



**Tofino Trip Sept. 26-29, 2025**  
**SD73 International Student Program**



A group of students from 7 different countries and several chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00AM Sept. 26, 2025. After a washroom stop at Britton Creek, we headed down into the Fraser Valley and on to the ferry terminal at Tsawwassen. We boarded our 12:45pm sailing without issue and went up to the top deck to see many Harbour Seals laying on the adjacent rocks. After some time, a Sea Lion made a brief appearance as well.



We enjoyed no rain on the ferry ride over to Nanaimo and some very fortunate students got to see 3 Hump-backed Whales from the top deck of the ferry enroute.



The remaining bus ride from Nanaimo to Tofino happened without any issues with a couple of washroom breaks. After arriving in Tofino, we had roughly an hour to purchase groceries for the weekend before the main grocery store in Tofino closed at 8:00PM. It was pouring rain and remained raining for the rest of the night. Photos of cooking below.



Photo of a rainy morning from the hostel window below

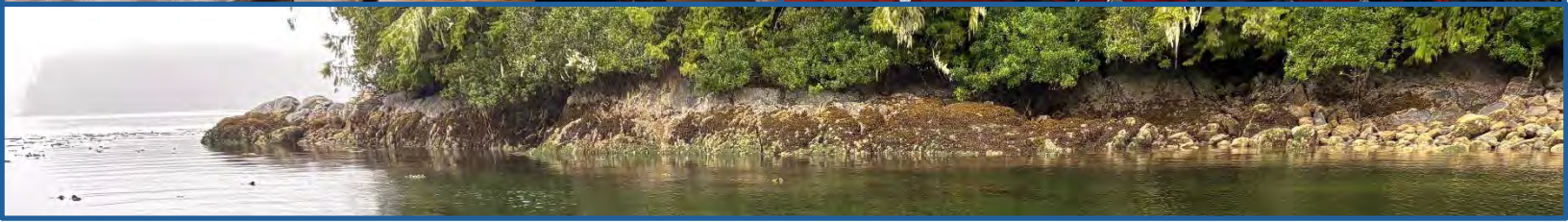


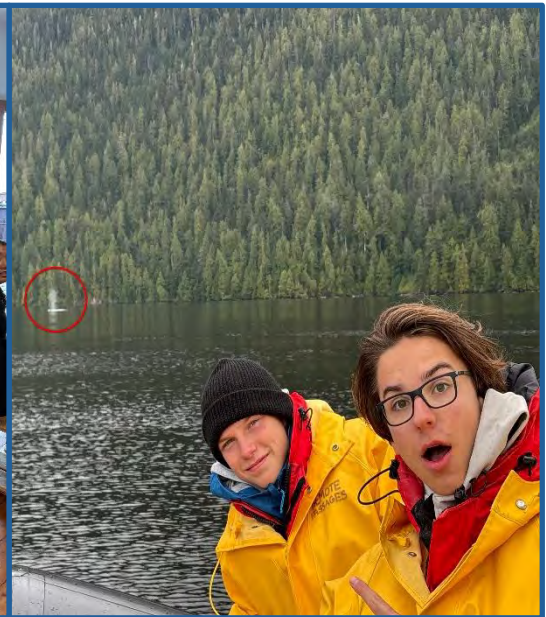
We made and ate breakfast the next morning and then left the hotel at 8:00AM for our first activity: bear watching. This was done on three smaller boats up along the east side of Meares Island in the Clayoquot Sound area. We saw 1 adult female Black Bear with two cubs from this year eating along the ocean at low tide. We also saw a couple of Harbour Porpoise, many Harbour Seals, a California Sea Lion, a Fried Egg Jellyfish, Bald Eagles, and Mute Swans. It rained lightly during this tour.

