

## September Wildlife Report

The September Labour day weekend was a stormy one. The rough seas made our boat monitoring work to protect orcas easier since very few boats ventured out into Georgia Strait. As gale warnings were posted even some whale watch companies cancel – a pleasant surprise as they have been out in extreme weather in the past. Lifeforce has urged govt to stop their operations during storms and fog.

### Doe and Twin Fawns

There are white two types of Black-tailed deer – Sitka and Columbian. There were three known fawns born this year. (see article at the end of this report).



### American Kestrel





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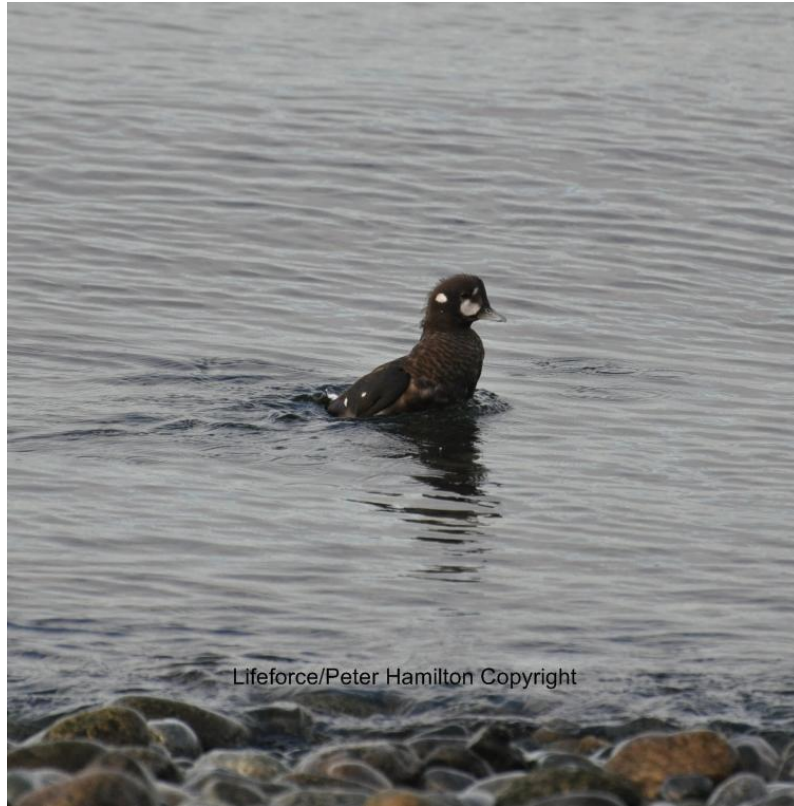
**Female Ring-necked Pheasant**



**Northern Flicker (Red shafted female)**



**Harlequin Duck - Female was with a group of four**



**Great Blue Herons –The Point Fashion Show? No heron chasing another.**



**Spotted Towhee (Male)**



**Caspian Tern with fish off park**



**Ring-bill Gull**

**First year**



**Adult (with feather on bill)**



**Killdeers**



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**A Mallard that likes berries**

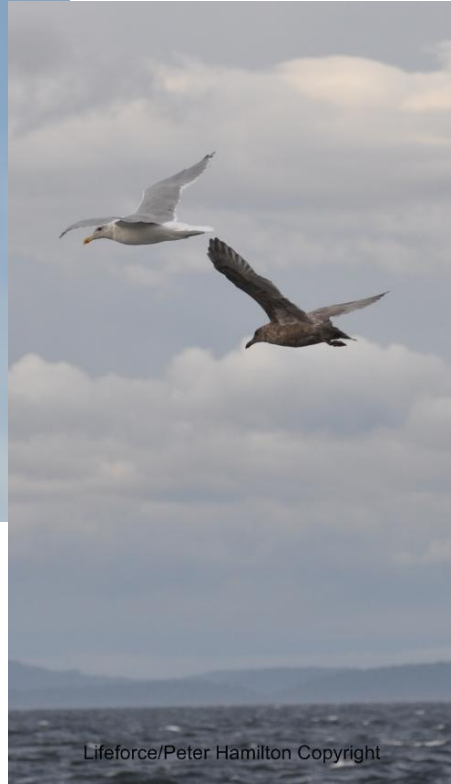


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**Gulls in Flight**



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**Common Murre**



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**California Gulls**



**Shore buffet**



## European Starlings



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## Boat Violations - Orca Report

Saturday September 12

The pleasure boat Calendonia was repeatedly driving amongst orcas



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**Other pleasure boat Pacific Hi within 100 yards and way too close to orcas**



**Pleasure boat Sunbird too close and in violation of legislation**



**Whale Watch company parked in path way against the legislation (Company is Orca Spirit)**



**Emerald Sea Adventures - “Emerald Moon” in violation**



**Prince of Whales – When the operator was advised by Lifeforce that he would be in the paths of orca. He said he had a handle on it. I guess that didn't meant getting out of the way.**





