

# BRITISH COLUMBIA

M A G A Z I N E

SUMMER 2013

Summer  
on the Water

## BEST VANCOUVER BEACHES

PLUS

**OKANAGAN**  
power paddle [p.36]

Listening to  
**WHALES** [p.46]

Susan Musgrave's  
**HAIDA GWAI**

**BEAR** myths  
debunked

\$6.95

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# Sailing into the zone

**O**ur writers and photographers took to the water to bring you this issue—and I followed suit. For three days last summer, I sailed between Nanaimo and Port McNeill aboard *Passing Cloud*, an elegant, 70-foot [21-metre] schooner designed by William James Roué. (Flip over a Canadian dime to see one of Roué's other nautical achievements, the *Bluenose*.)



Jane Nahirny

The invitation to join five crew and six passengers on the pre-season cruise came from Russell Markel, the boat's new co-owner and operator of OuterShores Expeditions. Larry Pynn was working on a feature for us about hydrophones ("Whale song," p. 36), so I was intrigued to learn that Volker Deecke, an educator and world-renowned expert on killer whale acoustics, was one of the crew.

Markel's pride in his new enterprise was evident as he welcomed me aboard the schooner. The smell of fresh coffee drew me into the warmth of the cedar-lined wheelhouse, where chef Gem Salsberg was preparing breakfast. I stowed my things below in my cabin, then climbed back up on deck. After a short safety drill, we cast off amid cheers from Markel's family and friends.

The radio crackled out a small-craft marine warning as we motored out of the harbour and into the Strait of Georgia, but we carried on with confidence through high winds and rain to Campbell River, where we would spend our first night.

The next morning, we passed through Seymour Narrows and entered Discovery Passage.

"Now we're 'in the zone,'" said Markel. "This is the gateway into an entirely different ecosystem. There are more dolphins and more killer whales here. All of this water rushes through a bottleneck—the cold, clear water that's so ideal for kelp, salmon, and other marine life comes to the surface."

Deecke dangled a small hydrophone over the side of the boat to see if we could detect any killer whales in the area. While we waited, he mimicked their song: "Weeee-owwwwwww," he called.

We didn't pick up any audio, but we did record many wildlife sightings over the three-day cruise. On a side trip to a tiny island in Port Neville, we saw the prints of a grizzly and her cub pressed into the wet sand. Rhinoceros auklets fluttered by in the sky above us. Pacific white-sided dolphins leapt from the water like sleek synchronized swimmers. And on our third day, we spotted the trademark tail fin of a humpback whale near Robson Bight.

In the final moments of our journey, another humpback whale suddenly emerged above the water's surface near the Port McNeill ferry dock. We strained for a better view, too stunned and excited to even reach for our cameras, as the whale breached again—and again—then sped out of sight.

When we experience wildlife first-hand in a pristine ecosystem, like this one, we make more than memories: we create a powerful, personal connection to nature. I hope your summer is filled with similar experiences.

Jane Nahirny, Editor  
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## Coming up

in Fall 2013

Photo Contest winners.



SHANNA BAKER



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## Congratulations

We're very pleased to announce that our writers Andrew Findlay ("Waiting for Fairweather," Winter 2012) and Remy Scalza ("Local culture," Summer 2012) each won Second Place in the Northern Lights Awards competition for excellence in travel journalism.