Gulf Islands
Real. Inspiring.
Welcome to Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, one of Canada’s newest national parks. Established in 2003, it safeguards a portion of British Columbia’s beautiful southern Gulf Islands in the Strait of Georgia. A mosaic of open meadows, forested hills, rocky headlands, quiet coves and sandy beaches, the park is a peaceful refuge just a stone’s throw from the urban clamour of Vancouver and Victoria.

Want to know more? The park offers many activities and learning opportunities. While planning your visit, or to spark your curiosity, look for other park brochures. They are available on-line at www.parkscanada.gc.ca/gulf or by contacting the office at 1-866-944-1744.

New Interpretive Panels
Watch for new signs throughout the park to learn more about the area, its rare ecology and storied past.
A Step Forward for a National Marine Conservation Area Reserve

The Strait of Georgia is among the most productive marine ecosystems in the world due to the fresh water from the Fraser River mixing with the ocean waters flooding through the Juan de Fuca and Haro Straits. The area is also home to some of Canada’s iconic marine animals such as orca whales, salmon and seals. Since the fall of 2011, Canada and British Columbia have been working closely with stakeholders and Coast Salish First Nations to explore their interests and values associated with the protection and conservation of the ecologically rich marine environment also known as the Salish Sea. The proposed National Marine Conservation Area Reserve would surround Gulf Islands National Park Reserve, ensuring ecosystem protection on both land and water in the Strait of Georgia.

Help us set the direction for Gulf Islands National Park Reserve

Parks Canada is currently working on the first Management Plan for the park and we welcome your ideas and involvement. To join the management planning email list and receive regular updates and notices of opportunities to participate, send your request/email address to gulfislands@pc.gc.ca. Information will also be available on the park’s website – look for the Management Planning feature button on the right-hand side of the welcome page.

Age Requirement for Permit Holders

In order to facilitate safe and enjoyable camping experiences in the park, and in keeping with British Columbia’s age of majority, campers must be at least 19 years of age to obtain a camping permit at Gulf Islands National Park Reserve.

Summer Fun Guide

Looking for things to do in the park this summer? Check out the park’s summer program guide where you’ll find a host of engaging interpretive programs and activities offered from June to August – ideal for the whole family. Available online or ask park staff.

Hiking & Camping

Available onboard BC Ferries or when you arrive at the park, this guide features a detailed map with hiking trails and camping opportunities in the park.
TOP 10

Try one of our GEOCACHING PROGRAMS, and embark on a self-guided trip to experience some of the park’s most interesting cultural and natural hotspots. Choose from two routes: a family-friendly treasure hunt or a more strenuous route.

MEDITERRANEAN ON A SHOESTRING: Grab the clan and a gourmet picnic for a “cruise” by passenger ferry to Sidney Spit’s warm sandy beaches and inviting blue waters. Lie back and unwind on your beach blanket or catch up with a favourite book.

IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK: Book a kayak guide or water taxi, and head to Russell Island where a forested trail takes you to a historic HAWAIIAN HOMESTEAD. On summer afternoons and evenings, descendants of the original settlers will regale you with stories of their ancestors’ lives on the island. Or, take a ferry to visit the Pender Island Museum or the Fog Alarm Building (opening this summer!) at East Point (Saturna Island) where you will MEET THE LOCALS AND HEAR TALL TALES OF THE ISLANDS.

ONE-DAY WONDERS: Pack the picnic basket for a new family adventure each weekend: Sidney Spit — make sandcastles; Mt. Warburton Pike — spot a goat; East Point — hear sea lions; Winter Cove — watch the water do tricks; Roesland — take a family picture.

FLOAT YOUR BOAT: Cruise to Cabbage Island and enjoy the PEACE AND QUIET or circumnavigate Princess Margaret (Portland Island) for 360 degrees of stunning views. If you don’t have your own boat, hire a kayak guide for the day or treat yourself to a guided eco-tour.

Interpretation programs

Touch a slug, smell a tree, hear an eagle call and get your feet wet while you discover the plants and animals of the park reserve on a free and fun nature program. Check the website or information kiosks throughout the park for a list of program locations and times.
Ever wondered what the park looks like underwater?

Parks Canada is pleased to collaborate with the Shaw Ocean Discovery Centre in the areas of public outreach, education and visitor experience. Located in Sidney, British Columbia, the centre is an aquarium and marine education centre offering visitors a unique glimpse of the park reserve’s extraordinary underwater life.

For more information visit www.oceandiscovery.ca
First Nations

There are many Coast Salish First Nations with long and continuous ties to the Gulf Islands. The Coast Salish people have a special bond with the environment—a spiritual connection to the earth and the water. Their knowledge of natural systems has been passed down from generation to generation through their oral tradition. Over millennia and to this day, the forests and seas have provided them with food, materials for everyday life and places for spiritual contemplation. First Nations’ scientific and traditional knowledge is being used alongside modern science to help park managers make decisions on how to restore and maintain park ecosystems.

