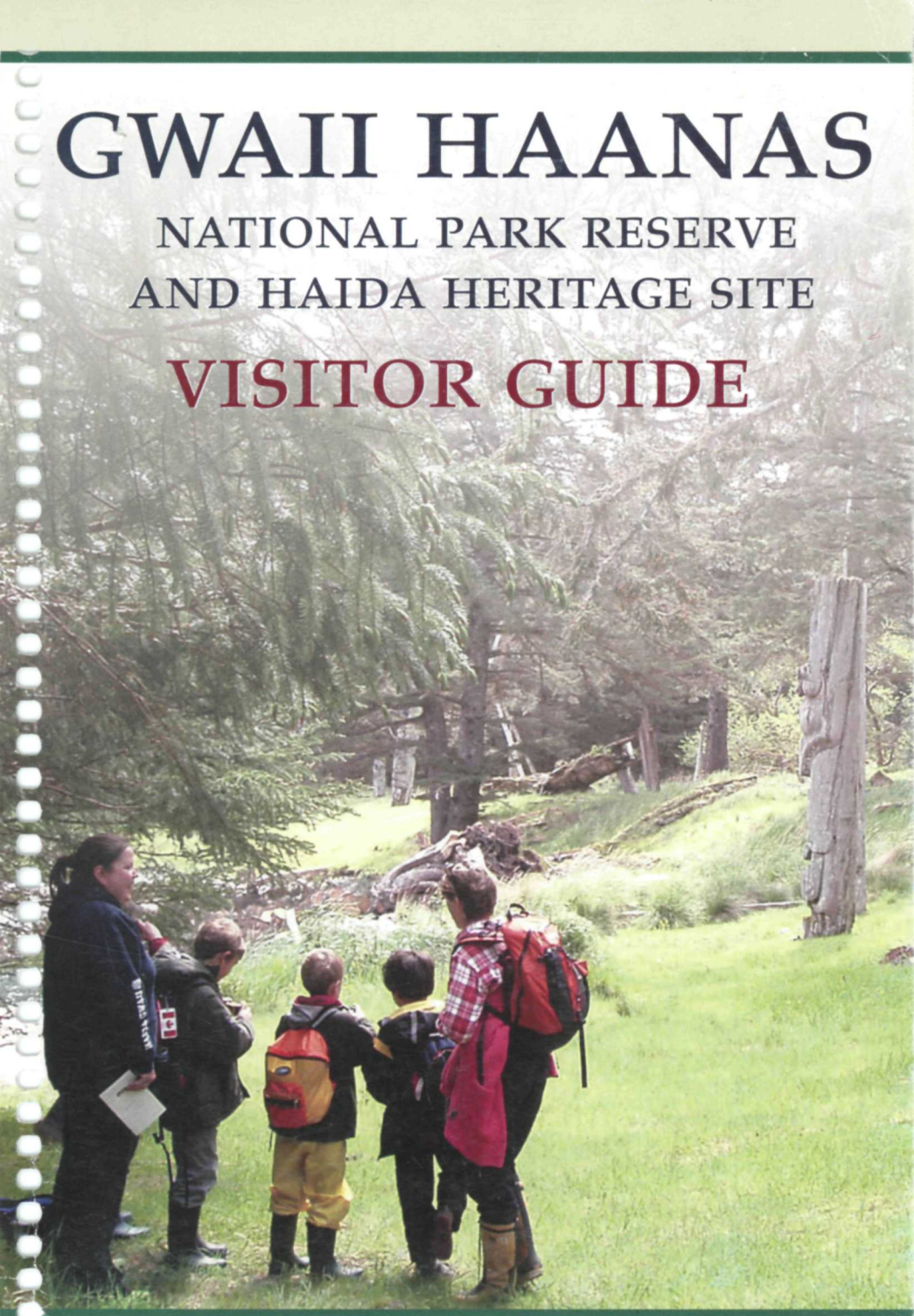


GWAII HAANAS

NATIONAL PARK RESERVE
AND HAIDA HERITAGE SITE

VISITOR GUIDE





THE GWAII HAANAS CREST

The Archipelago Management Board's crest is a unique design crafted by local Haida artist, Giitsxaa. The AMB chose the sea otter and the sea urchin because of the creatures' significance in the history and tradition of the protected area and because of their ecological significance.

Kelp forests are among the most productive ecosystems in the waters of Gwaii Haanas. Populations of sea urchins, a kelp-grazing species, were once kept in check by sea otters, ensuring an abundance of kelp—and more life in and around the kelp. With the extirpation of the sea otters during the fur trade, the natural balance between species in the community was disturbed. The sea urchin population has increased dramatically over time and the health of the kelp forest is threatened. Underwater deserts exist where there were once rich forests of kelp. The loss of the sea otter is a powerful reminder of the vulnerability of individual species and entire ecosystems.

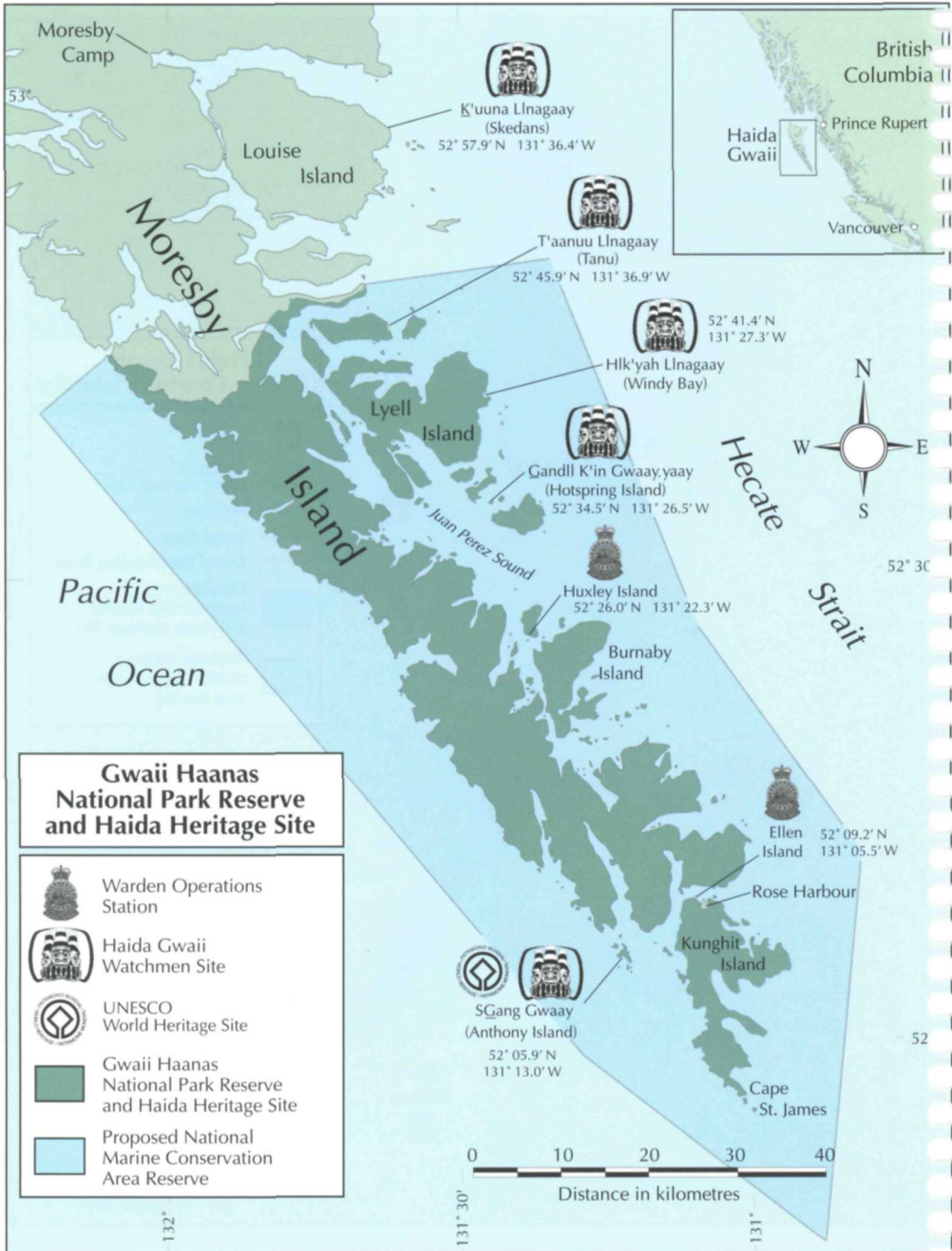
This book complements the orientation given to you by Gwaii Haanas staff or by your tour operator. It provides further information on safety, camping, and the cultural and natural heritage of Gwaii Haanas. The inside back cover verifies that you've attended an orientation.

You must register before each and every trip into Gwaii Haanas, if you are not travelling with a licensed tour operator. Reservations are highly recommended. Before you leave, you should also check with the Gwaii Haanas office for any information that has been changed or updated.

You may see various spellings for Haida place names in this booklet and other literature. The Haida language has been passed on orally for thousands of years. Now elders, through the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program, wrestle with how to spell and write the Haida language. The writing of the Haida place names will evolve over the next years. It will take time to capture the dialects and spelling of the language.



National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site



Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site

-  Warden Operations Station
-  Haida Gwaii Watchmen Site
-  UNESCO World Heritage Site
-  Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site
-  Proposed National Marine Conservation Area Reserve

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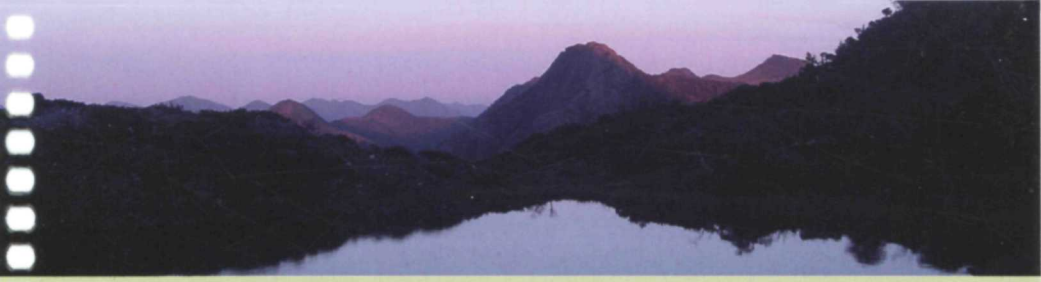
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Mt. Yatza, Gwaii Haanas © Parks Canada, Barb Johnston

A Place of beauty

Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site is a place of great natural beauty. It's a place of contrasts—wild, open seas and calm, secluded bays, fierce winter storms and perfect summer days. It's a place where travellers can encounter a world unlike any other—a world that's considered a national and international treasure.

Gwaii Haanas is located in the island chain known as Haida Gwaii or the Queen Charlotte Islands. The archipelago is perched at the continent's edge where ancient rainforests shoulder their way down steep mountainsides to the Pacific Ocean.

For more than ten thousand years, the Haida have been an integral part of this remarkable landscape. Their communities have thrived on the abundance created by the close relationship between sea, sky and forest. The Haida knowledge of the land and water was intimate and stretches deep in time.

It's because of this connection to the environment that the Haida led the effort to stop logging in Gwaii Haanas and to protect its natural, cultural and spiritual values. In 1985, a standoff on Lyell Island between the Haida and the logging industry brought the conflict to a head and drew international attention. This led to a unique situation with the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada negotiating an agreement to acknowledge and protect Gwaii Haanas as a place of value to all the world.

As part of that agreement, Gwaii Haanas is now cooperatively managed by the Archipelago Management Board (AMB), which is made up of representatives of the Council of the Haida Nation and the Government of Canada. Using a consensus-based decision-making model, the members of the AMB work towards the common goals of protecting the ecological and cultural heritage of Gwaii Haanas for future generations.

Through the Gwaii Haanas Agreement, the AMB also recognizes the inseparable connection of the Haida culture to the land and sea, and ensures that the relationship will continue.

Gwaii Haanas is a sacred place and travellers who are drawn here are welcomed with the understanding that they be respectful. Your visit can be both a spiritual and physical journey if you slow down and move with the rhythm of the place. Give yourself time to get used to the challenge of the journey and the feeling of your own body as it moves in this very different world. Take time to experience, to learn, to understand, and to help protect one of the world's very special places. Take care to leave each site as you found it so that the next visitors have the sense that they are very first to venture there.

the land

Island Geology

Gwaii Haanas has a natural heritage forged by the immense powers of the earth. The collision of the continental plates, the upheaval of the mountain ranges, the fiery eruptions of volcanoes, and the movement of glaciers have cast the form and all its variations. These powers have also created one of the most seismically active areas in Canada.

Seismic and volcanic activity have played a crucial role in shaping these islands. In fact, the oldest rocks of Haida Gwaii are from a group known as arc volcanics and include dark green basalts estimated to be at least 230 million years old. These rocks originated in volcanoes in the Pacific Ocean somewhere near Peru, part of a huge tectonic plate called the Wrangellia terrane. This plate includes what is now Vancouver Island and a portion of the adjacent mainland coast. Over millions of years, this terrane moved steadily northward. Then, about 140 million years ago, the Wrangellia terrane joined the older Alexander terrane. Some 40 million years later, the combined fragments “docked” on the North American Continent.



Fossils are found on many Haida Gwaii beaches © Parks Canada, Barb Wilson

Today, the Haida Gwaii archipelago, made up of hundreds of islands and islets, sits at the edge of the continent. To the east, between the islands and the mainland, lies the Hecate Strait, a shallow marine valley. To the west, the lip of the continental shelf extends less than five kilometres before plunging some 2,500 metres to the ocean floor. This is the location of the Queen Charlotte Fault, one of the great ruptures in the earth's crust and the place where the North American continent meets the Pacific Plate. From a juncture which lies north of Queen Charlotte Sound, the Pacific plate is creeping northward at a rate of 55 millimetres a year. To the south, a series of faults runs all the way to the San Andreas fault in California.



Cape St. James © Parks Canada, Barb Johnston

The movement of the tectonic plates creates enormous pressures, causing mountains to lift, rock strata to fold and compress, and small fault lines to shear. This movement also causes earthquakes. More than fifteen earthquakes with a magnitude greater than 5 have been recorded here. The largest quake ever documented in Canada took place in Haida Gwaii in 1949 and registered 8.1 on the Richter scale. Glaciers have also shaped the landscape over the past two million years. Several glacial cycles have taken place on the islands, the last receding about 10,000 years ago. Mountain peaks, valleys, fjords, riverbeds, and shorelines have all been sculpted by the passage of glaciers.

Combined with the effects of the weather, these forces have shaped an environment where diverse plant, animal and marine life forms now thrive.

Island Ecology

Scientists believe that small sections of Haida Gwaii may not have been covered by ice during the last period of glaciation. In these areas, some plants and animals survived and re-populated the land as the glaciers retreated. Because of the isolation of the archipelago, some of those species of plants and animals have evolved with unique characteristics. For example, six of the ten land mammals on Haida Gwaii are distinct subspecies that are not found anywhere else. The islands also have many rare plant species and communities.

