



# PacificBio

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Pacific Biodiversity Institute

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October 2013

## Levi Returns to the Wild!



When an adult harbor porpoise was discovered in March 2013 stranded on the rocks in a rising tide near Saanich Inlet, his chances of survival were slim. He was too weak to swim on his own and suffered from impaired hearing and a severe lung infection. Out of the water, he was in danger of muscle damage from his own body weight.

That's when Vancouver Aquarium's Marine Mammal Rescue Centre swung into action and took in the animal. In spite of his low chances of rehabilitation, which is true for stranded cetaceans in general, the porpoise—named Levi—beat the odds. Under the team's expert care, Levi's hearing recovered and he regained the ability to echolocate. His strong swimming skills returned, enabling him to catch fish. He gained weight, and his blood work returned to normal. In short, Levi made a full recovery, thanks to the skills of the recovery team.

PBI was proud to be part of the recovery team. At the centre's request, PBI board member and research scientist, Aileen Jeffries, conducted tests to investigate Levi's echolocation ability. Using advanced, high-frequency acoustic monitoring techniques, Aileen determined that Levi was able to echolocate. This was a key requirement for his release to the wild. Our researchers will now be able to apply the knowledge we gained to our ongoing studies of porpoises in the wild, where they demonstrate a wide variation in echolocation behavior.

After several months of diligent care, Levi was returned to his home in the sea by the extremely competent staff of the Marine Mammal Rescue Centre. Before his release, Levi was fitted with a satellite-linked transmitter, attached to his dorsal fin, so the aquarium staff can track



Levi is the first successfully rehabilitated and released harbour porpoise in Canada.

**The trainers cradled Levi. Then he gently swam away.**

On release, first he swam north and reached Texada Island in two days. He spent a week there then headed down the Georgia Strait. He fished the Georgia Strait for a few days then went to Burrard Island near Vancouver. Since then, he has stayed in the same areas: the Gulf Islands, Georgia Strait and Texada Island. Where will he go next?

**Want to learn more about the health of the Salish Sea and the role of the harbor porpoise as a sentinel species?**

**Come to the American Cetacean Society (ACS) talk on October 16 by PBI research scientist, Aileen**

**Jeffries.** You do not have to be an ACS member to attend. The meeting is at the **Phinney Neighborhood Center**, Room 6, 6532 Phinney Ave. N., Seattle, just north of the Woodland Park Zoo. The doors open at 7, the meeting starts at 7:30, and ends before 9 pm. We hope to see you there on October 16.

<http://www.acspugetsound.org>

### News:

**Fidalgo Bay Day** - On September 14 our volunteer Coordinator and Field Technician, Sue Ehler, shared information about harbor porpoises at Fidalgo Bay Day. She was assisted by Connie Walser, Bob Weathers and Pattie Hutchins. They talked with many visitors

his movements and continue to learn from him. And you too can learn about his favorite spots in the Salish Sea by following the link to a web map of his past and current location.

[Find out where Levi is now!](#)

<http://www.vanaqua.org/act/direct-action/marine-mammal-rescue/tracking>

#### Levi travels about the Georgia Strait

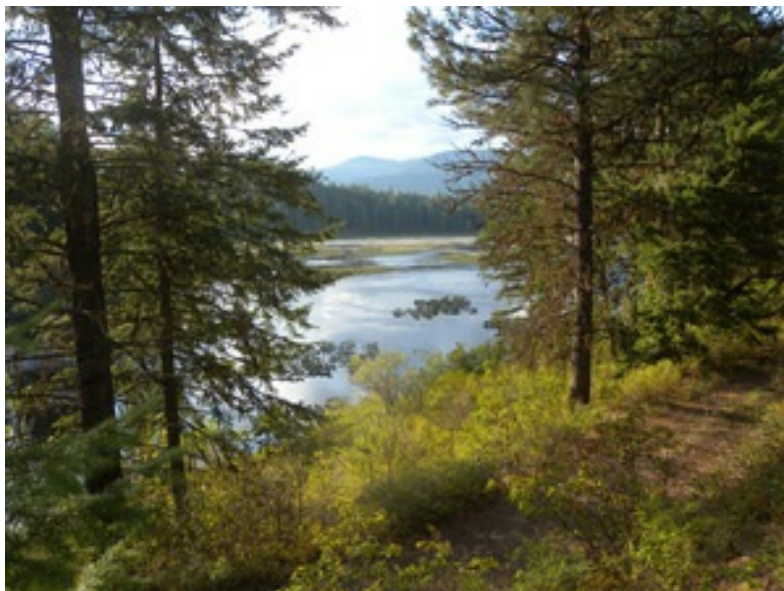


Are you a boater? If you see a group of **10 or more** harbor porpoise anywhere on your travels, (Canada and Alaska included), please record and send the following information: 1) Approximate number of porpoises seen, 2) Location of sighting (GPS or place name), 3) Date and time, 4) Brief description of behavior. Send sighting reports to:

[setehler@msn.com](mailto:setehler@msn.com) or [aileen@pacifico.org](mailto:aileen@pacifico.org).

