

THE GROWLER

Issue 2, June 1, 2024

GROWLS (Gabriola Rescue of Wildlife Society) monthly newsletter



Dear GROWLS members and supporters

Welcome to the 2nd edition of The GROWLER. This little newsletter is our effort to connect with our supporters and share some of the stories that evolve through our interactions with wildlife. This issue includes:

- GROWLS news for June, 2024
- AGM Meeting , June 19, 2024, Rollo Centre, 6-8pm
- Love Bats?? Or are you interested in finding out what cool mammals they are?
- Fawn season has begun! FAWN Tips - what to do if you come by a fawn
- Case studies in May
- VOLUNTEERS needed - Oceans Day, June 8, other duties
- DEAR GABBY - help column for local wildlife issues
- EVENTS - GROWLS AGM June 19, Ocean Day, June 8,
- Eagle Nest Monitoring
- WHALING: from Hunting to Watching, article by Iain Lawrence

AGM MEETING June 19, ROLLO Centre

GROWLS AGM

The 2024 GROWLS Annual General Meeting
will be held at the Rollo Senior Centre
685 North Rd. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, June 19
6pm - 8pm



For more info about GROWLS phone 250-247-8805



kw'atl'kwu

Gabriola Island

Ocean Day

Saturday, June 8, 2024
12:00pm – 4:00pm

ALL ARE
WELCOME TO
THIS FREE
EVENT!

COME BREAK
BANNOCK
WITH US!



**Snuneymuxw First Nation Land, located at Degnen Bay
 (at the end of Rowan Way)**

***LIMITED PARKING AVAILABLE**, continuous shuttle service will be provided at
 2400 South Road (At the parking lot next to the South End Fire Hall)

Join us for a day of ocean fun including:

- Snuneymuxw knowledge & story sharing
- "BREAKING BANNOCK" presents delicious bannock by Lorna Johnny
- BBQ lunch, hosted by Juan Moreno
- Marine science info booths, crafts, games & more
- Remotely-operated underwater vehicle (ROV) & drone demos



Please help us make The GROWLER a success. We encourage everyone in our community to submit interesting articles and photographs relating to our local wildlife. Send submissions to info@growls.ca Anything received by the second Wednesday of the month will be considered for inclusion in the next edition.

We believe that people, as the largest invasive species on the island, must take greater responsibility for protecting the homes and habitat of the wild creatures who share our island. We are all Gabriolans.

Every Day is Earth & Ocean Day at GROWLS

Dar and Liz at The Gabriola FireHall Open House, May 11, 2024



The next few months are EXTREMELY critical for the well being of our wildlife as babies are the most vulnerable. We have more visitors to the island with their pets who may not be aware of how their presence interferes with our local wildlife.

Please be a responsible dog owner and tell all your dog and cat friends!

GROWLS receives calls regularly of dogs at large. They can return home looking innocent and tired and their People Parents are unaware of the trauma and death they may have caused. With the popularity of cell phones GROWLS has been sent photos of these wonderful (at home) characters and are divided as to whether to publish them. Please give us your opinion and input as to how we can educate dog

and cat owners and protect wildlife.

During the month of May, GROWLS was asked for help in dealing with 3 cases of dogs and deer, one ending in the known death of a deer..... While we try our best wherever animals are concerned, we plead with pet owners to be responsible and knowledgeable about how they impact our wildlife.

For stray dogs:

Gabriola PetFind at 250-247-8654.

For dead sea lions: BC Marine Mammal

Response Network at 1-800-465-4336.



CASE STUDIES MAY 2024

May 6 - Song bird (Trillium). It was thought to be sick but recovered.

May 7 - Bat (Burnside Dr) In the house flying around. Val caught it and released.

May 8 - Song bird (North Rd, south end) cat got it but it flew off before we got there

May 8 - Hummingbird (Carmen Cres)In a planter, difficulty swallowing. Died in the night.

May 10 - Deer (Wild Cherry) Wanted to know if it was ok to put out water for the deer

May 11 - Song bird (Nanaimo) hit a window. Told to monitor and contact NIWRS

May 12 - Starling (Berry Point) flopping on ground, weak leg, head trauma. Took to NIWRS

May 13 - Song bird (Commodore) hopping along ground under bushes, likely a fledgling



photo : Val Lofvendahl

May 14 - Garter snake (Garland) hit by lawnmower. Injuries were too severe for

repair.

May 16 - Barred owl (North Rd) being attacked by ravens. Show signs of head trauma. Transferred to NIWRC



Photo: Val Lofendahl

May 16 - Seal (Beach) Dead, caller wanted it tested. Referred Marine Mammal

May 17 - Turkey (Brickyard) hatchling, died

May 17 - Song bird (Elementary school) Got caught in the skylight inside school. Captured and released

May 17 - Turkey (Easthom) found dead on beach. Caller really upset that vultures were picking at it. We removed it.

