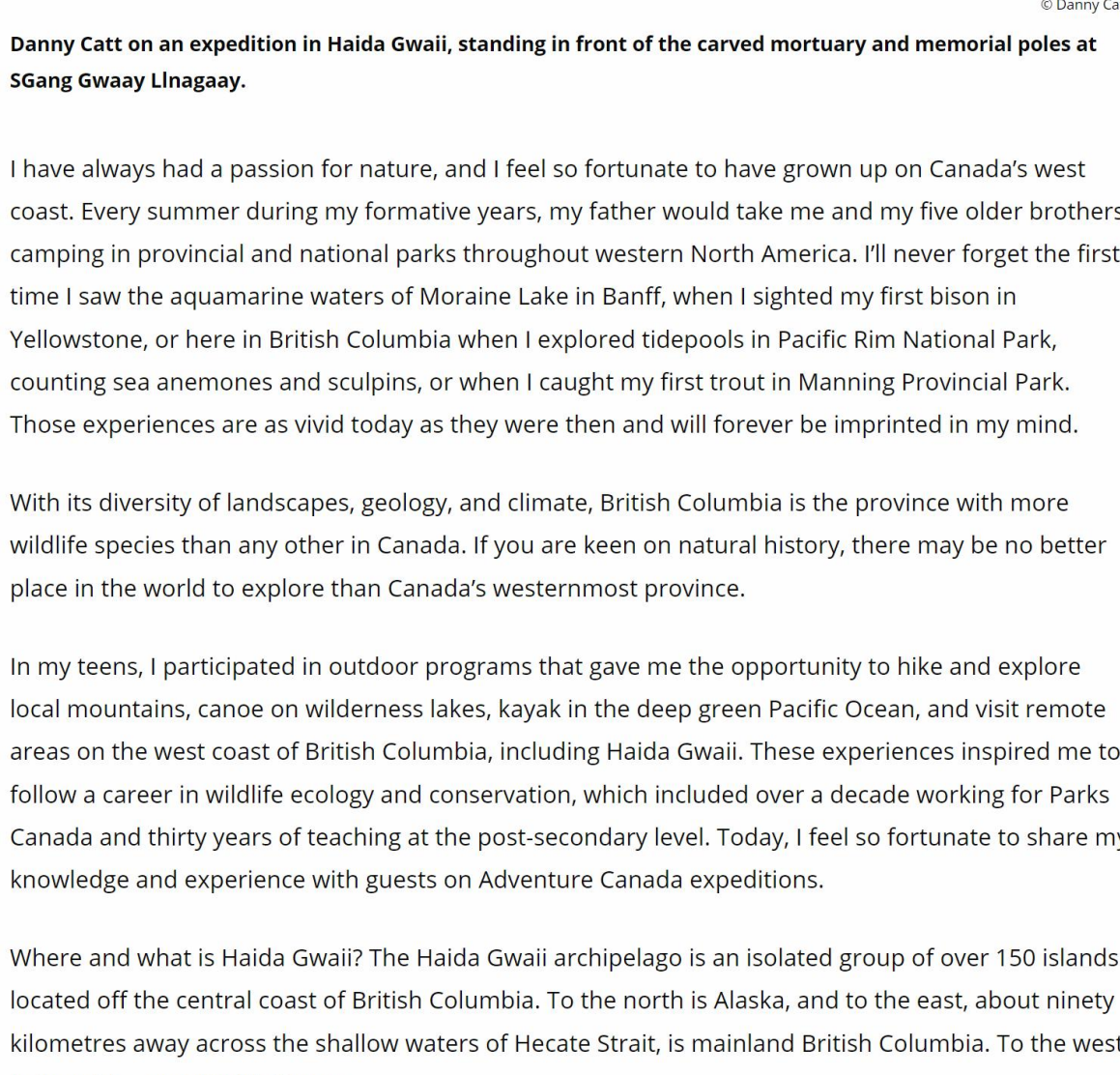


ARTICLE

Test your Knowledge on the “Marine Mammals of Haida Gwaii... Oh My!”

Test and expand your knowledge about the marine mammals of Haida Gwaii with the help of Danny Catt's expertise on the subject. Danny has led Adventure Canada natural history and photography programs for over thirty years. He's also been travelling to the region for decades, and has worked with Parks Canada for over a decade. In this article, Danny shares his deep love and knowledge about the fascinating marine animals that can be found in Haida Gwaii.

By Danny Catt | July 05, 2023
 Related expedition: [Haida Gwaii](#)



Danny Catt on an expedition in Haida Gwaii, standing in front of the carved mortuary and memorial poles at SGang Gwaay Llnagaay.

I have always had a passion for nature, and I feel so fortunate to have grown up on Canada's west coast. Every summer during my formative years, my father would take me and my five older brothers camping in provincial and national parks throughout western North America. I'll never forget the first time I saw the aquamarine waters of Moraine Lake in Banff, when I sighted my first bison in Yellowstone, or here in British Columbia when I explored tidepools in Pacific Rim National Park, counting sea anemones and sculpins, or when I caught my first trout in Manning Provincial Park. Those experiences are as vivid today as they were then and will forever be imprinted in my mind.

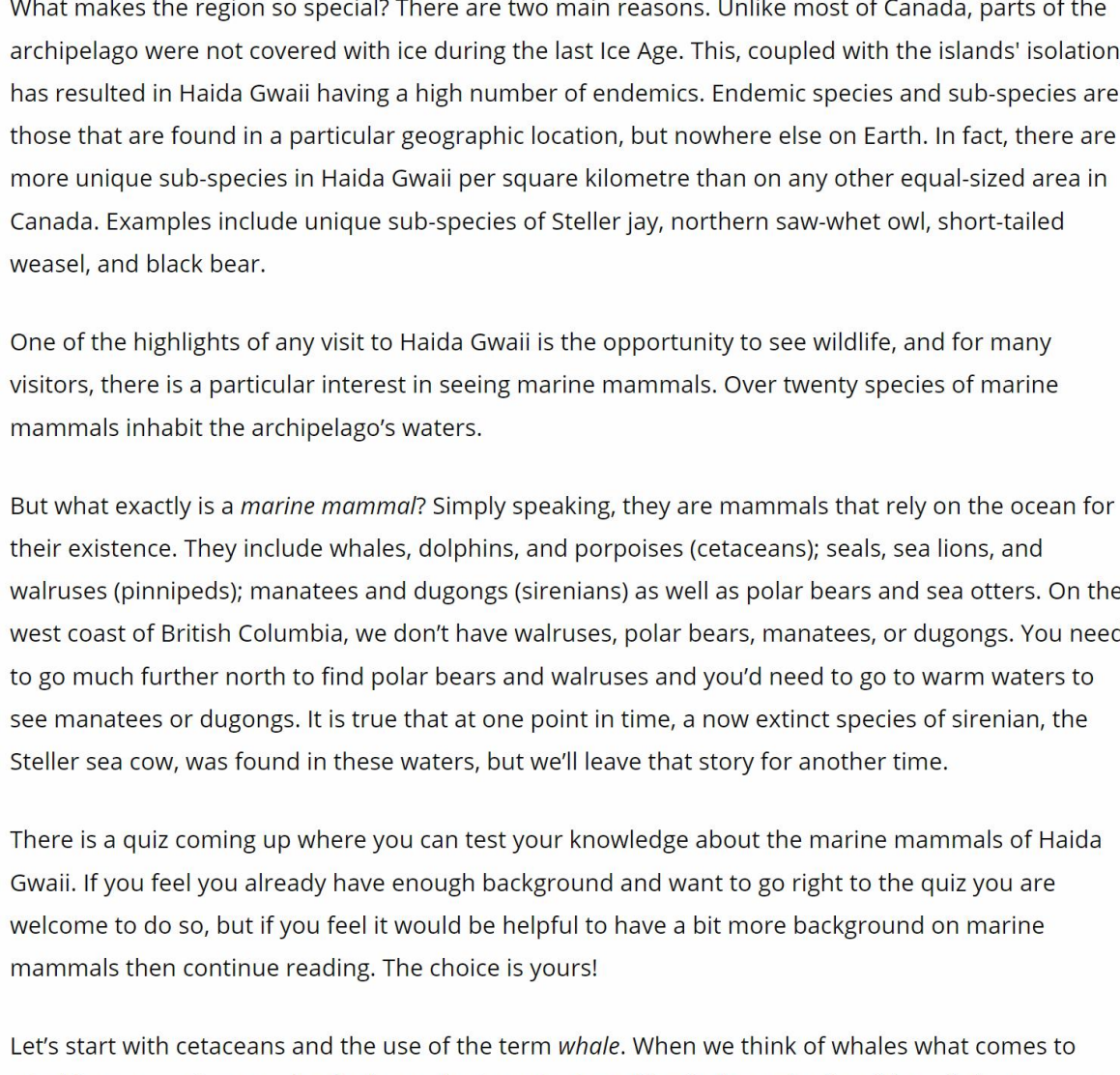
With its diversity of landscapes, geology, and climate, British Columbia is the province with more wildlife species than any other in Canada. If you are keen on natural history, there may be no better place in the world to explore than Canada's westernmost province.

