

NEWS FROM THE...

# Salmon Coast | Field Station

WINTER 2011/2012

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Issue one.

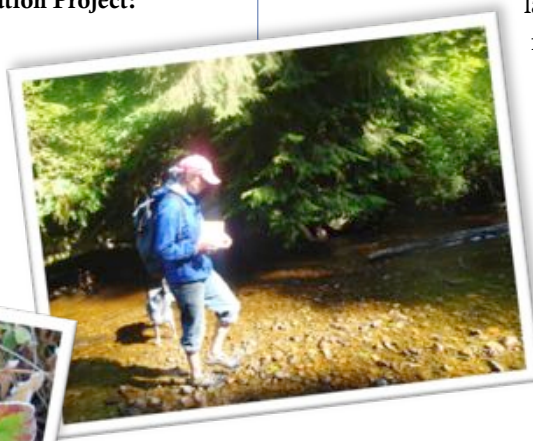


## Summer & Fall Projects

**JULY** **MESSS (Mainland Enhancement of Salmonid Species Society) Salmon Stream Trail Maintenance:** Funded by our local salmon restoration society, MESSS, two researchers were hosted by the SCFS while working on clearing the stream-side trails in Viner and Wakahna.

**AUGUST** **Listening to Sense of Place – Soundscape studies, cultural heritage, and acoustic ethnography with Billy Proctor in the Broughton Archipelago:** Jennifer Schine, who is completing her Master of Arts degree at the School of Communications at Simon Fraser University, returned to SCFS to continue work on her master's thesis.

**AUG. – NOV.** **MESSS Salmon Enumeration Project:** SCFS hosted one of the two stream-walkers who were working on this annual project. This project monitors salmon abundance on 20 of the rivers and streams in our area.



## A Note from the Station Coordinators...

Dear Friends & Supporters,

While station occupants worked and played this summer and fall, the wildlife was also busy. In August, large groups of Pacific Whiteside Dolphins churned up the waters just off the station dock. Throughout the fall, we often spotted a small group of transient orcas, as well as a solitary humpback whale. During salmon canning season, several bears followed their noses to the station, including a shy mother bear and her tiny cub, as well as a bold young male.

Later this autumn, a large cougar appeared on the back porch at the main house, and a researcher jogging around the corner in Shoal Harbour found herself sharing the road with a smaller cougar not long afterwards. Both cougars and wolves have been heard calling in the woods nearby, and locals say deer populations are unusually low.

As the weather grows colder and wilder at the station, we are beginning to look towards the year ahead. *(continued on page 2)*

For more information...

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We hope to welcome Jonathan Hill to the station in February 2012 to work with Marie-Josée Gagnon on the salmon diet component of the zooplankton dynamics and juvenile salmon diet study. In early spring 2012, we will again host researchers for the BAMP (Broughton Archipelago Management Plan) sea-lice monitoring project, as well as volunteers working on Dr. Alexandra Morton's long-term Broughton sea-lice monitoring project. We are also hoping to complete another sampling season of the zooplankton and juvenile salmon diet study. Other research project applications are also welcome!

We were visited by numerous friends of the station this summer and fall, the majority arriving in their own vessels. Some of our personal friends and relatives also visited, including folks from our previous home on Read Island who came to see for themselves the place that enticed us to leave. We would like to thank all of these visitors and other station friends for their contributions to the station, in both monetary donations and volunteer labour. John Polk, Salix's grandpa, was especially helpful with childcare this fall. Thank you to Ivan Gettings for his GPS donations and useful training sessions. As always, thank you to all the folks in the Echo Bay community for their continued support and friendship. Finally, a huge thanks to station founder, Sarah Haney, for her continued generous support.

Looking forward to a productive and enjoyable 2012!

