



Newsletter

October 2022 | Issue 17



Upcoming Events
See our [Calendar](#) for
nature events happening
nearby.

Let's Stay Social
We'd love to hear from you!



Club Events

Monthly Meetings

Thursday, October 20th at 7pm

Beban Social Centre, Room 2 & via Zoom

Nature Nanaimo Presents:

The Role of Sea Otters in Eelgrass Communities

with Erin Foster

Nature Nanaimo

Presents:

The Role of Sea Otters in Eelgrass Communities

with

Erin Foster

Thursday Oct 20th 7:00 PM

**Beban Park, Social Centre - Room 2
and Via Zoom**



Sea otters (*Enhydra lutris*) and eelgrass (*Zostera marina*) have co-evolved along the north Pacific Rim since at least the middle Pleistocene (~600,000-700,000 years ago). When sea otters were hunted to near-extinction during the 18th and 19th century maritime fur trade, their ecological interactions were lost from nearshore communities. As sea otters have recovered in some areas, scientists have shown that otters can initiate a trophic cascade in eelgrass communities: by limiting crab abundance and indirectly releasing small grazers from crab predation, otters reduce eelgrass epiphytes, supporting eelgrass photosynthesis and biomass. While much work on otters has focused on invertebrate limitation, we have also found that in British Columbia, recovering sea otters support genetically diverse eelgrass meadows through a disturbance pathway. By excavating clams and other infaunal prey in eelgrass meadows, sea otters affect eelgrass reproductive strategies, increasing eelgrass genetic diversity. We infer that this interaction between otters and eelgrass has been important to eelgrass resilience for more than half of a million years, during shifts in coastal ice-cover and climate regimes. Sea otter recovery thus shows how evolutionarily important species interactions can be restored to sustain ecological communities today. Although most of the world's large vertebrates have suffered irrevocably from human impacts, sea otters are a rare conservation success story, inspiring species recovery more broadly where it is still possible.

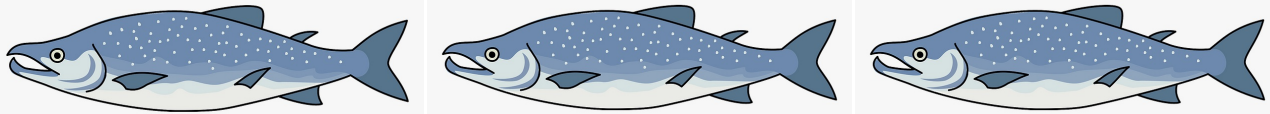
Bio: Erin completed her PhD at the University of Victoria, studying sea otter ecology in eelgrass systems, and late-Holocene effects of sea otters on clams and ancestral Indigenous clam gardens. She is currently a postdoctoral Research Scientist with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, examining grey whale foraging ecology, and ancient sea otter occupancy of eelgrass meadows. Erin grew up on the BC coast and is interested in ecological processes that affect coastal systems over long time scales.

UPCOMING AGM: We Need Your Talents & Enthusiasm!

Nature Nanaimo's annual general meeting is coming up on **Sunday, November 13th**. That means there will be elections for our Board of Directors, which consists of: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Director, Webmaster, and five or more directors-at-large. The Board meets monthly to plan the club's activities, events, projects, etc. and to manage our funds. Five directors are willing to continue on the Board, but not necessarily in the same positions: We need a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Webmaster, and at least 2 new directors-at-large. We are also looking for a Social Media Manager! Do you have skills, talents, or bright ideas that you would enjoy contributing to the Board? If so, **please** contact the nominating committee care of Julia Roberts (jmroberts449@gmail.com or 250-754-0602).

Nature Nuggets and News

Viewing Salmon at the Nanaimo River Hatchery:



Many thanks to Allan and the Nanaimo River Hatchery for sharing the following information:

- **Pinks** – September – Some pinks can be seen near the hatchery and trail towards Haslam Creek
- **Chinook** – Late September to Mid October – Some chinook may be seen near the hatchery and trail towards Haslam Creek
- **Chum** – Mid October to Mid November – The best fish to come see spawning. Best on the trail below the fish ladder towards Haslam Creek
- **Coho** – December to January – Coho can be seen near the hatchery, especially during large rain storms when the river is high.

Nanaimo River Hatchery
2775 Rugby Rd, Nanaimo,
[Nanaimo River Hatchery - Google Maps](#)



Where to spot salmon: Vancouver Island

Here are some of our favourite public spots to view spawning salmon on Vancouver Island. We've included family friendly locations with clearly marked trails and viewing areas. If you have a favourite spot to share, email us! Goldstream Provincial ...

[Read more](#)
psf.ca

Creating Bat-friendly Gardens:

In case you missed this great webinar, you can still watch it here!



[Watch Webinar](#)

Monthly Roundup of Nature Events

Linley Valley Meadow Restoration – October 22



LINLEY VALLEY MEADOW RESTORATION

Help us plant native
flowers for pollinators!
Bring gloves and shovel
if you have them

SATURDAY OCT 22
10:00AM - 1:00PM

Linley Valley
Cottle Lake park

This project is funded by Habitat
Conservation Trust Foundation, the
City of Nanaimo and NALT

RSVP to stewardship@nalt.bc.ca

Nature Nanaimo | naturenanaimo.ca

