

Another great field season has wrapped up on Limestone.

Oystercatchers

During our last two weeks in camp we completed our final visits to Black Oystercatchers sites in Laskeek Bay. We found a total of 34 chicks this season, of which 12 were large enough to be banded. The colour bands that we put on the chicks allow us to determine where the bird was banded (White indicates Laskeek Bay) as well as its age (White is the colour for 2009). On July 6 we saw a group of 10 Oystercatchers on Louise, 6 of which were banded. The year colours indicated that these birds were banded in 1994, 2004, 2007 and 2008.

We spotted our first Whimbrel of the season while visiting the oystercatcher sites on the Lost Islands.

On the water

We completed another near-shore sea survey on July 6, taking advantage of some beautiful calm weather. During the survey we came across a group of White-winged Scoters in Skedans Bay. They are common in the area when we arrive in early May, but this was our first sighting in over a month. While measuring the sea-surface temperature at Skedans Islands, we had a close up look at a dense school of Pacific Sand Lance that were feeding on zooplankton that had been concentrated in a tide line. The fish made a noise like heavy rain whenever they came to the surface near the boat. Later in the day we saw large numbers of Rhinoceros Auklets, Gulls and Marbled Murrelets which were no doubt feeding on the same abundance of fish.

We attempted another Hecate Strait sea-survey but were turned back by a bank of fog that rolled in as we were starting out. The same windless foggy weather persisted for several days before the sun finally made a come back.



Foggy morning in Boat Cove.



School of Pacific sandlance.

On Island

We saw four peregrines flying near Lookout Pt on July 12. We take this to mean that the young peregrines have left their nest and have now taken to the air with their parents. We have suspected

for several years that there must be Belted Kingfishers nesting somewhere on the island. While pulling thistles on the South side of the island on July 9 we noticed a kingfisher visiting a cliffy area with fish in its bill. Listening closely, we could also hear chicks making noise high up on the cliff in an area hidden by small cedar trees.

Another exciting discovery was made as we were packing up camp: Menzies' Pipsissewa (*Chimaphila menziesii*) blooming near the front step of the cabin. This species is one of several rare plants that we have on the island and we only see it in bloom occasionally.



Menzies' Pipsissewa (*Chimaphila menziesii*).

There were also a lot of end of season tasks that we tackled in the last two weeks on the island. The firewood pile has been replenished, the island's trail network has been cleared out, re-marked and repaired. We continue to inventory the occurrence of invasive plants on the islands in Laskeek Bay. On Limestone we pulled out thistles over most of the island.

Pigeon Guillemots

We checked the Pigeon Guillemot nest boxes at Lookout Point on July 13. There were 13 chicks this year, and some of them were very large – more than 300 grams and with a lot of adult feathers coming in. The boxes continue to be very well used which no doubt indicates that suitable rock crevices are in short supply.



Camp shutdown

The morning of July 14th was a flurry of activity as we took down tents, packed up gear and prepared for the big move back to town. Many thanks to Lynn and Leondre (m/v Victoria Rose) for providing transportation for us this season.

Volunteers

A big thank you to our hard working volunteers of the last two weeks: Kelly Runyon, Mitch Ward, Josee Gervais, Thomas Maas, Joseph Devey, Hussein Alidina and Evelyn von Almassy. Christine Pansino (LBCS Executive Director) and Leigh Joseph (LBCS summer student) also joined us in our last week on the island.

Joseph working on cabin maintenance.

Trivia Answer:

The drill rig SEDCO 135F, working of Cape St James, recorded a 30m wave on Oct 22 1968. During this storm the *average* wave height rose from 3m to 18m in just 8hrs.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this 20th field season on Limestone Island, especially Mountain Equipment Co-op, BC Hydro, Northern Savings Credit Union, Haida Fisheries, & BC Gaming. We couldn't do the work that we do without your support.

A reminder that the 20th Anniversary gathering is coming up on October 1, 2 & 3rd. Hope to see you all there!

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