

From the Field Station



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We were startled by what sounded like raindrops too large for even the Great Bear Rainforest. Splish.... splosh!.... splash... followed by what sounded like a frantic churning of water. We ran to the beach to take a look.

Dozens of pilchard were boiling to the surface, swimming for their silvery lives. Suddenly revealing his big brown mass was a chubby Stellar's sea lion in what seemed like impossibly hot pursuit. And, though blurred at that speed, it did look like he was grinning. And why not; these nutritious fish were coming back to the coast in great numbers this year. The big mammal seemed to take great delight in this now clearly acrobatic chase, which crossed the boundary between ocean and air at a frenetic pace.

This spot of the coast has been kind to us. There, among other natural wonders, we've witnessed hundreds of Pacific White Sided Dolphins frolicking by, Bald Eagles soaring down for their share of fish, and deer nibbling on seaweed and swimming to a nearby island. We also see the occasional tracks of large mammals that grace this area, including wolves and black bears. American robin, varied thrush, and winter wren visit the vegetation just outside our windows, offering us their cheery warbles, whistles, and extended avian songs.

Wonders of all wonders, however, this very same place also has high-speed satellite internet, dock space for 4 research boats, and comfortable office space and accommodation for several research or media crews at a time. It's the Raincoast Fieldstation on Denny Island, just a quick boat ride away from Bella Bella.

So here we are after the field season of 2007. Over seven hundred 'person nights' of accommodation. More than 3000 field samples processed and stored. Thousands of emails sent and received. Dozens of meals with local community members. Hundreds of phone calls and VHF radio transmissions. And countless improvements to the buildings, dock, and property.

Having apparently had his fill, our new sea lion friend moves on. We watch him cruise through the water, occasionally surfacing for air and a view. Like him, we also move forward with our busy day, after having been reminded of the value of coming up for air and a view.

We look forward to the exciting Raincoast work ahead. And for days when we must sit at our desks in the office, we look forward to the wonders and drama of the Great Bear Rainforest unfolding before our eyes, reminding us of our important work ahead to safeguard the larger ecosystem and the irreplaceable treasure it houses.

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