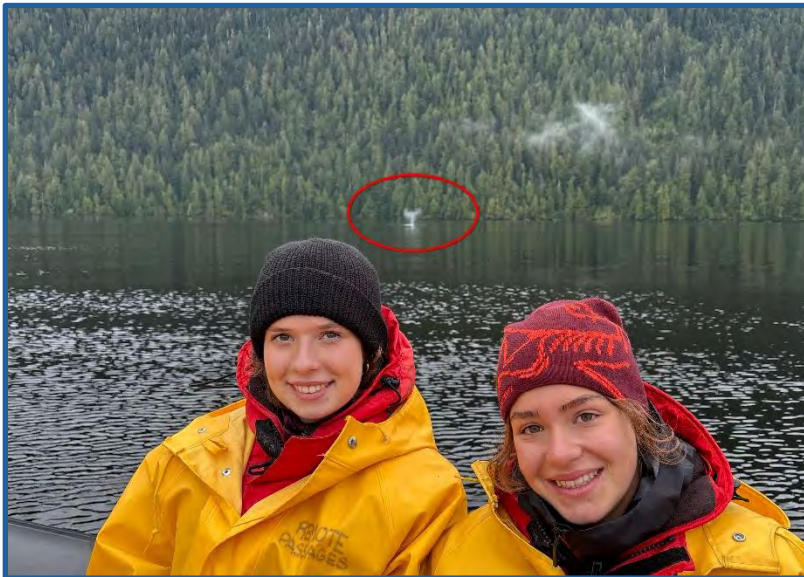




We usually do bear watching on one day and whale watching on the other day on these trips, but, looking at the weather forecast, we decided to move both to this day. The forecast for the following day showed solid heavy rain. Due to this, we had a 2 hour break for lunch and then met again in front of the hostel at 2:15PM for our 3:00PM whale watch tour. This tour was exceptional with many Sea Otters, more Harbour Porpoise, both Steller's (Northern) and California Sea Lions, and a very cooperative Gray Whale added to the trip mammal list. The rain stayed away despite the overcast conditions. This activity took us until around 6:00PM and then we had free time for dinner or whatever else the students needed to do. Photos from the day were processed, meals were cooked, cards were played, etc...







We awoke to light rain the next morning and it rained for most of the day. We had breakfast and left the hostel at 9:00AM to head out for our hike on Rainforest Trail in Pacific Rim National Park. The rain held off a bit so we could do most of these two loop trails in relative dryness. We learned about temperate rainforests on this walk and enjoyed the gorgeous scenery.





After our hike, we had a brief stop at Long Beach before lunch. The wind was up and the rain was threatening so we didn't stay very long. After a 1.5 hour lunch we decided to bus back to Mackenzie Beach and enjoyed an hour or so there before getting completely drenched with rain. This was followed by some free time that ran into dinner time and the early evening. Photos of both beach visits below:





The next morning we left our hostel at 7:15AM and started heading towards Nanaimo. Just after Port Alberni, we experienced radiator issues with our bus. After some phone calls, a rescue bus came and picked us up and we were moving in less than an hour after breaking down. This allowed us to make our ferry on time, and we walked on with our bags. We were then met by another bus from the original company in Vancouver and used this to get back to Kamloops. A highlight of the ferry was seeing no less than 10 more Hump-backed Whales enroute. Several of them breached beside us and allowed for some very distant photos. This drove our Hump-backed Whale count up to 13 for the trip, all of them seen from the ferries there and back. After some traffic in Vancouver, we arrived back in Kamloops around 9:00 PM.

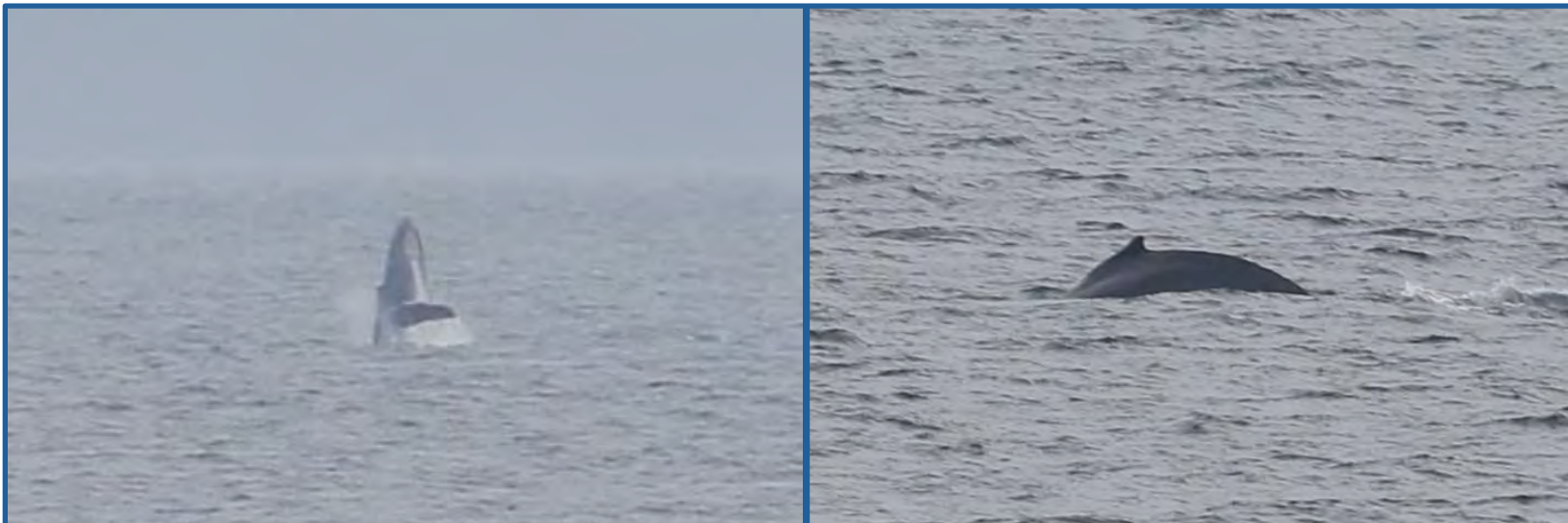
**Students On This Trip Were From: Germany, Japan, Brazil, Spain, the Czech Republic, Taiwan, and South Korea.**

