

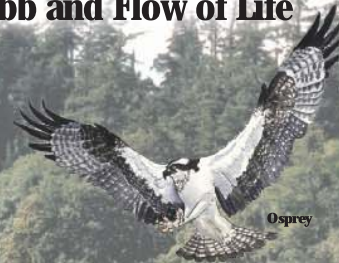


Bald Eagle

Esquimalt Lagoon: The Daily Ebb and Flow of Life

Tips to Protect Lagoon Wildlife

- **Keep an appropriate distance from birds and other wildlife.** Wildlife are sensitive to disturbance from people and pets. Migrating birds need food energy to recharge for long flights and maintain their winter fitness. Repeated interruption of their feeding by visitors to the lagoon can be very harmful. Please respect wildlife needs and keep an appropriate distance from them; if their behaviour changes as you approach, you are getting too close.
- **A healthy diet is critical.** The healthiest food for birds is supplied by nature. Bread has low nutritional value and can make birds sick. Repeat feeding of birds can cause them to become habituated to humans and decrease their ability to survive on their own. If you must feed the birds, please feed them grain.
- **Watch where you step.** Clams burrow close to the surface; shells can easily be broken if stepped on resulting in the death of the animals. Please do not walk on the gravel beds where the clams and other shellfish are living.
- **Dogs and birds don't mix.** The lagoon shoreline is highly important bird habitat. Migrating shorebirds are particularly sensitive to dogs. Please keep dogs on a leash while in the Migratory Bird Sanctuary and never let them chase birds.



Osprey



Turkey Vulture
These vultures are summer visitors to the lagoon and gather in numbers in the fall to migrate.



Northern Pintail



American Wigeon



Common Goldeneye
Like Bullheads, Goldeneye nest in tree cavities in BC's interior.



Black Turnstone
Summer (flying) & Winter



River Otter



Rock Pigeon

Esquimalt Lagoon supports an abundance of wildlife...

... some that you can see, and some that you can't. Many species are found here at the entrance to the lagoon, because of the rich food resource.

On the ebb (falling) tides, the water flows out of the lagoon like a river and deposits a sand and gravel delta on the ocean side of the channel. During flood (incoming) tides, water from the ocean flows back into the lagoon and deposits sediment to create a 'flood tidal delta' just inside the lagoon. Twice a day the tide rushes in and out, bringing fresh nutrient laden seawater to these gravel beds, providing a rich environment for marine plants like eelgrass and for many species of shellfish.

The abundance of food in the sheltered waters of the lagoon, particularly the number of shellfish exposed during low tide, attracts thousands of foraging birds and other wildlife for feeding. Winter is the busiest season, when seablacks and waterfowl return to spend the winter. First Nations peoples also understood the importance of the lagoon, and have a long history of harvesting its marine life.

Esquimalt Lagoon supports a unique collection of rare habitats on southern Vancouver Island. Its importance as a feeding and wintering area for birds led to its designation as a Canadian Migratory Bird Sanctuary.

Visit the other signs on the beach side, at the south end of the lagoon and at Royal Roads for more information about Esquimalt Lagoon.



Brewer's Blackbird



Black Oystercatcher
Oystercatchers don't breed until they are about four years old. They nest on shell beaches on offshore islets.



Raccoon

Funding for these signs generously provided by:

