

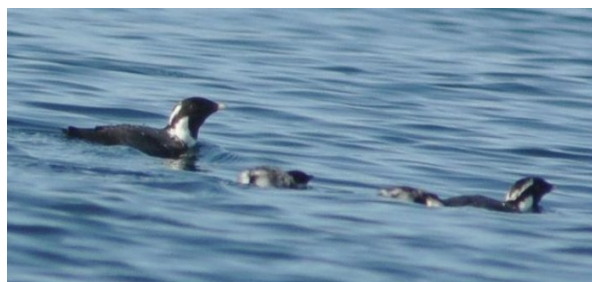
Time has flown by with fluffy energetic chicks, beautiful cavity nesters, and enthusiastic students and visitors...

Ancient Murrelets

For many nights now we have been finding Ancient Murrelet chicks at the end of our four funnels in Cabin Cove. Eager to complete their journey, these chicks bounce away in our cloth bags as we weigh them before taking them down to the water to send them off to their parents. The chicks hatch in burrows on land and must get to the ocean on their own to meet their parents, using the light of the water, gravity's pull down slope, and their parents calls to help navigate. We have had many clear and calm nights, perfect for the chicks' first journey out to sea. It may take a long time before these



Ancient Murrelet coming down a funnel



Family of Ancient Murrelets at sea

Ancient Murrelet chicks receive their first meal. They may have to swim for up to eight hours before reaching a safe distance from shore, where a hearty meal of planktonic invertebrates and larval fish is found. The Ancient Murrelet parents do not return to the colony with their chicks, instead moving rapidly away from colony, travelling up to 1,000 km south (as far as Oregon) within a few weeks. Chicks must become avid hunters quickly, as it is likely the parents only feed their offspring for less than six weeks. As of May 28th, 104 chicks have been collected and weighed from the four funnels in Cabin Cove. Peak night was May 18th with 16 chicks, which is one more than last year!

Thanks to our volunteers for the last two weeks!!!

Thanks for your hard work and enthusiasm:

Graham Neely, Emily Golumbia, Debby Peng, and Tim Grevers!!!

There are still a few spaces left for volunteers for the weeks of June 13th and June 20th. If you are interested be sure to get in touch with the office by email (laskeek@laskeekbay.org) or by phone (250) 559-2345



Project Limestone

The Project Limestone students filled their time this year with beachcombing, sea watching, hot chocolate drinking, and with awe-inspiring, adorable Ancient Murrelet chicks. We had students from three different schools. Two groups from Queen Charlotte Secondary School and ALM's grade 5, 6, 7 students all stayed at the new camp spot across from West Limestone on Louise Island, and used the tents platforms we installed for them earlier this year. QCSS students travelled over by kayak to join us for two nights, and ALM students went back and forth in the skiff for two nights of Ancient Murrelet chick monitoring until 2:30 a.m. The Living and Learning school joined us for a day of exploring East Limestone Island, watching Humpback Whales and Pigeon Guillemots at Lookout Point, observing wildlife trees, and searching the intertidal for sea-life, and a night of monitoring chicks. The students were here for some of our busiest chick nights, and everyone was lucky enough to see at least one chick!



L & L school searching for whales

Wildlife Trees and Other Sightings

We are still on the hunt for cavity nesting birds. So far there are 13 wildlife trees with active nests of Red-breasted Sapsuckers, Hairy Woodpeckers, Northern Flickers, Chestnut-backed Chickadees and Red-breasted Nuthatches. We keep a close eye on these trees in order to determine the date at which the chicks fledge. We have also been listening to a raven family grow up over the last few weeks, and in the last few days have observed the fledglings hopping through the forest and learning how to fly.



Hairy Woodpecker

Last week Cabin Cove was visited by a group of five transient Orcas, including two young calves. The next afternoon they swam by again and this time we rushed up to Lookout point to see them off on their journey. The following day a lone humpback cruised through



Orca

Cabin Cove, and we once again rushed down to the beach with the camera. The large groups of humpback whales we have been seeing over the last two weeks seemed to have disappeared recently, and we are missing their majestic blows out on the water.



Pacific Wren

This week we managed to complete a near shore and a Hecate Strait sea survey in the calm weather we have been experiencing. By boat, we travel along pre-determined transects counting and recording birds along the way. Unique birds seen included two Whimbrels, another Tufted Puffin (the fourth one this May), Tree Swallows, and large groups of White-winged Scoters. We also saw two Ancient Murrelet families with their chicks!



Wimbrel

Staff and Neighbors

We have had one visit from the sailboat the Island Roamer. After lunch on the boat, we gave them a tour of the island, where many ears were attuned to songbirds. On the tour we observed a Brown Creeper and a Red-breasted Sapsucker, and heard many thrushes, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Pacific Wrens, and warblers, including a Wilson’s Warbler, marking it’s return to East Limestone! Visitors learned about the island and our various monitoring programs, as the sun showed the island off in all its glory. Our staff is happy to give interpretive tours of Limestone Island throughout the season – please contact our office in Queen Charlotte if you are interested.

Gwaii Haanas staff and film-maker Nate Jolley were on ELI for a night working on a video summing up Gwaii Haanas’ Night Birds Returning project. They joined us for our nightly monitoring, and they were able to film three chicks in action on their way down to the ocean!



Pigeon Guillemots

Trivia Question:



Why might Northern Flickers and other songbirds living in high latitudes lay more eggs than those in lower latitudes?

Answer to previous trivia:

How do researchers identify individual humpback whales?
Humpback whales are unique in that each whale has its own black and white patterns and scars on the underside of its huge tail flukes. Like human fingerprints, no two humpback tails are the same.

Donations are very much appreciated and can be easily made through our website, any-time!

www.laskeekbay.org