**Saturday September 12**

**An orca does repeated breaches off Lighthouse Marine Park, Pt. Roberts**





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## Young Cedar Waxwings



Friday September 18

Sunrise with orcas off Point Roberts



**Steveston Seabreeze – “Triple 8” blocking orcas in violation of legislation**



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**“Emerald Moon” again in violation**



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**Jim Maya's Westside Charters – "Peregrin" in violation**



**"Orca Express" in violation**





**Seaquest - "Keiko" in violation**



### San Juan Island Outfitters – “Sea Hawk” in violation



### A more peaceful moment – Great Blue Heron on Kelp



### Orca Pass Record Tied (September 22 to September 27)

At the end of September the Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) passed Point Roberts six days consecutive days matching last months record. There were many other passings too. In previous years my records show a maximum of 3 consecutive days. This area is an important foraging habitat and there should be a no go zone around the shore when orcas are in the area. It is possible that orcas are spending more time in these waters away from the continuous pursuits by whale watch companies.

The days were:

Sept 22 – 10:45 Orcas foraging off Point Roberts

Sept 23 – First these Sinclair Island Incidents then later the orcas were at Point Roberts

**Wild Whales Vancouver– “Quick Change” in violation of legislation**





**Seabreeze – “Triple 8” in violation**



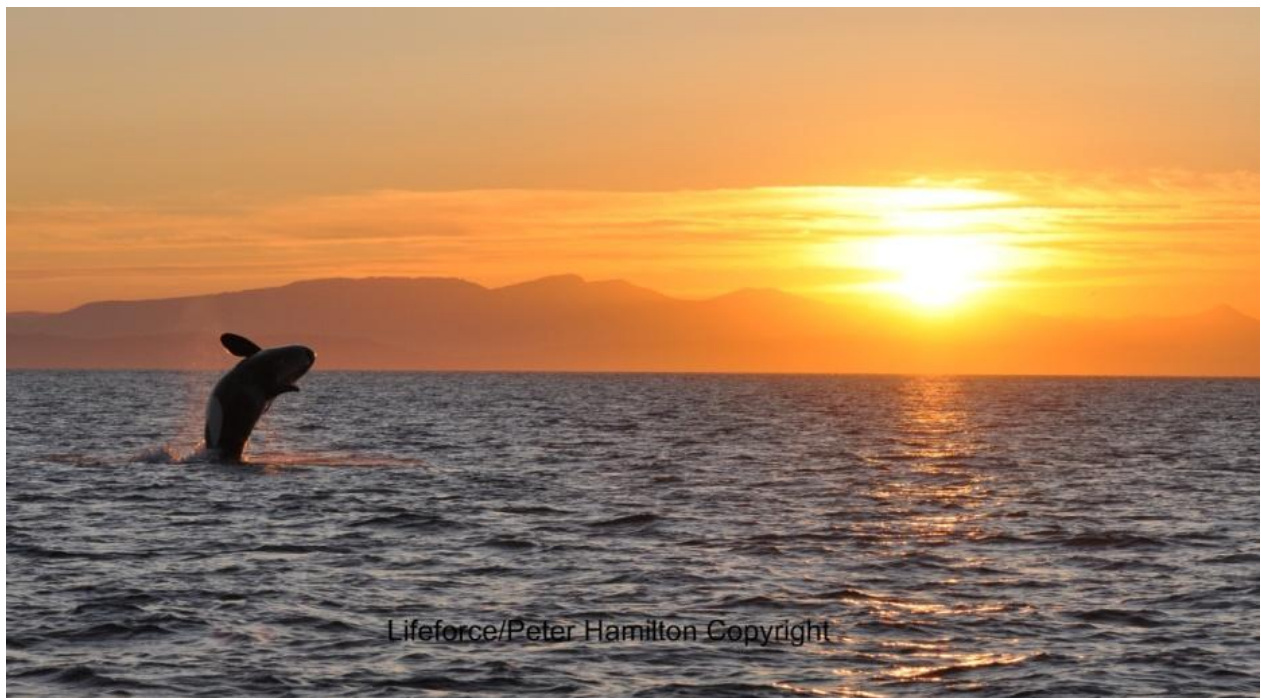
**Vancouver Whale Watch in violation**



**“Quick Change” Again! In violation**



**Breach at sunset off Point Roberts**



September 24 – Lifeforce took video of “Emerald Moon” off Point Roberts at approximately 3:30 PM. The video and photos supported complaints about him speeding in to intercept approaching orcas.



