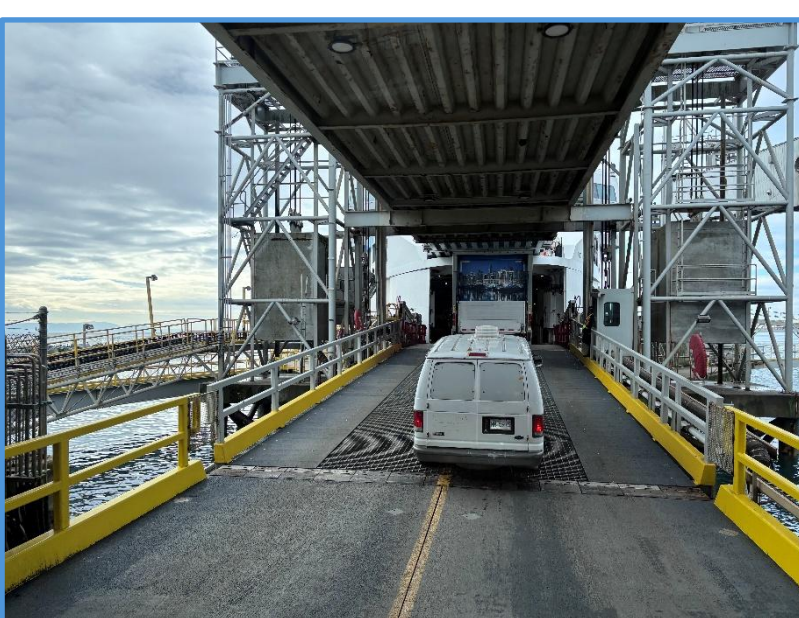




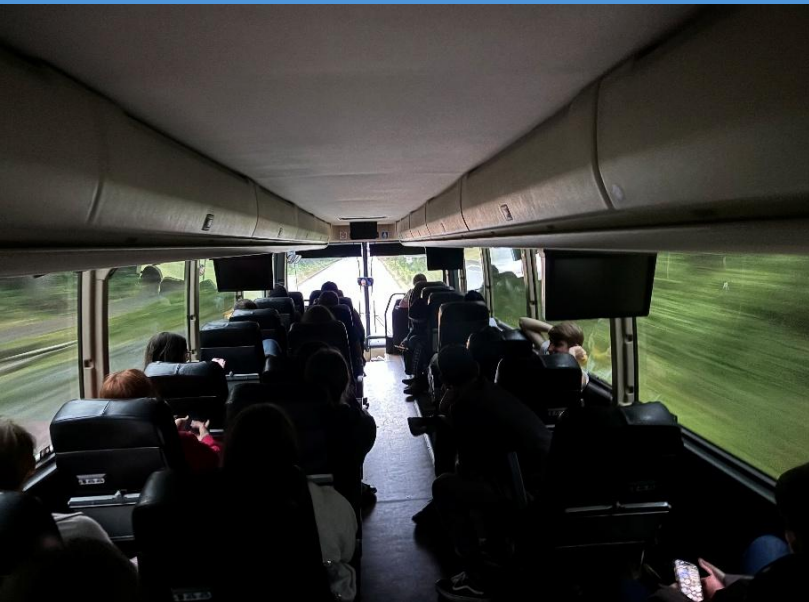
Tofino Trip Oct. 2-5, 2026
SD73 International Student Program



