female by the shape of its face.

Siham – Sea Lions are similar to real lions because the structure of their group is one male with a group of females.

Zazie – Black Bears are so lazy that they eat crabs. They do not need to hunt.

Mailys – Sea Otters live their entire life in the sea. They never go on land.

Stella – Otters do not live alone, they live in packs.

Zihan – Sea Otters always gather together and they live and catch food together.

Lotta – Bears walk slow so that they do not use all of their calories. They can move fast but rarely do.

Lucia – In a pair of Bald Eagles, the female is the larger one.

Minori – Nature is big. The trees were tall.

Mizuki – Tofino is really beautiful. The beaches and big trees were beautiful.

Yuzu – Forests make us calm down.

Emma – Bears come out with the tide is low to search for food.

Fanny – The difference between male and female bears. The male bears have longer legs and longer necks.

Camilla – When whales go to the surface, they breath out like a spout. Bears come out of the forest to search for crabs among the rocks.

Sophie – bears do not have to use conditioner because they eat crabs and that makes their fur soft and shiny.

Loreto – You need oil to make scrambled eggs.

Leyre – About new animals that I've never seen before.

**Students on this trip were from the following countries:**  
**Italy, Brazil, Belgium, Austria, Germany, Japan, China, and Spain.**

**Mammal List from the Trip:**

**Black Bear – 4**

**Sea Otter – 50**

**Steller Sea Lion – 50**

**California Sea Lion – 15**

**Raccoon – 1**

**Gray Whale – 1**

**Harbour Seal – abundant**