The ocean has always been the First Nations’ central source of food—a rich harvest of shellfish, seal, sea lion, whale, six-gilled shark, porpoise, halibut, salmon and other fish. The hunting of deer and small mammals and the harvesting of berries and plants are done in rhythm with the seasons.

Today, First Nations can pursue traditional activities—including hunting and harvesting of plants and other materials—within the national park reserve. Parks Canada works with First Nations to ensure that these activities are done in ways that respect the conservation of species and the ecosystem, and do not endanger the safety of other park users.

Hunting of such species as deer and waterfowl by First Nations occurs within the park reserve, most often during the fall and winter months. Park visitors should exercise due caution. For public safety reasons, visitors in the park reserve who observe hunting are asked to call Parks Canada Dispatch at 1-877-852-3100.
First People, First Voices

The Coast Salish First Nations speak three major dialects of the Coast Salish language: Sencoten, Hul'q'umi'num' and Samish. The park's website offers you an opportunity to learn a few words of one of these languages, Hul'q'umi'num'.

By clicking on the interactive park map, you'll be able to hear place names as well as some common day-to-day words spoken in Hul'q'umi'num'.

Explore the islands through this linguistic lens by visiting the park website at www.parkscanada.gc.ca/gulf

Coast Salish Ancestral Sites

There are many Coast Salish ancestral sites within Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. These sites are former villages and seasonal use sites, and may include grave sites. These culturally-important sites are also records of past use and continue to connect the Coast Salish people to the Gulf Islands.

Their Elders tell us that we need to take great care and caution around these places because they may contain burials. They remind us that these places are xe'xe'. In the Hul'q'umi'num' language, xe'xe' suggests “don't go there”, “don't walk there”, “don't even look in that direction”.

With their help, we are finding solutions that keep trails, picnic tables and other facilities off important ancestral sites.

These sites are meaningful to us all for the rich and complex perspective that they add to the history of the park reserve. You can help by leaving them undisturbed: abide by area closures, stay on designated trails, and camp only in designated sites. Use the stairs provided at some beach access points to help reduce erosion. If you witness desecration of any cultural site, please contact us immediately. It is illegal to remove or disturb cultural objects in the park reserve. If you find artifacts, leave them in place, and notify park staff.

PUBLIC SAFETY ANNUAL CLOSURE AT SIDNEY SPIT

A portion of Sidney Spit is closed to the public annually from November 1st to the end of February to facilitate hunting by Coast Salish First Nations. Please visit the park website for more information.

SENĆOTEN and HUL'Q'UMI’NUM’ are the two predominant language groups of the Coast Salish First Nations in the Gulf Islands. Some place names and their translations appear below.

SENĆOTEN NAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SENĆOTEN</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ČTESU</td>
<td>Just arrived</td>
<td>D'Arcy Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SXECOTEN</td>
<td>Dry mouth</td>
<td>Portland Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XELEXOTEN</td>
<td>Little dry mouth</td>
<td>Brackman Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.DAYS</td>
<td>Wind drying</td>
<td>North Pender Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TÀ.WEN</td>
<td>Coho salmon</td>
<td>Georgeeson Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WÀWEN</td>
<td>Place of seal hunting</td>
<td>Prevost Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WYOMEKEN</td>
<td>Land of caution</td>
<td>Sidney Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XELKÁTEM</td>
<td>Crossways</td>
<td>Isle-de-Lis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEKTEKEN</td>
<td>Long nose</td>
<td>Saturna Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEMOSEN</td>
<td>Becoming a</td>
<td>Tumbo Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>good fishing tide</td>
<td></td>
<td>McDonald Campground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSI,IKEM</td>
<td>Little land of clay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HUL’Q’UMI’NUM’ NAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HUL’Q’UMI’NUM’</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T’u’t’uq’usun</td>
<td>Pointed or long nose</td>
<td>East Point, Saturna Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Xinwýýys</td>
<td>Swift, narrow passage</td>
<td>Portland Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T’uq’usum</td>
<td>Coho salmon</td>
<td>Brackman Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T’u’ul</td>
<td>Georgeeson Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwùl’eshuw</td>
<td>Prevost Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hwì’t’uq’uxum</td>
<td>Sidney Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ste’ysus</td>
<td>Isle-de-Lis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T’e’ithhw</td>
<td>Saturna Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sq’è’ut’um</td>
<td>Tumbo Island</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T’b’’ümwuqw’</td>
<td>McDonald Campground</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SENĆOTEN and HUL’Q’UMI’NUM’ are the two predominant language groups of the Coast Salish First Nations in the Gulf Islands. Some place names and their translations appear below.
Camping
Docking &
Mooring

8 Gulf islands national Park reserve
Reserve your campsite at McDonald or Prior Centennial Campground.
www.pccamping.ca
1-877-737-3783

Things you need to know about camping
• Bring plenty of drinking water with you.
• You must have a valid permit at all times. Payment is in cash only. Exact change is preferable in case the visitor services personnel have missed you.
• Maximum length of stay is 14 days per calendar year.
• You must be at least 19 years of age to obtain a camping permit.
• Consumption of alcohol is permitted only at your registered campsite or onboard your vessel.
• Visitors camping at Sidney Spit must be registered before the last ferry leaves the island for the day.
• Although potable water is available at Sidney Spit, the sodium content is high and is not recommended for people with health conditions.