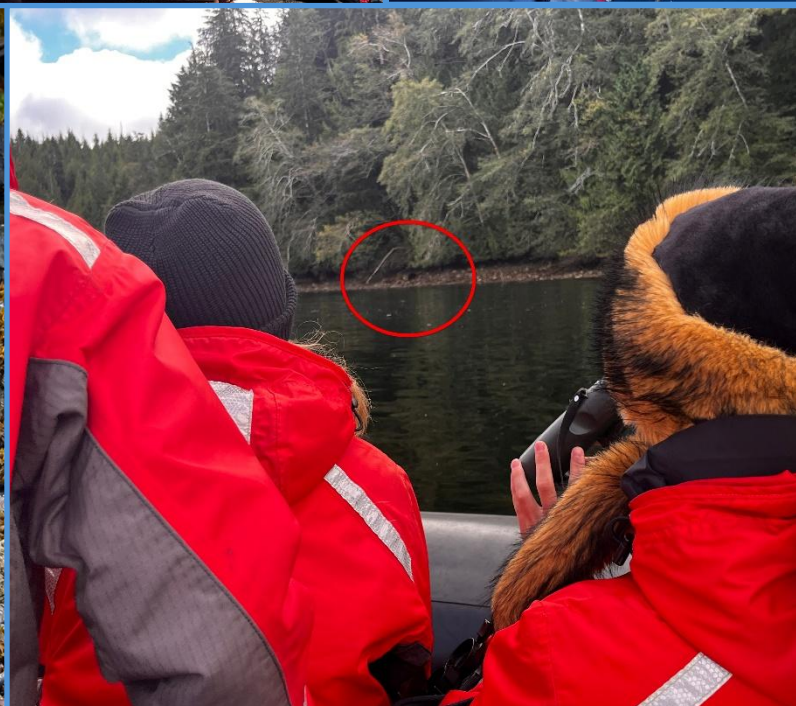
A group of students and three chaperones left Kamloops at 7:00AM on Oct. 2 and drove south down the Coquihalla Highway to Vancouver. We had our first washroom stop at Hope and then carried on to the Tsawwassen ferry terminal. Our reserved ferry was on time, and we sailed across to Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. We enjoyed excellent weather on this trip and most students stayed on the top deck looking for whales and other wildlife. We managed to see 7 Hump-backed Whales, some of which were quite close to the ferry. The ferries have 6-7 decks and so the top deck offers a good view. The ride across to Vancouver Island was 2 hours long.

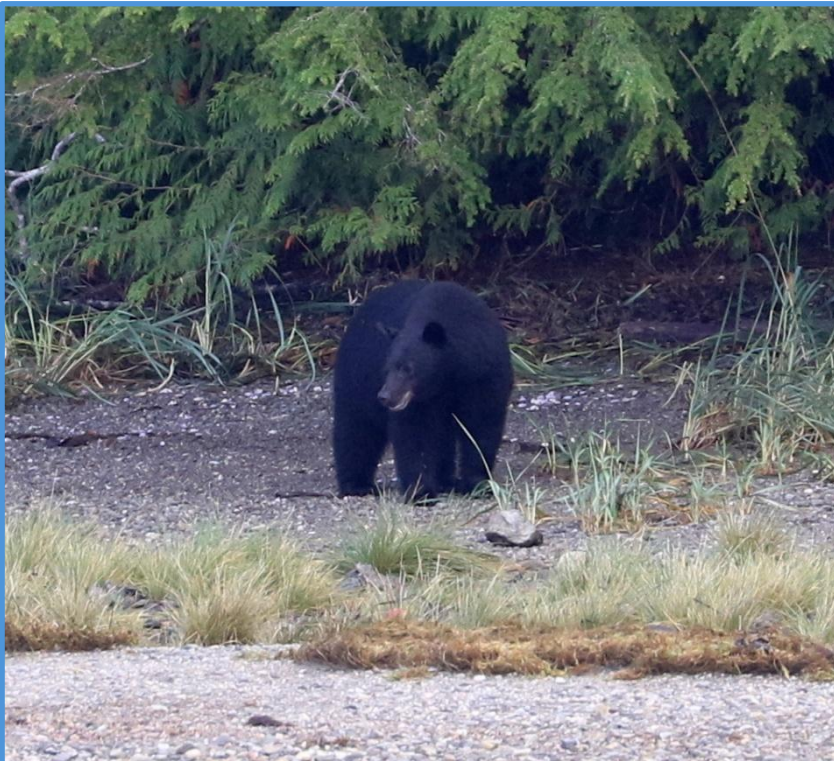


The drive from Nanaimo to Tofino takes just under 3 hours. We stopped in Port Alberni for a washroom break and grocery shopping at Walmart. We then finished the rest of the drive to Tofino as the skies cleared. It was just getting dark as we checked into the hostel in Tofino and the students got settled in their rooms and prepared dinner in the shared kitchen.



The next morning, we had optional wildlife viewing on the dock from roughly 7:00-9:00AM. The fog was thick, but we still managed to see a Sea Otter, some starfish, and Kelp Crabs. We then left our hostel at 9:30 and walked to our bear watching tour. We saw Harbour Seals, Bald Eagles, California Sea Lions, and 3 Black Bears. One mother and cub put on quite a show while walking and feeding along the shoreline. The fog had lifted as we left and we enjoyed gorgeous weather the entire tour.





After our bear watch tour, we had a couple hours for lunch and then drove out to Pacific Rim National Park for our rainforest hike. These loop trails are only 2kms long but pass by some fabulous old growth Western Red Cedar Trees that are well over 600 years old. The boardwalk trails are a great introduction to ancient coastal temperate rainforests.