**Mammal List From This Trip:**

**Black Bear – 3, Hump-backed Whale – 13, Gray Whale – 1, Red Squirrel – 2, Harbour Porpoise – 5, California Sea Lion – 50, Steller’s (Northern) Sea Lion – 2, Harbour Seal – 60, Sea Otter – 100, Mule Deer – 1**

**Accommodations: Tofino Hostel/Whalers Guesthouse**

**Company used for Whale and Bear Watching: Remote Passages Marine Excursions**



Photos of Hump-backed Whales taken from the return ferry.



## **My Favourite Moment On This Trip**

1. Merle – Hiking on Rainforest Trail because of the scenery, bird watching, and conversations.
2. Azuki – Whale watching because it was my first time seeing whales.
3. Lucie – Riding the zodiac boats because of the landscape views and open water.
4. Pia – Mackenzie Beach because the view was so good.
5. Johannes – Mackenzie Beach when we walked on the rocks near the ocean and explored the little island there.
6. Jannik T – When we saw the Gray Whale in Tofino because I've never seen one before.
7. Christopher – At Mackenzie Beach because of the view and the rainforest there.
8. Nike – The boat tours because it was a new experience for me.
9. Jette – The boat tours when we went towards the open ocean and could ride over waves. The whole Sea Otter group stop and climbing on rocks at the beach.
10. Nino – the boat trips because we saw many animals and I like boats.
11. Ciyeon – the boat tours because I've never seen a bear or the other animals before.
12. Yuzuki – talking with my friends because I got more friends on this trip.
13. Anna – To go on the boats and see animals because I've never seen them before.
14. Sarah – See the Sea Otters because they were so cute and I've never seen one so near.
15. Gonzalo – Seeing the whales because I've never seen one before.
16. Juan – When we saw the whales because I've never seen a whale before this trip and the size impressed me.
17. Patricia – Seeing the whales because I think it's an animal that is not that easy to see. My father has never seen a whale and now I can say that I have seen one.
18. Stella – Spending time with my friends because it was a good place to bond with each other.
19. Leandra – Seeing the different animals and the Sunday evening hike because of the good company.
20. Theresa – When I met my brother from Germany in Tofino. I certainly did not expect that!
21. Erik – When we went to Mackenzie Beach and walked into the water. It was cold but fun.
22. Tim – When we made pancakes and tried to flip them in the air and one accidentally ended up on Erik's foot.
23. Louis – Driving on the boats through the islands and out towards the open ocean after whale watching because it was fun when the water was not that flat.
24. Luise – Whale watching and every time we cooked dinner together because time together with friends was fun.
25. Jannik W – Hiking through the rainforest to the beach at the end of the day Sunday because it was so beautiful there.
26. Mei – Whale watching because I have never seen whales before.

## **One Thing I Learned On This Trip**

1. Merle – To bring more than one pair of shoes if it is raining in Tofino because my feet are still wet now (on the bus on the way home the next day).
2. Azuki – Canadian nature is so beautiful. The rainforest at Tofino was amazing.
3. Lucie – To speak a little Japanese because I was spending my time with some of the Japanese girls on this trip.
4. Pia – I should have brought a second rain jacket because they do not dry in one night in Tofino.
5. Johannes – Whales don't go as far out of the water as I thought when they breathe.
6. Jannik – That the Northern Pacific Ocean was not as cold as I thought it would be.
7. Christopher – Whales only partially show themselves, not fully.
8. Nike – Whales go under water for a long time to eat and then they come to the surface to breathe.
9. Jette – Whales can live inland in salt water and not only in the open ocean.
10. Nino – How to play Skyjo, a German card game in the hostel.
11. Ciyeon – I learned that hiking can be fun.
12. Yuzuki – I learned more English for example I learned new words.
13. Anna – When we cook together we need to help each other.
14. Sarah – That I need to establish my own boundaries with other people.
15. Gonzalo – Male Black Bears will sometimes kill cubs so that they can reproduce again.
16. Juan – That whales can live to be around 100 years old.
17. Patricia – It surprised me that whales can grow to be so old.
18. Stella – An eagle's nest can be as large as a small car.
19. Leandra – How to play billiards and poker.
20. Theresa – it doesn't matter how different people are, they can still have fun together.
21. Erik – That there are many place on earth that I've never experienced even though I thought I have seen everything.
22. Tim – That my purpose of life is surfing. I really need to go surfing and I will visit Tofino again.
23. Louis – That the closest cousin to Sea Lions are Black Bears.
24. Luise – How to play poker.
25. Jannik W – How to play poker and I learned how large Vancouver Island actually is.
26. Mei – How to talk with friends and how to make a conversation with people from other countries.