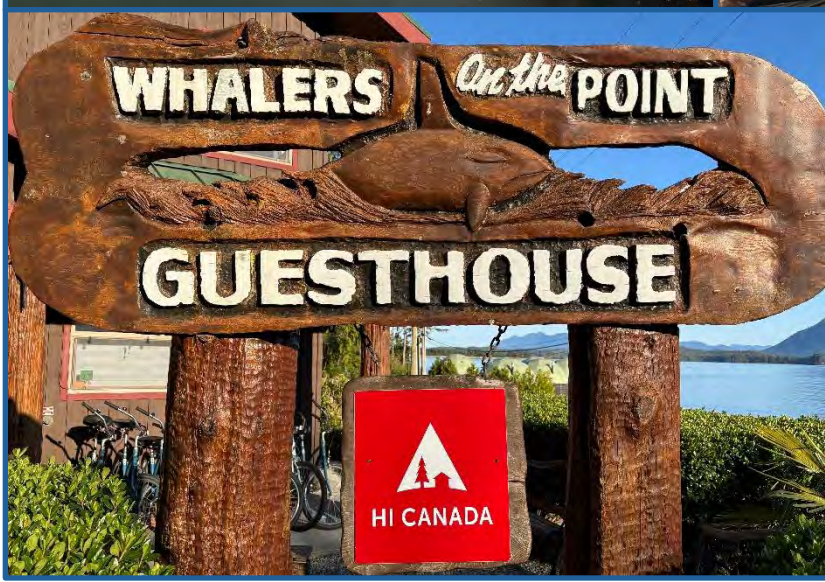




Tofino Trip May 2-5, 2025
SD73 International Student Program



On May 2, 2025, 32 students and four chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00AM and headed towards Tofino. It took roughly 4 hours for us to get to Tsawwassen with washroom stops at the Coquihalla summit and Chilliwack. We briefly enjoyed a colony of Columbian Ground Squirrels at the rest area at the Coquihalla summit. Photos below from the drives and stops.



We then took a two-hour ferry from Tsawwassen to Nanaimo at 12:45. We enjoyed sunshine on the ferry and were able to see 3 Orca (Killer Whales) on the crossing. The ferries are large vessels with outside seating, inside seating, restaurants, gift shops, etc... These ferries always break up the long travel day on the Tofino trips nicely.

Outside on the top deck

An Orca (Killer Whale) seen from the ferry



We arrived in Tofino around 7:00PM and checked into our hostel. We then had some time for grocery shopping, preparing dinner, and walking around the area. We soon spotted a Sea Otter right beside our hostel and spent some time having a look at this and enjoying our first sunset.

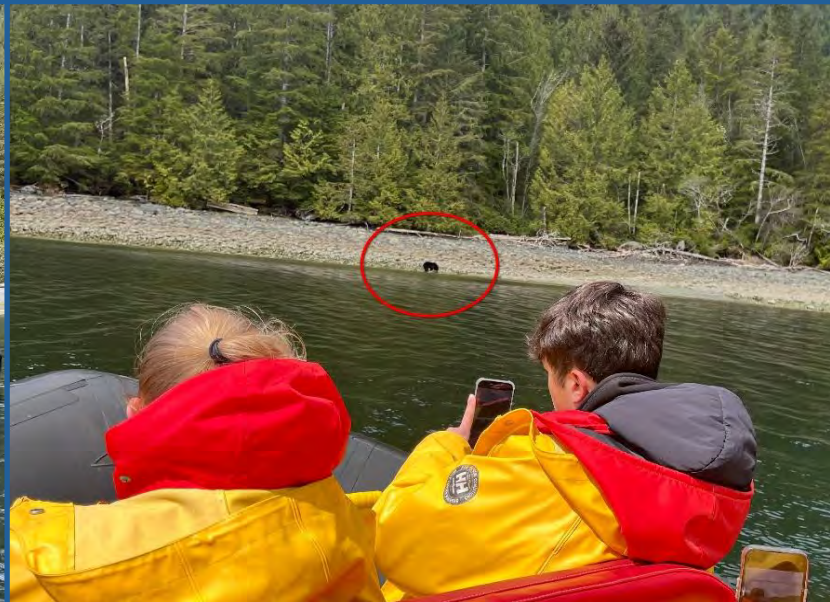


The next morning some of the students arose early and spent some time on the public dock in Tofino enjoying the sunrise and looking for any wildlife that could be seen . There was a brief passing rain shower but otherwise the weather was perfect again.

A River Otter photographed from the dock below



Our scheduled Bear Watching Tour with Remote Passages Marine Excursions left at 11:00AM and lasted roughly 2.5 hours. We saw 4 Black Bears, an occupied Bald Eagle nest, many Harbour Seals, a single Harbour Porpoise, Sea Otters, a couple of Steller's Sea Lions, and many species of sea birds and ducks on this tour.