In my teens, I participated in outdoor programs that gave me the opportunity to hike and explore local mountains, canoe on wilderness lakes, kayak in the deep green Pacific Ocean, and visit remote areas on the west coast of British Columbia, including Haida Gwaii. These experiences inspired me to follow a career in wildlife ecology and conservation, which included over a decade working for Parks Canada and thirty years of teaching at the post-secondary level. Today, I feel so fortunate to share my knowledge and experience with guests on Adventure Canada expeditions.

Where and what is Haida Gwaii? The Haida Gwaii archipelago is an isolated group of over 150 islands located off the central coast of British Columbia. To the north is Alaska, and to the east, about ninety kilometres away across the shallow waters of Hecate Strait, is mainland British Columbia. To the west is the wide-open Pacific Ocean.

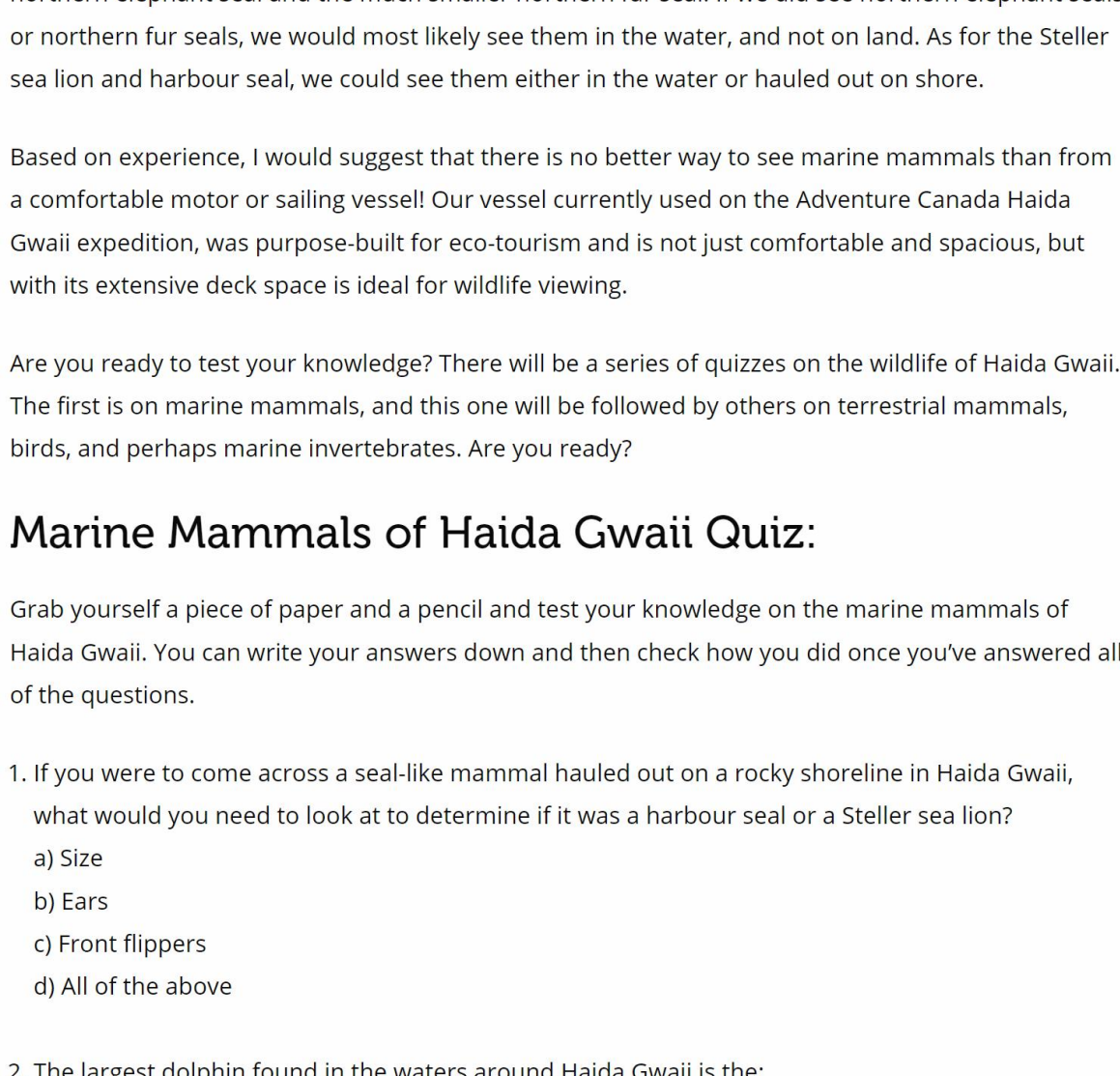
When I first visited Haida Gwaii, over forty years ago, the archipelago was known as the Queen Charlotte Islands. George Dixon, an English sea captain and maritime fur trader, named the islands in 1787 after one of his ships, the *Queen Charlotte*, which itself was named after the wife of King George III. This name is still found today on older maps and charts. Though, the name of the island group was changed as part of a historic reconciliation agreement between the province of British Columbia and the Haida Nation in 2010. Haida Gwaii translates to "islands of the people" in the Haida language and acknowledges the history of the Haida Nation, whose people have lived amongst these islands for over 14,000 years.

Haida Gwaii is amongst the richest biological and cultural areas in North America. The village site on SGang Gwaay, located in the southernmost part of the archipelago, was declared a United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site and a National Historic Site of Canada in 1981, the same year that I first visited the islands. The art on the carved mortuary and memorial poles at SGang Gwaay Llnagaay is considered amongst the best example of its type on Earth.



Mortuary and memorial poles at SGang Gwaay Llnagaay declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site and a National Historic Site of Canada in 1981.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, protests erupted in Haida Gwaii, around the province and across the nation, against unsustainable logging practices on Moresby Island, one of the archipelago's two largest islands. I remember very well as a teenager taking part in efforts to raise awareness about the need to protect the forests and wildlife of Haida Gwaii. I may be wrong, but I like to believe that the efforts my classmates and I made at that time—displaying hand held placards along Vancouver's roadways and helping raise money for conservation efforts—may have had an influence, albeit minor, on the government's decision to join with the Haida Nation to protect the region for future generations. The southern islands of Haida Gwaii were protected as Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site in 1993. The surrounding waters gained additional protection with the creation of Gwaii Haanas National Marine Conservation Area in 2010. Today, Parks Canada, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and the Haida Nation work together to manage the region's cultural sites, wilderness, and wildlife, including some of the most magnificent tracts of temperate rainforest remaining on the planet.



Sometimes referred to as the Galapagos of the North, the islands of Haida Gwaii, and the waters that surround them, are rich in wildlife, both terrestrial and marine.

What makes the region so special? There are two main reasons. Unlike most of Canada, parts of the archipelago were not covered with ice during the last Ice Age. This, coupled with the islands' isolation, has resulted in Haida Gwaii having a high number of endemics. Endemic species and sub-species are those that are found in a particular geographic location, but nowhere else on Earth. In fact, there are more unique sub-species in Haida Gwaii per square kilometre than on any other equal-sized area in Canada. Examples include unique sub-species of Steller jay, northern saw-whet owl, short-tailed weasel, and black bear.

One of the highlights of any visit to Haida Gwaii is the opportunity to see wildlife, and for many visitors, there is a particular interest in seeing marine mammals. Over twenty species of marine mammals inhabit the archipelago's waters.

But what exactly is a *marine mammal*? Simply speaking, they are mammals that rely on the ocean for their existence. They include whales, dolphins, and porpoises (as well as polar bears and sea otters). On the west coast of British Columbia, we don't have walruses, polar bears, manatees, or dugongs. You need to go much further north to find polar bears and walruses and you'd need to go to warm waters to see manatees or dugongs. It is true that at one point in time, a now extinct species of sirenian, the Steller sea cow, was found in these waters, but we'll leave that story for another time.

There is a quiz coming up where you can test your knowledge about the marine mammals of Haida Gwaii. If you feel you already have enough background and want to go right to the quiz you are welcome to do so, but if you feel it would be helpful to have a bit more background on marine mammals then continue reading. The choice is yours!