Things you need to know about mooring and docking
• Fees apply after 3 p.m.
• Rafting is prohibited. One vessel only per buoy.
• Vessel size guideline on mooring buoys:
  • Up to 15m with winds under 30 knots
  • Up to 12m with winds from 30-37 knots
• Mooring is prohibited when wind speeds exceed 37 knots.
• Docks at Sidney Spit and Princess Bay (Princess Margaret) are removed for the winter from Oct. 1 to May 14.

Quiet Hours: 10 p.m. to 8 a.m.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Dates Open</th>
<th># of Sites</th>
<th>Access</th>
<th>Fees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver Island</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McDonald*</td>
<td>May 1 - Oct 8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney Island (Accessible by a foot passenger ferry. For schedule and fees: 250-474-5145 or <a href="http://www.alpinegroup.ca">www.alpinegroup.ca</a>)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sidney Spit</td>
<td>May 15 - Sep 30</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>√</td>
<td>√</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mooring Buoys</td>
<td>May 15 - Sep 30</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dock</td>
<td>May 15 - Sep 30</td>
<td></td>
<td>√</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Group camping or picnicking is available at Sidney Spit by reservation only – maximum group size of 30. Fee is charged per party** or $49 for youth group. For more information or reservation, call 1-877-944-1744.

D’Arcy Island

| D’Arcy Island   | May 15 - Sep 30  | 7          | √      |            | $4.90/person |
| Isle-de-Lis     | May 15 - Sep 30  | 3          | √      |            | $4.90/person |

Princess Margaret (Portland Island)

| Shell Beach      | May 15 - Sep 30  | 6          | √      |            | $4.90/person |
| Princess Bay     | May 15 - Sep 30  | 12         | √      |            | $4.90/person |
| Arbutus Point    | May 15 - Sep 30  | 6          | √      |            | $4.90/person |

Pender Islands

| Prior Centennial*| May 15 - Sep 30  | 17         | √      | √          | $13.70**   |
| Beaumont         | May 15 - Sep 30  | 13         | √      | √          | $4.90/person |
| Beaumont Mooring Buoys | May 15 - Sep 30  | 15         |        |            | $9.80      |

Prevost Island

| James Bay        | May 15 - Sep 30  | 10         | √      |            | $4.90/person |

Saturna Island

| Narvaez Bay      | May 15 - Sep 30  | 7          | √      | √          | $4.90/person |

Cabbage Island

| Cabbage Island   | May 15 - Sep 30  | 5          |        | √          | $4.90/person |
| Mooring Buoys    | May 15 - Sep 30  | 10         |        |            | $9.80      |

* RESERVABLE ON-LINE AT WWW.PCCAMPING.CA OR BY PHONE AT 1-877-RESERVE.
** A party includes up to 8 people with a maximum of 4 persons aged 16 years or older, and 1 vehicle. Maximum 2 tents, or 1 RV or 1 motorhome per site. Additional vehicle fee is $6.80.
**Hiking**

### Inner Islands
- **Russell Island**
  - Difficulty: E
  - Distance: 1.0km
  - Time: 30min
  - Loop: X
- **Sidney Spit**
  - Difficulty: E
  - Distance: 2.0km
  - Time: 45min
  - Loop: X
- **Portland Island**
  - Difficulty: M
  - Distance: 6.5km
  - Time: 3hrs
  - Loop: X

### Pender Islands
- **Mt. Norman**
  - Difficulty: A
  - Distance: 2.3km
  - Time: 1hr
  - Loop: X
- **Beaumont**
  - Difficulty: A
  - Distance: 1.6km
  - Time: 40min
  - Loop: X
- **Roe Lake**
  - Difficulty: M
  - Distance: 1.5km
  - Time: 45min
  - Loop: X
- **Roesland**
  - Difficulty: E
  - Distance: 0.5km
  - Time: 15min
  - Loop: X

### Mayne Island
- **Bennett Bay**
  - Difficulty: E
  - Distance: 1.5km
  - Time: 15min
  - Loop: X

### Saturna and Tumbo Islands
- **Winter Cove**
  - Difficulty: E
  - Distance: 1.5km
  - Time: 25min
  - Loop: X
- **Narvaez Bay**
  - Difficulty: M
  - Distance: 1.7km
  - Time: 30min
  - Loop: X
- **Monarch Head**
  - Difficulty: M
  - Distance: 2.5km
  - Time: 1.5hr
  - Loop: X
- **Lyll Creek**
  - Difficulty: M–A
  - Distance: 2.0km
  - Time: 40min
  - Loop: X
- **Tumbo Island**
  - Difficulty: E
  - Distance: 3.5km
  - Time: 1.5hr
  - Loop: X

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**Special Note**

**Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning and sanitary contamination**

The algae responsible for paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) produce a potent toxin that can lead to paralysis of muscles and asphyxiation. Sanitary contamination can also cause serious illness.