September 25 – First Black-capped chickadees were seen and then it was off to Active Pass. The orcas headed to Point Roberts



I had spent time on the west side of Active Pass advising company boats that if they entered Active to do it on the South side. Before that I got divers out of the water and the boat moved out of the orcas path into the pass. After the orcas entered and went to the Galiano side I went very close along the south Mayne Island shore - no orcas around me. In the Pass I stopped a blue and white Larsen who was speeding behind and into the orcas. I stayed on the south side to try to get to that boat again because it had went through the pass, turned and drove back at them. I was also trying to get to other boats. Some orcas that I paralleled went to the south side too and I stopped trying to get to those boats. Quite often the orcas spread and favour moire the northern side. . I waited until they were well ahead of me before continuing.

**Boats following orcas into Active Pass**



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**Jim Maya's Peregrin within the permitted 100 meters**



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**Outer Island Expeditions – “Triton” (They also have boat “Blackfish”)**



**Pleasure Boat – Larson AB1682370 drove at orcas**



**Another pleasure boat getting too close**



**Sea Fun's "Serengiti" – Company fined last year but still not following the regulations!**





These orcas were off Point Robert at sundown. Later we heard the passing blows by the first group at 8:00 PM and the second group 9:30

September 26 – Windy off Pt. Roberts – 3:10 PM



September 27 – 2 orcas seen off Point as darkness rolled over us

**I will end this September Report with the article:**

**Wild At The Point: A Deer Look At Wildlife**

The Columbian black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) of Point Roberts may be somewhat elusive but many residents and visitors shared their “deer” moments with me. From road crossings near USA Gas to yard visits to sightings at the marina and golf course these reports has determined a census of nine so far. This includes a doe with twins, a doe with one fawn, and four bucks ranging from “spike’ to full antlers. Spikes are first antlers which are small, forked antlers with two points. Bucks drop them between late December and early March.

Deer eat a wide variety of plants. Their main food is browse that is the growing tips of trees and shrubs. They also eat fruit, nuts, acorns, fungi, lichens, and garden crops if available. Fawns thrive on mom's rich milk for their first few weeks.

Deer are referred to as "edge" species, meaning their shelter and range needs are at the edge of openings and cover patches. They normally reside within a ½ to 3 square-mile area.

Deer breed during a rutting season that normally occurs in November and December. Bucks compete for the ladies and it can lead to intense fighting. Pregnancy lasts 180 to 200 days. Younger does give birth to one fawn and older does often have twins. Newborns can walk almost immediately. Adult bucks do not help raise the fawns as they remain solitary or in bachelor groups.

Some of my magical nature moments started in the early 2000s when a large buck, a doe and a youngster was on the beach in front of Pier Point. Another encounter occurred when I was sitting in the Liferforce van watching for orcas. A lone deer came up from the beach and passed within 10 feet. This year there was a young buck at the mail box near the Lighthouse Marine Park entrance. And in September I photographed the doe and her twins in the marina field.

### **Other September Wildlife**

I got great photos of a Merlin who was arguing with a Northwestern Crow who then received a departing blow as the Merlin flew off.



Other raptors seen were a young Cooper's Hawk, a female and male Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawks, and a female American Kestrel. The Kestrel was hovering nearly motionless searching for prey in the park. (photos above)

There were also Spotted Towhees, a pair of Killdeer, Northern Flickers, large groups of House Finches and European Starlings, American Robins, Rock Pigeons, Cedar Waxwings, Barn and Violet-Green Swallows, and Black-capped Chickadees.



The Harbour Seals and Harbour Porpoises were amongst the fleets of commercial fish boats. I took a photo of two porpoises passing the bow of a sailboat as orcas passed by. Boaters have been seen driving around and around the Harbour porpoises off the park. They do not ride the boat wake as do Dall's Porpoises so please turn off the engine to watch them peacefully.



If nature permits the November article will be about the sea birds that reside and migrate through the Point. Some species are arriving late this year possibly due to the warmer weather.

### **Respect and Enjoy Wildlife**

Point Roberts has a diversity of wildlife that is especially hard to find all in one place. Cherishing these beautiful creatures can instill respect for all life in both young and old. Shoot them with cameras not guns. It is more of a challenge to capture that perfect living image. While we marvel at the wonders of wildlife please don't approach, feed or try to touch. They may look cute but they can cause severe injuries. Junk food can kill them. So respect and enjoy them from a distance.

Lifeforce Wildlife Reports, Nature Moments videos, and Wildpeace photographs are available at [www.lifeforcefoundation.org](http://www.lifeforcefoundation.org).

*Note: This is the fifth article about wildlife on and around the Point in 2009. The other stories are at <http://www.allpointbulletin.com/archives/archives.html>*

*Donations are greatly appreciated and can be sent to Lifeforce, Box 121, Point Roberts, 98281 or Box 3117, Vancouver, BC V6B 3X6. Thank you.*

*And in the end I didn't get any ripe tomatoes at my home but I did get this "visitor" to the plants".*

