



**Tofino Trip April 24-27, 2026
SD73 International Student Program**



Twenty four students and three chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00AM on April 24 and drove south down the Coquihalla Highway to Vancouver. We had washroom stop at the Britton Creek Rest Area and checked out the colony of Columbian Ground Squirrels that live nearby. After this, we drove to Hope where we had another washroom break. We then drove all the way to the Horseshoe Bay Ferry Terminal and caught our 1:25PM ferry to Nanaimo as planned. We enjoyed gorgeous weather and scenery on this 1 hour and 40 minute ferry.



The drive from Nanaimo to Tofino takes just under 3 hours and we rolled in just before 6:00PM. We had just enough time to check in and do our grocery shopping before the main grocery store closed at 8:00PM in Tofino. We then went down to the public dock in front of our hostel to watch the sunset and see any wildlife that may be around.



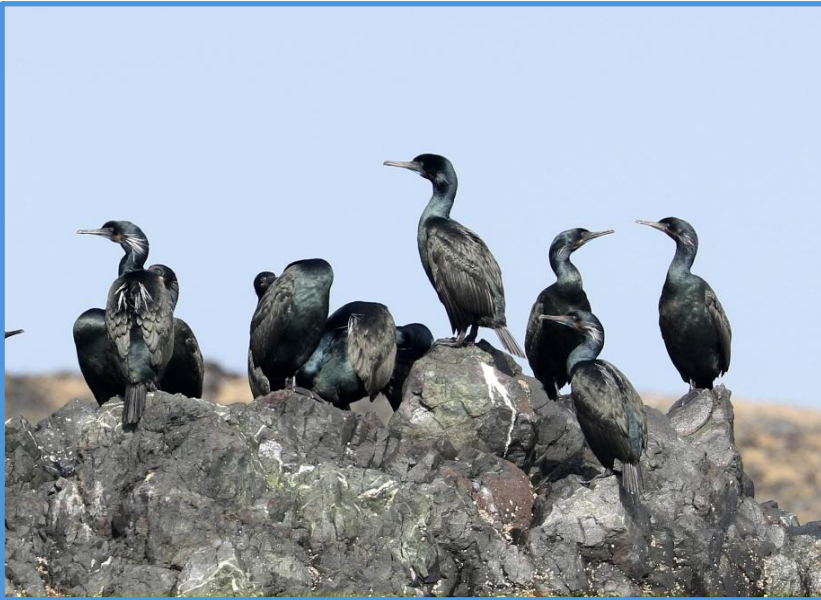
The next morning, we had optional wildlife viewing on the dock time from roughly 6:00-7:30AM. We then left our hostel at 8:00 and walked over to Remote Passages for our scheduled whale watch tour. We divided our group into 3 boats and headed out to try and see whales and other wildlife. With full sunshine and almost no wind, we were able to see much of the wildlife that the west coast of Vancouver Island is known for.



Wildlife seen from the morning on the dock above.