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada issues warnings and closures for PSP and sanitary contamination. It is illegal—and could be deadly—to harvest shellfish in a closed area. Don’t take chances.
- Permanent annual closures are in effect at Bedwell Harbour (South Pender Island), James Bay (Prevost Island), Princess Bay (Portland Island), and the west side of North Pender Island. Seasonal closures are in effect at Hood Island (Portland Island), Reef Harbour (between Cabbage and Tumbo Islands), Winter Cove (Saturna Island), and Sidney Spit.
- Closures can occur at any time! Be sure to check before you harvest. For further information contact Fisheries and Oceans Canada: 1-866-431-3474 or at www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

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**Visiting during the off-season**

- Gates are locked during the winter at McDonald and Prior Centennial, and camping is prohibited.
- Backcountry campsites are accessible year round. No fees are charged during the off-season and services are reduced.

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**Marine Hosts**

Volunteer Marine Hosts provide general information to boaters during the summer months. Members of the Royal Victoria Yacht Club are your hosts at Princess Bay, Princess Margaret (Portland Island). The Sidney North Saanich Yacht Club greets marine visitors at Beaumont near Bedwell Harbour, South Pender. Look for the Parks Canada Marine Host floats at these locations. Our volunteers are waiting to share park information, local knowledge, friendly tips and advice to make your visit safe and enjoyable.

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**A public safety closure is in effect at Sidney Spit from November 1 to the end of February to facilitate hunting by Coast Salish First Nations.**
What you need to know

The Gulf Islands National Park Reserve protects many plant species that are at their northern limit or exist nowhere else in Canada as well as animals and unique historic features. Help us to protect them.

leave no trace

DON’T JUST DO IT...PLAN IT FIRST
Because this is the best way to have a safe and enjoyable visit.

- Check weather forecast and sea conditions.
- Be responsible for your own safety and the safety of your group.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES
Many areas of the park are very sensitive to human use and it takes several years for eroded soil to re-build.

- Stay on designated trails.
- Camp only in designated areas and use tent pads where provided.
- Respect closures for Special Preservation Areas. Stay at least 100 metres from islets.
- Bike on traffic roads. Cycling on park trails or de-activated roads is prohibited.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND AND TAKE WHAT YOU BRING
Keep in mind that every item removed or introduced threatens the integrity of the park.

- Leave natural and cultural objects such as flowers, plants, antlers, rocks, shells, driftwood, bricks and other artefacts undisturbed for others to discover and enjoy.
- Pack out all garbage including dog feces. There are no garbage facilities on the islands.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS
Others have the right to enjoy the park in peace and quiet.

- Consume alcohol only at your campsite or in a properly equipped, moored vessel.
- Respect quiet hours in campgrounds, 10 p.m. – 8 a.m.
- Respect no-wake zones in moorage areas.

DON’T PLAY WITH FIRE!
Fires are prohibited everywhere in the park, including beaches and below the high tide mark; the only exception is in the fire rings provided in drive-in campgrounds. The risk is too great in such a dry area, especially during summer drought conditions.

- Do not collect deadwood, bark or branches from the forest.
- Use a gas stove for cooking.

PREVENT CONFLICT WITH WILD ANIMALS
Viewing wildlife is a unique way to connect with nature. Make it a safe and rewarding experience:

- Store your food and garbage where wildlife can’t get at it.
- Admire wild animals from a distance. Leave plenty of space for animals that may seem to be in distress, especially seal pups. Attempting to assist them often harms these animals.
- Take particular care on shorelines, wetlands and intertidal areas; they are critical habitats for birds and other marine creatures.
- Respect Marine Wildlife Viewing Guidelines (see pages 14-15).

MANAGE YOUR FOUR-LEGGED FRIEND
Others may not appreciate your dog’s company. Unleashed dogs may damage sensitive plants, harass wildlife or disturb cultural items. Even their scent can scare nesting birds away.

- Keep your pet leashed at all times.
- Take with you anything left behind by your dog.
A Message from the Park Wardens...

The whole Parks Canada team (including staff responsible for visitor services, resource conservation, visitor facilities/assets and law enforcement) look forward to welcoming you to Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. We want your visit to be both enjoyable and memorable. Park wardens are here to protect you as well as the natural and cultural resources that the park is responsible for.

Did you know that every item found in the park, from the smallest grain of sand to the largest tree, receives the highest degree of protection under the law? Along with that protection comes certain rules and regulations. Please be aware and respect all park regulations.

