

LEARN. HAVE FUN.

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Time Sensitive Material  
Fall 2020  
Issue #15  
Issue Date - October 2020  
Published Quarterly

# THE WILDSIDE



253.514.0187 | WWW.HARBORWILDWATCH.ORG


Prefer to go paperless? Sign up for the online newsletter by emailing [lindsey@harborwildwatch.org](mailto:lindsey@harborwildwatch.org)


## THE WILDSIDE


October 2020

When you shop at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), select Harbor WildWatch as your charity of choice and we will receive a donation. Thank you!


### OUR STAFF

 Lindsey Stover  
Executive Director  
[Lindsey@harborwildwatch.org](mailto:Lindsey@harborwildwatch.org)

 Rachel Easton  
Education Director  
[Rachel@harborwildwatch.org](mailto:Rachel@harborwildwatch.org)

 Stena Troyer  
Science Specialist  
[Stena@harborwildwatch.org](mailto:Stena@harborwildwatch.org)

 Carly Vester  
Communications Specialist  
[Carly@harborwildwatch.org](mailto:Carly@harborwildwatch.org)

 Jennifer Beard  
Bookkeeper (Volunteer)  
[Jennifer@harborwildwatch.org](mailto:Jennifer@harborwildwatch.org)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Cocktails & Fishtales**  
Wednesday, October 21 at 6 p.m.  
on Facebook LIVE\*  
Orca Behavior

Wednesday, November 18  
at 6 p.m. on Facebook LIVE  
Microplastics

**Donkey Creek Chum Festival**  
Saturday, November 21  
Save the date for the digital  
festival! More info to come

**Digital Pier Into the Night &  
Salmon Walking Tours**  
Check our full schedule online

\*Note: you do not need a  
Facebook account to tune in!



**WHAT AM I?**  
ANSWER ON PAGE 2

### WHAT'S INSIDE

**FIELD UPDATES**  
**SCIENCE WITH STENA: MASKS**  
**GET YOUR FEET WET**

2  
3  
3



Please recycle

### UPDATES FROM HWW

navigate the challenges of the pandemic, we are looking ahead to offering favorite Harbor WildWatch programs digitally through the fall.

This includes *Pier Into the Night* live dives with our underwater drone, digital wetland and salmon walking tours, and a digitized version of the annual and beloved *Donkey Creek Chum Festival* (save the date for Saturday, November 21). We even will explore the beach live during a night time low-tide!

While we continue taking precautions to keep our staff and volunteers safe, we hope to continue engaging with our community online through live content from the field. And, most importantly, inspiring stewardship for the Puget Sound and greater Salish Sea!

These digital programs are in addition to working with local schools, where Harbor WildWatch usually is offering hands-on workshops and lessons to students this time of year, to find a way to digitally bring engaging STEM education to students.

It is also with bittersweet emotions that I share my departure from Harbor WildWatch. I began my small

### Digital Programs & Changes for the Fall

*Carly Vester, Communications Specialist*

As we  
continue to

production company almost a year ago to create films about the outdoors. Since then, it has grown in exciting ways, including the upcoming release of a documentary about the Tacoma Narrow Bridge collapse and wreckage beneath. After October 9, I will be focusing my lens on my company, Vester Media, full-time.

Harbor WildWatch truly has the best community, one that I look forward to staying connected with. Thank you for letting me photograph and film you at events, for sharing your stories in the newsletter. For your joy and silliness at our marketing table, and sharing your passion for environmental education by volunteering with us in many capacities. You all rock, and I look forward to (safely) seeing everyone locally in the future.

Until then, Lindsey, Stena, and Rachel have some fantastic digital programs up their sleeves for fall and winter. All of the latest program updates can be found on our Facebook page, website calendar, and regular emails (email [lindsey@harborwildwatch.org](mailto:lindsey@harborwildwatch.org) to be added to the list!).

Although we are facing challenging times, we're facing them together with our community. We are grateful for your passion and excitement for the Puget Sound. If you have content you would like to see more of in the coming months, be sure to let us know!

Photo above: A pod of transient (Bigg's) orcas swim past Salt Creek Recreation Area in August.





## Volunteer Feature

We absolutely love sharing where student volunteers' love for the Puget Sound takes them. The entire Sawyer family are long-time Harbor WildWatch volunteers, and when we heard what Ellie has been up to for the last couple of years, we just knew we needed to share her story!

**Tell us about how you – and your family – became involved with Harbor WildWatch:** Originally, my mom set my youngest sister Kiah up in the seaStars and Beyond program. She wanted her to

have more exposure to the natural world, especially to such a wonderful and diverse place as the Salish Sea. I came home on a break from college and ended up unofficially volunteering at a couple of her Saturday meet-ups, helping little kids learn about the salmon cycle. It happened again the next time I came home. When I finally graduated, I didn't have a job lined up that actually used my degree, so until I found it, I decided to officially volunteer.

**What are you up to now in the San Juan Islands?:** I am a marine naturalist working for the best and most responsible ecotourism company in the region, Maya's Legacy Whale Watching. My job is educating passengers on whale watch tours not only about the whales of the Salish Sea, but all of the other aspects, such as the geology, the habitats, and other animals that make the Salish Sea the diverse ecosystem it is!