Let's start with cetaceans and the use of the term *whale*. When we think of whales what comes to mind for many of us may be the large charismatic giants like the humpback or blue whale. However, *whale* is actually a very general term that includes dolphins and porpoises. You may be wondering "aren't porpoises and dolphins the same thing?" The answer is "no." Biologists classify them into two different families and there are some key physical differences that help with their identification. Generally, dolphins have curved dorsal fins and longer beaked mouths. Porpoises, on the other hand, have triangular dorsal fins and a blunt non-beaked mouth. They also differ in terms of their behaviour. Dolphins commonly leap completely out of the water while porpoises may splash at the surface, but do not clear the surface.

Thus, all cetaceans, no matter their size, are considered to be whales. Biologists divide cetaceans into two groups: toothed whales and baleen whales. Toothed whales obviously have teeth and include dolphins and porpoises and the largest toothed whale of them all, the sperm whale. If you have travelled to the Arctic with Adventure Canada, you may have seen other species of toothed whales; the beluga and narwhal.

Baleen whales on the other hand, don't have teeth, but instead have sheets of baleen, similar in composition to your fingernails, hanging from the roof of their mouths that act as sieves to capture prey. Humpback and blue whales are examples of baleen whales. If you have been to the Arctic, you may have had the good fortune of seeing the massive bowhead whale, one of the heaviest of the baleen whales.

Finally (before the quiz), just a few thoughts about pinnipeds (seals and sea lions). Scientists break down this large group of marine mammals into two: true seals and eared seals. Examples of true seals on the British Columbia coast include the harbour seal and the northern elephant seal. Examples of eared seals are the northern fur seal and the Steller sea lion. And yes, one of the key differences between the two groups is that one has visible external ears (eared seals), and the other does not (hair seals).

Two *seal* species we are almost guaranteed to see are the harbour seal and the Steller sea lion. Both are found in large numbers in Haida Gwaii. But, if we are lucky, we could also see the massive northern elephant seal and the much smaller northern fur seal. If we did see northern elephant seals or northern fur seals, we would most likely see them in the water, and not on land. As for the Steller sea lion and harbour seal, we could see them either in the water or hauled out on shore.

Based on experience, I would suggest that there is no better way to see marine mammals than from a comfortable motor or sailing vessel! Our vessel currently used on the Adventure Canada Haida Gwaii expedition, was purpose-built for eco-tourism and is not just comfortable and spacious, but with its extensive deck space is ideal for wildlife viewing.

Are you ready to test your knowledge? There will be a series of quizzes on the wildlife of Haida Gwaii. The first is on marine mammals, and this one will be followed by others on terrestrial mammals, birds, and perhaps marine invertebrates. Are you ready?

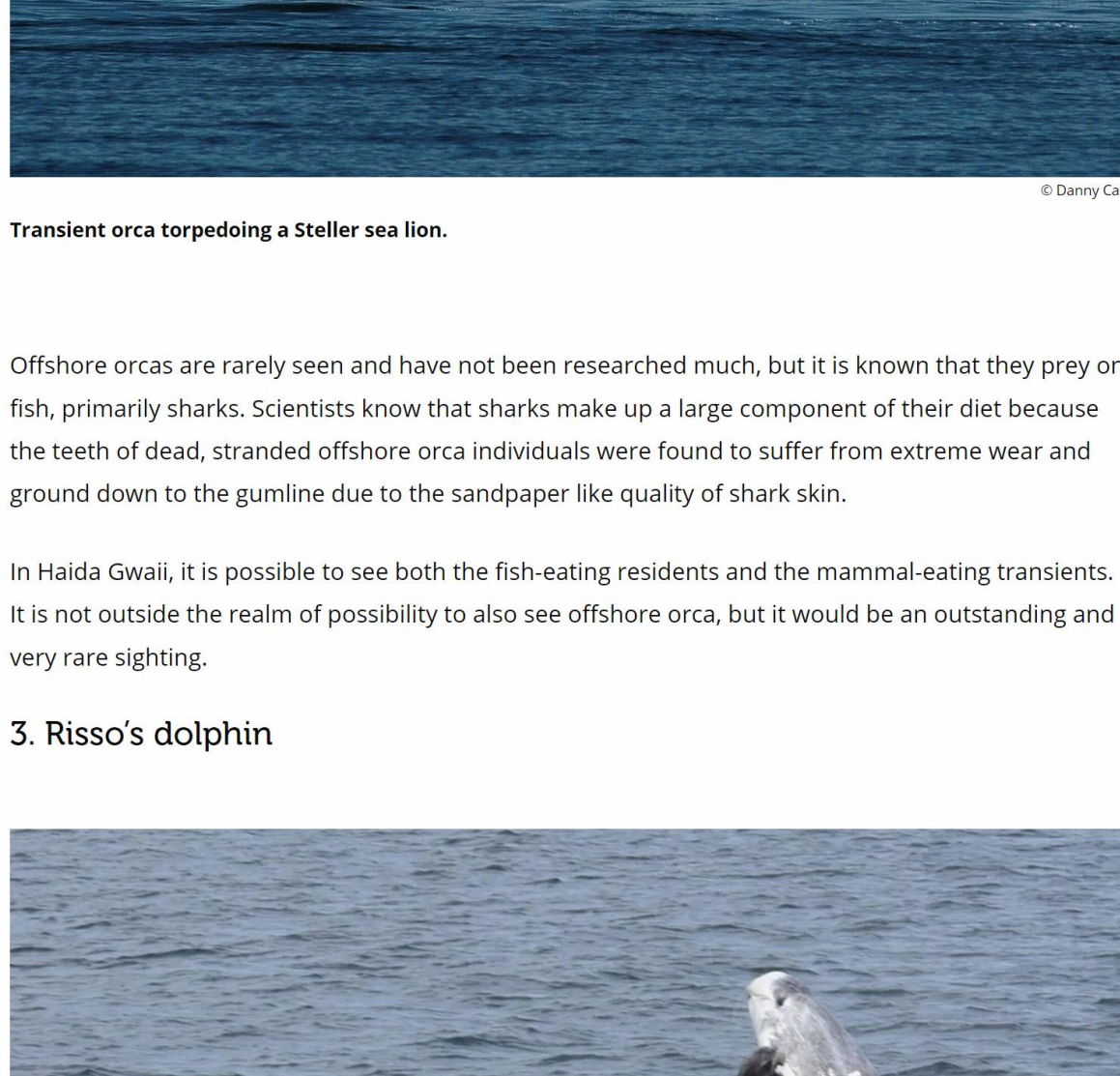
Marine Mammals of Haida Gwaii Quiz:

Grab yourself a piece of paper and a pencil and test your knowledge on the marine mammals of Haida Gwaii. You can write your answers down and then check how you did once you've answered all of the questions.

- If you were to come across a seal-like mammal hauled out on a rocky shoreline in Haida Gwaii, what would you need to look at to determine if it was a harbour seal or a Steller sea lion?
 - Size
 - Ears
 - Front flippers
 - All of the above
- The largest dolphin found in the waters around Haida Gwaii is the:
 - Risso's dolphin
 - Pacific white-sided dolphin
 - Orca
 - Dall's porpoise
- The toothed whale known to specialize on squid as a primary food source is the:
 - Risso's dolphin
 - Pacific white-sided dolphin
 - Orca
 - Dall's porpoise
- The cetacean that can be seen in huge congregations, sometimes over 1,000 individuals, in the North Pacific Ocean is the:
 - Risso's dolphin
 - Pacific white-sided dolphin
 - Orca
 - Dall's porpoise
- The cetacean that due to its black and white colour pattern is sometimes confused for a baby orca is the:
 - Risso's dolphin
 - Pacific white-sided dolphin
 - Harbour porpoise
 - Dall's porpoise
- The most commonly seen species of baleen whale in the waters around Haida Gwaii in summer is the:
 - Humpback whale
 - Sei whale
 - Minke whale
 - Fin whale
- The smallest baleen whale that is regularly seen in the waters around Haida Gwaii is the:
 - Humpback whale
 - Sei whale
 - Minke whale
 - Fin whale
- The baleen whale that is deemed to be the fastest in the North Pacific Ocean is the:
 - Humpback whale
 - Sei whale
 - Minke whale
 - Fin whale
- Of the four species of pinnipeds (seals and sea lions) that are found in the waters around Haida Gwaii, the species with the largest colony on the west coast of Canada is the:
 - Steller sea lion
 - Harbour seal
 - Northern elephant seal
 - Northern fur seal
- The species of marine mammal with the densest fur (number of hairs per square centimetre) is the:
 - Harbour seal
 - Northern fur seal
 - Sea otter
 - Steller sea lion

Answers:

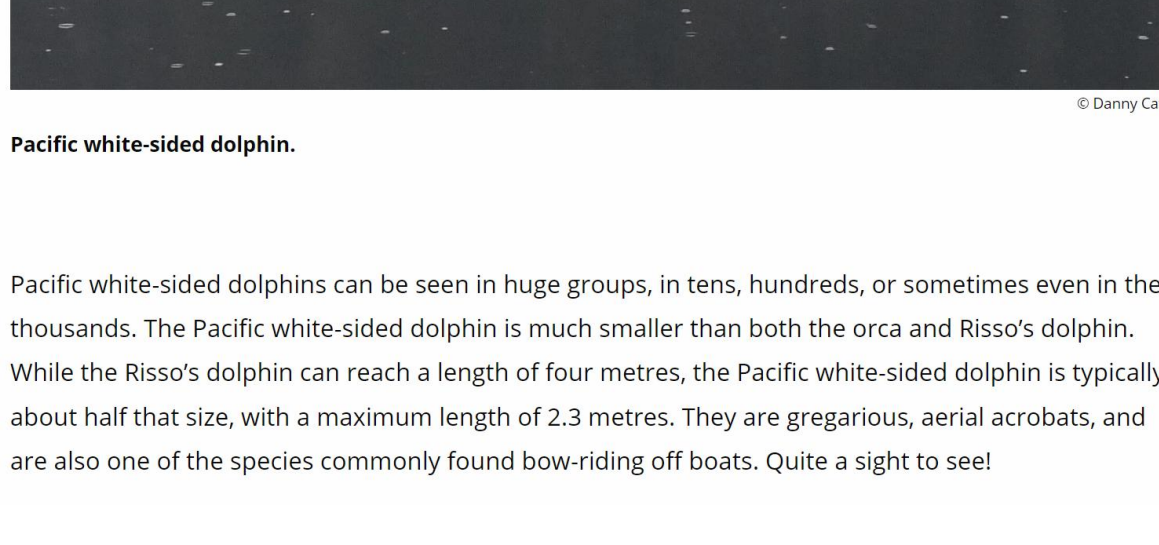
- All of the above



A group of Steller sea lions.

There are a number of things we can look at, and listen for, to help with species identification: 1) size, 2) vocalization, 3) ears, 4) front flippers, and 5) how they move (locomotion) on land.

First and foremost, the Steller sea lion is much larger than the harbour seal. Also, Steller sea lions make a lot more noise (males in particular make a roaring sound ... thus their name *sea lion*) while harbour seals are quite shy and rarely vocalize. If the seal-like mammal has visible ear flaps, a characteristic of all eared seals, then it is likely a Steller sea lion. Harbour seals, like all true seals, lack an external ear flap. Another key difference has to do with their front flippers. The Steller sea lion has large (and long) front flippers which they use to propel themselves through the water. Harbour seals, like all true seals, have much smaller front flippers, which they use for steering. A harbour seal's main propulsion comes from its rear flippers.



Harbour seals lounging around.

Lastly, the way each species moves on land is distinct. Steller sea lions, like all eared seals, can rotate their hind flippers up under their bellies and walk fairly easily on land. True seals do not possess this adaptation, which is why in Haida Gwaii, if we see a small seal-like mammal on a rock wriggling like a furry sausage, we can be pretty sure it is a harbour seal. If on the other hand, we see a much larger seal-like creature using its hind and forelimbs to scurry across the rocks, we can assume that it is a sea lion. That should help seal the deal on pinnipeds!

2. Orca

Picture of an orca bursting through the water.

The orca (*Orcinus orca*), also known as the killer whale, is the largest member of the dolphin family (Family Delphinidae) reaching lengths of up to nine metres. Therefore yes, orcas are dolphins, and dolphins are whales. Remember that the term whale can be used in reference to any cetacean, including porpoises and dolphins, although, in general it is applied to those cetaceans more than three metres, about ten feet long. Thus, we have species names like killer whale and long-finned pilot whale, both of which are actually large dolphins. I hope this clears up any confusion. Clear as mud?

In the waters of the North Pacific Ocean there are three eco-types of orcas: residents; transients (also known as Bigg's), and offshore. These types differ primarily in behaviour, social structure, and food preference.

Resident orca prey on salmon, primarily chinook, the largest Pacific salmon. They are found in large groups (from five to thirty) and are quite social and vocal.

Transient orca (Bigg's), are sometimes referred to as *wolves of the sea* because they prey on other marine mammals such as sea lions and seals, as well as dolphins, porpoises, and other whales. Transients are silent hunters that use stealth to hunt their prey. They are typically found in loose, small groups (two to six) and do not vocalize much, compared to the very vocal residents. The reason for this is likely because their prey (other marine mammals) may hear them. Salmon don't hear well, so for resident orca, being vocal doesn't negatively impact their hunting abilities.

A large bull transient orca (left) circling an adult humpback whale (right). The transient orca did not attack the adult humpback.

I have observed transient orca preying on Steller sea lions in a number of locations on the North Pacific coast and last autumn, for the first time, I witnessed a successful hunt of harbour seals. I'll be honest in saying it is not easy to watch, but as an ecologist, I find it fascinating to observe how the mammal-eating orca carry out the hunt. One needs to remember that orca have a soft snout and no limbs to defend themselves should a prey species *fight back*. Steller sea lions, and harbour seals too, have very sharp teeth and dagger-like claws that can cause a lot of damage, particularly when they are literally fighting for their lives. In order to incapacitate their prey, I have observed orca torpedoing and breaching on Steller sea lions.

Transient orca torpedoing a Steller sea lion.

Offshore orcas are rarely seen and have not been researched much, but it is known that they prey on fish, primarily sharks. Scientists know that sharks make up a large component of their diet because the teeth of dead, stranded offshore orca individuals were found to suffer from extreme wear and ground down to the gumline due to the sandpaper-like quality of shark skin.

In Haida Gwaii, it is possible to see both the fish-eating residents and the mammal-eating transients. It is not outside the realm of possibility to also see offshore orca, but it would be an outstanding and very rare sighting.

3. Risso's dolphin

Risso's dolphin.

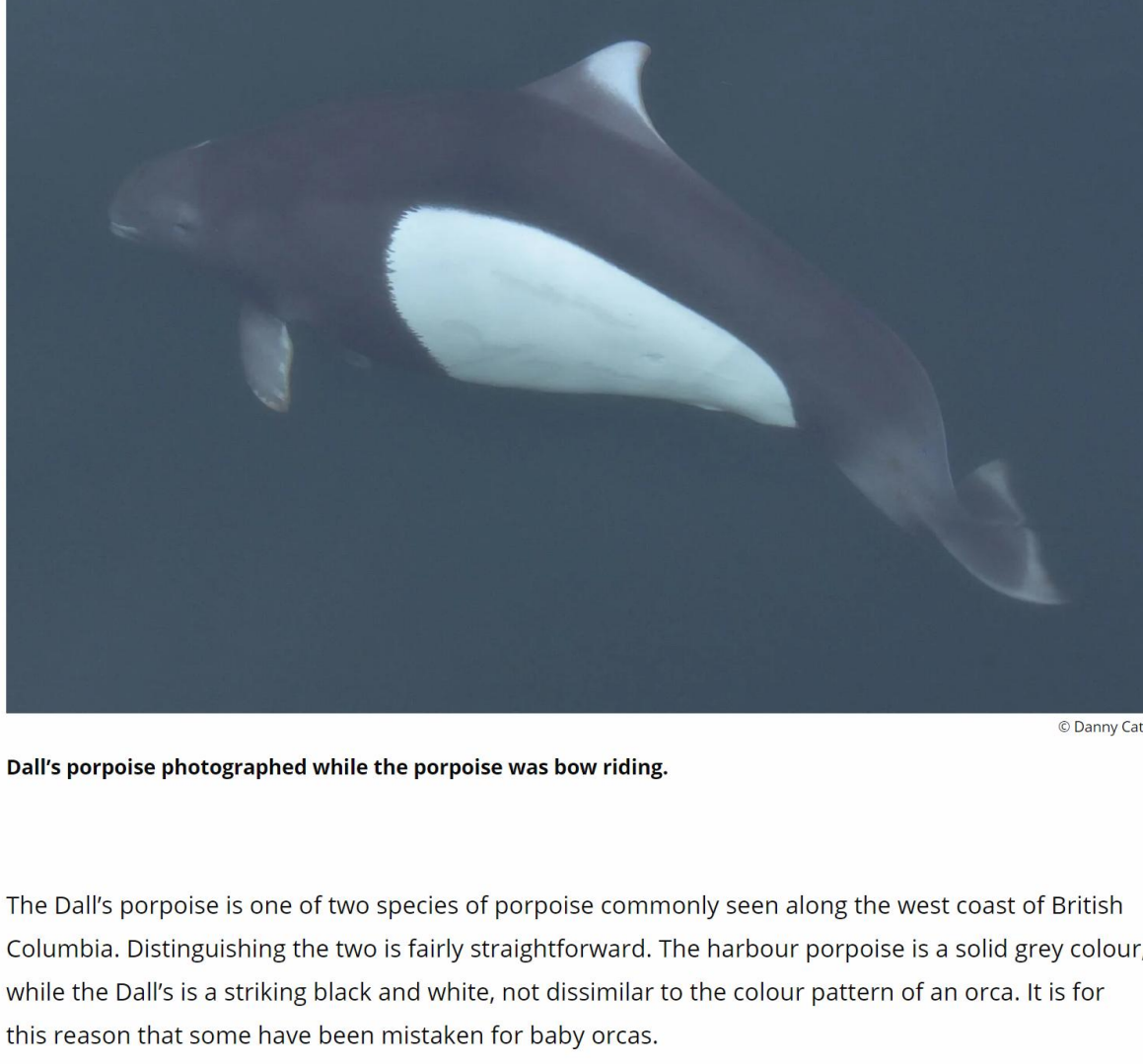
Risso's dolphin can be mistaken for an orca from a distance because of their relatively large size and their tall dorsal fins that look somewhat similar to those of the killer whale. When seen closer though, Risso's dolphins are fairly easy to identify as they are dark grey, and over time they obtain scarring due to interactions with other Risso's dolphins, and from their main prey—squid. They also have a bulbous forehead. If you have ever visited the Monterey Bay Aquarium in California and have observed dolphins frolicking out in the bay, while you're having lunch on the aquarium deck (as I have), they may very well have been Risso's dolphins.