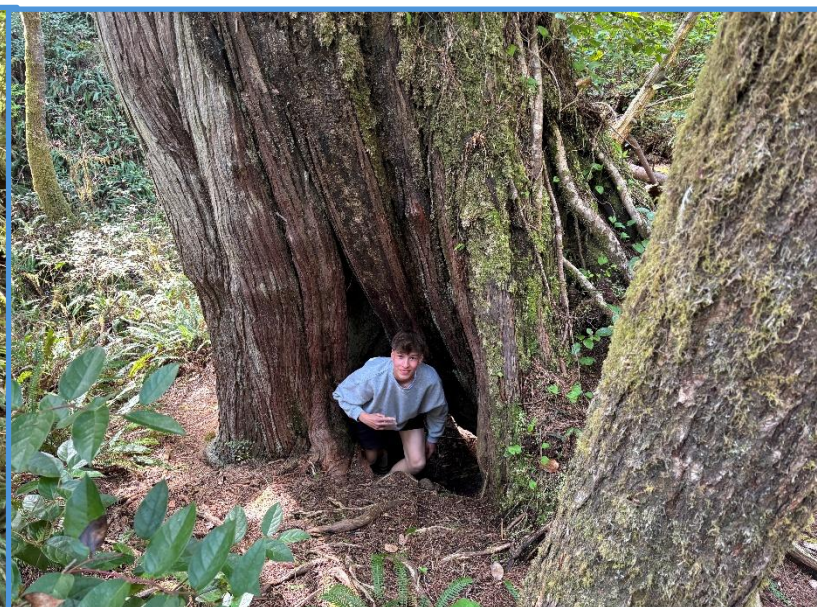






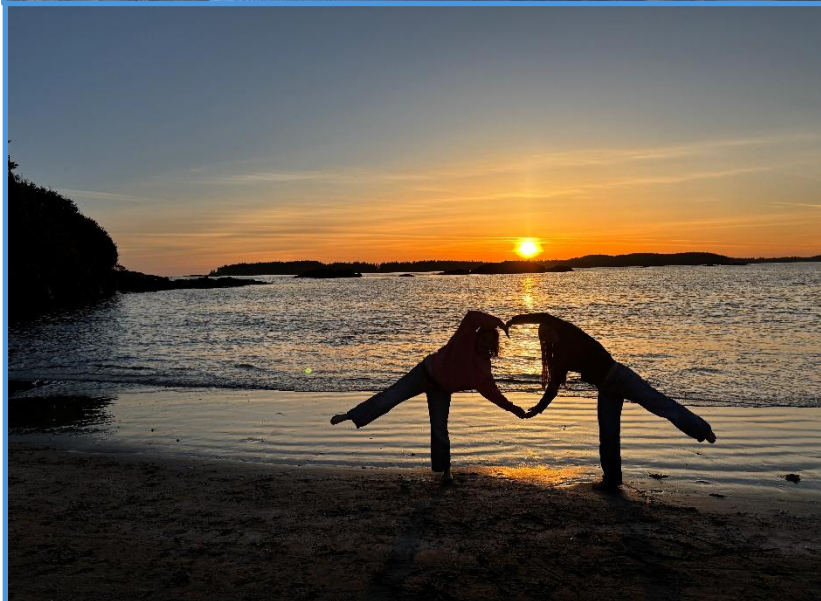


After lunch we left on the bus at 3:00PM and drove to Pacific Rim National Park where we hiked both loops of Rainforest Trail. These trails take you through old growth temperate rainforest and past some massive Red Cedar Trees, some of which are around 800 years old. We enjoyed sunshine and dry conditions on both loops.



Following the hikes we drove to Mackenzie where we did some tidal pooling, went on a short walk to the end of a headland, played beach games, and cooked hotdogs and made smores over a fire until sunset.

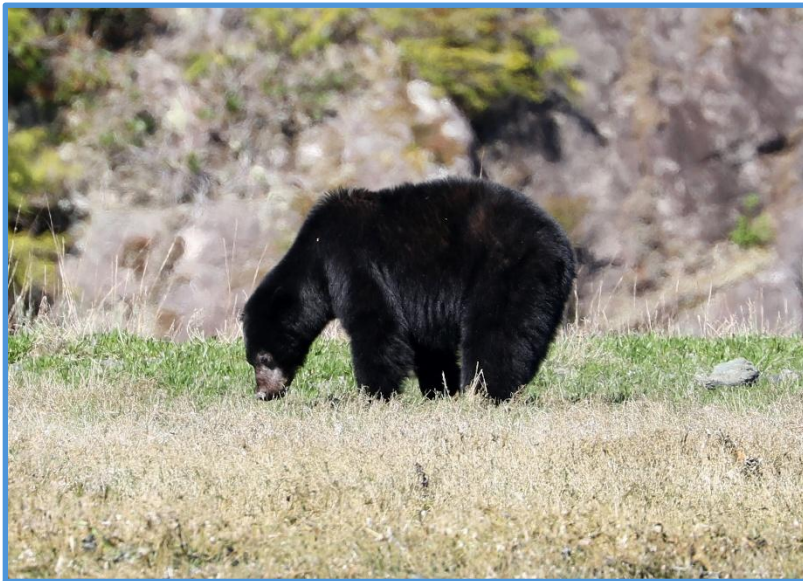




The next morning we had optional wildlife viewing on the dock again until 9:00AM before taking the bus down to long Beach at 9:30, enjoying 2 hours there. Students played beach games, walked into the water, or just hung out on the beach. We saw 3 Gray Whales feeding right in front of us for almost all of time there and we enjoyed watching them as well.







The photos above are from our afternoon bear watching tour following Long Beach and lunch. We then had some time for dinner before quiet time at 10:00PM. The next morning we pulled out at 7:10AM and drove towards Nanaimo for our ferry back to the mainland. We had enough time for stops at Cathedral Grove and The Old Country Market – Goats on Roof in Coombs. Cathedral Grove offers short walks through stands of ancient Douglas Fir Trees and The Old Country market is a tourist trap that sells just about everything from souvenirs to specialty foods and has buildings with goats on the roof.





