

Why wolves may be frequenting Hardy streets

By Lesley Fox

Recently, residents of Port Hardy have been surprised

by sightings of a wolf pack in town, although wolves have always lived on Vancouver

Island. Wolves are typically elusive and avoid human settlements; they're rarely seen in close proximity to urban areas. This unusual behaviour has sparked curiosity about what might be drawing them into town and raised concerns about how locals should respond if they encounter these wild animals.

Wolves: Solitary or Social?

Wolves are highly social animals within their packs, which are family units often consisting of a breeding pair and their offspring. Lone wolves, on the other hand, tend to be young individuals who have left their pack to find a mate and establish their own territory. When wolves are spotted in groups, it's usually a pack on the move, working together to hunt or secure new territory.

Seeing a wolf pack in an urban area like Port Hardy is unusual and likely temporary.

Wolves are territorial and generally steer clear of human activity, preferring to roam vast wilderness areas where their prey, including deer, elk and smaller mammals, are found.

However, when natural prey is scarce due to over hunting or habitat changes, or their territory is disrupted, wolves may venture into towns in search of food or space. In a town like Port Hardy, wolves could be drawn to garbage, or unattended pets and livestock as a potential food source.

As urban areas expand and wilderness is developed, wolves may find their natural range shrinking, pushing them into closer contact with humans as a result of the encroachments. Additionally, with winter approaching, wolves might be venturing farther from their usual hunting grounds in search of additional prey as they prepare for the leaner months.

Wolves are not only sentient, intelligent creatures but they are also critical to the health of ecosystems. As apex predators, they help maintain balance by controlling prey

populations and ensuring the natural environment thrives. Their presence is vital to the ecological integrity of the regions they inhabit.

What to do if you see a wolf

While encountering a wolf pack in town can be alarming, it's important to remain calm.

Wolves are generally wary of humans and will usually retreat when they sense people nearby. However, residents should take precautions to ensure their pets are inside or protected and backyard chickens are secure, as wolves might view smaller animals as potential prey. Securing garbage and keeping food sources indoors can also make properties less attractive to wildlife. Never try to feed or approach a wolf – teaching wolves to expect food from humans will encourage their presence and erode their natural wariness around people.

If you spot wolves from a distance, experts recommend staying silent and trying to not interfere with their activities. If you feel uncomfortable, make noise, clap your hands or talk in a loud voice.

In most cases, wolves will leave the area. In the very unlikely event that a wolf approaches you, remain calm and make yourself appear larger by spreading your arms out.

Avoid any sudden movements and do not run. Avoid direct eye contact and instead look at their front paws. Back away slowly and give them lots of space. You can also use a firm tone but do not scream.

Ultimately, living in a region like Port Hardy means that encounters with wildlife are part of life. By taking steps to protect both the community and the wolves, residents can maintain a safe and respectful

relationship with these iconic animals.

BC Conservation Officer Service (BC COS) are a policing agency and should only be called if a policing response is required. For example, if there was an emergency, a public safety issue, a wolf bit or approached a person, or if someone started feeding the wolves which is an offense under the Wildlife Act. Generally, the BC COS won't respond to sightings, nor will they proactively shoot the wolves. The BC COS does not monitor or manage wildlife populations, that is the responsibility of the Ministry of Water, Lands, Resource Stewardship.

Lesley Fox is Executive Director for The Fur-Bearers, a wildlife protection charity working to protect fur-bearing animals through conservation, advocacy, research and education. TheFurBearers.com



Photo — Brian Texmo, North Island Wild

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RCMP investigate fatal float plane crash

Port Hardy RCMP is investigating a fatal float plane crash that occurred Wednesday evening.

On Oct. 2, 2024, at approximately 7:50 p.m., Joint Rescue Coordination Centre (JRCC) notified Port Hardy RCMP of a float plane crash in Warner Bay, Seymour Inlet. The Search and Rescue attended the scene and recovered the three occupants of the plane. Sadly, one of the occupants was found deceased.

Port Hardy RCMP is working closely with Transport Safety Board and BC Coroners Service. The cause of the crash has not yet been determined.

The RCMP Underwater Recovery Team (URT) and West Coast Marine Services have been called in to support the ongoing investigation.

Thanksgiving Dinner

ON OCTOBER 14TH

Turkey with Cranberry Sauce

or

Ham with Honey Mustard Sauce

paired with stuffing, mashed potatoes, roasted vegetables, and gravy

\$34



By Reservation Only!

250-949-8886



HALLOWEEN PARTY

WITH DJ HEAD HUNTER

\$5
COVER

26th Oct 2024

MUSIC, FOOD,
DRINK SPECIALS,
COSTUME CONTEST

8:30-1AM



Nax'id Pub, 9040 Granville Street, Port Hardy

