

For Immediate Release
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COASTAL NATURALISTS RETURN TO BC FERRIES FOR 12TH YEAR THIS SUMMER

Interactive presentations encourage customers to discover the world beneath the waves

VICTORIA – In conjunction with World Oceans Day and in partnership with Parks Canada, BC Ferries is pleased to announce today the return of the popular Coastal Naturalist Program to educate and entertain customers of all ages again this summer. The Coastal Naturalist Program runs from June 28 through September 4 on board select vessels servicing the Metro Vancouver – Victoria (Tsawwassen – Swartz Bay) and Metro Vancouver – Nanaimo (Horseshoe Bay – Departure Bay) routes.

“We are so pleased to offer the Coastal Naturalist experience to customers once again this summer,” said Corrine Storey, BC Ferries’ Vice President of Customer Services. “Now in its 12th season, this program offers travellers the opportunity to learn more about B.C.’s wildlife, marine life, geography, culture and history. We are privileged to live and work in such a beautiful region and our customers can’t help but feel inspired by the surroundings when they are on board our vessels. The Coastal Naturalists help enrich that experience by highlighting the uniqueness of the area.”

Nine enthusiastic Coastal Naturalists will engage with customers during 20-minute presentations on the ships offering a unique opportunity for a real-life coastal experience. The program helps visitors and locals alike discover B.C.’s coastal wonders. Approximately 150,000 passengers participate in these presentations each season.

“To mark Canada 150, the Government of Canada invites Canadians to experience nature and learn more about our history. The BC Ferries Coastal Naturalist Program is the perfect way to begin that journey with fun and engaging programs shared out on the open ocean,” said Helen Davies, Parks Canada Field Unit Superintendent for Coastal BC. “With free entry to all of Parks Canada places in 2017, we invite people to continue discovering the wonders and heritage of B.C.’s Coast by visiting nearby sites such as Gulf Islands National Park Reserve and Fort Rodd Hill and Fisgard National Historic Sites.”

The Coastal Naturalist Program falls under the conservation pillar of BC Ferries’ [SeaForward program](#), which brings existing environmental activities, conservation projects, community investments and new sustainability endeavours together under a single program.

Under contract to the Province of British Columbia, BC Ferries is the service provider responsible for the delivery of safe, efficient and dependable ferry service along coastal British Columbia.

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Program details attached.

Media Contact:

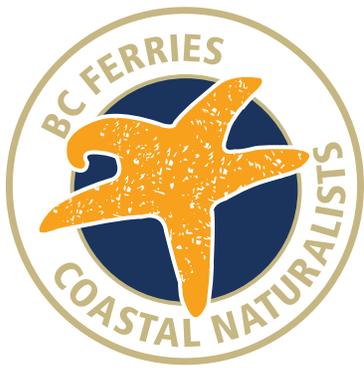
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BC Ferries & Parks Canada 2017 Coastal Naturalist Program