4. Pacific white-sided dolphin

Pacific white-sided dolphin.

Pacific white-sided dolphins can be seen in huge groups, in tens, hundreds, or sometimes even in the thousands. The Pacific white-sided dolphin is much smaller than both the orca and Risso's dolphin. While the Risso's dolphin can reach a length of four metres, the Pacific white-sided dolphin is typically about half that size, with a maximum length of 2.3 metres. They are gregarious, aerial acrobats, and are also one of the species commonly found bow-riding off boats. Quite a sight to see!

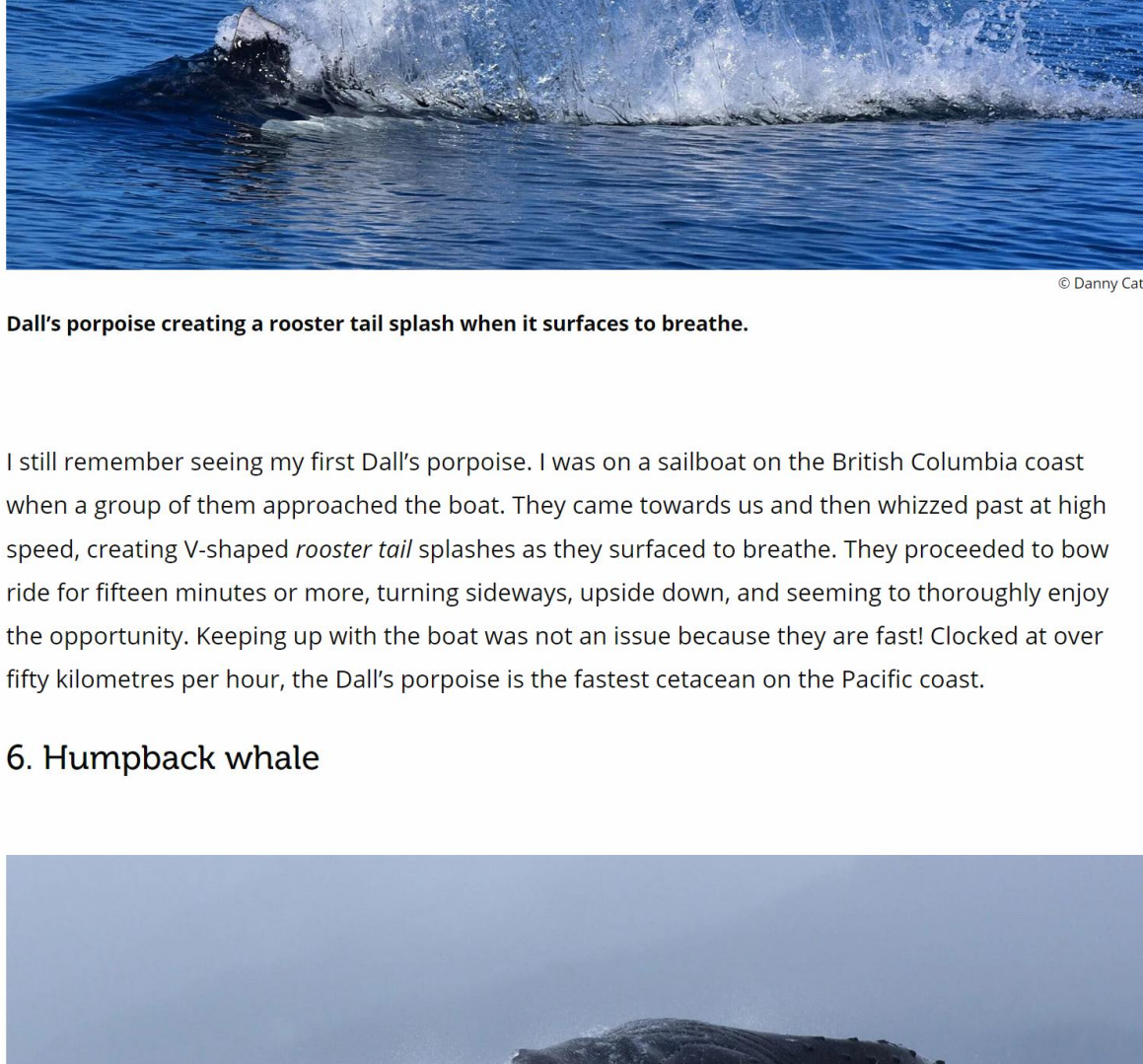
5. Dall's porpoise



© Danny Catt

Dall's porpoise photographed while the porpoise was bow riding.

The Dall's porpoise is one of two species of porpoise commonly seen along the west coast of British Columbia. Distinguishing the two is fairly straightforward. The harbour porpoise is a solid grey colour, while the Dall's is a striking black and white, not dissimilar to the colour pattern of an orca. It is for this reason that some have been mistaken for baby orcas.

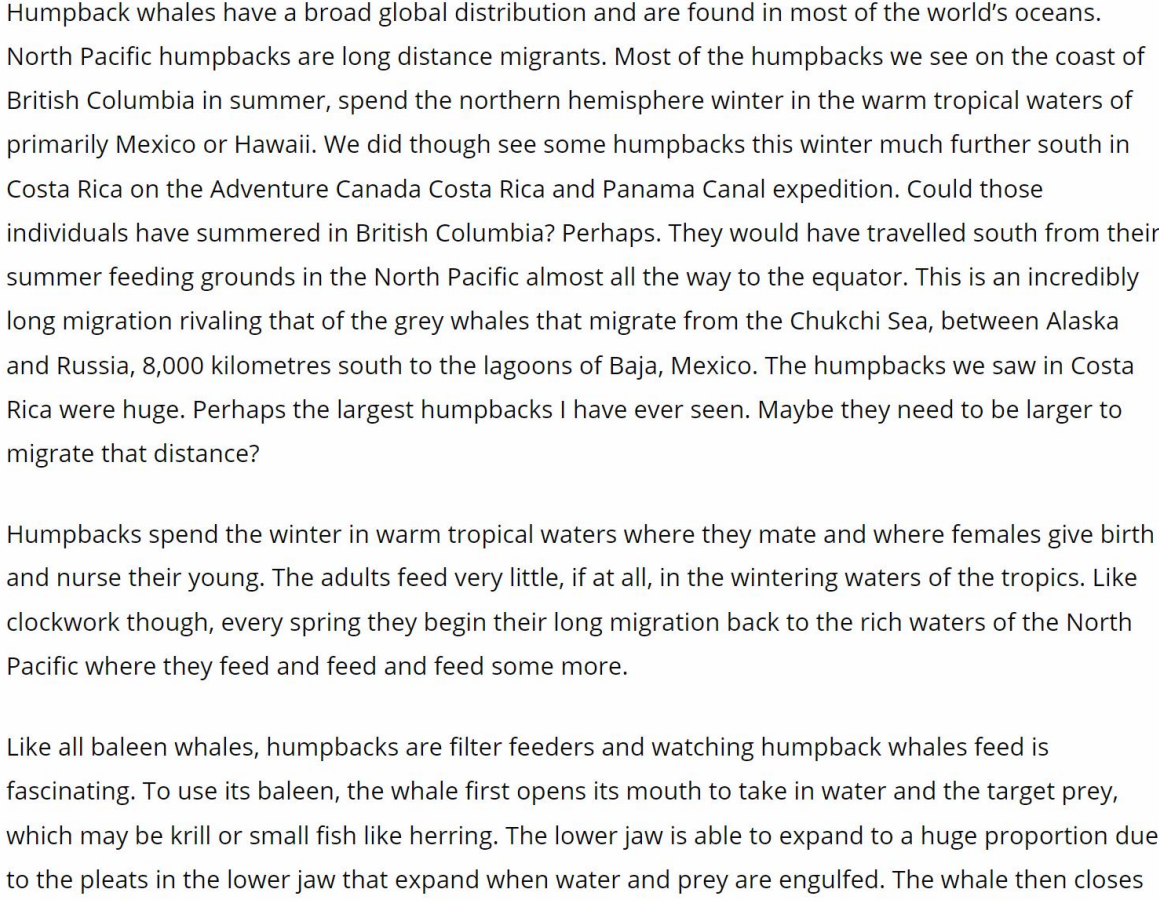


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Dall's porpoise creating a rooster tail splash when it surfaces to breathe.