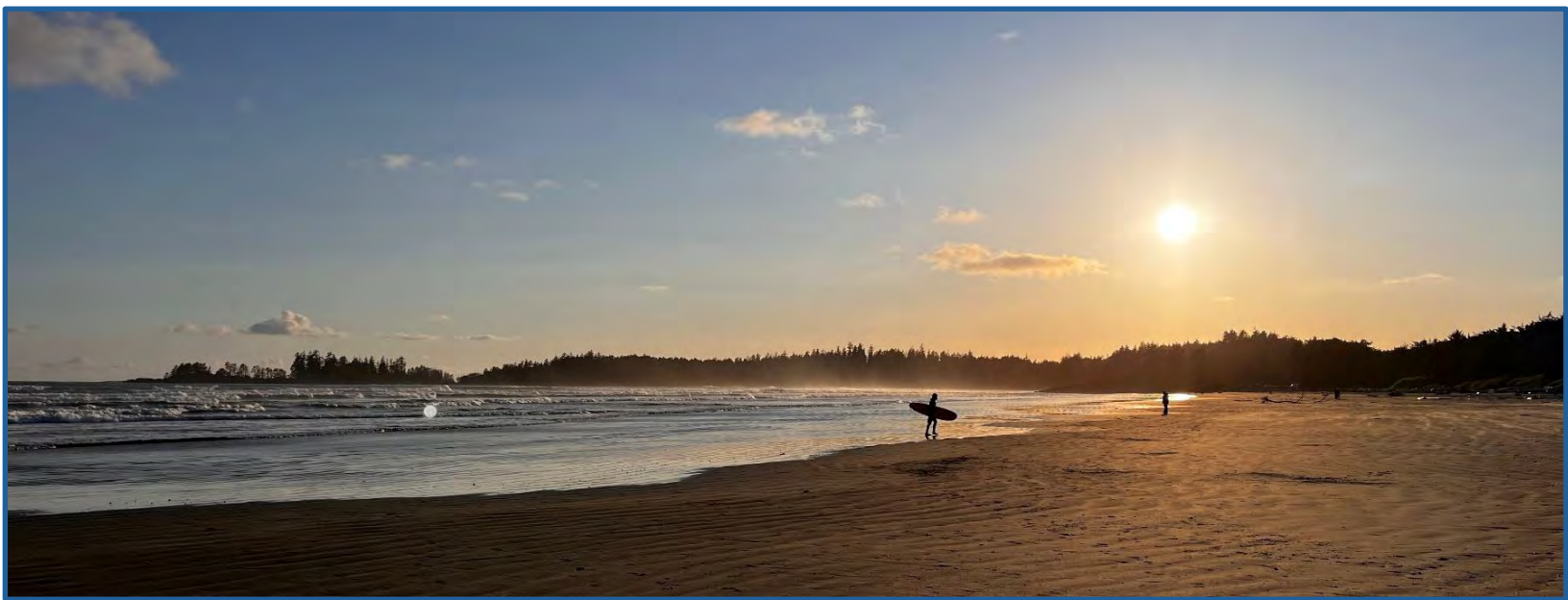


After 1.5 hours for lunch, we left for a short hike in the temperate rainforest of Pacific Rim National Park. We enjoyed a couple of hours of hiking among the 800 year old giant Red Cedar Trees that can be found here.





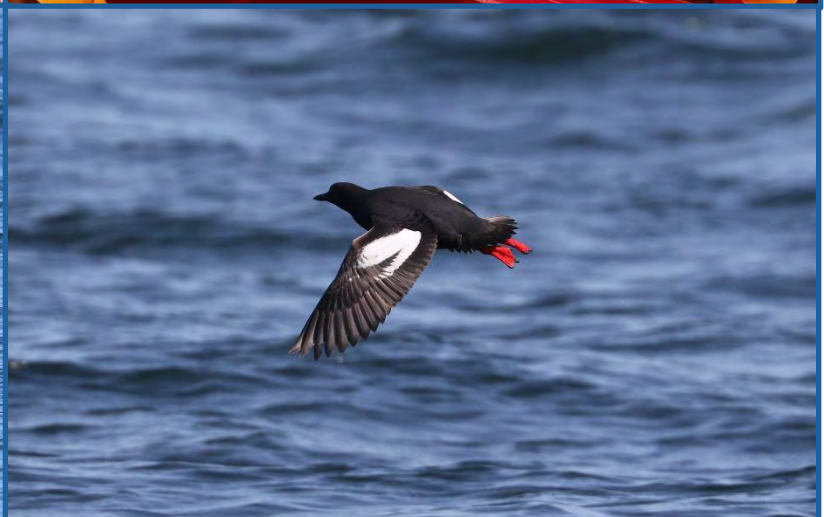
After dinner we headed down to Long Beach for a couple of hours and enjoyed a sunset. Students walked a short ways into the ocean, played beach games, and relaxed and enjoyed the amazing views.