If you see 50 or more, please try to give us a call at (206) 795-8181.

#### PBI Helps Colville Confederated Tribes Prepare Their New Integrated Resource Management Plan



Hutchins. They talked with many visitors and explained our harbor porpoise observations.

#### Soroptimists learn about the harbor porpoise

Aileen Jeffries gave a talk at the Anacortes Soroptimist Society meeting on September 10<sup>th</sup> about the work PBI is doing in Burrows Pass to study the harbor porpoise. Our work would not have been successful without the interest and support shown by the Anacortes community.



#### [Learn about Biota Maxima and PBI's South American Wildlands and Biodiversity Project](#)

and how you can join us on an expedition into one of the biggest wild biodiversity hotspots left on Earth.

#### [Explore the Big Wild of South America](#)

with PBI's scientists and wilderness guides.



#### The Colville Indian Reservation

was established by Presidential Executive Order in 1872 and was originally twice as large as it is today. Native American cultural resources are a significant part of the value of this landscape, making our work for this



In August, Pacific Biodiversity Institute (PBI) began work on a new project. We are helping the Colville Confederated Tribes (a sovereign nation) prepare a new Integrated Resource Management Plan (IRMP). This strategic plan guides all natural resources management decisions on the Colville Reservation. PBI is responsible for researching and writing the wildlife management guidelines for this plan.

Our project team consists of George Wooten (project manager), Kim Romain-Bondi (wildlife biologist), Peter Morrison (ecologist) and Debbie Lewis (conservation science intern). We are preparing a management plan that is based on the best available science and is conducive to a healthy and balanced ecosystem where key wildlife species can thrive. With the scope of the project ranging from the high peaks of sacred Moses Mountain to the waters of the Okanogan, San Poil, Nespelem and Columbia Rivers, the wildlife management plan must consider diverse ecosystems, which range from dry sagebrush-steppe to temperate rainforests supporting cedar, yew and hemlock.

The reservation land base covers **1.4 million acres** in Okanogan and Ferry counties of Washington State. It occupies a key ecological linkage zone between the Cascade Mountains and the Rocky Mountains. Therefore, wildlife management within the reservation is critical to regional biodiversity.

On an initial field trip through the reservation, Kim and George joined tribal biologists and explored a landscape that is scarcely known to the outside world. Small roads took them through managed and wild forests where they saw abundant signs of bear, moose, sharp-tailed grouse, loons, hawks and eagles. They also saw feral horses which, despite the romantic image they often evoke, must be managed to reduce the disturbance that their pounding hooves cause to rangeland ecosystems. Kim and George's tribal guides explained how timber harvesting, livestock grazing and big game are currently managed and how this may affect wildlife. Preparing a plan to accommodate the cultural diversity, timber, grazing, hunting and wildlife protection will require all the skills of our competent team and keep them busy throughout the 15 months of the project.

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*Photos: Levi with Trainers - Vancouver Aquarium; Colville Reservation wetlands and forests - George Wooten; black-capped capuchin monkey in the Yungas forest of northern Argentina - Peter Morrison.*

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**Pacific Biodiversity Institute**  
**Blazing the trail for conservation in the 21st century**

PO Box 298 | Winthrop, WA 98862  
| [information@pacificbio.org](mailto:information@pacificbio.org) | 509.996.2490

*Pacific Biodiversity Institute is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. PBI works throughout North and South America, with a homebase in Washington's Methow Valley.*

project unique.

Prior to the influx of Canadians and Europeans in the mid-1850s the ancestors of the 12 aboriginal tribes were nomadic; they followed the seasons of nature and their sources of food. Their aboriginal territories were grouped primarily around waterways such as the Columbia River, the San Poil River, the Okanogan River, the Snake River and the Wallowa River. They traveled through both these territories and other areas in the northwest before the United States and Canada came into existence, gathering with other native peoples for traditional activities such as food harvesting, feasting, trading, and celebrations that included sports and gambling. Their lives were tied to the cycles of nature both spiritually and traditionally.

Now, natural resources, wildlife and cultural traditions are still very important. Today, over 9,365 descendants are enrolled in the Confederated Tribes known by English and French names: the Colville, the Nespelem, the San Poil, the Lake, the Palus, the Wenatchi (Wenatchee), the Chelan, the Entiat, the Methow, the southern Okanogan, the Moses Columbia and the Nez Perce of Chief Joseph's Bands.

### Thanks

Many thanks to Mary Johnson for her help with editing the eNews articles.

Special thanks to Pattie Hutchins, Chris Brown, Bob Weathers, Connie Walser, Mike Mohundro and Sue Ehler for their skilled harbor porpoise observations at Burrows Pass in the last months!

And a very special thanks to Dan Stroh for 15 years of service on the PBI Board and Paul Brookshire for 12 years of service. Both of you have contributed immensely to PBI's success!





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Pacific Biodiversity Institute  
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Winthrop, WA 98862  
US

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