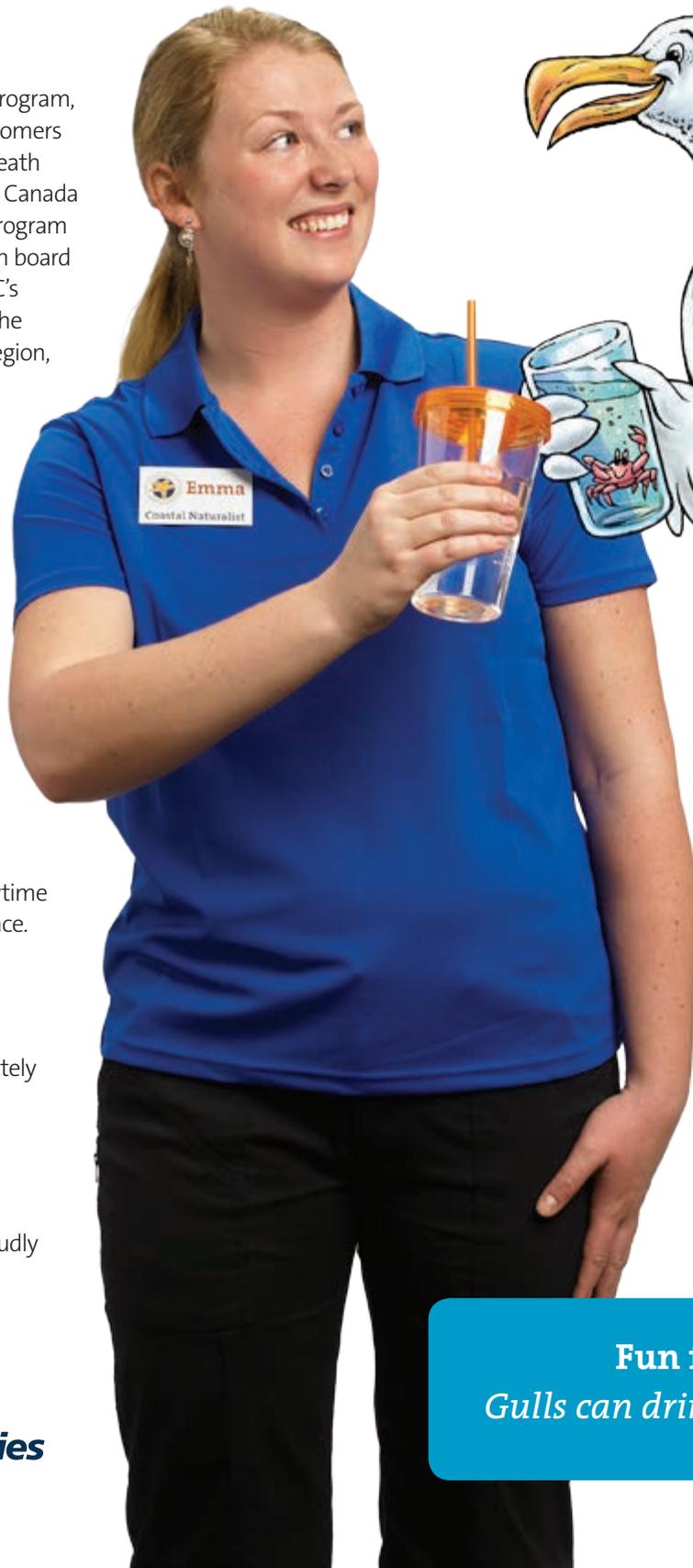
This summer, the 2017 Coastal Naturalist Program, *now in its 12th season*, offers BC Ferries customers the opportunity to discover the world beneath the waves, and more! BC Ferries and Parks Canada work together to present this successful program to inform, educate, and inspire travellers on board BC Ferries vessels about the wonders of BC's coast. The program offers our customers the opportunity to connect with the coastal region, covering topics about the ocean, BC's unique wildlife and marine life, coastal, nautical and cultural history, and hear stories that connect Canadians and visitors to Parks Canada's incredible places.

The Coastal Naturalist Program runs on board from Wednesday, June 28th through Monday, September 4th, 2017 on BC Ferries vessels travelling between Vancouver Island and Vancouver.

Nine Coastal Naturalists engage with customers with short roving presentations throughout the vessel and deliver a 20-minute program on select daytime sailings, offering a real life coastal experience.

The Coastal Naturalist Program helps to raise awareness of BC's coast and increase appreciation for its wildlife, marine life, geography, culture and history. Approximately 150,000 customers participate in onboard presentations each season, with seasonal program promotions reaching millions of customers.

The 2017 Coastal Naturalist Program is proudly presented by BC Ferries and Parks Canada.



Fun fact:
Gulls can drink seawater!



 Parks Canada



Coastal Naturalist Program Details

Coastal Naturalists

We started the 2017 year with a comprehensive audition process to find the best naturalists, and are proud to introduce a team of nine enthusiastic presenters for you to meet on board.

Onboard Program

The program runs from June 28th to September 4th, 2017. The program is delivered seven days a week on select vessels travelling between Vancouver Island and Vancouver. Presentation schedules vary by route; please check the schedule to determine availability.

Coastal Naturalist Programs are offered on all statutory holidays during the summer period.