REGULATIONS

- It is illegal to remove, deface, damage or destroy any flora or natural or cultural objects in a Park.
- It is illegal to entice, approach, feed, disturb, possess or remove wildlife from the park.
- Fires are prohibited in the park, including below high tide mark, except in the designated fire pits in the drive-in campgrounds. Watch for fire ban postings.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times and their droppings removed.
- Camping is permitted only in campgrounds and campers must have a valid permit at all times.
- It is illegal to consume alcohol in public places, including day use areas, beaches and docks.
- A tidal water sport fishing licence is required to fish. Fishing in fresh waters inside the park is prohibited.
- Firearms are prohibited; except for First Nations engaged in traditional hunting.

Failure to comply with these or any other regulations may result in fine, permit cancellation, eviction or court prosecution.

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY OWN SAFETY, I

- Tell someone where I am going and when I plan to return
- Wear a lifejacket or PFD
- Learn rescue skills for myself and for others
- Know first aid
- Go with a buddy
- Am aware of my environment and watch my footing
- Know how to obtain help in case of an emergency

Traditional hunting by First Nations occurs in the park reserve. Consider wearing bright colours, particularly in the winter. For public safety reasons, if you observe people hunting in the park, please contact Parks Canada at 1-877-852-3100.

Emergency Numbers

Police, Fire, Ambulance 911
Marine Distress VHF Channel 16
Park offences or emergencies 1-877-852-3100
BC Ferries Coastal Naturalist Program

During the summer months, Parks Canada and BC Ferries present the Coastal Naturalist program onboard BC Ferries vessels travelling between Vancouver and Victoria and West Vancouver and Nanaimo. Gather on the outer deck to take part in 30-minute presentations focusing on BC’s wildlife, marine life, culture, history, geography and coastal national parks.

For schedules and more information: www.bcferries.com
Hiking & Camping brochure available from the park office or from roving park staff and also onboard BC Ferries.
Species at Risk

Golden Paintbrush
Golden paintbrush is a perennial herb with showy, golden-yellow flowering shoots. This species only grows in grass-dominated meadows associated with Garry oak ecosystems. Only two known populations of golden paintbrush remain in Canada, hence the species’ status as “endangered” under Canada’s Species at Risk Act. In 2009, Parks Canada established an experimental population of golden paintbrush on an islet in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve to investigate recovery measures for bringing this species back from the brink. Two years later, these tiny recruits flowered and produced their own seeds for the first time.

Sharp-tailed Snake
The Sharp-tailed snake—a slender snake with smooth scales—is one of the smallest and most elusive snakes in BC. It gets its common name from its tail, which ends abruptly in a tiny, thorn-like spike. It’s nice to know that these attractive snakes are harmless to humans. In BC, sharp-tailed snakes are typically found on south-facing, rocky slopes. They spend most of their time under cover, which explains why few people have encountered them. While these snakes have been observed in the southern Gulf Islands for a number of years, it was only in 2007 that one was found in the national park reserve. The Sharp-tailed snake is protected under Canada’s Species at Risk Act (endangered).

Orcas
(also known as killer whales)
The southern Gulf Islands area is a feeding ground for orcas. Resident pods of these whales frequent this area between May and November to feed on salmon and other fish. They are impressive with their black and white colouring, blunt head shape, and dorsal fin. On males the dorsal fin stands as tall as a grown man.

Orcas are protected under Canada’s Species at Risk Act (endangered), BC’s Wildlife Act, the Fisheries Act of Canada, the United States Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora.

Marine Wildlife Viewing Guidelines

It is important that whales, porpoises, dolphins, seals and sea lions be able to carry on with their daily and seasonal routines without interference from human activity. Federal regulations are in place to prohibit harassment and disturbance of these marine mammals. Their survival depends on it.

Viewing etiquette to protect marine mammals

- Keep your distance – never within 100 metres/yards
- Slow down – to 7 knots at 100 metres/yards and any time mammals are near
- Stay out of their path – it is illegal to “park” in a whale’s line of travel
- Stay on the offshore side – avoid positioning your boat between whales and shore
- Limit your time – less time equals less disturbance (30 minutes maximum)

Admire from a distance...for your safety and their protection.
Marbled Murrelet
Marbled Murrelets are seabirds that depend on and nest in old growth forest. Their nests are dispersed throughout available habitat. There are no recent nesting records for park forests and they are not thought to nest in this region today. However, marbled murrelets are often seen in park waters where they feed in shallow (less than 30 metres) waters with sandy bottoms and catch sandlance and other small fish. These are long-lived birds. The oldest captured bird was ten years old.

Garry Oak Ecosystem
Garry Oak associated ecosystems are uncommon in Canada but widespread in the park reserve. Since 2007, a Garry Oak site that includes plants like camas is in the process of being restored on Eagle Island within Sidney Island Lagoon.