When the ice receded from Haida Gwaii, the land resembled tundra with patches of exposed soil, grasses and sedges. Alder and lodgepole pine were some of the first tree species to appear approximately eleven thousand years ago. They were followed by Sitka spruce and western hemlock nine thousand

years ago, and cedar just five thousand years ago. The coniferous trees, which don't shed their leaves in winter, are best-suited to the climate in Haida Gwaii as they are still able to photosynthesize despite the lack of sunlight.

The terrestrial ecosystems of Gwaii Haanas have adapted to the climatic effects of the Pacific Ocean. In the winter, huge storms batter the rugged mountain slopes of the San Christoval Mountains but the proximity of the ocean keeps the temperature moderate. The result is a wet, cool environment with little sunlight in the winter months.

Other important terrestrial habitats of Gwaii Haanas include bogs and wetlands, sub-alpine forests, and alpine meadows in the upper elevations of the San Christoval Mountains.

For the Haida, the island ecology is divided into three realms of creatures: those of the sea, those of the land and those of the sky. Each realm is organized by rank with a bird or mammal at the top of each hierarchy. In the animal world, the killer whale is the chief of the ocean people, the bear is the chief of the forest people, and the eagle is the chief of the sky creatures. Human beings are also considered to be a part of the natural world and are not viewed as superior to animals in any way. For the Haida, there is also no clear line between the natural world and supernatural world. Many stories exist about encounters between supernatural beings and humans, and of supernatural creatures taking the form of humans.

The Forest

The coastal temperate rainforest dominates the land with trees towering up to 95 metres above a floor shrouded in moss and lichens. Some of the trees in the ancient forests can live more than a thousand years.

Traditionally, the most important of these trees are the red and yellow cedars.

Haida artist, Bill Reid, describes their significance:

Oh, the cedar tree!

If mankind in his infancy had prayed for the perfect substance for all materials and aesthetic needs, an indulgent god could have provided nothing better.

Cedar trees can live for hundreds of years and grow to a massive size.

The wood is soft but the natural oils make it long lasting, and its straight grain makes it ideal as a building material. Historically, the Haida used cedar for a variety of things. The bark was woven into mats and clothing while the



Mycena © Parks Canada, Clint Johnson



Sitka Spruce © Parks Canada, Chris Cheadle

wood was used for making utensils, tools and storage boxes, as well as for building. Massive longhouses with house frontal poles, or *gayang*, were constructed in the villages and huge, ocean-going canoes were carved from single trees. Today, cedar remains a crucial part of the Haida culture and their art.

Beneath the canopy of forest giants in Gwaii Haanas, there is a varied understorey made up of shrubs including salal, huckleberry, salmonberry and devil's club, and ferns including the deer fern, maidenhair, sword ferns and bracken. Foamflowers, bunchberries, false lily of the valley and queen's cup are just a few of the flowers of the forest.

The forest provides a home for animals of all sizes, and a variety of birds. It's also home to an extraordinary number of insects and other tiny organisms which play a critical role in maintaining the health of the ecosystem. Bacteria, fungi, and worms all help to recycle huge amounts of old wood into soil, sustaining the life of the forest.

Water is also an integral part of the forest ecosystem. Streams run everywhere—winding down the mountainsides, pooling in quiet ponds, and pouring into estuaries and mud flats before meeting the sea. In the late summer, the salmon—pink, chum, and coho—return from the sea, swimming upstream to the creeks of their birth. As the fish spawn and die, bears and eagles feast on them, playing an important role in the exchange between sea and land. Bears haul the salmon carcasses into the forest where the nitrogen and other nutrients fertilize the roots of giant trees. Research shows that one bear can move some 700 salmon or 1,600 kilograms up to 150 metres into the forest from the stream. The cycle continues when the salmon fry hatch and emerge from the gravel beds of their birth to return to the sea.

Checklist of Native Terrestrial Mammal Species

- Deer mouse *Peromyscus keeni keeni*
P. keeni prevostensis
- Dusky shrew *Sorex monticolus elassodon*
Sorex monticolus prevostensis
- Pine marten *Martes americana nesophila*
- Charlotte ermine *Mustela erminea haidarum*
- River otter *Lontra canadensis pericyzomae*
- Black bear *Ursus americanus carlottae*
- California bat *Myotis californicus caurinus*
- Keen's bat *Myotis keenii keenii*
- Little brown bat *Myotis lucifugus alascensis*
- Silver-haired bat *Lasionycteris noctivagans*



Queen Charlotte Black bear © Parks Canada

Bears on Haida Gwaii

The Queen Charlotte Black Bear is the only species of bear on the archipelago today. The Queen Charlotte black bear (*Ursus americanus carlottae*) is a subspecies which is unique to the area and is among the largest in North America. The bears in Haida Gwaii have larger jaws and teeth than those on the mainland, an adaptation that is believed to have evolved from the bears chewing on hard-shelled invertebrates in the intertidal zone.

Haida traditions consider the bear to be the chief of the forest and a relative of human beings. Because of this, the Haida traditionally hunted the bear for ceremonial purposes, but never for food.

The bears in Gwaii Haanas forage in valleys and creeks where plants, berries and salmon are plentiful. They also feed in the intertidal areas—the same areas often considered to be favourite camping spots for visitors. The bears' natural movements and habits change when they learn to associate people with food. Please keep a clean camp and follow camping guidelines in the *Need to Know* section of this guide.

Help us learn more about bears. Please report all sightings to Gwaii Haanas staff so that numbers and behavior patterns can be monitored. Unusual encounters should be immediately reported to a Park warden.

Refer to the *You are in Black Bear Country* pamphlet for more information on black bear behavior and what to do if you encounter a black bear.

Introduced Species in Haida Gwaii

Every ecosystem is unique and takes thousands of years to evolve, but islands also have certain evolutionary characteristics that make them especially vulnerable to introduced species. New species are often successful because they have fewer predators and competitors. For example, the Sitka black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus sitkensis*) was initially brought here in the 1880s to supplement people's diets. Since then, the deer's range and population has increased to the point that they are disrupting the native ecosystem. In some areas, deer have browsed so extensively that plants like red cedar, salal, huckleberry, foamflower, sword fern and deer fern have been virtually eliminated. The result is a change in the composition of the forest, which in turn, affects the numbers and distribution of native animals, birds and insects.

It used to be that one of the things that made the islands of Gwaii Haanas excellent breeding habitat for seabirds was that the threat from natural predators was relatively low. That changed with the arrival on the islands of



Raccoons after intertidal prey © Parks Canada, Duane Sept

several new species. Raccoons were deliberately introduced in an attempt to revitalise some sort of fur trade after the extinction of the sea otter, and now pose a serious threat to seabird colonies. Raccoons are good swimmers, able to reach offshore colonies where they kill adult birds and dig up the burrows, raiding the nests for eggs and chicks. Gwaii Haanas staff monitor the seabird colonies for raccoons. If you see a raccoon on a seabird colony, please notify a park warden or the Gwaii Haanas office.

Since even earlier, rats had been arriving on the islands from boats travelling in the area. The rats are believed to have eliminated Cassin's auklets and to have reduced the number of tufted puffins on St. James Island. In 1997, to try to control the problem, Gwaii Haanas staff conducted a rat eradication program on the island. Other islands where long-term rat control and the re-establishment of representative ecosystems are feasible will also be included in the control program. You can help by making sure there are no rats onboard your vessel. You can also read the *Rats on Board* brochure for further information and a list of islands where rats are present.

Red squirrels were first introduced to Haida Gwaii in 1950 to facilitate the collection of spruce cones and seed for silviculture. They quickly spread throughout the archipelago and are now found throughout Moresby Island, as well as on 18 other islands within Gwaii Haanas. Red squirrels prey on songbird nests and have an added advantage in areas browsed by deer, where songbird nests are more exposed. The combined effects of browsing by deer and predation by squirrels have been linked to declines in songbirds.

Eleven species of mammals and 25% of all plant species have been introduced on the islands for a variety of reasons. It is difficult and costly to try to control species once they are established. The best approach is to prevent them from being introduced in the first place.

small islet alert!

Rats, raccoons, and red squirrels are introduced predators that threaten seabirds, shorebirds and songbirds. Predator free, small islets provide extremely important habitat to many species of birds. To help protect these areas please record and report any sightings of rats, raccoons and red squirrels on small islets to the Gwaii Haanas office.

Birds of Prey on Haida Gwaii

Raptors:

For an ecosystem that is in many ways species poor, there are many birds of prey, with few of the usual prey species you'd expect.

Eagles are a common sight in Haida Gwaii.

They are fish eaters and scavengers and tend to nest in locations where marine life is abundant. They also nest in areas with trees large enough to support their massive nests that can weigh up to 900 kilograms (2000 pounds).

Seabirds, in particular murrelets and petrels, are an important food source for the rare Peale's peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus pealei*).

However, falcons don't always nest close to seabird colonies. Occasionally, they will fly great distances to obtain food and will prey on flocks of murrelets several kilometres out to sea.

The Queen Charlotte goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis laingi*), a subspecies of the Northern goshawk, lives in the mature forests of Haida Gwaii and coastal areas of BC. Using a hunting style described as "lurk and swoop" goshawks prey on medium sized birds- grouse, thrushes, woodpeckers, murrelets, and small mammals. The Queen Charlotte goshawk is considered threatened. It is believed to be in decline because of habitat loss as a consequence of logging of low-elevation old growth and older second growth.

The goshawk's 'home range' is large and complex. It appears to be made up of a tree with an active nest, a nest area with alternative nest trees, a 'post-fledging' area where young birds learn to hunt, and the adult bird's foraging area. Research efforts continue to identify active goshawk territory and nest sites in Gwaii Haanas and other areas of Haida Gwaii.



Bald Eagle © Parks Canada, Chris Cheadle

Are you being harassed by a raptor?

If so you are likely close to its nest. To avoid disturbing the nest, please retreat from the area. To contribute to our understanding of raptor distribution in Gwaii Haanas, record your observations and location and report them to the Gwaii Haanas office.

The marine ecosystems here are among the most important in the world. Each spring, the waters of Gwaii Haanas teem with life. The cycle of biological productivity begins when large schools of Pacific herring come into the shallow waters to spawn in March and April. The milt of the males turns the water a shimmering opalescent green and the eggs of the females shine on the rocks and kelp. The kelp, thick with herring eggs, is known as roe-on-kelp or K'aaw and is considered a delicacy. This is an important traditional food for the Haida and is also the basis for a commercial fishery. The herring eggs also provide nourishment for other creatures including marine birds and invertebrates. Other fish, birds, seals and sea lions prey on the adult herring. The cycle of life continues as the spring days get longer, and the microscopic organisms known as plankton start to bloom providing nourishment for the young herring. It's all part of a complex marine food chain.

The east coast is a complex network of islands, fjords, inlets, estuaries and channels. The west is a wild place where high mountain cliffs and rocky, rugged slopes are pounded by the huge waves of the Pacific Ocean. Besides herring and salmon, the seas around Gwaii Haanas are home to a rich variety of marine life including groundfish, rockfish, halibut, geoduck and prawns. During low tide on the east coast, sea urchins, kelp forests, sea stars, sea grass meadows and schools of small fish can easily be viewed from a kayak or small boat.

The Kelp Forests

The kelp forests are the marine counterpart to the great rainforests of the Pacific Northwest. The giant kelp and bull kelp found along the coast of Gwaii Haanas belong to the brown algae family. Anchored to the ocean floor with holdfasts, their flexible stalks grow towards the sunlight at the water's surface. There, the plant continues to grow, draping a protective canopy over the sea life that teems below.

Hundreds of species of fish and invertebrates feed on and find shelter in the fronds while predators use the kelp for camouflage. Marine mammals, such as sea lions and harbour seals, rest, play, and occasionally hunt in the kelp forest.



Bull Kelp © Parks Canada, Graham Osborne

Today, the near-shore environment of Haida Gwaii has been profoundly changed by the red sea urchin. In the past, urchin populations were kept in check by the sea otter. But the natural balance shifted in the 1700s and 1800s when the fur trade pushed the sea otter to extinction in British Columbia. Since then, the kelp forests here have faced increased grazing from the urchins. The urchins can usually be seen, in pale-coloured bands called urchin barrens, just seaward of the kelp forests.

Eelgrass Meadows

Along relatively sheltered bays, estuaries, shorelines and heads of inlets at low tide, a forest green blanket of long green blades waves just under the surface, announcing the presence of eelgrass meadows. Many marine species are dependent on the habitat provided by healthy eelgrass meadows. Numerous fish inhabitants are forage species eaten by other fishes, birds and mammals. For example, successful rearing of great blue heron young is linked to the fish species found in the eelgrass meadows where the adults feed. Juvenile salmon, rockfishes, herring and English sole—important fishery species—are known to use eelgrass meadows as nurseries, and for forage and shelter. Eelgrass meadows are places of great sensitivity that reflect environmental change. They are particularly vulnerable to degradation from human activities including direct destruction and sedimentation from coastal developments, and excess nutrients and pollution from land and sea-based activities. Losses of seagrass ecosystems throughout the world have heightened awareness of human impacts on coastal areas.

Research surveys suggest that eelgrass ecosystems in Gwaii Haanas may be in better health than those on the west coast of Vancouver Island and in the

Strait of Georgia. In Gwaii Haanas, significantly more fish species were caught on average and very little residual nitrates (an indicator of coastal pollution) were detected. Some Gwaii Haanas meadows had over 22 fish species each, including all nine of the most common sculpin species. In addition, juvenile rockfish, especially copper rockfish, were generally more abundant. In stressed eelgrass meadows, fewer species are present and the loss of species diversity could render meadows less resilient to future stresses. The greater diversity of fish in Gwaii Haanas meadows may reflect a healthier ecosystem due to less fishing pressure and less habitat degradation from human activities.

Protecting the Intertidal Zone

Along the sheltered east coast, many life forms thrive in the area between high and low tide. This is particularly evident where narrow channels constrict the tidal flow. In places like Burnaby (Dolomite) Narrows, the water pushes through a channel that's just 50-metres wide, providing a nearly constant stream of plankton and nutrient-rich water.

Hundreds of marine species, in amazing concentrations, have been identified in this area. For example, in one survey, bat stars were counted at a density of 74 per square metre; near Vancouver Island, the typical density is just seven per square metre.

The same characteristics that make Burnaby Narrows special, also make it one of the most vulnerable places in Gwaii Haanas. Because of the topography and the tides, the rich intertidal life is often exposed and easily trampled. By exploring Burnaby Narrows on foot, at low tide, you can crush

Bat Stars © Parks Canada, Graham Osborne



organisms with every step you take. To prevent this, please float through the area in a kayak, skiff, or other small boat, instead of walking. You'll still see a kaleidoscope of bat stars, turban snails, sunflower stars, and many other creatures that make up this colourful spectrum of life. Floating through the narrows allows visitors to appreciate and learn about these creatures without endangering them.