Vessels

- *Spirit of British Columbia*
- *Spirit of Vancouver Island*
- *Coastal Celebration*
- *Queen of New Westminster*
- *Coastal Renaissance*
- *Queen of Oak Bay*

Schedule

The Coastal Naturalist schedule is found at bcferries.com/onboard-experiences/Coastal_Experiences



“I’m new to British Columbia, and was interested in learning more about BC as I travelled on the ferry. Imagine my delight in realizing there was a knowledgeable naturalist on board! I learned so much that I didn’t know before. Coastal British Columbia is indeed a place of remarkable diversity, beauty and wonder! It is a treasure to be valued and cared for.”

– BC Ferries Customer



Meet our 2017 Coastal Naturalists!

Rachel

My name is Rachel. I have lived on the BC coast my entire life and was born and raised in beautiful Victoria. I am currently in my fourth year of study at the University of Victoria, double majoring in Environmental Studies and Geography. I have a variety of passions within these subjects, but the most consistent is my passion for environmental stewardship and communicating its importance. A previous volunteer opportunity with World Fisheries Trust provided a wonderful opportunity to live out this passion and connect with the community about local marine life through the Seaquaria in schools program.

In my free time you can find me singing at my local grocery store, hanging out with my family and friends, or working out at my favourite spin studio. I also love spending time outside, whether it is going for hikes, or just finding a nice spot to sit outside and soak up the fresh air and sunshine. During this summer term, I am most excited to expand on my knowledge of the beautiful west coast. Although I have lived here my entire life, there is so much to know and appreciate. This is my second co-op term and my first experience with Parks Canada and BC Ferries and I couldn't be more excited!



TJ

Hi! My name is TJ. I was born and raised on BC's Sunshine Coast in a small town called Gibsons only accessible by ferry or float plane. You might recognize it as the small cluster of houses that you see on the North side of Route 2. Currently, I study at the University of Victoria majoring in Business with a specialization in entrepreneurship. This is my first work experience with BC Ferries and Parks Canada, but I have been a lifelong passenger and visitor. Growing up on the Sunshine Coast, BC ferries and the beauty of the coast are an ever-present part of my life. I've sailed well over 1000 trips on the ferries and I'm ready for a summer of many more.

My main interests are experiential education, sustainable communities, and exploring the great outdoors here in the Salish Sea bio-region. I spent last summer fully immersed in the Salish Sea participating in an Environmental Studies field school and volunteering as a summer Camp Counsellor with the David Suzuki Foundation on Gambier Island. I'm proud to call this place home and I look forward to another amazing summer sharing my knowledge of the region and inspiring others to love our coast.



Jessica

My name is Jessica and I've lived in beautiful British Columbia my whole life. I am a third year Psychology student at UBC with a specific interest in mental health and this is my first co-op work term. I was drawn to the Coastal Naturalist position because I love interacting with diverse populations and immersing myself in culture, not to mention the fact that I've enjoyed riding ferries since I was a little kid! I just recently discovered a passion for outdoor adventure, especially hiking, camping and canoeing, and I'm so excited to be spending my summer surrounded by water and nature. In my spare time, you can find me reading a good book or sharing my own culture through Irish dance and musical theatre. I am ecstatic to work with BC Ferries and Parks Canada for the first time and to experience a deck job rather than a desk job!



Joe

Hi! My name is Joe. I've always been fascinated by the natural world and living things. It began with childhood summers at the family cottage, exploring the lake bottom using my grandfather's old snorkeling gear and catching small fish with a butterfly net. Since then, it has evolved gradually into a life-long passion. After earning a bachelor's degree in Environment and Health Studies at York University in Toronto, I moved to Prince Rupert, BC, where I studied Applied Coastal Ecology at Northwest Community College, worked as a volunteer hatchery technician for Oldfield Creek Salmon Hatchery, and fell in love with BC's rugged North Coast region.

Most recently I've been working with a Vancouver-based charity, Fraser Riverkeeper, where I serve as Coordinator of the Fraser Valley Illegal Dumping Alliance. FVIDA is a coalition of concerned non-profits and local businesses partnering with municipal governments and the BC Conservation Officers Service to tackle illegal garbage dumping in sensitive wilderness areas in the heart of the Fraser Valley. We organize regular clean-ups of dumping hot-spots and educate recreational water users on how to safely report and handle potentially hazardous waste items that have been illegally left behind in our parks and along our rivers.