If dolphins or porpoises “bow ride” your vessel
- Do not suddenly change direction
- Discourage this activity by gradually slowing down

If seals, sea lions, or birds are observed on land
- Keep your distance – never within 100 metres/yards
- You are too close if wildlife is paying attention to you
- Never touch, swim with, feed or harm wildlife

You can learn about the species at risk of the Gulf Islands during your visit or on-line at www.cosewic.gc.ca
Many plant and animal species have been introduced to the southern Gulf Islands since the mid-1800s. These species become a problem when they out-compete native plants and animals for habitat, resulting in a disruption of the natural food chain. A lack of natural predators often contributes to rapid take-over. Invasive plants are the second greatest threat to biodiversity after habitat loss.

**Extreme Take-Over**

Watch out for the Bullfrog

Although native to some parts of North America, the Bullfrog has been widely introduced to areas it does not normally live in. Bullfrogs are real “bullies”: they prey on any animal they can overpower and stuff down their throat! They also reproduce rapidly.

1. **Fallow deer vs. black-tailed deer on Sidney Island**

Fallow deer were introduced to Sidney Island from Devonshire England in the early 1900s. The population of fallow deer peaked in the mid 2000s at an estimated density of over 200 deer per hectare — six times more than native black-tailed deer populations on neighbouring islands and far exceeding the habitat and food available. Through cooperative efforts on park and private lands, the island deer population has been reduced to an estimated 400 animals. Parks Canada hopes to see a healthy black-tailed deer population replace the introduced fallow deer on Sidney Island.

2. **Himalayan blackberry vs. dewberry (trailing blackberry)**

Himalayan blackberry was introduced from Eurasia in the late 1800s. Dewberry is the only native blackberry in British Columbia. Both have deciduous leaves, white to pink flowers, produce blackberry fruits, and favour disturbed sites and dry open forest habitat. Himalayan blackberry predominates with its fast-spreading growth that chokes out other plants. Parks Canada is treating and removing Himalayan blackberry infestations on several sensitive islets.

3. **Carpet burweed vs. Macoun’s meadowfoam**

Carpet burweed, an introduced plant from South America, was discovered in the Gulf Islands about ten years ago on Salt Spring Island. As the name infers, this plant spreads out “carpet-like” and can outcompete native plants like the threatened Macoun’s meadowfoam. The burr-like seed of the plant is easily transported to new sites on hiking boots, dog paws and tent floors. Park sponsored surveys have detected this plant at two locations on Portland Island and one location on D’Arcy Island. An early detection and rapid response has been successful in controlling these outbreaks and we continue to look for new outbreaks in the park.
Did You Know?

Have you ever wondered about eelgrass beds?

Eelgrass is a flowering sea grass rooted in areas of sandy seafloor close to shore. Eelgrass is a critical habitat in which many marine species lay their eggs or hide from predators. It is a nursery for a variety of fish species including salmon and rockfish. Eelgrass also prevents shoreline erosion by slowing the movement of water, and allowing sediments to settle out among its interlocking roots.

Fannini...that sounds funny!

Great Blue Herons (Fannini subspecies) make quite a distinct screech during take-off. These noisy wading birds stand over one metre tall and double back their necks against their shoulders while in flight. They are often seen wading in shallow water where they prey on fish, crayfish, crabs and frogs. They also forage in grasslands for salamanders, snakes, large insects and small mammals. They eat pretty much anything nature has to offer!

What do Purple Martins and the lunar cycle have in common?

28 days! It only takes Purple Martins 28 days from hatching to fledging.

Like many small birds, they experience a mortality rate of more than 50 percent. This means they need to produce 2 – 2.5 chicks per nest to maintain their current population. This year, research conducted in Gulf Islands National Park Reserve showed a healthy population growth, with 2.6 chicks per nest.

Black Oystercatchers fussy about oysters

You would think that with such a name Black Oystercatchers would favour oysters as their main food source. However, they are rarely seen feeding on oysters! These large noisy birds prefer limpets, mussels and clams as well as urchins, crabs and barnacles. Their bright orange chisel-shaped bill is used to slice the adductor muscle of slightly open mussels and remove the soft parts with its tip.

What baby weighs as much as three human babies?

At birth, a harbour seal pup weighs 8-12 kg (18-26 lbs.) but it’s not quite ready to face the frigid ocean waters. A pup needs to “haul out” for a week or so on land and rest while its mother searches for food. She might be gone for a few hours, but don’t worry or interfere: it’s OK for her to leave her pup unattended.
Sidney Spit, D'Arcy Island & Isle-de-Lis

Located at the north end of Sidney Island, Sidney Spit is a popular family destination. Its sand bluffs, tidal flats and salt marshes teeming with birds and marine life provide lots to explore. The spit is accessible May to September by a walk-on ferry service from the town of Sidney. For fees and sailing schedules, please check the website.

With striking views of the Gulf Islands, numerous coves, cobble beaches and sheltered campsites, D'Arcy Island is a haven for kayakers.