Northern Abalone

The waters surrounding Gwaii Haanas are home to the Northern abalone (*Haliotis kamtschatkana*), a marine snail, and a threatened species. Abalone is ecologically and culturally important and was once abundant along many exposed rocky shores. Poaching and commercial harvest in the 1970s pushed abalone to the brink of extinction. The abalone population is not rebounding, despite a closure on all abalone harvest. **It is illegal to possess or harvest any part of the abalone, including shells found on the beach.**



Northern Abalone © Parks Canada, Brian Eccles

The Northern abalone is the only one of eight North Pacific species of abalone to be found in British Columbia waters. It is also the smallest of the eight species, growing to no more than about six inches in length. Abalone shells are distinctive. They are shaped like an ear, and are lined with iridescent mother-of-pearl.

Abalone attach themselves to rocky seafloors in areas where there is considerable swell or current. Juvenile abalone are sensitive to light and are found in cracks and the underside of rocks. Adults congregate in kelp beds where they feed on fragments of kelp and make up part of the rich diversity of this habitat. Natural predators are octopus, sunflower star, wolf eel, sea otter, birds and otter.

Abalone have long been valued by First Nations and harvested for food and ceremony. Historically, the shells were used for art and ornamentation. Recreational and commercial harvesters also prize abalone for its food value

and abalone is considered a delicacy in global markets today. Commercial fishing began in the early 1900s but did not take place extensively until the 1970s. The fishery grew rapidly and within about ten years stocks were in serious decline and in 1990 the fishery was closed to all users — an unprecedented step!

Abalone have not recovered as hoped. In part this may be due to continued illegal harvesting including large-scale poaching. There may also be 'biological factors' at play involving spawning densities, a naturally slow growth rate and not enough juveniles surviving to become, in turn, spawning adults. Environmental factors may also be involved. The kelp forest changed dramatically when the sea otter was extirpated from waters surrounding Haida Gwaii. It is difficult to reconstruct what happened when the sea otter was removed from the kelp ecosystem but it may have meant a period where abalone populations were able to thrive in the absence of its predation. The abundance that made such huge catches possible in the 1970s may have been made possible by the extirpation of the sea otter more than a hundred years earlier.

A Haida Gwaii Northern Abalone Stewardship Program was established in 2000 by the Council of the Haida Nation Haida Fisheries Program working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Environment Canada, Gwaii Haanas, Laskeek Bay Conservation Society, World Wildlife Fund Canada and the Haida Gwaii Marine Resources Group. Their goal is to promote stewardship and find ways of restoring abalone populations to self-sustaining levels that could support food fisheries.





Humpback Whale © Parks Canada, Judson Brown

To help build our understanding of the species, an abalone stewardship area has been set aside in Juan Perez Sound near Gwaii Haanas. This is one of two areas in Haida Gwaii being used to collect baseline data, monitor changes and conduct research on rebuilding techniques.

Community support for rebuilding abalone populations is critical to project success. Please participate in Abalone Watch—call the **Observe. Record. Report Hotline** at 1800-465-4336 to report any suspicious activity.

Whales

Twenty species of whales, dolphins, and porpoises have been known to use Gwaii Haanas waters. Whales belong to one of two major groups, defined by their diet and feeding habits. Baleen whales feed on plankton and small fish, scooping huge mouthfuls of water and straining the plankton through a structure in the mouth called baleen. The toothed whales eat fish, squid and marine mammals.

Humpbacks, grey whales and minke are the most common baleen whales in Gwaii Haanas. Grey whales arrive in Gwaii Haanas waters each spring to feast on herring spawn and other treats on the ocean floor. They stop over along their annual 15,000 to 20,000 kilometre round-trip migration from winter calving grounds in Baja California, Mexico, to summer feeding grounds in Alaska. Each leg of the trip takes about two months. Humpback whales are known for spectacular acrobatic displays. They feed on herring, zooplankton and krill—shrimp like creatures. The patterns, colouring and shape of Humpback tail flukes are unique to each individual. Researchers use photographs of the undersides of their tails to monitor Humpback numbers and to track their movements.

At 10 metres long the minke whale is the smallest of the baleen whales. Minke whales are shaped like torpedos and can be identified by their small, sharply

curved dorsal fins and the white band on their pectoral flippers. Little is known about their social lives but it appears that minke whales are solitary whales.

The orca, or killer whale, is probably the most easily recognized and best-known of the toothed whales. Killer whales are found in cold and temperate waters around the world. Each killer whale has a unique pattern of markings which, combined with distinctive variations in the shape of the dorsal fin, make individual whales relatively easy to identify and a rewarding subject for study. These whales are social creatures and travel in well-defined family groups or “pods”. Studies of the various pods in the waters of B.C. have shown that there are three distinctive categories of killer whales. Some pods live in groups, varying in size from three to sixty mammals and feed primarily on salmon. These whales form two separate communities, each with its own well-defined range, and are known as residents. Southern residents use the waters of southern Vancouver Island, and northern residents range from northern Vancouver Island to southeast Alaska. The Southern residents are considered to be endangered* and the Northern residents are considered to be threatened*.

The killer whales most commonly seen near Gwaii Haanas are known as transients. This group lives in smaller pods of up to five whales and feeds on marine mammals such as seals, sea lions and porpoises. Resident and transient killer whales can also be distinguished by their vocalizations. Although every pod has its own distinctive dialect, in general the language of the residents is clearly different from the transients.

A third group of orcas is known as the offshores. These whales have been observed near Gwaii Haanas, travelling in large groups ranging between 25 and 40 mammals and generally travelling further offshore than the residents and the transients. Based on the little evidence we have, they seem to be mainly fish eaters, but researchers have not ruled out that they also eat mammals. The offshores dialect is different from both residents and transients. COSEWIC has listed the offshore population as a species of special concern*. The three groups—resident, transient or offshore—do not appear to associate with each other.

According to Haida culture, killer whales are closely linked to the spiritual world. The Haida believe that when people drown in the waters around Gwaii Haanas, they become killer whales. As a result, the whales are often associated with certain geographical features such as shoals, reefs and headlands—the same places where people are known to have drowned.

***Refer to page 32 for COSEWIC categories**

Checklist of Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises in Gwaii Haanas

Toothed Whales

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Transient killer whales | <i>Orcinus orca</i> (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Resident killer whales | <i>Orcinus orca</i> (u) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Offshore killer whales | <i>Orcinus orca</i> (u) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Pacific white-sided dolphin | <i>Lagenorhynchus obliquidens</i> (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dall's porpoise | <i>Phocoenoides dalli</i> (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Harbour porpoise | <i>Phocoena phocoena</i> (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sperm whale | <i>Physeter macrocephalus</i> (*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Cuvier's beaked whale | <i>Ziphius cavirostris</i> (*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Short-finned pilot whale | <i>Globicephala macrorhynchus</i> (r) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Risso's dolphin | <i>Grampus griseus</i> (r) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Baird's beaked whale | <i>Berardius bairdii</i> (u) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Northern right whale dolphin | <i>Lissodelphis borealis</i> (r) |

Baleen Whales

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Humpback whale | <i>Megaptera novaeangliae</i> (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Gray whale | <i>Eschirichtius robustus</i> (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Minke whale | <i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i> (c) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Fin whale | <i>Balaenoptera physalus</i> (u) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Blue whale | <i>Balaenoptera musculus</i> (vr) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Sei whale | <i>Balaenoptera borealis</i> (*) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | North Pacific right whale | <i>Eubalaena japonica</i> (*) |

c – common
u - uncommon
r - sightings are rare

vr - very rare
* - abundance unknown

***Refer to page 32 for COSEWIC categories**

did you KNOW?

During the commercial whaling era, between 1910 and 1943, large numbers of whales were hunted in this area and processed at Rose Harbour.

If you see a whale, porpoise or dolphin (collectively called cetaceans) the BC Cetacean Sightings Network would like to know!!

Keep detailed notes on the date, time, location, species name and/or physical description, behaviour, number of animals you saw and report your sightings by web www.wildwhales.org, email sightings@vanaqua.org or phone 1866 I SAW ONE (1 866 472-9663)

The BC Cetacean Sightings Network is a collaborative effort by the Vancouver Aquarium and Fisheries and Oceans Canada that was established in 1999 to gather sighting information from mariners and the public. Public sighting information helps to increase our understanding of cetacean distribution and habitat use and ways to conserve these species.

Whale Watching Guidelines

- **Be cautious and courteous:** approach areas of known or suspected marine mammal activity with extreme caution. Look in all directions before planning your approach or departure.
- **Slow down:** reduce speed to less than 7 knots when within 400 metres/yards of the nearest whale. Avoid abrupt course changes.
- **Keep clear of the whales' path:** If whales are approaching you, cautiously move out of the way.
- **Do not approach or position your vessel closer than 100 metres/yards to any whale.**
- **Stop immediately** if your vessel is unexpectedly within 100 metres/yards of a whale, and allow the whales to pass.
- **Do not** approach whales from the front or from behind. Always approach and depart from the side, moving in a direction parallel to the direction of the whales.
- **Stay** on the **offshore** side of the whales when they are traveling close to shore.
- **Limit** your viewing time to a recommended maximum of 30 minutes. This will minimize the cumulative impact of many vessels and give consideration to other viewers
- **Do not** swim with or feed whales.
- **Aircraft should fly a minimum of 300 metres (1000 feet) above any whale.**

Porpoises and Dolphins:

Observe all guidelines for watching whales.

- **Do not** drive through groups of porpoises or dolphins to discourage bowriding.
- Should dolphins or porpoises choose to ride the bow wave of your vessel, **reduce speed gradually** and avoid sudden course changes.

Sea lions and Seals

Seals and sea lions straddle sea and land environments, spending most of their lives travelling and feeding in the sea, coming ashore to rest, mate, give birth and moult. Steller sea lions and harbour seals are commonly spotted in waters surrounding Gwaii Haanas and at haul outs (places where they literally haul themselves out of the water).

There is a large Steller sea lion rookery, or breeding colony, on the Kerouard Islands in the Cape St James area. This is the only rookery in the region and one of only a handful on the BC coast. Over 600 breeding Steller sea lions currently use the Cape St James rookery. Large males (bulls) weighing 800 kilograms or more arrive in early May to compete for breeding territories. Each bull usually has a harem of 10 to 15 females (cows).

Sea lions are extremely sensitive to disturbance during the breeding season, from late May until the middle of July. The sea lions give birth high on the rocks to protect the newborn pups from being swept away. In their first month of life, the sea lion pups are highly vulnerable. Disturbance of mature animals may lead to accidental trampling of pups or to pups being knocked into the sea. To help prevent this, please keep your boats away from the rookery during this time period.

Steller sea lions feed on over 50 different fish and invertebrate species. Preferred foods are small to medium-sized fish including herring, sand lance, hake, pollock, arrowtooth flounder and other flatfish, rockfish, salmon, dogfish and squids. Transient killer whales are one of the few predators of Steller sea lions.

Steller sea lions © Parks Canada, David Denning



Outside of the breeding season, congregations of Steller sea lions are found in relatively sheltered year-round haul out sites. These large mammals expend considerable energy hauling themselves onto land. If the sea lions feel threatened and are forced to return to the safety of the water, their ability to call on those energy reserves for more important situations is compromised. Sea lions can also display behaviour that may seem playful, curious, or even aggressive. This can be disconcerting, especially if you're in a kayak or small boat.

Sea lion and Seal Viewing Guidelines:

- **Avoid** approaching closer than 100 metres/yards to any marine mammals.
- **Slow down** and reduce your wake/wash
- **Pay attention** and back away at the first sign of disturbance or agitation.
- **Be cautious and quiet** when around haul-outs, especially during breeding and pupping seasons (generally May to July).
- **Do not** swim with or feed any marine mammals.

Between the early 1900s and when they were protected by law in 1970, both Steller sea lions and harbour seals were intensively culled for their fur and for salmon predator control. Over that time in BC waters, about 55,000 Steller sea lions were killed, reducing the breeding population to about 4,000 animals. An estimated half a million harbour seals were killed during the same period, reducing the population to less than 10% of historic levels. The Haida Gwaii populations of Steller sea lions and harbour seals are both increasing, with an estimated 4,500 Steller sea lions and 9,500 harbour seals cruising the waters today.

The recovery and the present day breeding success of the Cape St. James rookery is a great conservation success story. Researchers are studying the Stellar sea lion population around Gwaii Haanas for population status, movement (looking for animals branded in Alaska) and diet studies.

Harbour seals © Parks Canada, Rob Harding



Seabirds

Seabirds spend most of their time at sea, coming to land generally only to breed. The isolation, abundance of food, lack of disturbance during nesting periods and availability of suitable habitat make Gwaii Haanas an ideal place for seabirds. Twelve species make up some 370 thousand pairs of seabirds nesting in Gwaii Haanas. They represent about 15% of all seabirds that nest in British Columbia and include a large rhinoceros auklet colony, and nearly a thousand pairs of tufted puffins.

Seabirds are mainly either burrow nesters or surface nesters. Burrow nesters choose small offshore islands free from predators. Nests are created by digging into the soil beneath tree roots, grassy hummocks, or rocks. These chambers can be several metres in depth. Surface nesters nest on rocky headlands, islets or cliffs. One bird, the marbled murrelet, is a tree nester. It has been discovered to nest high on moss covered platforms in trees of old-growth forest.

To avoid disturbing the birds during the breeding season, which runs from mid-April through September, you can take the following steps:

- **Do not** approach nests or go ashore on seabird colonies. Most offshore islands support seabird colonies. Be aware that many seabirds as well as peregrine falcons will abandon their nests, eggs or chicks if they are disturbed.
- **Avoid** using flashlights, campfires and boat lights near colonies. Some birds come ashore only at night and may be disoriented by the light.
- **Avoid** anchoring near seabird colonies since boat lights and rigging can be deadly to approaching birds.
- **Avoid** making noise, including running your boat engine, playing music or speaking loudly.
- **Check** and ensure your boat is rodent-free.