The ferry was on time and everything went smooth on our return journey. We arrived in Kamloops at 8:30PM after a washroom and food stop in Hope. We saw 3 Black Bears from the bus on the way back.

Students on this trip were from: Germany, Switzerland, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Austria, and France.

Trip Mammal List

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|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Black Bear – 7 | Harbour Seal – 20 | Steller Sea Lion – 250 |
| American Mink – 1 | Raccoon – 1 | Gray Whale – 4 |
| Coyote – 2 | Columbian Ground Squirrel – 20 | Sea Otter – 55 |
| River Otter – 2 | Mule Deer – 2 | |

Accommodations: Whalers Guesthouse

Whale and Bear Watching Tours: Remote Passages Marine Excursions

Favourite Moment

- Victoria – When we went to the beaches because the trees are so tall and big. In Spain they are so short.
- Fiete – The Rainforest Hike because I really liked the nature there and I've never seen that before.
- Maya – The sunset at the beach and the whale watching because I liked the vibes when we were all together and I liked to see the wildlife.
- Lavinia – At Mackenzie Beach I really liked the sunset and roasting marshmallows there.
- Jessica – When we saw the whales from the beach because it was unexpected and cool to see.
- Adele – When we were at the beach and had hot dogs, smores, and played volleyball. I've never had smores before and being together was fun.
- Anina – Seeing the whales because it was a magical moment to see something that big.
- Lenia – When everyone sat around the campfire on the beach and watched the sun set together because at that moment I realized that I'm currently living with these nice people on the other side of the world.
- Sara – When we saw the whales because it's crazy that we live on the same planet as them because they are so big.
- Jana – When we saw the whales because I've never seen one before and it was an unreal moment.
- Lola – The evening at the beach because it was so pretty. I don't live near the ocean and I love sunsets.
- Lucia – The sunset at the beach because I liked that the beach and the mountains were so close.
- Noah – When we were at the beach playing the sports, going into the water, and seeing the sunset.
- Elena – Seeing the first bear because we could see it very well.
- Jonah – The bear watching because I've never seen a bear before and going fast on the boat was really fun.
- Jonathan S – the sunset on Mackenzie Beach because I really liked the vibe and how we tried different sports together.
- Tim – I really liked our nice sunset walk because it was a little foggy and it made the sun look very nice.
- Pedro A – Watching the sunset at the beach close to our hostel because it was something I was not expecting to see.
- Jonathan H – Watching the sun set on Friday because the beach looked amazing.
- Zafer – When we were whale watching because I saw the whales close to me and saw more of them than bears.
- Felipe – Throwing the football at the beach because I didn't know how to do it before.
- Cornelis – The walk to watch the sunset at a look out because it was very amazing to see how the clouds looked.
- Pedro G – Mackenzie Beach because it was different scenery than I'm used to and I learned how to play American Football.
- Valentin – The bear watching tour because the view was beautiful and I've never seen anything like that before.

One Thing I Learned On The Trip

Victoria – There were many movies made in Tofino such as The Twilight Saga and War For The Planet of the Apes.

Fiete – Gray Whales come from Mexico and they did not eat there so now they are very hungry.

Maya – That Gray Whales winter in Mexico because it is warmer there.

Lavinia – That Bald Eagles pair for life and they usually use the same nest each year.

Jessica – That the Cedar Trees that look dead at the top are the oldest and show that the forest is healthy.

Adele – That if the top of the trees are white, it is because the forest is healthy.

Anina – That you shouldn't be scared about trying new things. I've never been on a boat before and I had a lot of fun.

Lenia – It is still legal to hunt bears.

Sara – That Gray Whales can only stay 5 minutes under water. I thought it was longer.

Jana – That Gray Whales can't stay under the water for more than 5 minutes.

Lola – That whales are so big.

Lucia – how to deal with different kinds of bears if you meet them.

Noah – How to throw a football properly.

Elena – That Jurassic World was filmed on Vancouver Island.

Jonah – How to deal with different types of bears. If it's black, fight back. If it's brown, lay down. If it's white, say good night.

Jonathan S – That the only place to see Sea Otters in Canada is Tofino.

Tim – That bears have an inner clock for the tides and they always come out when the tide is low to eat.

Pedro A – Canada's coastline is so full of life.

Jonathan H – You should enjoy every moment you get.

Zafer – I learned that the whales come to the surface of the water to breathe a lot.

Felipe – How to be in the room on time.

Cornelis – How to play pool.

Pedro G – That sea otters are endangered because they used to be hunted for their fur.

Valentin – About the wildlife in the sea and on the land, such as Sea Otters and bears.