Sincerely,  
Zephyr & Coady

## Featured Research

### *Plankton Study*

Though often overlooked in marine conservation, the plankton that thrives in the cold, well mixed, highly oxygenated waters of the Pacific Northwest is largely responsible for the impressive abundance and diversity of marine organisms in the Broughton Archipelago. Despite this oceanic abundance, pink and chum salmon populations have been in steep decline over the past 20 years, and much attention has been paid to the impacts of aquaculture, parasites, and disease on these salmon populations. However, as the primary food source for juvenile pink and chum salmon, zooplankton population dynamics are a determining factor in early survivorship, year-class strength, and carrying capacity of these salmon populations. Gaining insight into this relationship is a critical step towards identifying limiting factors for the recovery of these salmon. To begin this process, Scott Rogers of SCFS initiated the zooplankton dynamics and juvenile salmon diet study in spring 2010.

The objectives of the plankton project are to sample and preserve zooplankton weekly from March to June along local juvenile salmon migration routes, and to obtain, preserve, and analyze stomach content samples of the juvenile pink and chum feeding on the plankton during the project period in order to relate zooplankton abundance, distribution, and composition to the

salmon's diet. Collaboration with other research projects may allow scientists to see a relationship between zooplankton population dynamics and juvenile salmon distribution.

Two seasons of field samples have been collected, and the 2010 plankton samples have been processed. Project Biologist Marie-Josée Gagnon hopes to collaborate with Jonathan Hill this winter to analyse the 2010 stomach samples and to finish the 2011 plankton sample processing as well (funding is pending). Because zooplankton dynamics are so critical for basic understanding of early marine salmon survival, plankton project volunteers are also trying to find the resources to carry out a third season of field sampling this spring.

For more details, please see the "Latest News" section of our website. If you are interested in helping fund this important research effort, please email us.

(Photos by M.J. Gagnon)





## Lauren Portner Featured Volunteer

*Lauren currently splits her time between Arizona (as a veterinary assistant), Bimini (at a shark biology field station), and SCFS. Here's a little note from Lauren, sharing why she keeps returning to SCFS.*

I came to Salmon Coast on recommendation from a friend who said, "Lauren, you would love it there. You have to go." A year later, after graduating from UVic with a BSc in biology, I packed my gear, hopped in a truck with Martin Krkosek and drove up island to Port McNeill. We then set out to visit the Broughton and I have never looked back. I have now completed three seasons and plan on returning for a fourth.

In my time here, I have focused on research pertaining to salmon farms and the sea lice epidemic. I started my first season as a volunteer for Martin Krkosek's and Alexandra Morton's sea-lice monitoring research. For the last two, I have been working with the Broughton Archipelago Monitoring Plan.

My experience at Salmon Coast has been nothing but positive. There is a reason that I keep returning. I have gained a deep respect for our oceans and fish. I have made lifelong friends and met some of the best people I know. I hope that my field and lab experience gained here will carry me to a future of shark research. (Just slightly larger fish!)

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND EVENTS Summer / Fall 2011

Here is a summary of what the Station Coordinators, along with station users, friends, and volunteers, have been up to.

**Station Maintenance and Safety:** Coady completed many small fix-it jobs and built a covered outdoor sink facility for safer lab chemical handling. Both coordinators and the lab researcher received their WHMIS certifications, and a lab MSDS binder was created. Station friend Lyle Koenders built a new woodshed and reinforced the front porch. The coordinators set up a new recycling system, found ways to recycle more waste, and learned more about maintenance of the power system from electrician, Mike Geldrich. They also chopped and stored more firewood, worked on brushing, and are working towards increasing the station's organization and cleanliness.

**Gardens and Food Collection:** The coordinators, their families, and station visitors enjoyed the kale, tomatoes, basil, peas, and other crops over the summer. They also picked berries and caught salmon, preserving some of each to share with station users in the spring. Coady roofed the compost to combat nutrients washing away, and once crops were finished for the fall, they cleared the beds, composted the old plants, and covered the empty beds with leaves, grass, seaweed, kelp, and tarps. With these nutrient inputs and manure stored for spring, hopefully the spring gardens will thrive!