May 18 - Hummingbird (Gabriola Gardens) caught in a drip tray of sugar water syrup. After a soak and misting, it was released.



Photo: V.Lofvendahl

May 18 - Gosling (Ferne Rd) abandoned. Fed overnight and released and accepted by another goose family.

May 18 - Raven (Horseshoe) Couldn't fly. Identified as a fledgling. Left there.

May 19 - Deer (Whalebone trail) Dog attacked deer. Died

May 24 - Bird nest caller was working on house, wanted to know if nest could be removed. Was going to leave it if there were eggs.

May 28 - Dog (Pat Burns) running loose. Referred to Pet friends

May 29 - Deer (Wild Cherry) laying in yard, not moving Died..

Photo credits - Val Lofvendahl

YOU GOT BATS??!!!

Gabriola Bat Monitoring
Would like to hear from YOU.

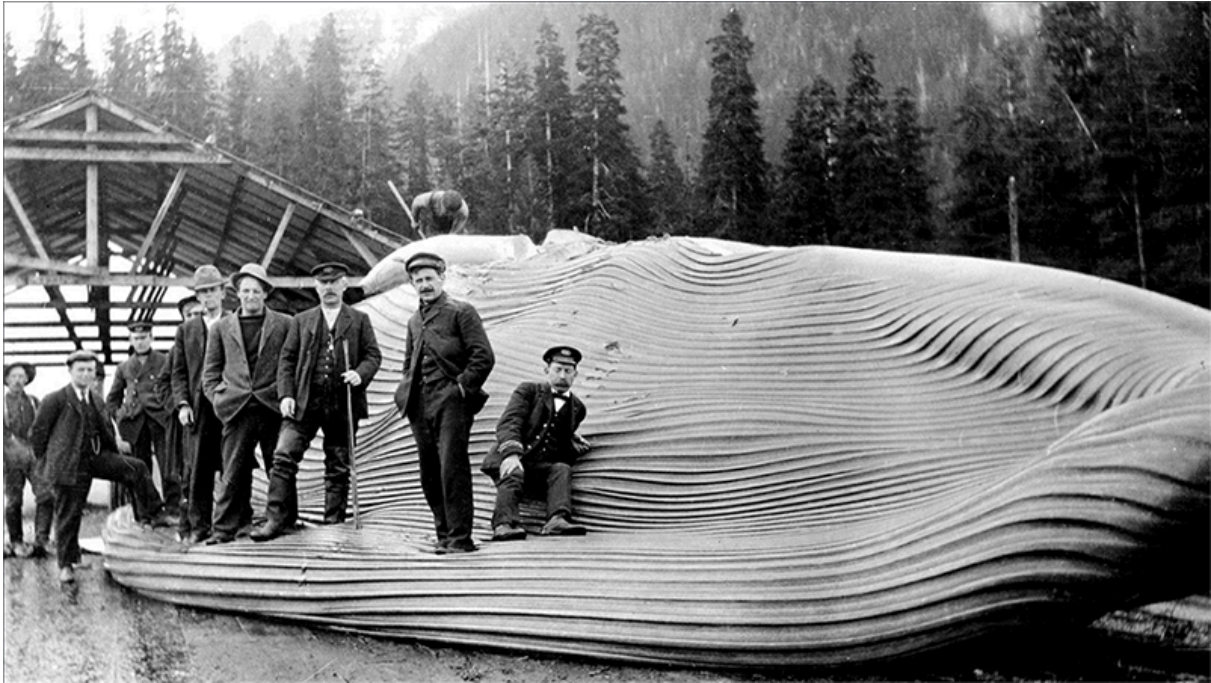
GROWLS is looking for help from Islanders to locate Bat Colonies. Do you think you might have a colony in your attic, barn or shed? If so, contact Gabriola Bat Monitors. We will come and check it out. We would like to know so Bat Counts and identification can take place. Your privacy is respected and you can also take part in the Annual Bat Count, which takes place starting in June.

CONTACT Gabriola Bat Monitoring Liz Ciocea 250 247-8805.
Never handle live bats with bare hands and report all encounters.



Photo credit:Liz Ciocea

To read more and find out what you can do please go to bcbats.ca



Knowledge Network

From Hunting to Watching:

Whales of the Salish Sea

As Captain Vancouver explored what is now the Salish Sea, his lookout sighted ships in the distance. But they were a strange sort of ship, their white sails visible one moment and gone the next.

Vancouver soon realized that his lookout had not seen the billowing canvas of a phantom ship, but the spouts of enormous whales. The Salish Sea was full of them then. Vancouver saw whales bigger than his ship, more whales of more types than he'd seen anywhere else since leaving England more than a year before.