Isle-de-Lis (Rum Island) is another favorite retreat for paddlers. There are only three campsites on Isle-de-Lis, and they are very popular. A gravel beach connecting it to neighbouring Gooch Island is the best place to land a kayak. Gooch Island is privately owned. Please stay on park lands.

The proximity of the inner Gulf Islands to Sidney and Victoria makes for a perfect day trip for kayakers, boaters and visitors looking for a walk or beach opportunity. For those wishing to extend their visit, designated campsites, dock space and mooring buoys allow for overnight stays.

Suffering in Isolation

D’Arcy Island has a unique history. Members of Victoria’s Chinese community affected with leprosy were exiled there to live out the remainder of their lives. In the early years, their only contact with the outside world occurred when a supply ship arrived four times a year. From 1891 to 1924, a total of 49 people, including white people, were banished and/or relocated to the island that served as a quarantine station. The inhabitants were fed, clothed and housed, but received no medical attention. An orchard and the disintegrating remains of a few buildings are the legacy of this sad chapter of Canada’s history. In 2001, a plaque was dedicated on the island by the City of Victoria.
Princess Margaret (Portland Island), Brackman & Russell Islands

Princess Margaret (Portland Island) was presented as a gift to Princess Margaret in 1958. She returned the island to British Columbia in 1967. The island features cliffs, protected coves and sand beaches. The island has long been used by First Nations, and its shell beaches are the most visible reminder of their presence. The fruit trees, roses and garden plants also found on the island testify to the more recent settlement by Hawaiian (Kanaka) immigrants in the 1880s.

Adjacent to Portland Island, Brackman Island has been designated as a Special Preservation Area. Only authorized access is allowed. The island is unique because it has remained undeveloped; its original ecosystem remains virtually intact. Thirteen rare plant species have been identified here.

At the mouth of Salt Spring Island’s Fulford Harbour, Russell Island is blessed with many natural features typical of the southern Gulf Islands. Open meadows of native grasses host yearly bursts of camas lilies and a variety of other wildflowers.

Hawaiian homestead on Russell Island (see page 4 for more information on Mahoi Host Program.)

Islet Alert! Small Places, Big Protection

Parks Canada has designated all islets and several small islands in the park reserve as Special Preservation Areas. Although small, they are very important ecologically. Human activity can damage their environment irreparably. Only authorized access is allowed. This applies to the Isabella Islets; to Imrie, Reay and Greig Islands, Dock Islet and the Little Group Islands, all located north of Sidney Spit; and to Sallas and Unit Rocks, located south of Sidney Island. Day use access is permitted on Dock Islet (north shoreline only).

Hawaiian (Kanaka) Settlement on Russell Island

During the fur trade, the Hudson’s Bay Company hired several hundred Hawaiians as labourers. After their contract expired, some decided not to return to their homeland and many settled on southern Salt Spring, Portland, Coal, Piers and Russell Islands. Russell Island was settled by William Haumea and inherited from him in 1902 by Maria Mahoi. Both were of Hawaiian ancestry. A house, orchard and remnants of what was once a flourishing vegetable garden prove that Maria and her family lived an almost self-sufficient life there. Maria lived on Russell Island until her death in 1936 at the age of 81.
Pender Islands

The Penders—North and South Pender Islands—were once one island connected by a narrow strip of land. A canal between the islands was dredged in 1903 to allow boats passage to the outer Gulf Islands. In 1957, the two islands were reconnected with the construction of a one-lane bridge.

At Beaumont, mooring buoys are available. Visitors can beach their kayaks or dinghies to enjoy this popular picnic and camping spot. The peninsula is a sensitive area and has been fenced off to permit natural regeneration of the area. Nearby Skull Islet is a Special Preservation Area with only authorized access allowed.

Trails depart from Canal Road, Ainslie Point Road and Beaumont campground leading to incredible views from Mount Norman.

Prior Centennial is the only vehicle-accessible campground operated by Parks Canada on the Penders. This small and rustic campground is set in the shade of a rich forest of cedar, fir, maple and alder.

Loretta’s Wood is home to four provincially rare or endangered plant communities, one vulnerable plant community and the red-legged frog—a COSEWIC-listed Species of Concern. It also contains wetland and terrestrial herbaceous ecosystems, both of which have been identified in the joint federal-provincial Sensitive Ecosystem Inventory initiative. Currently there is no public access to this section of the park.

The wetlands of Greenburn Lake are vital to the recharge of South Pender’s scarce water supply. This area contains pockets of the endangered Garry oak ecosystem.
Prevost Island

National park reserve lands are located on both the north and south shores of **Prevost Island**. The majority of the island, however, remains in the hands of the descendants of Digby de Burgh, an Irish nobleman who bought it in the 1920s. The de Burgh family continues to farm and raise sheep on the island.