Common Murre © Parks Canada

Checklist of Seabirds in Gwaii Haanas

Burrow nesters

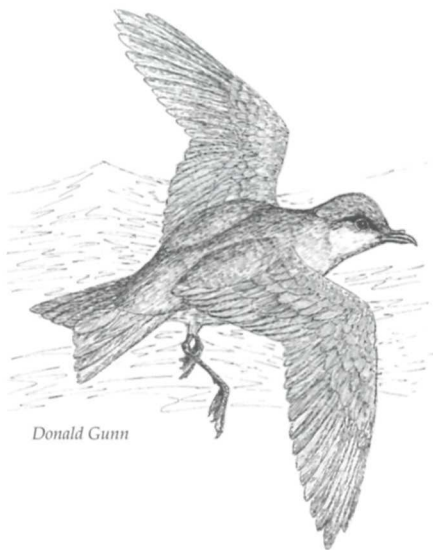
- Fork-tailed storm-petrel *Oceanodroma furcata*
- Leach's storm-petrel *Oceanodroma leucorhoa*
- Pigeon guillemot *Cephus columba*
- Ancient murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus*
- Cassin's auklet *Ptychoramphus aleuticus*
- Rhinoceros auklet *Cerorhinca monocerata*
- Tufted puffin *Fratercula cirrhata*
- Horned puffin *Fratercula corniculata*

Surface Nesters

- Common murre *Uria aalge*
- Pelagic cormorant *Phalacrocorax pelagicus*
- Glaucous-winged gull *Larus hyperboreus*

Tree Nester

- Marbled murrelet *Brachyramphus marmoratus*

FORK-TAILED STORM PETREL, JIK'IIGA OR SDAAGWAANA*Oceanodroma furcata*

Donald Gunn

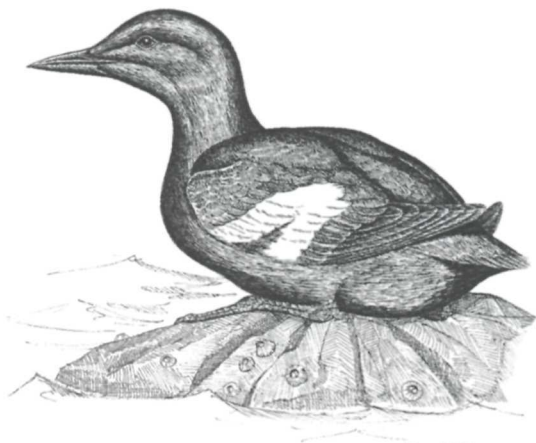
The fork-tailed storm petrel is the smallest seabird. It has a bluish-grey body with black around the eye. The Leach's storm petrel, *Oceanodroma leucorhoa* (Vieillot), is blackish-brown with a white rump patch above the forked tail.

Storm petrels feed far offshore, picking small marine animals from the surface of the water while still in flight. They feed a single chick a regurgitated plankton mixture. Most young fledge in August and September. About 115,000 petrels nest in the area.

PIGEON GUILLEMOT, SGAGADAWAA or JAAD XAWS*Cephus columba*

The pigeon guillemot has a black body with a white patch on the upper wing marked by a black triangle. Its feet and the insides of its mouth is bright orange. It makes a characteristic 'weeee' call.

Groups of pigeon guillemots are commonly seen feeding close to shore. The birds usually have two chicks, and throughout the day the parents feed the chicks bottom-dwelling fish such as blennies and sculpins, which the birds catch in the shallow water. The chicks usually fledge in August.

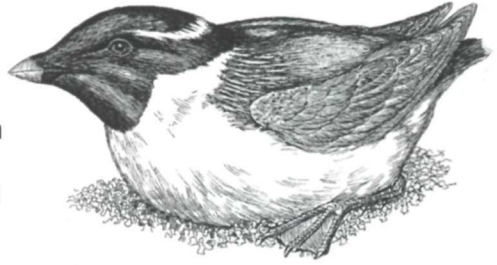


Donald Gunn

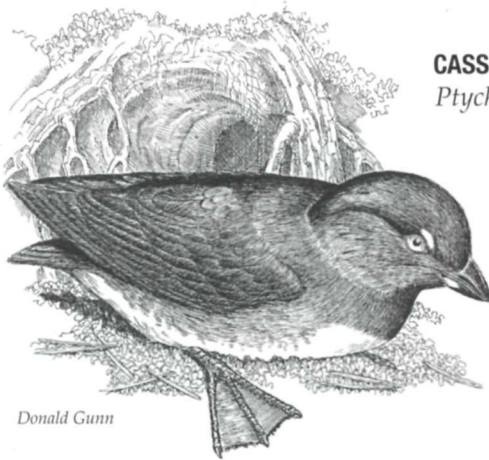
ANCIENT MURRELET, SGINXAANA*Synthliboramphus antiquus*

The ancient murrelet has a grey back with a white stripe above the eye that extends onto the back of the head, a black bib and a white breast.

Ancient murrelets have been studied intensively on the islands. They lay 2 eggs and both parents share the 32-day incubation duty. During the night, usually around the end of May, parents and their 2-day old chicks depart for the sea. They have been known to travel up to 50 kilometres away from the colony by the following day. An estimated 238,000 breed in Gwaii Haanas.



Donald Gunn



Donald Gunn

CASSIN'S AUKLET, HAJAA*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*

The Cassin's auklet has a dark grey upper body with white to light gray below and a white spot above pale eye.

They lay a single egg and return to the colony at night to feed their chicks regurgitated plankton. Breeding coincides with the plankton bloom in the northeastern Pacific. About 165,000 breed in Gwaii Haanas.

RHINOCEROS AUKLET, HLAGWAATS'I or 7UHUU*Cerorhinca monocerata*

The rhinoceros auklet has distinctive white head plumes and a yellow "horn" at the base of the upper bill. They fly close to the water, beating their short wings rapidly.

They lay one egg, in a burrow in a forested area. The parents return to the colony at night to feed their young whole fish. The birds sometimes can be seen near shore at night with their bills full of fish.



Donald Gunn



Donald Gunn

TUFTED PUFFIN, KUXAANA*Fratercula cirrhata*

The tufted puffin has a distinctive, large orange bill, with a white face and yellow head tufts.

The birds use their short wings to "fly" underwater in search of prey. The adults generally feed within sight of land and parents may make many trips a day to carry fish back to their young in burrows.

The horned puffin *Fratercula corniculata* prefers the open marine environment but has been seen singly or in very small groups mingling with tufted puffins and rhinoceros auklets near rich feeding grounds like Cape St. James.

PELAGIC CORMORANT, K'YAALUU*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*

Donald Gumm

The pelagic cormorant is black with green or purple iridescence and has a distinctive, long slender neck.

They build nests from grass and marine algae on low-lying cliffs and usually lay 4 eggs. Adults feed close to shore on a variety of fish. Chicks hatch in late June and July.

GLAUCOUS-WINGED GULL, TANGGWAAN SK'IINAAY or SK'IN GAT'ADAANG*Larus hyperboreus*

The glaucous-winged gull is white with pale grey on the back and upper parts of the wing. The wing tips are spotted in grey but never black.



Donald Gumm

COMMON MURRE*Uria aalge*

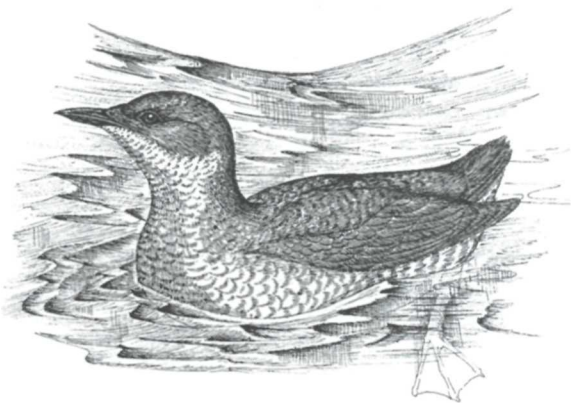
The common murre has a dark, sooty brown head and back with white underparts. It has a distinctive, long, slender, pointed bill.

Murres generally breed on the thin ledges of sea cliffs where they lay a single egg on the ground. Chicks are fed one fish at a time throughout the day. One parent, usually the male, accompanies the chick to sea when it is approximately 20 days old.

**MARbled MURRELET, TS'ALANGAH***Brachyrhamphus marmoratus*

The marbled murrelet has a dark brown upper body, and its underparts are mottled brown and white.

Pairs are commonly seen on the water close to shore. Because few nests have been found, little is known about the marbled murrelet's breeding biology. They nest inland in trees where they lay a single egg.



Donald Gunn

Gwaii Haanas Marine

The rich marine environment surrounding Gwaii Haanas has been proposed as a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve. The purpose of a National Marine Conservation Area is to protect representative marine areas for the benefit, education and enjoyment of everyone. They are intended to protect marine ecosystems while, at the same time, allowing people to use the areas in ways that are considered to be ecologically sustainable. Traditional harvesting, recreational and commercial fishing, boating, tourism, and shipping are some of the activities that can continue within guidelines.

Parks Canada intends to eventually establish a National Marine Conservation Area network representing each of 29 marine regions identified in the Pacific, Arctic and Atlantic Oceans, and the Great Lakes. The proposed Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve would represent two of these regions—Hecate Strait and the Queen Charlotte Shelf, and would cover a total area of about 3,400 square kilometres. The Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area Reserve would be managed in partnership, by the Government of Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Council of the Haida Nation. If established Gwaii Haanas will protect 5,000 km from mountain top to deep sea.

COSEWIC categories

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada

Extinct: A species that no longer exists.

Extirpated: A species no longer existing in the wild in Canada but occurs elsewhere.

*****Endangered:** A species facing imminent extirpation or extinction.

****Threatened:** A species likely to become endangered if limiting factors are not reversed.

***Special Concern:** A species of special concern because of characteristics that make it particularly sensitive to human or natural events.



the people

The English translation for Haida is *The People*. Haida have lived on Haida Gwaii for more than ten thousand years and during that time, these islands have been a source of inspiration and sustenance.

Haida Lineages

The Haida nation is divided into two moities—the Ravens and the Eagles. Each moiety is subdivided into numerous smaller and more localized groups or lineages. The clans' genealogy and inheritance are passed to the descendants through the mother. Therefore, it is the son of a chief's sister (his nephew) who is first in line to inherit the chieftainship, rather than the chief's own son. However, in a few clans, the chieftainship passes to a chief's brother first. If there are no brothers, then it passes to the eldest sister's son. In the past, arranged marriages with the opposite clan preserved the lineages and controlled intermarriage.

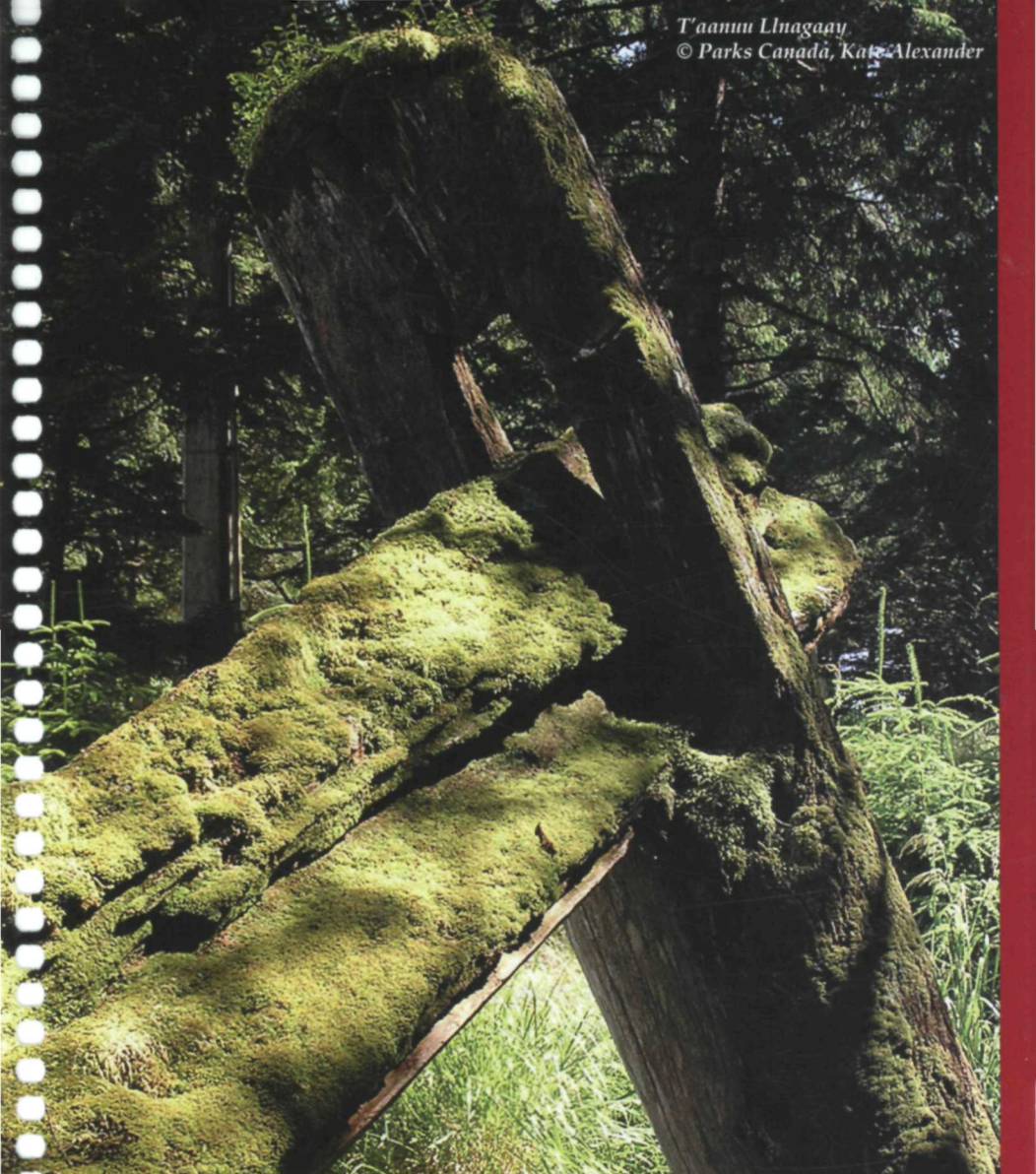
The Raven clans of Haida Gwaii lay claim to the more ancient association with these islands. Their oral histories describe their ancestors as having emerged from a primeval flood in one of three areas: Skincuttle Inlet, House Island or Naikoon. The Eagle clan's origins are tied to Jiila Kuns, the Creek Woman at the head of Pallant Creek in Cumshewa Inlet. She lived here prior to the volcanic eruptions and the floods, but she married away from Haida Gwaii, eventually returning to Cumshewa with her children.

Each lineage measured its wealth by the extent of its access to such things as hunting lands, fishing streams, berry-picking areas, and stands of fine timber. Right of access, not only to natural resources but also to the supernatural, could be traced through a lineage's ancestry and history. Incorporeal wealth such as dances, songs, crests and names handed down through the lineage was jealously guarded.

Village Life — Yesterday and Today

Each permanent village had houses sheltering large extended families. The hereditary leader controlled all harvesting areas in his traditional territory such as fishing and hunting grounds and intertidal areas for food gathering.

The wealth of the individual was measured not by accumulation, but by distribution of property in a complex system of payment and repayment with



Our culture, our heritage is the child of respect and intimacy with the land and sea. Like the forests, the roots of our people are intertwined such that the greatest troubles cannot overcome us. We owe our existence to Haida Gwaii. On these islands, our ancestors lived and died, and here too we will make our homes until called away to join them in the great beyond. The living generation accepts the responsibility to insure that our heritage is passed on to following generations.