I still remember seeing my first Dall's porpoise. I was on a sailboat on the British Columbia coast when a group of them approached the boat. They came towards us and then whizzed past at high speed, creating V-shaped *rooster tail* splashes as they surfaced to breathe. They proceeded to bow ride for fifteen minutes or more, turning sideways, upside down, and seeming to thoroughly enjoy the opportunity. Keeping up with the boat was not an issue because they are fast! Clocking at over fifty kilometres per hour, the Dall's porpoise is the fastest cetacean on the Pacific coast.

6. Humpback whale



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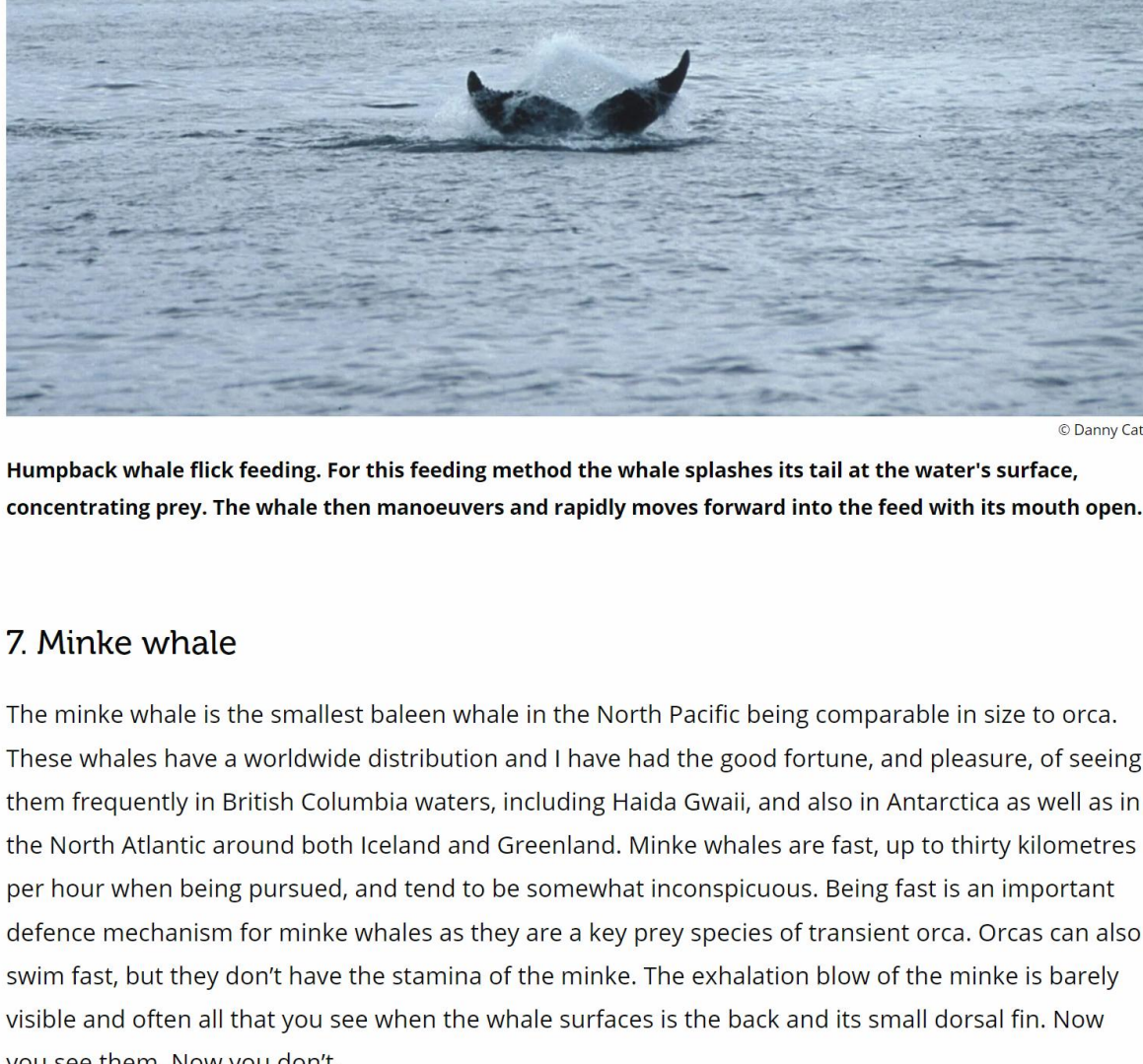
Humpback whale breaching.

We do see other species, but the humpback is the most commonly seen baleen whale in the waters of Haida Gwaii in summer.

Humpback whales have a broad global distribution and are found in most of the world's oceans. North Pacific humpbacks are long distance migrants. Most of the humpbacks we see on the coast of British Columbia in summer, spend the northern hemisphere winter in the warm tropical waters of primarily Mexico or Hawaii. We did though see some humpbacks this winter much further south in Costa Rica on the Adventure Canada Costa Rica and Panama Canal expedition. Could those individuals have summered in British Columbia? Perhaps. They would have travelled south from their summer feeding grounds in the North Pacific almost all the way to the equator. This is an incredibly long migration rivaling that of the grey whales that migrate from the Chukchi Sea, between Alaska and Russia, 8,000 kilometres south to the lagoons of Baja, Mexico. The humpbacks we saw in Costa Rica were huge. Perhaps the largest humpbacks I have ever seen. Maybe they need to be larger to migrate that distance?

Humpbacks spend the winter in warm tropical waters where they mate and where females give birth and nurse their young. The adults feed very little, if at all, in the wintering waters of the tropics. Like clockwork though, every spring they begin their long migration back to the rich waters of the North Pacific where they feed and feed and feed some more.

Like all baleen whales, humpbacks are filter feeders and watching humpback whales feed is fascinating. To use its baleen, the whale first opens its mouth to take in water and the target prey, which may be krill or small fish like herring. The lower jaw is able to expand to a huge proportion due to the pleats in the lower jaw that expand when water and prey are engulfed. The whale then closes its mouth, but not completely, and using its throat muscles pushes the water out, and the krill or herring are filtered by the baleen and remain as a food source for the whale. The throat of the humpback is about the size of a grapefruit, so anything larger than that would simply not fit!