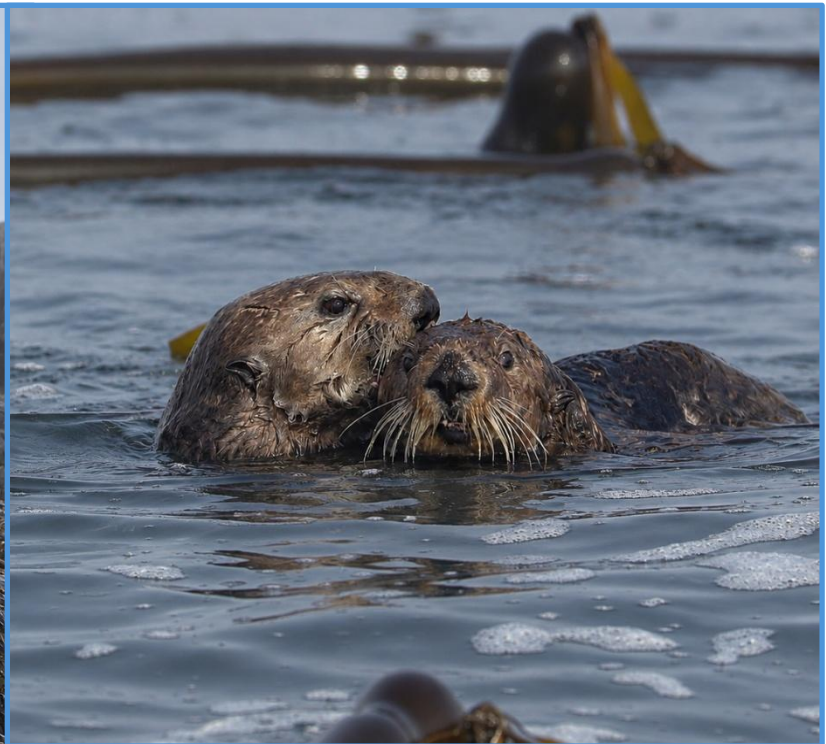
That night after dinner we had a few hours in the hostel for games and hanging out before quiet time.



The next morning, we woke up to heavy fog. It stayed for much of the morning and then cleared up around noon. Despite this, our morning whale watch tour was still successful with good looks at Gray Whales and lots of other wildlife.









After this, we drove to Long Beach and spent 2 hours there playing sports, walking into the ocean, or relaxing in the sun to the sound of waves. We were able to see one more Gray Whale there through a spotting scope and took some photos of a surfer with a Gray Whale in the background. There are not too many places in the world where you can surf with whales!





We then drove to a different beach where we did some tidal pooling, a short headland hike, and cooked hot dogs and smores over a fire. The sunset provided a fantastic back drop to our last night in Tofino.





The last day we left at 7:00AM and drove from Tofino to Coombs where we spent some time at the tourist trap known as “Old Country Market – Goats on Roof”. We then moved on to Nanaimo where we took our ferry back to the mainland. The return ferry was foggy for almost the entire way, but we still managed to see 3 Hump-backed Whales at close range. After a washroom stop in Hope, we pulled into Kamloops around 7:00PM.



Students on this trip were from: Germany, Brazil, Japan, and Czechia.

Trip Mammal List

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Black Bear – 3 | Harbour Seal – 30 | Steller Sea Lion – 25 | California Sea Lion – 2 |
| Gray Whale – 3 | Hump-backed Whale – 10 | Raccoon – 3 | |
| Sea Otter – 30 | Mule Deer – 5 | American Mink – 1 | |

Accommodations: Whalers Guesthouse

Whale and Bear Watching Tours: Remote Passages Marine Excursions

My Favourite Moment:

1. Luiz – When we went on the boats to see the bears because it was my first time seeing Black Bears and the landscape was very beautiful.
2. Philipp A – Walking into the ocean because it felt amazing.
3. Ronja – When I was holding a jellyfish because it the first time I've ever done that.
4. Jonte – Whale watching by boat because we saw a baby and mother Sea Otter together.
5. Tony – When we all sat around the fire and roasted hotdogs and marshmallows because I love them both.
6. Luisa – Whale watching because the bumpy ride was so fun. I also liked walking into the ocean because it was cold and I've never been in the Pacific Ocean before.
7. Alexa – When we were on the whale watching tour and Luisa and I sat in the front and saw a rainbow.
8. Hannah – Whale watching because I saw so many animals that I've never seen before such as Gray Whales, Sea Lions, and Sea Otters.
9. Rebecca – When we saw the family of bears because it is really special that we saw the baby, mom, and dad.
10. Kokomi – Eating the hot dog at the beach because I made a few friends then and I had so much fun.
11. Ida – Standing in the Pacific Ocean with the waves. Every time I come back to an ocean, I realize how much I miss it when I am not there.
12. Lara F – When we saw the Sea Otters because it was cute seeing how they were floating on their backs in the water.
13. Helena – The campfire during the sunset because it was really beautiful and everyone was having fun.
14. Meret – When we went to see the Black Bears and we saw the baby because it was really cute.
15. Karlotta – Whale watching on the boats because it was really fun and something I had never done before.
16. Magdalena – Going into the ocean because it was really fun. Even though it was very cold, it was really exciting.
17. Katharina – Getting splashed by water on the boats because I felt so alive in that moment.
18. Lara S – When I saw a whale for the first time because it was such a stunning moment. I've never dreamed about seeing a whale in real life.
19. Johann – The campfire by the ocean because of the beautiful sunset.
20. Philipp T – When we were allowed to walk into the water because it was doing something together and we could feel a little bit of the Pacific Ocean.
21. Marten – Spotting the Sea Otters because they were pretty cute and I've never seen them in the wild before.
22. Nele – Wearing the red suits because they were comfy and cozy.
23. Polly – Whale watching because I've seen my two favourite animals, Sea Otter and whales.
24. Emil – When we sat around the campfire because of the connection with the people and the atmosphere.
25. Julia – The campfire because we were all together and it was very fun.
26. Alice – Seeing the Black Bears because we do not have them in Brazil.
27. Hugo – Sitting around the campfire because it was nice to know the people and talk with them. The group came together there.
28. Thiago – Being in the whale watching boats because I did not imagine the whales would be that close to us.
29. Isabella – Whale watching on the boats because I have never seen a whale in my life.
30. Finn – Seeing a whale today on the ferry on the way home because it was like a last gift.

One Thing I Learned On This Trip:

1. Luiz – Male Bald Eagles are smaller than females.
2. Philipp – We need to protect this world because if we don't, we will lose it.
3. Ronja – How big whales are. They were bigger than our boat.
4. Jonte – Whales need about 100,00 calories per day.
5. Tony – That jellyfish eat plankton and algae in the water.
6. Luisa – Otters have so much fur that the Orcas only hunt them when they can't find something else.
7. Alexa – That seals turn white when they dry out.
8. Hannah – Sea Lions can weigh as much as a horse.
9. Rebecca – That there's a part of the rainforest that has never been cut down and I did not know that there was even a rainforest in Canada.
10. Kokomi – To watch the time and not be late.
11. Ida – That Sea Otters lay on their back in the water and eat crabs. When a mess develops on their stomach, they just roll over.
12. Lara F – That even though the Black Bears were so small, they can easily lift large stones to search for food.
13. Helena – That people are naturally kind. You don't have to have a relationship with someone to treat them kindly.
14. Meret – That mother bears carry a fertilized egg inside her for several months before it starts developing.
15. Karlotta – There is only a small percentage of original forest left in BC.
16. Magdalena – That female Bald Eagles are bigger than males.
17. Katharina – That second growth forests are replanted and that only 2% of forests in BC are untouched.
18. Lara S – How a bear develops in the womb of its mother. It takes 4 months to start developing.
19. Johann – Gray Whales are smaller than Hump-backed Whales and they do not have a fin on their back.
20. Philipp T – If you want to know things, you need to ask.
21. Marten – Sea Otters went extinct in Canada but not in Alaska.
22. Nele – Sea Otters turn when they have garbage on their chest.
23. Polly – That whales don't really have an instinct; they do what they want to do. Sea Otters hold hands while sleeping so they don't drift apart.
24. Emil – That whales swim to Mexico during the winter.
25. Julia – That whales can show their tails when they dive.
26. Alice – That whales do not show their tails when diving in shallow water because they would hit their head on the ocean floor.
27. Hugo – Punctuality is very important.
28. Thiago – We can easily see the difference between old growth and second growth forests. The old ones were much thicker.
29. Isabella – The foam on the open ocean is microorganisms and they become that foam when they hit on rocks and sand a lot.
30. Finn – Sea Otters have fur instead of fat to keep themselves warm.