



# ABALONE WATCH

February 2009

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Haida Gwaii Abalone Stewards



Haida Fisheries Program personnel are part of the Haida Gwaii Coast Watch Program, one of our many eyes and ears on the water.

Photo: Haida Fisheries Program



Council of the Haida Nation  
Haida Fisheries Program



Laskeek Bay Conservation Society



Skidegate Band Council



Old Massett Village Council



World Wildlife Fund Canada



Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve  
and Haida Heritage Site



Fisheries and Oceans Canada



Environment Canada



Centre for Wildlife Ecology at  
Simon Fraser University

**1.800.465.4336**

## Making Haida Gwaii Coast Watch Better

by Sharon Jeffery & Lynn Lee

Thank you for your ideas for how to improve the Haida Gwaii Abalone Coast Watch Program! In 2008, we were able to reach 12 Coast Watch participants for telephone surveys to help us evaluate the success of the program and to highlight how we can make the program better.

As a result of your feedback, the Haida Gwaii Abalone Stewards (HGAbS) are organizing a Coast Watch workshop for Saturday, April 25th, 2009, so please put the date on your calendars and expect an invitation from us soon. A thank you letter and package with newsletters and updated outreach materials were mailed out to Coast Watch participants last fall, and materials will also be available at the upcoming workshop.

The abalone Coast Watch program was initiated in 2004 by the HGAbS to facilitate reports of suspicious activity related to abalone

poaching. In 2007 the 48 program participants included small vessel operators, charter businesses, Haida Watchmen, conservation groups and other volunteers.

In order to evaluate program success, participants were interviewed in 2005 and 2007. Interview surveys were designed to: (a) profile participants and estimate overall volunteer effort; (b) assess the incidence of unreported observations of suspicious activity; and (c) identify ways that the Coast Watch program could be improved.

According to survey results, an estimated total of 2,994 person days were spent by participants on the water throughout most of Haida Gwaii in 2007 – an excellent effort by any standard! Coast Watch participants were out during all months of the year with efforts concentrated in the summer.

Suspicious activity was only observed by one respondent who

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indicated seeing 6-12 suspicious incidents around Tasu Sound; however, these incidents were not reported to the hotline.

When asked, participants said that the *Haida Gwaii Abalone* glossy brochure was the outreach item they used most; however, others were simply not aware of what materials are available. An annual Coast Watch meeting and newspaper ads were identified as ways to help keep people up to date.

How can the Coast Watch Program be improved? From the watchmen perspective, a more secure means to report suspicious activity was identified instead of relying on the public marine radio channel. To improve communication between the HGAbS and program participants, ideas were to host an annual workshop with presentations, provide informational emails and newsletters at least twice a year, and redistribute decals, brochures and tide tables each year.

The HGAbS look forward to another season of working with you to help others learn more about abalone and whales at risk, and to keep an eye out on the waters of our extensive coastline to report signs of suspicious activities.

#### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

**MARCH 23** . Whale Photo ID Daytime Workshop . 10am to 4pm . Haida Heritage Centre

**APRIL 25** . Abalone, Whales & Making Coast Watch Better . Coast Watch Workshop

*Coast Watch participants invited*

## **WHAT'S THAT WHALE ALL ABOUT?**

FREE public presentation on humpback & killer whale research in BC

**SKIDEGATE . Monday March 23**  
Haida Heritage Centre classroom

**MASSET . Tuesday March 24**  
Community Futures Boardroom (NW Community College)

*Doors open 6:30pm . Presentation at 7:00 pm  
by Jared Towers, DFO Marine Mammal Researcher*

refreshments  
door prizes

*hosted by the Haida Gwaii Abalone Stewards*

## **Charasmatic Megafauna** by Lynn Lee

Are you wondering why there are whales on the abalone newsletter? You may have noticed both abalone and marine mammal information in the latest HGAbS mailout to you. Last year, we expanded our focus to include outreach about marine mammals at risk, focusing on humpback and killer whales. We will continue to do so in the coming year, hosting several presentations about whales starting with those in the ad above.

Jared Towers, a marine mammal researcher with DFO and independent whale watching charter operator on northern Vancouver Island, will be on Haida Gwaii in March. Along with the public presentations, Jared will be teaching a workshop on marine mammal photo-identification techniques and talking about whale research in BC. The workshop will take place on Monday, March 23, 2009, at the Haida Heritage Centre at Kaay

Llnagaay in Skidegate from 10am to 4pm. Please contact Lynn Lee at 250.626.3302, the Haida Fisheries Program office in Old Massett, to register or for more information.

Stay tuned for more about our upcoming Coast Watch workshop in April where we have invited local and off-island speakers to talk with us about abalone and whales. We encourage everyone to come out and share your thoughts with us. We will have updated outreach materials, promotional items and more. Thank you for your continuing time and efforts!



Humpback whale sounding near Langara Island. Photo: Graeme Ellis, DFO

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