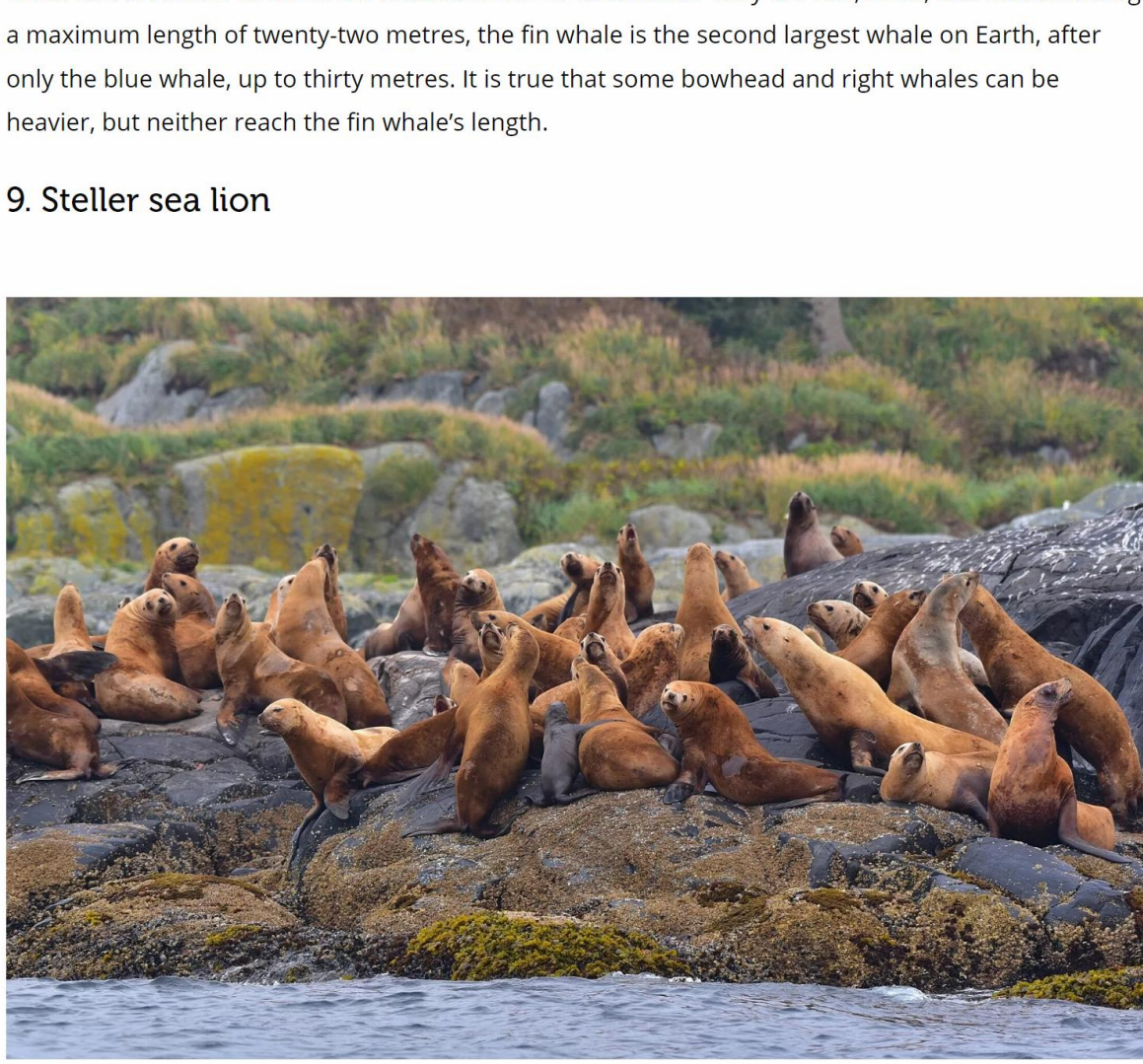


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Humpback whale bubble net feeding on the British Columbia coast.

This whale, pictured above, had just created a circle of bubbles around a school of fish, likely herring. The whale then lunged to the surface, capturing the fish. The pink is the roof of the mouth (left) and the greyish coloured baleen is visible. The lower jaw (right), with the pleats expands with the water and fish. The whale then closes its mouth, and pushes the water through the baleen trapping the fish.

Humpbacks use many different techniques to capture their prey. I have observed flick feeding, lunge feeding, and the impressive bubble-net feeding. I have observed whales simply swim with their mouths open through a concentration of krill. Last summer I observed a new technique for the first time. The whale positioned itself vertically at the water's surface, with its mouth wide open, then waited for the fish to swim into its mouth and then, when it decided there were enough fish, it simply closed its mouth. It didn't move an inch except to close its mouth!



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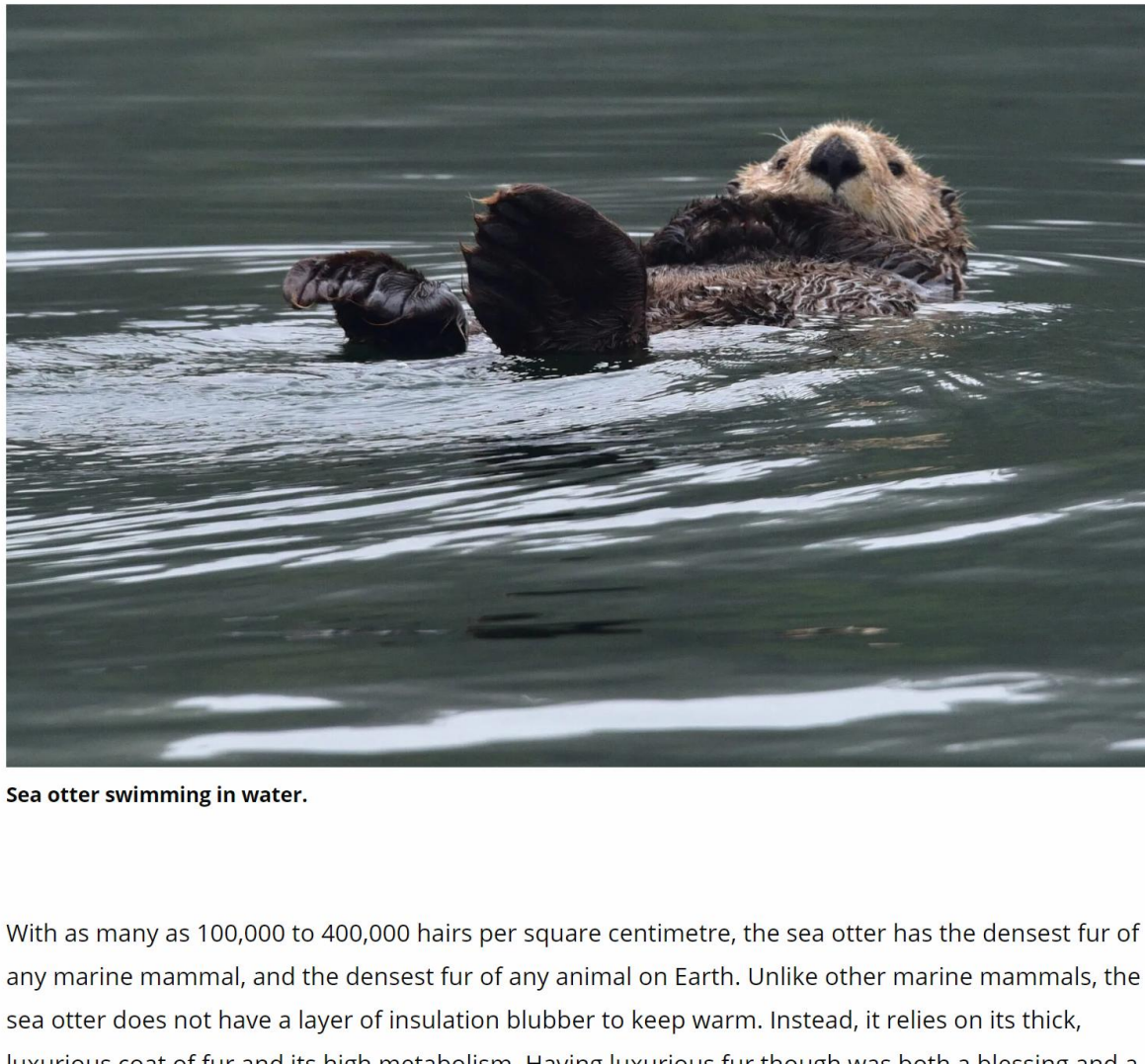
Humpback whale flick feeding. For this feeding method the whale splashes its tail at the water's surface, concentrating prey. The whale then manoeuvres and rapidly moves forward into the feed with its mouth open.

7. Minke whale

The minke whale is the smallest baleen whale in the North Pacific being comparable in size to orca. These whales have a worldwide distribution and I have had the good fortune, and pleasure, of seeing them frequently in British Columbia waters, including Haida Gwaii, and also in Antarctica as well as in the North Atlantic around both Iceland and Greenland. Minke whales are fast, up to thirty kilometres per hour when being pursued, and tend to be somewhat inconspicuous. Being fast is an important defence mechanism for minke whales as they are a key prey species of transient orca. Orcas can also swim fast, but they don't have the stamina of the minke. The exhalation blow of the minke is barely visible and often all that you see when the whale surfaces is the back and its small dorsal fin. Now you see them. Now you don't.

If you are lucky enough to see a minke whale up close, in addition to their smaller size, they can be identified by the distinctive white bands on their pectoral fins.