**Communications and Outreach:** SCFS continued giving tours to interested visitors throughout the season. Zephyr learned the basics of website maintenance from Ashli Akins in October, and assembled the text and photos for this newsletter. Finally, the coordinators sent a questionnaire to many past station users

to get opinions about what users like most about the station, what they would like to remain the same, and what they would like to improve. They've received invaluable input from many people and hope to receive even more. Please email SCFS if you would like to conduct the survey.

**Bookkeeping and Fundraising:** Zephyr worked on filing organization, learned the basics of the accounting program, helped Michelle Young with the year-end report, submitted monthly financial updates to the board, and drafted the budget with input from Scott and Michelle. The station received donations from summer visitors through our "Pink Salmon On Parade" campaign at Echo Bay, as well as from Billy's Museum. We now have Paypal on our website to facilitate online donations. Also, a volunteer fundraising committee now exists, and Zephyr has been consulting with them as she researches funding options and prepares to apply for new grants and renew existing ones.



**Community Involvement:** Station Coordinators, researchers, and volunteers joined other community members for Canadian Thanksgiving and Halloween at Billy's house, US Thanksgiving at Brent and Marka's place, monthly bird counts, and pool and pizza nights at Al and Yvonne's home, and many casual dinners and teas. The coordinators' daughter, Salix, continues to thrive in the company of the kids at Blackfish Lodge.



## Here we come, 2012

### Goals & Challenges for the New Year

#### Continued Threats to Local Salmon

**Ecosystems:** Local salmon populations and the ecosystems built around them, impacted in the past by fishing and logging, continue to be influenced by current logging and aquaculture practices. We will continue to support research on the impacts of aquaculture, carry out plankton and juvenile salmon research, support MESSS's Salmon Enumeration Project, and collaborate with MESSS to monitor impacts of logging operations on salmon-bearing streams. We will also continue outreach efforts to raise community and visitor awareness of such issues.

**Fiscal Stability:** Financially, our non-profit society continues to walk a fine line. In hopes of improving the situation, we will continue researching and applying for more funding, with greater involvement from the Board of Directors and our Volunteer Fundraising Committee. We are working on increasingly accurate budgeting, and the newly required monthly report to the board ensures conscientious bookkeeping. We also will re-evaluate our fee structure.

**Outreach and Research Project Recruitment:** To raise awareness about the science we support, and to

remain financially viable, we are always striving to increase our supporter, donor, and researcher networks. To this end, we will continue circulating newsletters, maintaining and improving our website, and maintaining and increasing our outreach to summer visitors through brochures, information packages, newsletter sign-up sheets, and station tours. Through their academic contacts, board members (and other past station users) are currently working to increase recruitment for new research projects.

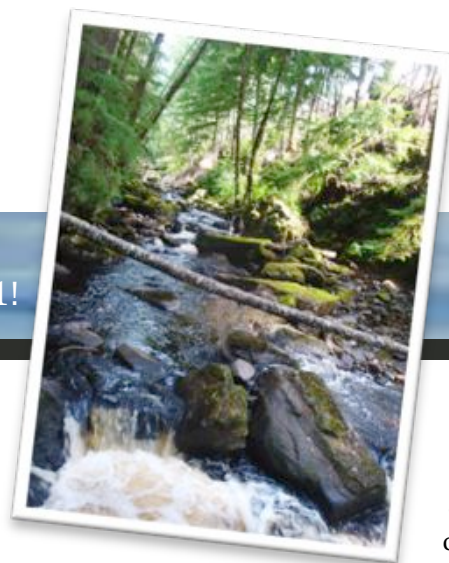
CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE:  
WWW.SALMONCOAST.ORG, LAUNCHED IN JUNE 2011!

#### Station Maintenance and Safety:

We are assessing, prioritizing, and working on pressing maintenance issues. We are also working on various safety issues, such as writing Emergency and Safety Handbooks, posting clear signage about required boat safety items, compiling boat safety kits that can be rented or

loaned to station users, and requiring all users to document trip information before leaving station grounds.

**Other Goals:** We hope to increase food production and collection, are working on improved organization of station



tools and supplies, and hope to take advantage of our new membership in

the Organization of Biological Field Stations, to get useful tips from other field stations.