Vancouver recorded the sightings in his logbook, but fifty years went by before Europeans again showed much interest in the whales of the Salish Sea.

In the 1840s, the Hudson's Bay Company talked of adding harpooneers to the crew of its ship, the *Beaver*. Nothing came of it. In the 1860s, two Scotsmen built the sea's first whaling station - at Mill Bay. With a schooner named *Kate*, they slaughtered every humpback whale in the area, then moved north to Hornby Island and did the same thing there. Within a decade they'd run out of whales and headed back to Scotland.

In 1907, the Pacific Whaling Company established a whaling station at the inlet now known as Piper's Lagoon in Nanaimo. Two whale-catching ships armed with exploding harpoons went hunting for humpbacks throughout the Salish Sea. They did

a remarkable job, killing nearly every whale in the sea in less than two years.

There have been other whaling stations in the Salish Sea. One, on Cortes Island, gave Whaletown its name. Another existed at Blubber Bay on Texada Island. But none lasted a decade, although whaling continued on the outer coast of BC until 1967, when the last whaling station was closed down. It had been operating in Coal Harbour, on the west coast of northern Vancouver Island.

At that time it was still doubtful that whales would ever return in any great number to the Salish Sea. There were very few sightings until 2003, when the number of visiting humpbacks suddenly began to grow. Today more than a thousand humpbacks have been identified in the Gulf of Georgia and Juan de Fuca Strait, and groups of eighty or more have been seen feeding together. There is now a year-round population.

The trend is the same for other species of whales. Grey whales and minke whales are being seen in record numbers. So are the transient Bigg's killer whales, but are not technically a whale at all. In 2018, for the first time in twenty years, a sperm whale swam down through Johnstone Strait, past the old whaling station on Cortes Island, and into the Salish Sea. Yet the resident, salmon-eating killer whales continue to struggle to maintain their population.

Many people credit the gradual return of the whales to the creation of a new industry that replaces whale hunting with whale watching. But for a short while in the early 1900s, the two existed together.

The Terminal Steamship Company, established in 1902, operated regular tours from Vancouver into Howe Sound. Passengers paid to see the humpback whales that lived there in large numbers. It took just one year for the whale hunters to kill the whale and end the whale-watching industry for almost a century.

Today there are so many whales in the waters round Gabriola Island that the Shaw Centre for the Salish Sea encourages whale watching from shore. Its Guide to Land-Based Whale Watching is online at salishseacentre.org.

It directs people to a "Whale Trail" of viewing sights and teaches them how to identify whales according to what can be seen from shore. An excellent guide, it comes with one caveat:

"Sightings are not guaranteed, but you can still enjoy your day sitting by the water."

DEAR GABBY

Dear Gabby,

I found a baby bird lying on the ground under a tree. I could see a nest in the branches so I thought I could pick up the bird and put it back in its nest. But my friend said if you do that the mother will ignore the baby and might even kill it because it smells like a person. I think she's wrong. Who is right?

Signed, Just Trying to Help

If you have a wildlife question for Dear Gabby, That you think may benefit other Gabriolans please submit to info@growls.ca

Dear Trying,

You are mostly right. It's a myth that a mother bird will reject a baby that has been touched by a person. That doesn't mean the mother can't smell your human scent. Most birds have a fairly crude sense of smell, but they can probably tell if you've touched their eggs or their babies. It's just that their nurturing instinct is so strong that they're willing to overlook it. The adult birds are much more likely to abandon the baby if you disturb the nest too much while you're doing it. Signs of disturbance might frighten them away from the nest, and away from the baby. But not all baby birds that end up on the ground have to be put back in the nest.

You should check first to see if the baby is a nestling or a fledgling, and if the parents are hovering nearby. A nestling will be small and naked, with no more than a few feathers, if any. It's far too young to fend for itself away from the nest. It should be picked up and gently returned to the nest. A fledgling will be covered with feathers and is ready to fly. It may end up on the ground if its first flight is unsuccessful. But the parents are most likely watching it from nearby, and are prepared to feed their baby until its strong enough to fly. Unless the fledgling is in danger from a nearby predator, it should be left alone.

Hope that helps,

Gabby

We welcome articles pertinent to Gabriola wildlife

Gabriola Eagle Nests are active now. GROWLS monitors are also active. By documenting their nest locations we can insure their protection from unknowing developers and also insure the property owners privacy.

If you think you know of an active eagle nest on Gabriola. please contact Linda Blokhuzien
250 222 0953

lsb2407@shaw.ca)

Photo credit Corinne Flaws



Photo credit eagle nest
Linda Blokhuzien

Thank you to our contributors, Val , Liz, Mark, Iain, Linda B., Dar & Corinne who helped with this second issue. If you would like to be part of The GROWLER newsletter committee WE WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU JOIN US. Please contact Liz 250 247 8805 or Dar 250 616 7415