I am also a recurring contributor to a podcast covering the Southern Resident killer whale decline called *Breaching Extinction*, in which I have both had discussions with the host of the show, Erica Wirth, and have also held interviews with various experts such as author and activist Barry Swanson, filmmakers Michael Peterson and Steven Hawley, and orca behavioral scientist Monika Wieland Shields. The latter of those will be out in the near future for listening, and I am super excited about it because Monika is one of my favorite whale people ever.

**What is your favorite part about your job?:** My favorite part of being a marine naturalist is exposing people to this beautiful place on Earth. The San Juans are at the center of the Salish Sea, and we see much of its diverse aspects here. It is really amazing watching people transform from apathetic and unaware of their surroundings to really appreciating the marvels of the world many people take for granted.

Opening people's eyes to the very complex and charismatic lives of our Salish Sea critters is extremely gratifying!

**Did Harbor WildWatch have an influence on this work?:**

Harbor WildWatch absolutely had everything to do with my decision to become a marine naturalist. I had very little direction after I graduated college, and had no idea what I wanted to do. For a while, I considered grad school, but I had little interest in a lot of the research that was out there, and the research I was interested in had little funding. I also considered working for the hatcheries, but after two volunteer days with them, I realized it was not for me. Harbor WildWatch showed me that my biggest passion is in teaching, and where better to teach than out with all the wild animals?

**Do you have any fun memories from volunteering with HWW?:** I have a lot of fond memories with Harbor WildWatch, but the one I always tell is when we had our touch tank booth at the Farmer's Market, and a bunch of kids wanted to check out some critters on the dock. Stena called it "belly biology," because you have to get on your belly to look at everything under the dock. I volunteered to take everyone over to the dock, and Stena cried out, "Yay! Ellie Belly Biology!" I still tell my passengers when I meet them at our dock about it, and it always makes them smile.

**Anything else that you would like to add about your work, orcas, or Harbor WildWatch?:** I would love this space to advocate for our Southern Resident killer whales. They are deeply malnourished, which is why we don't see them as much as we used to in the Salish Sea, so they have been going out further for longer off the West Coast, mostly along Vancouver Island. We have seen them for less than 3 weeks all summer here in the San Juans; compared to 5 years ago, when they would see them almost every week here, from May to September. They just aren't finding fish here anymore. Chinook salmon habitat recovery is essential to bringing them back from the brink, so I encourage everyone to pitch in and do their part, whether volunteering, calling legislators to ask them for help, or even talking to your friends and educating them about our killer whales. As always, I am extremely grateful to the Harbor WildWatch team for being such an inspiration and an amazing source of knowledge!



## Masks get the Harbor WildWatch Seal of Approval

Stena Troyer, Science Specialist

At Harbor WildWatch, we excel at talking about science in a fun and exciting way. It is easy for us to gush about all the cool critters that call the Salish Sea home and talk about their incredible adaptations to survive and thrive in this unique part of the world. We use educational opportunities about the environment to inspire stewardship for the Puget Sound and greater Salish Sea to positively impact the wellbeing of these amazing ecosystems.

A more difficult part of our job is conveying how our human actions can also negatively impact these creatures and places, such as our contribution to climate change. But, despite these challenges, we at Harbor WildWatch try our best to communicate the positive difference our collective actions can make which is as true in the face of climate change as it is with a global pandemic. So let's relate wearing a mask to some important stewardship tips!

**Replace single-use with reusables** - Disposed masks and gloves are the new beach trash. Don't let your personal safety gear endanger the safety of the environment. Dispose of single-use protective equipment correctly or opt for a reusable cloth mask



## 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Make Waves Benefit was a Digital Success



As with so many other programs, our annual benefit looked a little different this year. The Harbor WildWatch team pivoted digitally for *Make Waves*, creating an entertaining line-up of special videos, live remarks from the team, exciting drawings, and a fun Salish Sea Swag box to go with it all.

With your support, we exceeded our goal and raised over \$26,000 at *Make Waves* to support crucial youth environmental education during this digitized time. Thank you so much to everyone who joined us for the evening and raised their paddle to continue providing valuable STEM education to our community and beyond!

than can be sanitized between uses.

**Remember your reusables** - Think of a mask as another item to add to your sustainable adventure kit. Just like remembering to bring along your reusable water bottle, utensils, bag, or straw, add a mask to your list. If you can remember to bring your reusables to help protect the environment, you can remember your mask to promote public health.

**Keep your distance** - Marine mammals need a lot more space than the 6 feet of social distancing recommendations, but remembering to give marine mammals their space, especially seal pups on the beach, can help us remember to give our fellow humans some room too. Stay a "seal" distance away from others.

While science provides a method for producing reliable knowledge about the world, scientific findings are always a journey of learning and a work in progress. A lot of what we know about COVID-19 is evolving, but we do know that wearing a mask in public slows the spread of airborne pathogens. Let's take what we know to be good stewards for our community and for our environment to do our part. Please wear a mask... our 2020 harbor seal pin is (pictured left)!

## GET YOUR FEET WET

### Knock, knock! Who's there?

Just in case you needed a laugh (who doesn't?!), here's some marine jokes for a chuckle.

**Why do seals live in salt water?**

Pepper water makes them sneeze!

**Did you hear about the poor fish who got his left side cut off?**

Don't worry, he's all right now!

**What do you call a fish with no eyes?**

Fish!

What Am I? (Page 1):  
Keyhole limpet (*Diodora aspera*)