8. Fin whale

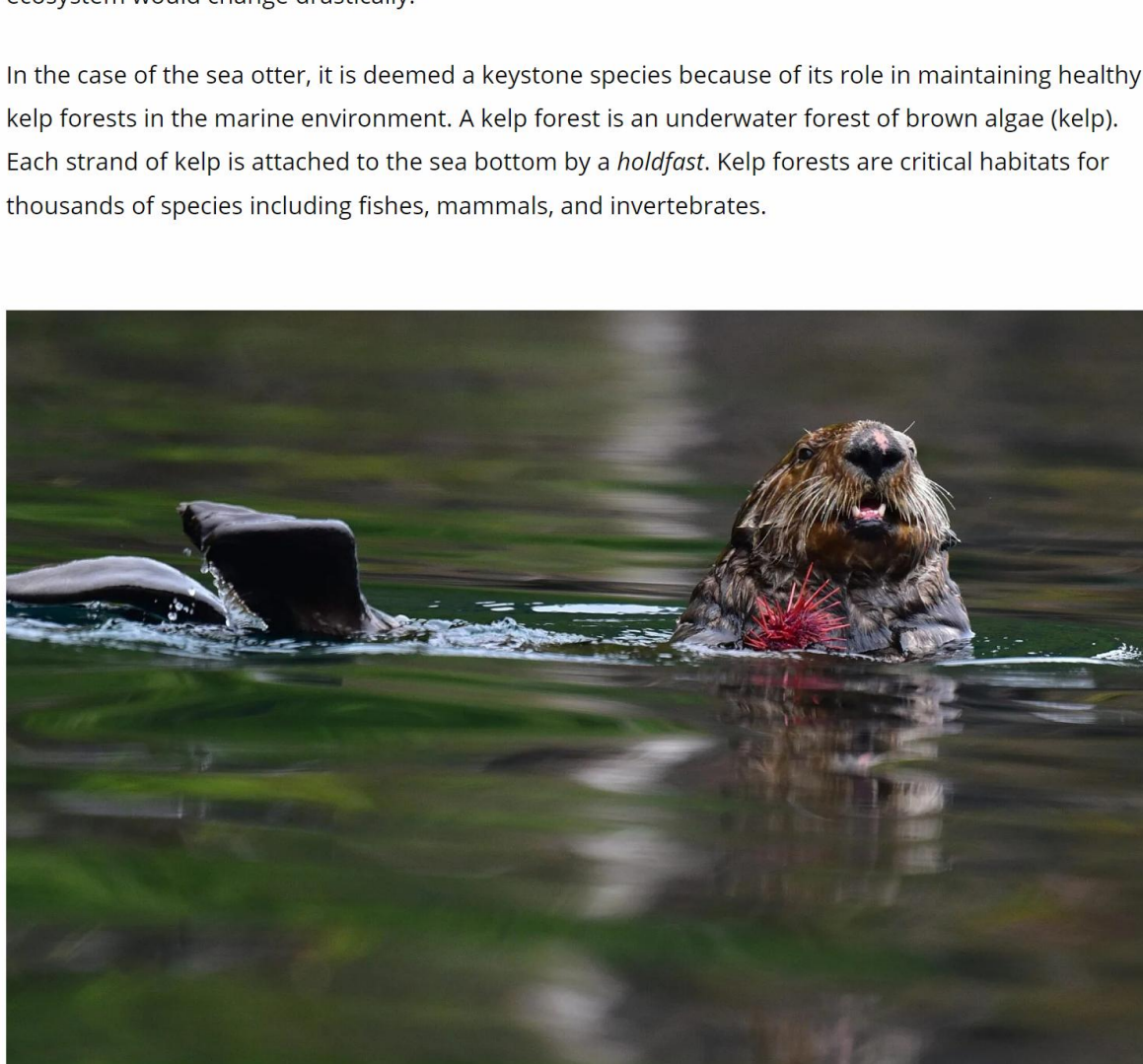


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Fin whale, sighted in the waters of Hecate Strait, Haida Gwaii.

The fin whale is the fastest baleen whale on the Pacific coast able to attain bursts of speed of over forty kilometres per hour. I have had the pleasure of seeing them on both the Pacific side of Haida Gwaii and in Hecate Strait on the mainland side of the islands. They are fast, sleek, and BIG! Reaching a maximum length of twenty-two metres, the fin whale is the second largest whale on Earth, after only the blue whale, up to thirty metres. It is true that some bowhead and right whales can be heavier, but neither reach the fin whale's length.

9. Steller sea lion



© Danny Catt

Steller sea lions at a summer haulout.

The Steller sea lion is the largest eared seal (and sea lion) in the world. They are huge, with males, called bulls, reaching up to 800 kilograms, two to three times heavier than females. Every spring, during the breeding and pupping season, hundreds, and sometimes thousands, of Steller sea lions congregate at rookery sites that have been used for generations.

There are six main breeding areas on the west coast of British Columbia, two of which are in Haida Gwaii. The largest rookery on the British Columbia coast is in the Scott Islands at the northern tip of Vancouver Island, which was recently protected as a marine National Wildlife Area. As many as 4,000 pups have been born there in a single season! The second largest Steller sea lion rookery is at Cape St. James at the southern tip of Haida Gwaii.

Male Steller sea lions typically arrive at the rookery in May, where they battle other males and establish a territory of about 200 square metres. Females arrive in late May to early June. Within just a few days of their arrival females give birth to their pups, which would have been conceived the year before. By about two weeks after giving birth females will mate with the bull, whose territory they chose. Bulls will breed with multiple females and may not leave their defended patch of rocky foreshore for as long as two months. During that period the bulls do not feed or drink and rely solely on their body fat reserves.

Do all sea lions return to rookeries each summer? No, slightly less than fifty per cent of the Steller sea lion population are non-breeders and instead use what are called *haulouts* during summer. Both haulouts and rookeries are typically on remote and exposed rocks and islands and are generally believed to be in close proximity to food resources.

Steller sea lions are opportunistic feeders that target a range of prey including cod, herring, squid, octopus, and salmon. They are marine mammals, but are known to travel up major coastal rivers in search of salmon and eulachon. I have personally observed them over 100 kilometres up the Skeena River, on the coast of British Columbia.

10. Sea otter

© Danny Catt

Sea otter swimming in water.

With as many as 100,000 to 400,000 hairs per square centimetre, the sea otter has the densest fur of any marine mammal, and the densest fur of any animal on Earth. Unlike other marine mammals, the sea otter does not have a layer of insulation blubber to keep warm. Instead, it relies on its thick, luxurious coat of fur and its high metabolism. Having luxurious fur though was both a blessing and a curse. Sea otter pelts were highly sought after and a key item in a booming marine fur trade in the late 1700s.

In the early 1800s, sea otters were still prevalent on the Pacific coast of British Columbia, including Haida Gwaii. But by the mid to late 1800s, the sea otter population had been decimated due to over harvesting, which resulted in a local extinction.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, sea otters from Alaska were reintroduced along the west coast of Vancouver Island. Over time, the sea otter population has grown in British Columbia, and they have expanded their range. Today, sea otters, gone from Haida Gwaii for over 150 years, are making a comeback. I have seen them myself in Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve in the past few years. Very exciting!

The sea otter has a few other claims to fame. It is the largest member of the weasel family, and also the smallest marine mammal. Sea otters are also a keystone species.

If you were to check the dictionary, a keystone species is:

"A species on which other species in an ecosystem largely depend, such that if it were removed the ecosystem would change drastically."

In the case of the sea otter, it is deemed a keystone species because of its role in maintaining healthy kelp forests in the marine environment. A kelp forest is an underwater forest of brown algae (kelp). Each strand of kelp is attached to the sea bottom by a *holdfast*. Kelp forests are critical habitats for thousands of species including fishes, mammals, and invertebrates.

© Danny Catt

Sea otter feeding on a sea urchin.

Sea urchins feed on the holdfasts of kelp, which when eaten results in the release of the kelp from the ocean bottom, and a reduced coverage of kelp forest. Sea otters feed on sea urchins. Without sea otters, sea urchin populations exploded resulting in great damage to kelp forests and an overall negative impact on the marine environment. With the return of sea otters, with time, this relationship will once again be in balance.

About the Author

Danny Catt

Host, Naturalist, Photographer

Danny has led Adventure Canada natural history and photography programs for over thirty years. The youngest of seven, Danny was raised on Canada's west coast at where he completed his undergraduate and graduate degrees in wildlife ecology at Simon Fraser University before heading overseas to do postgraduate studies at the College of African Wildlife Management in Tanzania.

Danny worked for many years for Parks Canada as a naturalist and planner in Kootenay National Park in the Canadian Rockies. He also taught at three universities in eastern Indonesia for the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) before returning to Canada to teach at the post-secondary level. Danny recently retired from his position as program head of the Fish, Wildlife, and Recreation program at the BC Institute of Technology where he taught for over twenty-five years.

Join Danny Catt on:

[Haida Gwaii](#), June 25 to July 4, 2024