



**Tofino Trip Report April 26-29, 2024**  
**SD73 International Student Program**



A group of students left Kamloops Friday morning April 26, 2024. After two stops to pick up students we turned south in a large charter bus at 7:00am and headed towards Tofino. The roads were excellent and, after a washroom stop in Hope, and a quick stop in Chilliwack, we arrived at the Tsawwassen ferry jetty at 11:30am. We had reserved a spot on the 12:45pm ferry to Nanaimo and soon were on board and heading across the Strait of Georgia to Vancouver Island.



After arriving in Nanaimo. We drove the three hours to Tofino, located on the west side of Vancouver Island, arriving at 7:00pm.



We checked in to our hostel, took in a gorgeous sun set on the main public dock in Tofino, grocery shopped, and went to sleep after a long day of travel. The next morning, the predicted rain had settled in, and we enjoyed a breakfast at the hostel. It was one student's birthday so some of the group surprised him with gifts and a cake. We had just enough time for a quick walk out to the dock to check out the sea life exposed at low tide before our whale watch tour. We left the hostel at 9:15am and walked over to Remote Passages for our whale watch tour that was scheduled to depart at 10:00am.



Our whale watch tour was full of action, despite the persistent rain. We saw 3 Gray Whales, several Sea Otters, and a large group of California Sea Lions. The whales were seen in calm water which allowed for some photos.





Clockwise from top left:  
California Sea Lion, Sea  
Otter, Gray Whale





Gray Whale



Sea Otter



After our whale watch tour, we had a short break for lunch before driving to the rainforest hike in Pacific Rim National Park. We did both loop trails in the rain, which seemed fitting for being in a temperate rainforest. There are huge trees there.



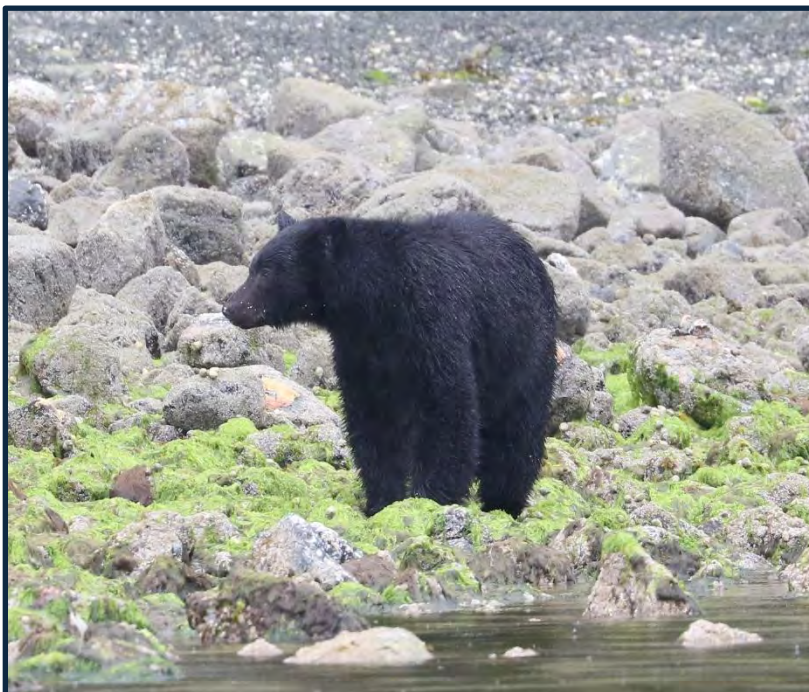


After the hiking, the students had dinner and then hung out around the hostel. The next morning, we left the hostel at 8:45am for our 9:30am Bear Watching Tour. We walked over to Remote Passages and got our float suits and raincoats back on for what would be a memorable tour. Despite the heavy rain, we still saw a lot of wildlife and were able to have a great time. The bear watching takes place on calm inland water so it was a smooth ride on our three boats.