The next morning, we had a 9:00AM Whale Watching Tour. On this tour, we spent 3 hours out in the open ocean searching for whales and other wildlife. We ended up seeing both Steller's and California Sea Lions, Sea Otters, Harbour Seals, many kinds of sea birds, and 4 Gray Whales.







After whale watching, we had lunch and then met again mid afternoon for a short trip out to Mackenzie Beach. Students did some tidal pooling, a short hike, and relaxed on the beach. The sun was still out and made the water look tropical.





Dinner was followed by free time and packing up to leave the next morning.



We left our hostel at 8:00 the next morning and headed east towards the ferry. We had time for stops at Cathedral Grove in MacMillan Park (a walk through giant old trees) and Coombs (Old Country Market – Goats on Roof tourist stop) before arriving on time for our 3:15PM ferry departure. This all went according to plan, and we arrived in Kamloops just after 9:30pm.





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

Hostel: Whalers on the Point Guesthouse – HI CANADA

Bear and Whale Watching – Remote Passages Marine Excursions

Trip Mammal List:

Black Bear – 9

Sea Otter – 20

Steller's (Northern) Sea Lion – 100

California Sea Lion – 4

Mule Deer – 1

Orca – 3

Harbour Porpoise – 1

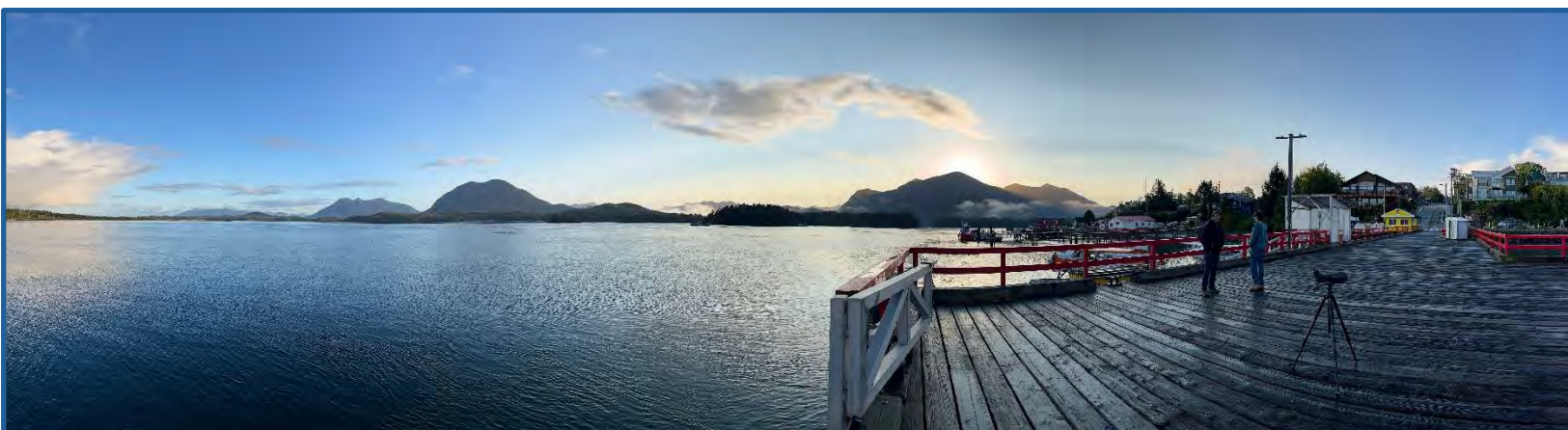
Harbour Seal – 35

Columbian Ground Squirrel – 20

Gray Whale – 4

River Otter – 1

Red Squirrel – 1



My Favourite Moment On The Trip:

Sol – Visiting Long Beach and the rides on the fast boats because we were in the front and it was fun on the waves.

Aitana – At Mackenzie Beach admiring the views with the music and talking with my friends.

Alexandre – Bear Watching on the boats because the landscape was beautiful and it was fun to see bears in nature.

Markel – Whale watching because it was fun to see sea animals like birds and whales.

Marine – Whale watching because I've never seen a whale before and I think it was really beautiful and impressive.

Andrea – When we were cooking together in the kitchen because it was fun to be together doing this on a trip like this.

Eugenia – The free time with friends because I had so much fun when we all went to dinner together.

Joana – Going to the beach to see the sunset and walking into the Pacific Ocean for the first time. Also playing pool with my friends.

Michela – When we went with the boats to see the bears because it was really fun and we were in nature. Also when we cooked meals together. It was fun being with my friends.

Pietro – When we went bear watching because of the beautiful views. It was like how people imagine Canada.