Katie

Hello my name is Katie. My favourite animals are nudibranchs (sea slugs)! This is my second season working as a Coastal Naturalist – my first season was in 2015. I've spent most of my life in British Columbia and specifically on Vancouver Island. I graduated from the University of Victoria with a BA in Environmental Studies and French. My passion is experiential education and I intend to return to school this fall to obtain my teaching certificate.

I spend most of my time outside exploring, hiking, identifying flora and fauna, and kayaking. I recently worked at the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre on the West Coast of Vancouver Island facilitating science-based field trips for university classes and grades six through twelve. I also love swing dancing and I teach beginner lessons from time to time. I look forward to meeting and working with you all!



Colin

My name is Colin. I grew up on the mainland, in Langley. I studied for two years at Thompson Rivers University in sciences, and have now completed my second year of the four-year bachelor of education program at the University of Victoria as an elementary generalist. My career interests also extend to interpretation and museum education. I have worked operations and customer service positions in different provincial parks, have instructed science camp, and volunteer at the Royal BC and Canadian Aviation Museums in a variety of roles.

Beyond my work and school, I spend much of my time in the summer outdoors backpacking, kayaking, or simply exploring. I also have a passion for aviation and technological history, and across all my hobbies, photography gives me a way of sharing them visually. As an individual entering into a career focused on offering knowledge to future generations, I am excited to share this exciting region with visitors and residents alike. The natural history of the BC coast and being able to share this knowledge. I hope to gain work in national parks as an interpreter in the future.



Hilary

Growing up on the East Coast and spending a lot of time exploring the shores of Nova Scotia as a child, I have always loved the marine world. So it's no surprise that I'm now finishing an M.Sc. at Thompson Rivers University where I study intertidal animals and their tolerance to stressful environmental conditions. I moved permanently to British Columbia two years ago to work as a Marine Educator at a marine science centre on the West coast of Vancouver Island and I instantly fell in love with the place. I was amazed by the abundance of marine life (not to mention the size of the trees!) and I've enjoyed spending my free time hiking, camping and exploring along the coast.

I've worked and volunteered in conservation biology, environmental chemistry, reforestation and education, but more recently I've been primarily interested in environmental education and science communication. I'm looking forward to sharing my excitement and knowledge of the West coast marine life through this position while learning more about history and culture of the region. I've spent the majority of the last two summers on a boat collecting data for my Master's thesis, so I'm looking also looking forward to getting back on the water and enjoying the summer weather!



Janna

My name is Janna and I am studying Natural Resource Sciences at Thompson Rivers University. This semester I was fortunate enough to be involved in a study abroad semester in Inverness, Scotland, and while it was an amazing experience I am excited to be living back in beautiful British Columbia.

In my free time I enjoy soccer, volleyball, hiking, camping, and good books. This summer, as a Coastal Naturalist I am looking forward to meeting people from different places and being able to share my passion and knowledge about the unique coastal ecosystems found in BC.



Find us on board this summer!

Michelle

Hello! My name is Michelle. I am from British Columbia, raised in the Okanagan Valley and on Vancouver Island. I have been based in Nanaimo, BC since 2007. I graduated from Vancouver Island University in 2015 with a major in Anthropology and a minor in Geography. My interests are widespread, but I have been interested in marine conservation and science education throughout my life. I am passionate about marine mammals, nudibranchs, and coastal First Nations' history. Currently I work as a marine science educator at the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre. Past jobs that relate to the Coastal Naturalist position include being and Interpreter at the Whale Interpretive Centre in Telegraph Cove, BC, and being an assistant at the Vancouver Island University Natural History Museum. I have also worked for BC Ferries as a Catering Attendant for three summer seasons, and one winter season.

In my spare time I like to spend time outdoors via kayaking, hiking, and camping. Spending time with family and friends is a priority, but I also love to go on solo road trips to explore new places around BC. I have visited Pacific Rim National Park Reserve numerous times (Long Beach area) and have guided a few day hikes along the West Coast Trail from Bamfield (Pachena Bay) as far as Pachena Lighthouse. This summer I am most looking forward to learning more about Parks Canada's role on BC's coast, and more about the natural history of the lower mainland and the Salish Sea.