**James Bay** and **Selby Cove** are located at the northern tip of the island. The park lands form a narrow point adjacent to a deep cove with a shoreline that varies from steep rock faces on the Trincomali Channel waterfront, to gently rising rock shelves near Peile Point, to a gravel beach in James Bay. Kayakers favour its campsites, and boaters enjoy the good anchorage in Selby Cove. The shoreline of Portlock Point/Richardson Bay on the northeast shore of Prevost Island offers kayakers a location to take a break on longer paddling routes. The Portlock Point automated navigation light can easily be seen by ferry passengers as they exit Active Pass on the way to Victoria.

Mayne Island

Mayne Island offers many services, including lodging, restaurants, grocery stores, docks and art galleries. It’s also well known for its birdwatching, kayaking, whale watching and cycling opportunities. Park Reserve lands include Bennett Bay, Georgina Point, and adjacent Georgeson Island and the Belle Chain Islets.

**Bennett Bay**, located on the Strait of Georgia, is a popular launch point for kayakers. The Campbell Point peninsula features a walking trail through mature forest to superb views of nearby Georgeson Island—a picturesque sandstone ridge clad in old-growth forest. The park, in partnership with the Mayne Island Conservancy Association, is working towards restoring ecological integrity at Bennett Bay.

**Georgina Point** sits at the east entrance to Active Pass. The point provides spectacular views across the Strait of Georgia and is an Important Bird Area (IBA) for migratory birds. The site is also a very popular day use area for picnicking, wildlife viewing and special events.

Special Preservation Areas and only authorized access is permitted. Only **Lot 65** (the Belle Chain Islet closest to Samuel Island) is accessible for day use rest stops.

Farther off, **Anniversary Island** and the **Belle Chain Islets** are highly valued as marine mammal haulouts and nesting sites. The sensitive ecosystems on these islands and islets are

The Light

at Georgina Point

Originally established in 1885, the site was automated and de-staffed in 1996. The light continues to be in active service as a navigational aid used by vessels transiting Active Pass or passing through the Strait of Georgia.
Saturna Island

Saturna Island is a magical place: quiet and remote, yet accessible by vehicle and boat—a perfect retreat location. Incredible panoramic views, spectacular rocky shorelines and peaceful bays are all part of the charm.

1 Narvaez Bay is one of the most beautiful and undisturbed bays in the southern Gulf Islands. The dark green of a regenerating Douglas fir forest is punctuated with the contrasting lime green and copper colours of arbutus trees.

2 Winter Cove is backed by forested uplands, open meadows and salt marshes. Local residents and visitors enjoy the picnic area and easily accessible walking trail. A strong tidal current rushes through Boat Passage and can be viewed close-up from the viewpoint. The cove itself is an excellent, sheltered moorage area and a new dinghy dock provides boaters access to the shore.

The virtually undisturbed mature forest with patches of old growth running north from Taylor Point to a private vineyard is one of the longest uninterrupted stretches of protected shoreline in the southern Gulf Islands. Its cliffs are part of the rare coastal bluffs ecosystem. There are currently no designated trails. Goats and deer have traced paths running along the cliff edge, but these informal trails can be dangerous.

A Legacy in Stone – Taylor Point

The remnants of a farm with its old stone house and nearby sandstone quarry are reminders of one of the island’s past commercial enterprises. Sandstone from this quarry was used in the construction of several buildings in Victoria.

George Taylor, a mason by trade, designed and built his family home in 1892 from stone quarried on his property. With his wife Anne and five children, he carved out a living on this isolated point of land. An orchard bore apples, cherries and pears for preserves. There were cows to milk, sheep to shear, and cod, salmon, clams and crab to be gathered from the ocean. The Taylors lived there until their house was destroyed by fire in 1932. Anne then moved to North Pender Island but George remained. He died the following year. Anne, described as a “hard-working Lancashire woman,” lived to the age of 90.
3 Lyall Creek is a significant protected salmon-bearing watershed in the southern Gulf Islands, a success achieved through the long-time efforts of Saturna Island volunteers.

4 East Point has many features to explore. Intriguing patterns on sandstone cliffs, green carpets of kelp dotted with colourful sea stars and an old foghorn building. Built in 1887, the original lightstation here warned sailors away from the turbulent waters of Boiling Reef, just offshore. Orcas and other ocean wildlife are often seen here as nutrient-rich upwellings in this vicinity provide an important source of food.

5 The summit of Mount Warburton Pike provides breathtaking panoramic views of the southern Gulf Islands and the neighbouring San Juan Islands in the United States. At 397 metres (1,303 feet), Mount Warburton Pike is the highest point on Saturna Island.

The open, grassy slopes of the ridge are unique in the Gulf Islands, and the slopes and ridge itself are significant habitat for falcons and eagles.

Who Was Warburton Pike?

Warburton Pike was born near Wareham, Dorset, in 1861. Like many young Englishman of his time, Pike was attracted to outdoor life and distant lands. In 1884, drawn by the wilderness and immensity of British Columbia, he purchased land on Saturna Island, where he thereafter resided periodically. His life was full of wilderness travel adventures and he was renowned for his feats of endurance.
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