~ preamble to the Haida Constitution



Massett woman weaving © British Columbia Archives

interest. For example, the potlatch tradition confirms or validates the status of an individual and important events, such as raising a pole, naming a chief's successor, a marriage, and other events that occur during a person's life. The guests who attend a potlatch receive food and payment for witnessing what occurs. The quality and quantity of this payment is dependent on the witness' standing within each lineage. If a person accepts payment, he is legally bound to remember and to talk about the event accurately. An individual's tangible wealth decreases significantly as a result of providing payment for witnesses; however, wealth has always been shared in this manner. It is understood that the cycle of payment and repayment with interest is constant.

In general, Haida children began learning their life skills at an early age. From the time they were babies, the Haida males bathed in the cold ocean to keep their people strong. As they grew older, the children played games that taught them skills and allowed the elders to observe and note the talents of each child. Some children were born into hereditary positions, such as that of a chief or historian. A child was raised from birth to be a chief when that was his destiny. He learned the details about his lineage and territory. Further, he learned about every transaction that had taken place in the history of his lineage or family. A "historian" began at a very young age repeating the histories of his people word-for-word. In the past, the Haida had no written language; history was passed orally from generation to generation. Since 1998, the elders in the Skidegate Haida Language Program (SHIP) have worked to create the written equivalent of the Haida language for modern use. Haida language is taught in the local school (from daycare through high school) and to the community, as a result of the SHIP initiative.

Because resources were so rich and food could be stored, there was plenty of time for craft, play, and exploration. During the spring, summer and fall, the Haida gathered the foods and materials they needed from the land and sea. For example, women gathered bark to make clothing, baskets, rope, and other useful items— and were known to take part in trade. Winter months were spent celebrating the significant events of the villages. It was during this time that the Haida men perfected their carving techniques and painted artistic designs on their work and on items made by the women. Items used during celebrations, as well as those used in day-to-day living, were carved with personal identifying motifs or crests. Cedar storage boxes, eating utensils, houses and poles—embellished with the motifs and crests of the families—are the legacy.

Today, Haida crests are recognized around the world. They're expressed in the massive carved poles, in architecture, sculptures, fabric and painted designs, and in intricately detailed jewellery. They can also be seen in the old memorial and mortuary poles that we see slowly returning to the earth—an evocative commemoration of the lives of the ancestors. As in precontact times the customs and traditions are still practised in the daily lives of the Haida.

Drying Halibut 1897 © British Columbia Archives



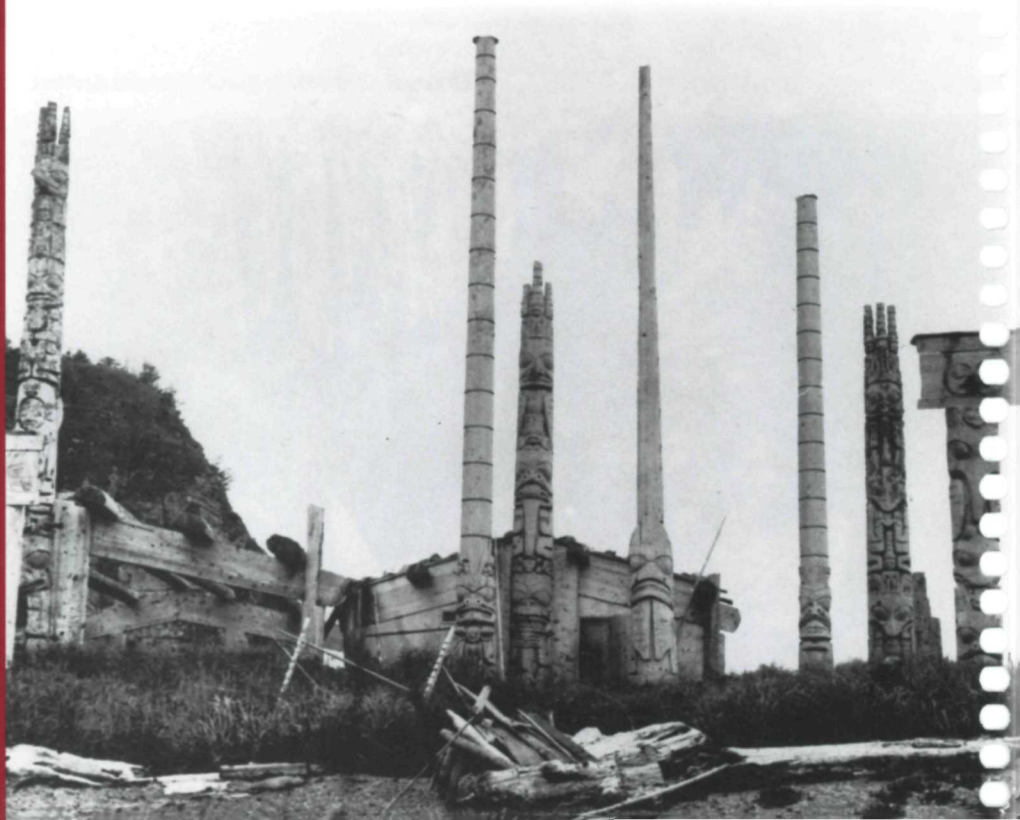
Poles

Memorial, mortuary, and frontal poles are three types of poles carved by the Haida. Each pole, with its representations of human and animal figures, tells a story associated with an individual or family lineage. Much of the information and stories about the origins of the crests and the people is missing, as many historians and other members of the lineage died in the smallpox epidemic.

Memorial Poles

Memorial poles were erected in memory of a deceased person whose remains were deposited elsewhere or whose body was lost at sea. Most often, a single crest figure was carved at the base; at the top, a figure of a raven clan crest or an eagle crest might sit. In between these two figures, the pole was left blank or filled by potlatch cylinders. The number of potlatch rings carved into the pole indicated the number of potlatches—a sign of wealth and high standing—hosted by the deceased during his lifetime.

Skedans 1878 © British Columbia Archives



Mortuary Poles and Mandas

When the chief or person of high standing died, his body lay in state inside a mortuary box. This bentwood box rested on a manda, a large carved figure believed to carry the deceased to the afterworld. The body was left in this position and eventually transferred to the mortuary house, where it rested until the mortuary pole was complete. This allowed the eldest sister's son preparation time to assume the role left by the deceased. During this two-year period, the nephew was tasked with carving a mortuary pole, hosting a potlatch to celebrate the life of his uncle, and amassing the wealth required to pay the witnesses at that potlatch. If the nephew did not complete these tasks within the two year limit, the role could be challenged by a relative who was able to fulfill the requirements.

A mortuary pole was the grave of a high status person. The pole, carved with the crests of the deceased, had a cavity at the top where the remains were placed inside a bentwood box. A plaque, usually with a painted or carved design on it, was placed in front of this cavity to cover it from view. A board was placed on top to keep rain out, and rocks were placed on the board to stop the winds from blowing it away. Mortuary poles were considerably shorter than house frontal poles or memorial poles. They were carved, then inverted so that the base of the tree served as the top of the pole.

Interior Poles

The house of a chief often contained an inside pole, centred along the back wall. This pole was usually 9-10 feet in height and depicted one crest figure. The village or house chief sat and slept in front of this pole.

House Frontal Poles

House frontal poles are the most obvious and detailed of the three types of poles, as each tells a story of a family's history. Placed at the front of a house, a hole in its base served as the house entrance. There are no standing frontal poles left at SĠang Gwaay. They were removed to museums, or have fallen over and returned to the earth. Frontal poles fell sooner than the other types of poles because the bases were weakened by the holes cut through them.

Houses

The Haida built two types of houses. In one, the basic support structure consisted of two parallel round beams set across two interior pairs of uprights. The second type had six beams on the roof and used more elaborate joinery in its construction. This latter type of construction is unique to the Haida.

When a person of high standing had accumulated the wealth required to raise a house, people of the opposite moiety were contracted to gather the materials required for construction. The owner oversaw the entire building of the house. The scale and duration of construction were seen as a direct reflection of the

workforce the owner could assemble—an indication of prestige.

The plank walls on each house were moveable and were used for other structures during the summer camp months. The entrance into the house was usually through the frontal pole. The wall boards could be moved at the rear of the house for removal of the dead and for escape, when necessary.



*House pit at SGang Gwaay Llnagaay
© Parks Canada, Judson Brown*

Usually, a deep pit was found only in the house of the village chief. Descending in large, platformed stages from the outer walls towards the centre of the house, this feature served as the ceremonial centre of a village.

During the time of first contact with “those from away”, it is estimated that the Haida numbered approximately twenty thousand. The population plummeted with the introduction of communicable diseases such as smallpox and by the late 1800s, there were fewer than 500 Haida left on Haida Gwaii. The survivors from the southern-most villages gathered at SGang Gwaay. They slowly moved northward to T’aanuu Llnagaay (Tanu), K’uuna Llnagaay (Skedans), K’aadaasGu Llnagaay (New Kloo) and Hlkinul Llnagaay (Cumshewa). They were visited by, and invited to join the people already living in HlGaagilda Llnagaay (Skidegate). Today, survivors of the epidemic and their descendants are concentrated in Skidegate and Old Massett, but Haida also reside in other parts of the world.

The Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program

As the number and impact of visitors to Gwaii Haanas increased, the Skidegate Band Council was concerned about protecting the villages and cultural resources such as moveable objects. They began the Watchmen Program in 1981 and today, the Haida Gwaii

Watchmen work closely with Parks Canada, which has funded and provided logistical support for the program since 1990. Watchmen live at five village sites from

May to September. The villages are K'uuna Lnagaay (Skedans), T'aanuu Lnagaay (Tanu), Hlk'yah Lnagaay (Windy Bay), Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (HotSpring Island), and SGang Gwaay (Anthony Island). K'uuna Lnagaay (Skedans) and T'aanuu Lnagaay (Tanu) are outside the national park reserve, but are still within the Haida Heritage Site. Between two and four Watchmen live at each site serving as guardians to protect the natural and cultural heritage of these sites. They also act as a point of contact for visitor information or in emergency situations.



Watchman with visitors SGang Gwaay © Parks Canada, Linda Tollas

National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site

Visiting Haida Gwaii Watchmen Village Sites

As in the rest of the protected area, only 12 people at a time are allowed on shore at the village sites. Please radio each site ahead on Marine VHF Channel 6 and ask the Watchmen for permission to land before you arrive. Because the marine environment is unpredictable, a reservation system for the village sites is not feasible. The Watchmen's ability to protect the natural and cultural heritage of the sites depends on the cooperation of the visitors. You can help by observing the following:

- Stay on the trails at the village sites. Cultural remains such as poles and longhouses are in fragile condition and can be easily damaged.
- Alcohol is not allowed at any village sites (including the hot pools at Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay.)
- Camping is not allowed at any of the village sites except at Hlk'yah Lnagaay (Windy Bay), where there is a limit of one night's stay. See page 52 and 53 for a list of other areas closed to camping or access.
- Except in an emergency, limit your visits to daylight hours especially at Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay and SGang Gwaay Lnagaay, where traffic is particularly heavy. The Haida Gwaii Watchmen are on site seven days a week and need time for themselves.
- Do not put plastic of any kind into the solar composting toilets at the Haida Gwaii Watchmen village sites.

K'uuna Lnagaay (Skedans)

K'uuna Lnagaay is located on the northeast corner of Louise Island. At its height, the village had between 26 to 30 longhouses. A nearby fort, called Xanagadas Talkaixaxing, served as a refuge in the event the village was attacked.

need to KNOW

Be aware of your draft and the tide conditions if you choose to use the mooring buoy at the south beach.

In the late 1800s, more than fifty pieces of monumental sculpture were recorded at K'uuna Lnagaay including 22 frontal poles, 18 single mortuary poles, 3 double mortuary poles, 5 memorial poles and 5 mortuary figures.

Today, a few carved memorial and mortuary poles remain standing and the depressions of

several longhouses give a sense of their former scale. A wooden site map is posted at the village.

The chief of K'uuna Lnagaay and his clan members now live in Skidegate and other centres.

T'aanuu Llnagaay (Tanu)

T'aanuu Llnagaay is located on the east side of Tanu Island. The name refers to a type of sea grass found nearby. At one time, there were between 25 to 40 longhouses in the village, along with 31 mortuary columns and 15 mortuary houses. Little has been left standing at T'aanuu Llnagaay but today the spirit of the place is still strong. The house depressions and fallen, mossgrown house posts give a vivid sense of the layout of the village.

Two hereditary leaders representing the descendants of T'aanuu Llnagaay, an Eagle chief and the chief of the Raven Wolf Clan now live in Skidegate.

Access

Mooring is available at the south end of the village. If you are in doubt about where to moor, check with the Watchmen at the basecamp. There are two site maps at T'aanuu Llnagaay— one at the Watchmen's cabin and the other at the south beach in front of the village.

Hlk'yah Llnagaay (Windy Bay)

Hlk'yah Llnagaay was one of the sites where Haida protested the logging on Lyell Island. During 1985, the Haida took their stand on the logging road at Sedwick Bay. Their protest ultimately led to the protection of the area and the creation of the Gwaii

need to KNOW

Be aware of your draft and the tide conditions if you choose to use the mooring bouy in front of Hlk'yah Llnagaay.

Hlk'yah Llnagaay (Windy Bay) © Parks Canada, Kate Alexander



Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site. In addition to the cabin at Sedwick Bay, “Looking Around and Blinking House” was built here to house people during the logging blockade.

A trail at Hlk'yah Llnagaay winds through old growth western hemlock, western red cedar and Sitka spruce. The trail also runs along Windy Bay Creek, which supports a strong run of pink salmon. At one point, the trail passes a giant Sitka spruce, many hundreds of years old.

Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (HotSpring Island)

Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay traditionally provided waters to comfort, food in abundance, and a place to heal and nourish body and soul. Today, the Watchmen protect those values for future generations and look after one of the more unusual sites in Gwaii Haanas. Here, the small hot spring system that gives the island its name warms thin soils and keeps the forest at bay.

The springs seep from at least 26 small vents, at temperatures ranging from 32°—77° Celsius (89°—170°F.) Chemistry indicates that the water is not sea water, although its mineral content makes it distinctly “salty”. The source of the water isn't known. One possibility is that it first falls as precipitation on Lyell Island, which is the closest large landmass. The water then makes its way through faults and fissures in the rock to a warm reservoir at a depth of 3 to 4 kilometres somewhere between Lyell and Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay. As the water is warmed, pressure forces it back up to emerge on Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay. Other springs may emerge on the seafloor in the area, but so far this hasn't been confirmed.

The vegetation here is influenced by the springs. It ranges from films of iridescent, blue green algae on the warm water seepages, to meadows of moss, to dense patches of salal and crabapple on rocky outcroppings.



Keen's Bat © Parks Canada, Doug Burles

Humans are not the only ones to enjoy the warmth and relaxing atmosphere of HotSpring Island, Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay. The island is also home to one of two known maternity colonies of Keen's long-eared bat, *Myotis keeni*. These small brown bats with ears one quarter the length of their bodies, have only been

need to KNOW

Camping is not permitted on SGang Gwaay or on nearby House Island and House Islet. Make sure you watch the weather while you are ashore and allow plenty of time to get to your camping spot.

Please stay on the trail and wear shoes when walking between the bathhouse and the pools. The trail surface is rough and people in bare feet tend to step off onto softer footing. This causes the trail to widen and creates opportunities for non-native species to establish.

Bathe at your own risk. Prolonged immersion in hot water can lead to a variety of heat related illnesses which, in their most severe form, can be fatal. To make your visit to the hot springs as safe as possible, please pay attention to the guidelines posted in the bathhouse.

Natural hot springs may contain harmful bacteria from soil run-off, human use and wildlife. Because these springs are the only examples of this type of ecosystem in Gwaii Haanas, the water is not treated. However, you can help reduce the risks:

- Wash thoroughly in the bathhouse before entering the pools.
- Don't use the pools if you have a cut, a rash, or broken or "weepy" skin. The condition may seem minor but you're likely carrying bacteria such as *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* — a common cause of ear infections associated with bathing. You will introduce this to the pools where it may cause problems for others.
- To minimize the risk of ear infections, avoid immersing your head while soaking in the pools.
- Remove contact lenses before showering or entering the pools.
- Do not bring pets ashore on the island.

Also, some other things to keep in mind:

- Out of respect for the Watchmen and other visitors, please wear a bathing suit while in the pools.
- Don't stay in the water too long and watch for signs of dizziness or heat exhaustion.
- Check the water temperature before standing under the showers, especially on a sunny day.
- Bring sufficient drinking water with you to avoid dehydration. The island does not have a freshwater source and the bottled water is provided only for the Watchmen.

Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (HotSpring Island) © Parks Canada, Chris Cheadle



found at a few locations on the Pacific Coast. The only other known maternity colony is located near the town of Tahsis on Vancouver Island. Each May, approximately forty reproductive female bats return to Hotspring Island in Gwaii Haanas to give birth and to raise young in the heated spaces found surrounding the hot pools. Approximately 70 little brown bats share these roosts. The females emerge from their roosts to forage for food for their young shortly after sunset. To help reduce disturbance to the bats, the hours for visiting the island are between 8:30 am and an hour before sunset. This colony continues to be monitored by Doug Burles, an ecosystem scientist with Gwaii Haanas.

Access

The hot springs and Watchmen cabin are located on the southeast side of the island. Access is from the beach on the northeast side.

The short trail across the island passes through coastal western hemlock forest and the forest cover changes as you cross the island.

SGang Gwaay (Anthony Island) World Heritage Site

SGang Gwaay (Anthony Island) is on the exposed southwest coast of Gwaii Haanas. The name is based on a sound that emanates from the air being pushed through a hole in the rock, at a certain tide. This sound resembles the keening of a woman, and hence the name, SGang.gii.ngang Gwaay—“Wailing Island”.

Black Oystercatcher © Parks Canada, Kate Alexander





In 1981, UNESCO—the United Nations Education and Science Organization—declared the island of SGang Gwaay a World Heritage Site, reflecting the importance of the area to the global community.

SGang Gwaay consists of one larger island and 27 small islets. The main island is made up primarily of volcanic rock, seen at the surface as a series of ridges, knolls, and cliffs. Toward the coastline of the island, the rock formations create an alternating series of bays and rocky outcrops, and also surface to create small reefs and islets offshore— excellent habitat for the sea lions and seals hunted by the G̱ang.xid X̱aayda. These rocky outcroppings were part of a natural defense of the island against enemies. Along the forest edge, there is evidence of old shorelines in the form of cliffs and surge channels— this island was once below the surface of the ocean, and has only been above it, in recent times, for about the last 2,000 years.

The isolation of this island group and the absence of mammalian predators make SGang Gwaay an incredibly important seabird nesting area. Despite its small size, it supports amazing numbers of seabirds: over 40,000 breeding pairs of 10 different species. Seven species nest on the main island, of which the rhinoceros auklet (20,600 pairs) and Cassin's auklet (8,000 pairs) are most numerous. Their abundance and predictable behaviour during the breeding season (March—September) made them an easy source of food for the Haida. SGang Gwaay also supports 16 species of forest songbirds as well as bald eagles, Peale's peregrine falcons, sharp-shinned hawks, and northern saw-whet owls.

SGang Gwaay Llnagaay (*Wailing Island Town*) National Historic Site

SGang Gwaay Llnagaay is located in a sheltered bay on the east side of the island. An islet in front of the village adds further protection. In 1981, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recognized the national historic significance of the village and designated it as a national historic site.

SGang Gwaay Llnagaay represents the only example in the world of the remains of a traditional Northwest Coast First Nations village site, complete with standing poles and the remains of massive cedar longhouses. Here, human occupation and use—in the form of caves, midden sites, upright and fallen poles, house pits, and standing longhouse post and beams—is evident. It is one of the earliest recorded villages and the last on SGang Gwaay to be occupied on a full-time basis. In the last stage, after people consolidated from

need to KNOW

You can help protect SGang Gwaay by observing the following:

- Entering caves is prohibited under the Canada National Parks Act.
- Burrow-nesting seabirds have colonized this isolated island. They are susceptible to human activity—particularly through physical disturbance of their habitat and by the sensory disturbance from light and noise. To avoid trampling burrows and nests please do not climb along the bluffs on the island and nearby islets.
- Overnight mooring at SGang Gwaay is discouraged in order to protect the seabirds breeding on the island and the islets nearby. Anchor lights can be disorienting to the birds. Mooring is allowed during daylight hours.

other villages, there were 20 longhouses, along with many memorial, frontal, and mortuary poles.

Canoe runs are still visible in front of the village.

SGang Gwaay Llnagaay is a sacred site. The Haida consider this place more than a village site — the remains of many ancestors and their spirits reside here still. The Haida population was decimated by epidemics introduced when the Europeans made contact, and against which they had no defense. On SGang Gwaay, many hundreds died and were buried — in caves, in mortuary poles, and in the earth. As you walk the paths of this island, remember that you are walking among these spirits and that this is sacred ground.

Access

At SGang Gwaay, please do not bring your vessel into the bay in front of the village, as you may disturb visitors who are already in the village site. Refer to the map of SGang Gwaay for access and trail information and check with the Watchmen at the cabin before proceeding to the village site. Enter from the North beach and stay on the trail.

Check your marine charts, watch for rocks and be cautious when approaching the waters around SGang Gwaay.

The boardwalk at SGang Gwaay is uneven. Watch your step.

SGang Gwaay © Parks Canada, Judson Brown



need to **KNOW**

Often this is the first wilderness experience for children participating in the programs.

To help preserve the wilderness experience for them and to help ease their adjustment from the modern world, the Skidegate Band Council asks people to avoid camping in the immediate area of Swan Bay during July and August while the summer program is in operation.



Swan Bay © Parks Canada

Swan Bay

The Skidegate Band Council established a youth cultural camp at Swan Bay in 2000. The camp gives young people from Haida Gwaii the opportunity to participate in cultural and environmental programs and generally operates from July through August.

Sunset from Ramsay © Parks Canada



need to know

As visitors, we all have a role to play in helping to preserve this place for generations to come. Please do your part by following the rules and guidelines outlined in this book.

Mandatory Orientation

An orientation session is required for all visitors once every three years before entering Gwaii Haanas, K'uuna LInagaay (Skedans), and T'aanuu LInagaay (Tanu).

Rules and Regulations

The Archipelago Management Board has agreed to manage Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site through the Canada National Parks Act. Gwaii Haanas is therefore subject to certain rules and regulations in order to ensure the area's long-term protection.

Within Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site, the following activities are prohibited:

- Possessing, disturbing, or removing flora, fauna, and natural objects
- Hunting or trapping (including within tidal areas)
- Fishing in freshwater rivers, lakes, and creeks;
- Possessing a firearm
- Entering caves
- Depositing garbage or other refuse
- Damaging, removing, or destroying cultural artifacts
- Building campfires above the high tide

Under the Gwaii Haanas Agreement there are provisions for the continuance of Haida cultural activities and traditional resource harvesting activities (e.g. gathering food and medicine, ceremonial activities, hunting, trapping and fishing). These rights only apply to people of the Haida Nation.

Fishing in Gwaii Haanas

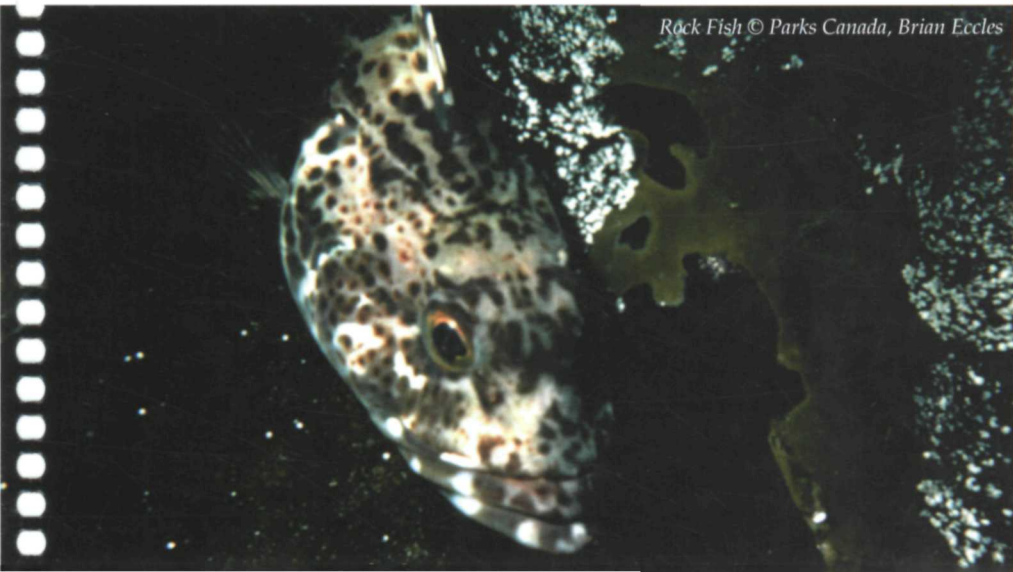
The waters of the archipelago teem with life. They have supported the traditional way of life of the Haida for generations but they cannot stand unlimited harvesting. If fishing is part of your experience, limit it to catching only what you will eat during your stay. Catch-and-release is not recommended—salmon treated in this way are often traumatized and do not survive.

A license is required for saltwater fishing. Follow the current Saltwater Fishing regulations. Licenses can be obtained at locations in the Village of Queen Charlotte and Sandspit.

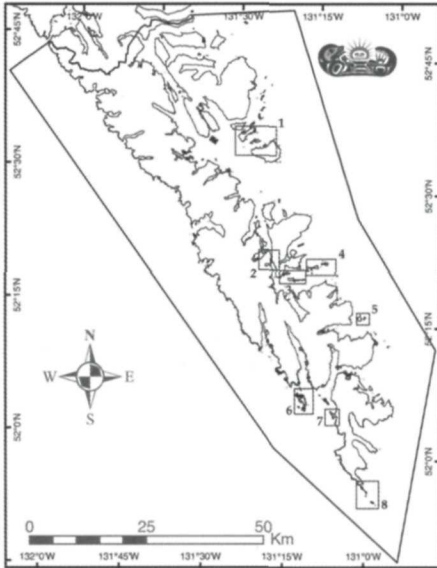
Fisheries and Oceans has designated Rockfish Conservation Areas (RCAs) to protect inshore rockfish. RCAs are part of a larger strategy to halt declines and allow inshore rockfish and lingcod stocks an opportunity to rebuild. Two of these RCAs are located within the boundaries of the proposed Gwaii Haanas national marine conservation area. Fishing is restricted within these areas. A list of fishing activities permitted within the RCAs and maps showing the designated areas are distributed at the Gwaii Haanas orientation. More information is available on the Fisheries and Oceans website at http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/recfish/restricted_areas/rca_e.htm

Commercial fishers travelling for reasons of employment do not require an orientation or registration but do have to pay a user fee at Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hotspring Island). Please register with the Watchmen in the fishers log book and an invoice for \$10.00 per visit will be mailed to you.

Rock Fish © Parks Canada, Brian Eccles



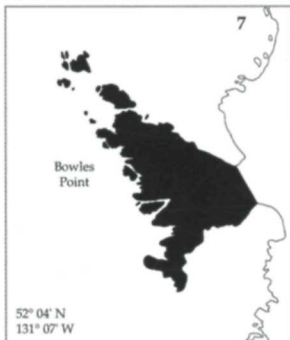
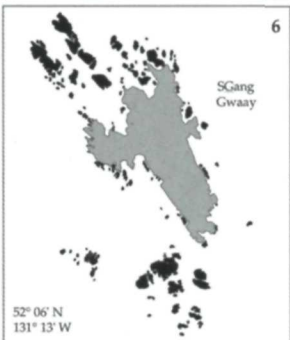
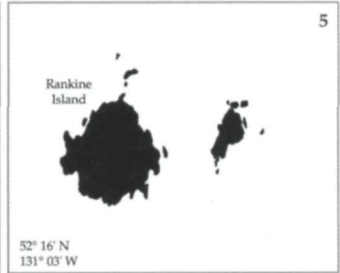
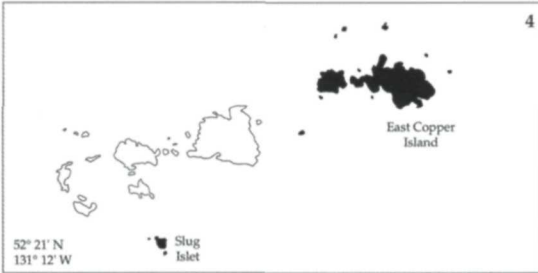
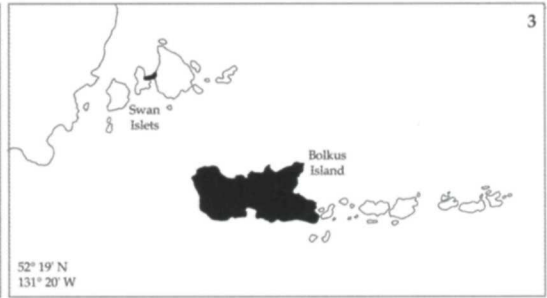
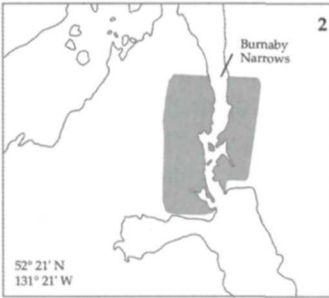
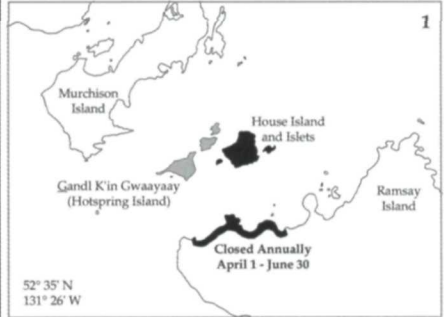
Closures in Gwaii Haanas



Legend

- No Access
- No Camping

Latitude and longitude coordinates are in degrees & minutes. They represent the approximate centre of each inset.