From top left: Bald Eagle, Barrow's Goldeneye, Black Bear, Harbour Porpoise, Black Bears





We arrived back at our hostel around 12:45pm as the rain ended. The sun popped out so we went to Mackenzie Beach for a couple of late afternoon hours. At Mackenzie Beach we flipped over rocks to see the small crabs under them and understand what the bears were eating. We also did the short hike to the end of a headland there and hung out on the rocks enjoying the scenery and wonderful weather.





We then headed back to town for dinner before heading out to Long Beach for a sunset. There are few places like Tofino on a sunny day and Long Beach delivered with beautiful views and a great sunset. Students played soccer, threw a football around, got their feet wet in the ocean, or just hung out in the area and enjoyed the views and weather.





The next day we left the hostel at 7:00am and drove back to Nanaimo to catch our ferry back to the mainland. We had a stop at The Old Country Market in Coombs. The ferry was on time and all went well with the roads. We were surprised to see fresh snow on the way back on the Coquihalla Highway.



**Students on this trip were from the following countries:**

**Germany, China, El Salvador, Italy, Taiwan, Spain, Japan, Mexico, and Sweden**

**Mammal List of the Trip:**

**Black Bear – 5**

**California Sea Lion – 40**

**Harbour Porpoise – 4**

**Harbour Seal – 30**

**Gray Whale – 3**

**Sea Otter – 6**

**Raccoon – 1**

## Favourite Moment of the Trip:

Laila – Long Beach because I like sun sets and I like the beach.

Gabriela – the sunset on Long Beach and cooking pasta with everyone.

Nick – Watching the sunset in Tofino on the first night because it was simply beautiful.

Simon – Riding the boat on the waves in the ocean because it felt like a roller coaster ride.

Gregorio – When we saw the sea lions and they were fighting because I've never seen one before.

Erich – Enjoying the sun on the beaches and walking into the water.

Alessandro – Watching the whales because it was my first time doing it and it was completely different from my usual boat experiences.

Julian – The sunset on the first evening because I got some really good pictures.

Sebastian – Cooking pasta because I learned how to do it.

Valentin – Walking on Long Beach because it was magnificent and we had a great conversation.

Camino – Learning how to cook because I didn't know how to before.

Lilly – Watching the sunset at Long Beach because I liked the atmosphere at the beach.

Jette – Just to be with an amazing group at a beautiful place.

Anna – Bear watching because of the beautiful landscape and great wildlife.

Zihan – Seeing the whales because it was very exciting.

Tianyu – Seeing so many different wild animals on the sea.

Fuka – Whale watching because it was beautiful.

Renoa – Mackenzie Beach because it was nice and warm.

Juni – Learning about the wildlife because it was different from what I am used to.

## One Thing I Learned on the Trip:

Laia – That bears can eat crabs.

Gabriela – Bears can give birth during hibernation.

Nick – The importance of preserving nature.

Simon – Whales can filter their food out of sand.

Gregorio – Bears in Tofino eat small sea animals all day, they don't really hunt for big things.

Erich – I learned about and got to experience another part of Canada.

Alessandro – I can improve my organization with other students and the time.

Julian – Black Bears flip over stones to look for crabs to eat.

Sebastian – Male bears can eat baby bears.

Valentin – Lichen looks almost the same as moss.

Camino – That there are different types of bears and that the bears from the coast don't usually eat meat.

Lilly – It's smart to bring waterproof shoes to Tofino.

Jette – Bears can smell who did not shower on the boat.

Anna – Bears are 80% vegetarian and eat 20% of shellfish and sea creatures.

Zihan – Not to be discouraged by bad weather, to stay positive, and to believe that there will be many different surprises.

Tianyu – Managing time better.

Fuka – The trees are very tall in Tofino.

Renoa – About Sea Lions. What they eat and how they hunt.

Juni – Different species of whales in the Pacific Ocean.