Henrique – When we went whale watching because it was fun to be on the open ocean and search for whales.

Maria – Whale watching because I had never seen a whale before.

Ana – When we went for the little hike by the beach and looked down at the sea because the view was beautiful.

Heriberto – Whale watching because it was incredible to see those animals and how big they are. Also because I learned how they migrate.

Simone – Whale watching because of the excitement that came as soon as we saw the first gray mist of one exhaling. Also when we went for the little hike at the beach and looked down on the ocean from up high.

Jonna – Whale watching because it was fast and interesting to see the whales. In my country you cannot see wild animals like the ones in Canada.

Judit – The first sunset at the beach because it was fun walking into the water and it was beautiful.

Kilian – When we walked into the water at the beach because it was a once in a lifetime experience.

Paul – When we were on the speedboats because our driver went fast and we were jumping over the waves. Also seeing all of the animals because I've never seen them before.

Aaron – When we were going full speed on the ocean in the speed boats because it was lots of fun to sit in the front and jump over the waves.

Noelly – The sunset at the dock because it was beautiful.

Ares – Whale watching because it was fun to bounce in the waves. Also the second beach because the scenery was beautiful.

David – Cooking and the whale watching. The boats were like a roller coaster.

Justus – When we saw the bears because I've never seen bears in the wild before.

Nicolas – I really liked the whale and bear watching because I've never seen a bear or a whale. Being on the boats with my friends was really fun.

Sven – Whale watching because it was my first time seeing Gray Whales and it was fun skipping over the waves at fast speed in the zodiac.

Florens – The speed boats when they went fast while whale watching because it was fun to jump over the waves.

Laura – When we went to the beach and walked into the water because it was a fun time.

Emilian – Playing pool with the boys and just vibing.

Malte – The dinner that we had together on the last night because the vibe was right and we had good weather. We saw some otters on the way there.

Christian – Watching the sun rise in the morning from the hostel because it was such a nice view and was so calm.

Ben – When we went on the boats and saw the animals because I learned new things about the animals.

One Thing I Learned On This Trip:

Sol – That the birds called Crossbills use their special bills to open pine cones and that Sea Otters get gray fur when they get older.

Aitana – How to live and share responsibility with people around me. I also learned that Black Bears can have 1 baby or 2 and that the father is never around. I also learned how to tell how old a tree is by counting its rings.

Alexandre – The difference between Black Bears and Grizzly Bears. Black Bears think before attacking and Grizzly Bears attack first and think later.

Markel – How some animals act around the sea. Like Seals and Sea Lions that stay around rocks to not get attacked by Orcas.

Marine – I didn't know that the whales in Tofino came from Mexico or even that they migrated.

Andrea – That Black Bears live next to the sea. I always thought they lived next to fresh water and in the forest.

Eugenia – That dead trees can provide a place for life to grow even though they are dead.

Joana – That mother Black Bears raise their babies by themselves.

Michela – To respect nature because we were very close to it. Also that Black Bears eat sea creatures that live under rocks.

Pietro – A lot about wildlife. For example, people in Tofino do not like it when other Canadians come to Tofino to hunt Black Bears.

Henrique – That if we protect trees, they can live to be hundreds of years old.

Maria – That Gray Whales spend their winter in the warm waters of Mexico and then they migrate to the north pacific in the spring because of the food rich waters.

Ana – How to cook salmon and how to buy my own groceries. I also learned how to search for special things in nature.

Heriberto – That Sea Lions relax during the day and hunt at night. I also learned that in every group of Sea Lions there is one male.

Simone – How diverse the landscapes are in Canada. How it can feel like home even far away from home.

Jonna – That whales stay on the surface for a while and then dive down for several minutes.

Judit – That whales migrate from Mexico up the north.

Kilian – that Sea Otters can weigh up to 30kg.

Paul – That male Sea Lions protect a group of female Sea Lions.

Aaron – How heavy Sea Lions can get → almost 1 ton.

Noelly – To not run away from a bear because then they may run after you.

Ares – I made a lot of new friends. I also learned how to make pasta.

Justus – I learned that whales move down to Mexico to give birth and then migrate up north to get better food.

Nicolas – To think about how your actions can influence your future. Also to adjust to include everyone from different cultures.

David – Seeing animals with your own eyes is way better than seeing them on a screen.

Sven – About the behaviour of Gray Whales. They migrate from Mexico to the north because the food is better there. They have to go south to breed there.

Florens – That there is actually a rain forest in Canada and not only near the equator.

Laura – To say yes to every experience. When you are more open to new things, you will experience more.

Emilian – Life is great without my phone.

Malte – That otters are able to swim far off the coast.

Christian – If you encounter a Black Bear it may be a problem. If you encounter a Grizzly Bear it is definitely a problem.

Ben – That whales travel from Mexico to Canada to get their food and then go back.