Areas Closed or with Limited Access

To protect areas with significant cultural, spiritual and ecological features, please note the following closures and restrictions:

- Bolkus Island and the isthmus between the two eastern Swan Islets, House Island and islets, Slug Islet, East Copper Island, Rankine Islands, SGang Gwaay (*Anthony Island*) islets, the Kerouard Islands, and Bowles Point west of the trail connecting the north and south beaches are permanently closed to access. Visitors are prohibited from going ashore on these islands and islets.
- Bowles Point is one of these sensitive cultural locations. For this reason, restrict your travel and campsites to the beach area. Access to the headland located west of the trail leading to the south beach is also restricted.
- At Louscoone Point, avoid trampling on the steep slope.
- A portion of the north shore of Ramsay Island, across from Hotspring Island, is closed during the ancient murrelet breeding season, April through June. Signs identifying areas of closure will be posted at Hotspring Island. Visitors are asked not to camp on any of the seabird colonies.
- Burnaby (Dolomite) Narrows has been permanently closed to camping. Floating through is the recommended way to visit the area to avoid crushing intertidal creatures.
- At Windy Bay visitors are asked to limit their stay to one night except in case of emergency.

did you KNOW?

The Great blue heron found on Haida Gwaii is considered "at risk". A recent study found that herons living on these islands, and along the northwest coast of Washington, BC and Alaska are part of a subspecies that do not migrate, are solitary nesters, and have different features and colours than other blue herons.

In 2004, Gwaii Haanas began a study of the breeding and habitat of the herons. This work confirmed that herons occur in very low densities in Gwaii Haanas, with a notable grouping found at the north end of Juan Perez Sound, on the Bischof Islands, and between Murchison and Faraday Islands.

Please keep great blue herons in mind when travelling in these areas. Give the birds a respectful space to avoid disturbing them. If you use the mooring buoy at Murchison Island, please limit your activity (coming and going) as much as possible.



Great blue heron © Parks Canada, Carita Bergman

Camping

Gwaii Haanas does not have formal campsites. Instead, visitors are asked to spread their camping activities throughout the area to minimize damage to shore and forest vegetation.

Most areas that visitors find suitable for camping are the same areas that the Haida have used historically. These locations have important spiritual and archaeological value. In order to respect these values, treat every area as a potential archaeological site.

Most campsites in Gwaii Haanas are concentrated on the fringe of coastline that connects the land to sea. This area is an important part of the Gwaii Haanas ecosystem. Treat each site with care and minimize your “footprint” on the land by doing the following:

- To reduce impact and maintain a wilderness feeling, group size must be kept to 12 people on shore at any one time within sight and sound of each other.
- Camp on the sand or rock above the high tide line to cause the least impact to local vegetation. Choose a spot on the beach for gathering and cooking that is least likely to damage vegetation.
- Keep any campfires below the high tide line and away from drift logs. Never leave the campfire unattended. Keep it small so it burns to ash and the next incoming tide will wash it away. Don't stir the ashes into the sand and gravel, as they will then take longer to wash away. Remove charcoal and scatter any rocks used for a hearth. Use driftwood for your firewood.



Bolkus Islands © Parks Canada, David Andrews

- Reduce the amount of garbage you have to dispose of. Plan meals so that you don't have a lot of uneaten food to get rid of and choose packaging that is light weight, low bulk and reusable.
- Carry a portable stove. There will be times when driftwood is wet or scarce. Or you may simply want the option of not having a fire.
- Wash your dishes in the ocean with biodegradable soap and sand as a natural scrubber.
- Use the intertidal privy. Make your deposit as close as possible to the water line, and cover with a rock afterwards so others do not step on it. Microorganisms in the marine soil effectively decompose faeces. If you have no alternative, you can use the bush method. Dig a small 20 centimetre hole away from animal trails and at least 100 metres from water sources, deposit waste and then bury it completely with soil. Never bury toilet paper or feminine hygiene products. Burn your toilet paper in a campfire on the beach, or pack it out. Treat feminine hygiene products as garbage. A small bag of baking soda or powdered bleach can help to neutralize the scent.
- Use small amounts of non-detergent soap products when bathing. Select a location near the mouth of the stream and downstream from any place where people gather water for drinking.
- Pack out all garbage. Burn toilet paper and can labels in your campfire but all other garbage must be picked up and packed out. Do not burn cans, foil or plastics at your campsite or throw these and other garbage items into the ocean. Burning plastics releases harmful fumes into the air.
- After eating, burn food scraps, or bag them securely for packing out. Return fish entails to the sea. Bears and other animals are quickly attracted to kitchen waste, even if it has been buried, and it can create a dangerous situation for the next camper.

Before you leave your campsite, remember the following:

- Dismantle beach furniture, put logs and rocks back to random positions.
- Pick up all garbage including the tiny pieces like twist ties, paper fragments and tent pegs.

Remember you are in Black Bear Country. Avoid attracting bears by:

- Hanging all food, garbage, grease and toiletries, including toothpaste and feminine hygiene products, well away from sleeping areas, and at least 5 metres up in a tree and 1.5 m away from the tree trunk. Never leave food in the open when the camp is unattended.
- Camping away from the mouths of streams, in particular during salmon spawning season (mid-August on).
- Keeping a clean camp. Caching food in kayaks on shore or in boats close to shore could result in the loss of food or damage to the boat.



*Storing Food © Parks Canada,
Josh McCulloch*

Hiking in Gwaii Haanas

Gwaii Haanas has no established hiking trails. If you plan to hike—be prepared. Bring a map, compass, GPS, radio, proper footwear, rain gear and a survival kit. If you're climbing to the alpine region, be aware of ground conditions that are often rugged and slippery. To protect the particularly sensitive and unique alpine vegetation, camp only below the tree line, and be sure to pack out all garbage. Let someone know where you are going.

Archaeological Sites

Archaeological sites are found in rivers, on beaches, in the intertidal areas or in the forest, so it's important to treat every area as a potential archaeological site. If you do see any artifacts exposed, leave them undisturbed and report the area to a Haida Gwaii Watchmen or to a Gwaii Haanas staff member. If you see a site that is being disturbed, notify a Gwaii Haanas warden or the local RCMP as soon as you are able.

Archaeological remains complement the oral history of the Haida. When a site is disturbed, part of that history is gone, forever. You can show your respect for those who have gone before by walking and camping with care.

Gwaii Haanas also has many historic sites. Mining and logging camps, fish processing plants and clam canneries once operated throughout the area. These areas are also considered archaeological sites. Digging and removal of artifacts is strictly prohibited.

commercial filming and photography media program

The Archipelago Management Board has a permit and support program for media productions and commercial photographers interested in working in Gwaii Haanas.

Please contact Gwaii Haanas at 1-250-559-8818 or email: gwaii.haanas@pc.gc.ca. For more information check our website at www.pc.gc.ca/gwaiihaanas

Visitor Fees

National parks and national historic sites are funded through a combination of tax-based dollars and user fees. Tax dollars are used to create and preserve protected areas, since this benefits all Canadians. When people decide to visit these sites, they receive a personal benefit from the services they use.

In fairness to all Canadians, visitors contribute through user fees to partially cover the cost of services. Every time you visit a park or site you are investing in its future— and in a legacy for future generations.

Many national parks charge fees separately for entry, camping, parking, mooring, firewood and backcountry use. In order to keep the fee structure simple, the visitor fee for Gwaii Haanas is all-inclusive. Revenues stay with the Park or site where they are paid. Visitor fees in Gwaii Haanas are used to help pay for the costs to provide services such as:

- pre-trip information and orientation
- interpretive brochures
- water testing and mooring buoys
- board walks and composting toilets
- Haida Gwaii Watchmen Program
- basic public safety

travelling safely

Gwaii Haanas is a remote wilderness area that's a challenge for everyone. Try to be prepared for any type of emergency, as there is no guarantee of a quick rescue. Sit down with your group before you go, or when you arrive in Gwaii Haanas, and discuss a safety plan. Be aware of, and be prepared for, the natural hazards in Gwaii Haanas. Weather conditions can change quickly and dramatically. If you have any concern about conditions—stay ashore. When you're kayaking, your daily plan should include an alternate route or camping spot in case the weather deteriorates. Do not become too focused on reaching a specific destination as the weather and conditions may not allow it. Boaters should also be aware that there are no fuel facilities or services anywhere in Gwaii Haanas. Refer to the *Safe Boating Guide* by Transport Canada for the legal requirements for different types of vessels.

Travellers will need a marine VHF radio to receive updated weather forecasts, to call for help in case of emergency, and to contact the Haida Gwaii Watchmen.

Weather

The shape of the islands and the shallow depth of the Hecate Strait combine to create weather-related hazards unique to this area. The direction and speed of the wind can be altered quite dramatically when it hits the steep, narrow, knife-edge of Gwaii Haanas. The conditions can differ from one location to another on the islands, and the winds can approach from every direction of the compass. Wind conditions can also change from inlet to inlet over relatively short distances. Hecate Strait is a relatively shallow, but exposed, body of water and short, steep waves can develop very quickly. Keep in mind that the waters around SGang Gwaay are also exposed and travellers should be cautious when planning their crossing. No matter where you're travelling in Gwaii Haanas, watch for fog, which can roll in at anytime.

Weather-watching and Forecasting

You put your life at risk if you venture out on the water without carefully considering the weather and its effect on the sea conditions where you'll be travelling.

The Canadian Coast Guard broadcasts continuous marine weather forecasts 24 hours a day. Forecasts are valid for 24 hours with an outlook for an additional 24 hours, and are updated four times daily at:

Rose Inlet Ch21B 161.65 MHz

Van Inlet WX1 162.55 MHz

Barry Inlet WX2 162.40 MHz

Cumshewa WX3 162.475 MHz



Gwaii Haanas staff © Parks Canada, Chris Cheadle

There's no way to become an instant expert when it comes to weather. Experience—and staying alive long enough to acquire that experience—is the best teacher. Your risk-management strategy should include the following four things:

1. Listening to the Marine Weather Forecast

Listening to the marine weather forecast gives you the big picture—what weather systems are developing, how fast they are developing, and how they are likely to affect the general area you will be travelling in. Taken into consideration along with your observation of local conditions, it can help you anticipate what you are likely to encounter in the course of each day's travelling.

2. Observing

Keeping a constant weather watch is the single most important part of your routine. Monitoring the sky, the horizon, and the water for any changes that might indicate approaching winds or storms should be an on-going process. Do it before you leave shore, and keep monitoring as you travel.

3. Identifying Local Hazards

Use charts, sailing directions and, if possible, local knowledge to identify areas where the interaction between wind, tide and landforms is likely to create hazardous conditions.

4. Keeping a Weather Log

Keep a weather log to record your observations, along with key information from the marine forecast. In particular, keep track of changes in barometric pressure. Ideally, monitor at three hour intervals, and more frequently if the pressure is changing rapidly. For reference, remember that the pressure at the centre of a very deep low will be about 950 mb, and at the centre of a very strong high, it will be about 1035 mb.

Some conditions to watch for:

- Southeast winds increasing in strength. A storm is probably on its way, even in summer.
- Swell—a considerable swell may persist for several hours or days after a storm is over.
- Strong outflow winds—these can develop very quickly out of the heads of inlets.
- Clouds—the approach of dark, threatening clouds may foretell a squall or storm.
- Rapid change in pressure.

What the Forecast tells you

The marine weather forecast for the north coast is transmitted from Prince Rupert and uses a number of repeater stations around the islands (see map page 63). Use the correct repeater for the area you are in and become familiar with the weather terms. The format for the forecast is as follows:

1. The synopsis describes major weather systems influencing the north coast, where they are located, which way they are moving, and what effects they are likely to have.
2. Area forecasts give wind, weather conditions, sea state and outlook for each of the eight areas included in the North Coast forecast.
3. Ocean buoy reports give recorded wind strength and direction, barometric pressure and sea state.
4. Automated reports give the wind conditions.
5. Lighthouse weather reports cover sky conditions, visibility, wind, and sea state. Pay attention to the forecast for the area that you are travelling in and for the adjacent areas.

For example, knowledgeable local mariners will tell you that storm conditions in Queen Charlotte Sound, north of Cape Scott, will produce a considerable swell along the east coast of Gwaii Haanas about 16 hours later. Be aware that there are no small craft warnings issued for north coast waters because the area is considered to be hazardous for small craft at all times.

important weather terms

front: the line of separation between cold and warm air masses. Usually associated with a change in the weather.

high: a region of high pressure, usually associated with good weather. This will generally mean northwesterly winds. These can be of considerable strength. Because the tide floods—or rises—from south to north, wind and tide will be opposed and waves will steepen.

low: a region of low pressure, often associated with strong winds, rain and bad weather. Winds flow counter-clockwise around a low, so when the wind is backing, the low is getting close.

millibar (mb): unit used to measure barometric pressure. Gale force winds generally occur when the pressure is 980—990 millibars at the centre of the low.

knot: unit of wind speed equivalent to one nautical mile an hour (1 knot = 1.1 mph = 1.8 km/h).

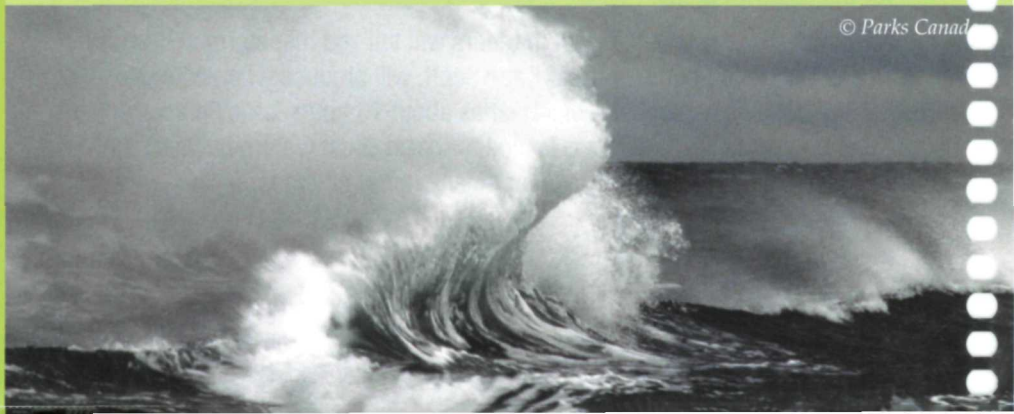
moderate winds: Winds with speeds in the range of 15—19 knots. Winds of less than 15 knots are considered light and more than 19 knots, strong. Gale force winds are 20—33 knots and storm force 48—63 knots. Hurricane winds exceed 64 knots.

backing: a counter-clockwise change in wind direction. An indicator of incoming bad weather associated with the passage of a low.

veering: a clockwise change of wind direction.

wind wave: waves generated by local wind.

swell: long waves created by a distant storm. They are likely to be low and regular with a long interval between crests. They add to the overall height of local wind waves, and when they're coming from a different direction from the local wind, they may cause the waves to steepen even more.





Tides in Gwaii Haanas

Generally, there are two high and two low tides in each 24-hour period, with approximately six hours between the high and low. Tidal range can be up to 24 feet (7.5 m), with the highest and lowest tides occurring around the time of a new or full moon. Large tides will have a more noticeable impact on the speed of the current. Tides flood (rise) from south to north, and ebb (fall) from the north to the south.

The tide table you use to calculate tide times and heights varies depending on where you are travelling. Purchase the current edition of the Canadian Tide and Current Tables and refer to the map to select the correct tide table. Use the secondary ports as listed in the tide table booklet to adjust the height and time of each tide for your specific location. Secondary ports listed in the tide tables do not cover all of Gwaii Haanas, so estimating the tides is necessary in some locations. High and low tides take place approximately fifty minutes later from one day to the next.

Some currents are marked on the marine charts.

A rising tide is illustrated with a feathered arrow, and the ebb tide is illustrated with a featherless arrow. Tides rushing through narrow inlets and channels increase in speed and some areas, such as Houston Stewart Channel, have currents of up to five knots (the average kayaker travels 2.5—3.5 km per hour). The hazard increases when the wind and tide are running in opposite directions causing steep standing waves.

When travelling by boat or kayak, expect to move slower when travelling against the current. If you are kayaking against the current, paddle close to shore. The shallow and rocky bottom tends to slow the flow of the water and you may be able to take advantage of back eddies. Keep an eye on range marks. Sometimes, you can have the illusion of making progress when, in fact, you're actually gaining little or no ground.

For your Health and Safety

Drinking Water in Gwaii Haanas

The water from streams in Gwaii Haanas shows consistently high levels of coliform and faecal coliform bacteria and should be treated before drinking. All fresh water should be purified before use. According to Health Canada, boiling is the safest and most effective method of purifying water. Filter water first, then boil drinking water for at least one minute.

Hypothermia

In our mild west coast climate, hypothermia can strike with just as deadly a force as in a frigid, polar climate. In the summer, the sea temperature around Gwaii Haanas is approximately 12° C (54°F) and getting immersed in the cold water is the fastest way for you to get hypothermia. You're also at risk if you're cold and damp when onshore or in a small boat, especially if it's windy. Most people are particularly susceptible to hypothermia near the end of the day, when they are tired and hungry, and the temperature is beginning to drop.

Prevention is the best strategy. Once the body core temperature begins to drop, the progression of hypothermia may be rapid. The symptoms include severe shivering, poor judgement, clumsiness, and slurred speech. The victim may also lose consciousness and suffer cardiac arrest. Hypothermia is a medical emergency. Begin treatment immediately.

Treatment of Hypothermia

If the person is still conscious:

- Get the person out of the water or wind to a dry, sheltered area.
- Remove wet clothing and replace with warm, dry clothing.
- Prevent further heat loss.
- Cover the head and neck. Wool or fleece is best.
- Put on mitts or gloves.
- Give the person a hot water bottle or other warmed object to hold against their torso. Wrap the object and take care not to burn the patient.
- Give the person a hot, sweet, non-alcoholic drink such as milk, juice, water, or herbal tea. Never give hypothermia sufferers alcohol. Avoid caffeinated drinks such as tea, coffee and hot chocolate as the caffeine will further stress the heart and blood pressure.

If the person is exhibiting slurred speech or is unconscious:

- This is a serious medical emergency. Call for medical assistance immediately (i.e. Canadian Coast Guard Marine VHF radio channel Channel 16 or Park wardens at 1-877-852-3100).
- Handle the person gently— jolts may affect the heart.
- Once shivering stops, the victim must be warmed from outside sources. Their own body heat will no longer warm them inside a sleeping bag or under blankets.
The victim must be sandwiched between two other warm people or be placed in a prewarmed sleeping bag with a heat source such as a hot water bottle. Warm the lungs with mouth-to-mouth breathing.
- Do not attempt to give the person fluids because of the risk of choking.

CAUTION

Do not remove wet clothing and begin the re-warming process unless you are reasonably sure you can keep the person warm. Causing the victim to become chilled again and to return to a hypothermic state after being warmed is more damaging than waiting a little longer to get to a sheltered area. Make sure to warm the torso, neck and head first. It can be fatal if the hands, arms, feet and legs are re-warmed first as blood will rush from the heart and other vital organs. Do not rub the skin for the same reason. Handle the person gently.



Kayakers © Parks Canada, Chris Cheadle

did you KNOW?

Hypothermia Prevention Checklist

- Carry a hat even when it's warm and sunny. Wear a warm hat if it is cool, damp or windy.
- Dress in layers and keep spare warm clothing close by in a waterproof bag.
- Carry wet weather gear.
- Take frequent rest stops and don't overextend yourself, especially in cool, wet, windy weather.
- Avoid getting hungry or dehydrated. Keep well-fuelled with frequent, nutritionally dense snacks and drinks.
- When kayaking, consider using dry or wet suits.

Heat Exhaustion

Heat exhaustion and dehydration can also be problems, especially for kayakers. Carry a hat for sun protection. Remember to keep drinking water to avoid dehydration.

Not all red tides are toxic. Some are caused by the organism *noctiluca* sp. responsible for the beautiful and dramatic displays of bioluminescence we often get treated to if we're on the water at night.

During a red tide, the waters are often dramatically coloured—but not always. Highly toxic red tide conditions are just as likely to be invisible to the eye. In addition, the toxin remains in shellfish long after the red tide is gone, and there is no way to tell which shellfish have been infected. Some of the symptoms of PSP include tingling lips, headache, dizziness, nausea, and weakness. Depending on the amount of toxin ingested, the victim can be paralyzed or even die within just 12 hours. There is no cure for this type of poisoning, but swift medical attention may improve the chance of survival. If PSP is suspected, immediately induce vomiting and seek medical attention. Do not give the victim alcohol. Survivors of PSP don't suffer from long-term side effects.



Kayaker © Parks Canada, Geoff Skinner



Red Tide © Parks Canada

Paralytic Shellfish and Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning

Please Note: The waters of Gwaii Haanas are closed to shellfish harvesting because of the danger of shellfish poisoning.

Shellfish poisoning comes in two potentially deadly forms:

Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP)

Paralytic shellfish poisoning is associated with algae blooms known as a red tides, a phenomenon that is common in the waters around Gwaii Haanas. The blooms are made up of microorganisms called dinoflagellates, which sometimes carry a potentially deadly toxin. This toxin is stored in the bodies of bivalve shellfish (cockles, mussels, scallops, clams) and if eaten, can cause PSP.

Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP)

Algae blooms also produce the toxin that causes amnesic shellfish poisoning. It is found in bivalves and in the viscera (body), but not the legs of crabs. As with paralytic shellfish poisoning, there is no cure for ASP and poisoning may result in death. The symptoms include nausea, vomiting, and disorientation. Amnesiac shellfish poisoning can also cause permanent brain damage.

the facilities

Water Hoses

There are two water hoses in the Gwaii Haanas area, one at Shuttle Island, and one at Louscoone Inlet. Water from these hoses is not treated. All fresh water should be purified before use. According to Health Canada, boiling is the safest and most effective method of purifying water.

Mooring Buoys

There are mooring buoys in several locations within the protected area. Visitors are advised that they use these buoys at their own risk.

Mooring buoys at Haida Gwaii Watchmen sites were installed for use by the Watchmen and Gwaii Haanas wardens and may not be suitable for larger vessels. These coordinates for mooring buoys are in degrees and minutes. Coordinates are for watchmen sites where applicable, the mooring buoys are located near the site.

K'uuna Llnagaay (Skedans) 52°57.90'N., 131°36.40'W.

T'aanuu Llnagaay (Tanu) 52°45.90'N., 131°36.90'W.

Hlk'yah Llnagaay (Windy Bay) 52°41.41'N., 131°27.30'W.

Gandll K'in Gwaay.yaay (Hot Spring Island) 52°34.50'N., 131°26.50'W.

SGang Gwaay (Anthony Island) 52°05.90'N., 131°13.0'W.

Huxley Island Operation Station 52°26.0'N., 131°22.30'W.

Ellen Island Operation Station 52°09.20'N., 131°05.50'W.

Shuttle Island (water) 52°40.00'N., 131°43.80'W.

Louscoone (water) 52°11.64'N., 131°15.37'W.

Louscoone Inlet 52°10.05'N., 131°12.81'W.

Hoya Passage 52°39.95'N., 131°43.70'W.

Murchison Island 52°35.65'N., 131°28.00'W.

Ramsay Island 52°34.55'N., 131°24.00'W.

Section Cove 52°25.10'N., 131°21.5'W.

Rose Harbour 52°08.90'N., 131°05.10'W.

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

The coordinates provided for the various facilities in this handbook are based on the North American Datum, 1983 (NAD83). If you are using a chart based on NAD27, the measurements will be out by up to 50 metres west and 150 metres south (so if you are using a NAD27 chart move 50 metres west and 150 metres south). To determine if your chart is based on NAD27 or NAD83, look under the heading Horizontal Datum at the top of the chart. (If it is not noted, the chart is based on NAD27). Chart #3807, Atli Inlet -Selwyn Inlet February 5, 1999 and Chart #3894, Selwyn Inlet-Lawn Hill, June 12, 1998 are available in NAD83.

Operations Stations

Gwaii Haanas operations stations are located on Huxley Island (Gaaduu Gwaay.yaay) and Ellen Island (Kilgii Gwaayaay). Gwaii Haanas wardens, ecologists, and patrol officers live at these sites while conducting their duties in the protected area.

These operations include conducting ecological and cultural research and monitoring activities, supporting visiting scientists, providing search and rescue services, conducting Canada National Parks Act compliance and enforcement patrols, and ensuring safe and appropriate travel in bear country. They may be at either cabin depending on their schedule. The best way to contact them in an emergency is by telephone at 1-877-852-3100 or 1-780-852-3100, via any of the Haida Gwaii Watchmen on Marine VHF Channel 6, or via Prince Rupert Coast Guard Radio on Marine VHF Channel 16.



M.V. Gwaii Haanas © Parks Canada, Chris Cheadle

Information for Sail Boaters and Motor Boaters

- No fuelling facilities are available in Gwaii Haanas. You must be self-sufficient.
- Use marine charts to locate suitable anchorages.
- Many areas in Gwaii Haanas pose a hazard to boaters and kayakers. Use extreme caution when travelling around exposed points of land. There are often strong tidal currents, swells and winds.
- Watch the water depth carefully as you explore bays and heads of inlets, as many are shallow and rocky.
- Burnaby Narrows is a narrow, rocky and shallow channel that is difficult to navigate. It is also a very sensitive marine ecosystem. The channel is marked with a series of channel markers but they are not official Canadian Coast Guard markers, and you use them at your own risk. If you are not familiar with the channel, take your tender through to find the route. Boaters should anchor north of Burnaby Narrows, or to the south at Bag Harbour.
- If you operate a larger boat, we recommend you take the outside route on the east coast, rather than the inside passage through Burnaby Narrows, unless the tide is very high at the time and unless you're absolutely sure that you have good clearance.
- Use your radio to warn other vessels when you are about to start your transit through the Narrows.
- Unless you are a very experienced mariner or paddler and familiar with these waters, avoid the west coast of Gwaii Haanas. It is exposed, not fully charted and contains few sheltered anchorages.

if you need help

These are in order of likelihood of contacting someone, given limits to radio reception.

- Contact the Canadian Coast Guard by radio on Marine VHF Channel 16. Stay on the channel for an answer. If you don't get a response in 15 to 20 seconds, try again. Or
- Place a telephone call to Canadian Coast Guard, 1-800-567-5111 or 1-250-363-2333 on your Marine VHF radio through one of the B.C. Telephone radio channels. Use the radio channel for the area in which you are travelling in.
 - Louise Island (Chan. 64) 156.225 MHz
 - Burnaby Island (Chan. 03) 156.150 MHz
 - Cape St James (Chan. 24) 157.20 MHz
- Place a telephone call to the Parks Canada emergency dispatch at 1-877-852-3100 or 1-780-852-3100 on your Marine VHF radio using one of the radio channels listed above. Dispatch can contact Park Wardens immediately regardless of radio coverage.
- Radio the Haida Gwaii Watchmen on Marine VHF radio Channel 6, and they can contact the park wardens or the Canadian Coast Guard.
- Use an EPIRB (Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon) or PLB (Personal Locator Beacon) in emergency situations only.

Radio reception can be unreliable in Gwaii Haanas. If your radio is not receiving, try moving to a higher or different location. Be prepared to be self-sufficient in case of emergencies.

If you do not have a radio, there are some international distress signals that can be used to draw attention to yourself:

- Flares
- a smoke signal giving off orange-coloured smoke.
- a signal using the international code of distress N over C (N/C)
- a large fire on the beach.

- any unusual behaviour that will draw attention to yourself.
- a continuous sounding of any fog-signalling apparatus.
- any signalling method consisting of the group . . . - - - . . . (SOS), in morse code.
- a square flag with a ball shape under, or over the square.

Note: There is no cell phone coverage in Gwaii Haanas.

MAYDAY

In a life-threatening emergency...that is, if your life is in danger or your vessel is in danger of sinking, put out a distress call on Marine VHF radio Channel 16.

1. Repeat the distress signal "MAYDAY" three times.
2. Say "This is..." followed by the name and call sign of the vessel in distress. Repeat three times. As soon as possible follow up with a distress message in the standard format:
 1. The distress signal "MAYDAY."
 2. The call sign of station in distress (once).
 3. Particulars of its position.
 4. Nature of the distress and kind of assistance required (eg. what has happened).
 5. The number of persons on board and injuries (if applicable).
 6. Any other information that might facilitate rescue.
 7. The call sign of the vessel.

Keep repeating the distress call until you get an answer. When an emergency is in progress, vessels not directly involved must maintain radio silence. When the emergency is over, the vessel that was in distress or the station that controlled the distress traffic must transmit a message addressed to All Stations advising that the distress traffic has ended.

"Pan Pan", the **URGENCY** signal may also be used when the station calling has a very urgent message concerning the safety of a ship, aircraft, other vehicle, or the safety of a person. The information to be broadcast is the same as the distress message format. The urgency signal has priority over all other communications except distress.

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Haida Gwaii Watchmen Village Site Stamps



Haida Gwaii Watchmen Village Site Stamps



This book is proof of orientation. It is not transferrable.

Name: _____

Date of Orientation: _____

Registration Number: _____

Date In Date Out: _____

Authorization: (Company and Initial:) _____

Additional Registration Numbers and Dates: _____



Gwaii Haanas is protected through the cooperation of the Government of Canada and the Council of the Haida Nation by the Archipelago Management Board (AMB).

Contact Information

If you require further information please contact the Gwaii Haanas office:

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Queen Charlotte City, BC

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