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Cedar Beach Ocean Lodge & 49th Parallel Dive Charters

Vancouver Island BC, Home of the Boeing 737 Artificial Reef

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News from the SALISH SEA

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A TALE OF TWO TRIPS

This spring, we had the opportunity to travel to two different parts of British Columbia and would like to briefly share our adventures with you.

Excursion 1

From May 19th to 22nd, the Luckham's and the Lamb's left Thetis Island and the coast for a short visit to B.C.'s interior. Multi-tasking was the goal as several items were on our agenda and they neatly fit together. Encouraged by fellow diver, research assistant Donnie Reid, Peter and Andy were anxious to explore Pavilion Lake and its mysterious reef-like formations.



Apparently these mound-shaped structures were the result of some primitive life form and are the subject of ongoing studies by NASA and the Canadian space program. The fellows made two dives: the first at the primary shore access just off the highway and the second, on the other side

of the lake. The second dive was hosted by Dale Anderson and his group from the *Ocean Pacific Water Sports* dive shop in Kamloops. The clear water proved warmer than expected, making for a pleasant experience and terrific viewing.



The other major focus of the trip was to visit several local dive shops, meet with their staff and provide evening presentations about the dive packages that we offer on Thetis Island. In addition to Dale's shop in Kamloops, we also visited Chad Edward's *Innerspace Watersports* in Vernon and *Serpent Aquatics*, Sheldon Boyd's facility in Westbank (near Kelowna). These sessions were very enjoyable and provided great opportunities to visit with many enthusiastic folks. We look forward to hosting them in the future. Finally, what would a trip to Okanagan wine country be without some tasting? Over the course of the adventure, we stopped at several vineyards, to sample and purchase 'grape-squeezings' of interest.

All and all, it was a very enjoyable trip to a beautiful area we seldom visit.



Excursion 2

In early June, Virginia and Andy accepted an invitation to join a group aboard the *Nautilus Explorer* for a circumnavigation Dive trip around Vancouver Island.



It was our first such voyage around this large and spectacular island. As usual, owner/operator Mike Lever and his outstanding crew made us most welcome aboard this 116 ft., live aboard dive vessel. The group of over 20 passengers included several old friends/dive buddies and numerous other enthusiasts, all of whom quickly 'bonded' to form a happy gang of fellow travellers. Some of the folks came from as



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far away as New York and Virginia, on the east coast. Over the next ten days and nine nights, we cruised and dove our way, counter-clockwise around the island, stopping at numerous pre-determined locations. Sometimes, we anchored overnight at a location but more often, travelling was accomplished during the sunless hours. Speaking of sun, the weather was spectacular -- only two days with cloud, no rain and most importantly -- calm seas. The diving was excellent and for the most part good visibility provided the picture-takers in the group with countless great photos. Indeed, the best of the many contributions were selected for a complimentary trip DVD. As part of the proceedings, Andy carried his little orange and white 'holey' bucket on each dive for specimen collecting. Most evenings, everyone gathered in the main salon where Andy presented a "show and tell", question and answer session with the temporary little guests (later released). One particularly noteworthy pair of dives occurred at Solander Island, off the Brooks Peninsula. This remote location is nearly always subject to windy conditions and consequently has never made Captain Mike's 'hit list'. However, the day we were there, conditions were ideal and everyone was keen to explore. It

got the 'thumbs up' from everyone, with great Steller sea lion interaction included.



Photo gayle Van-Leer

For Andy, though, the highlight came with the observation and collection of a tiny sculpin that he had not seen before. Dive buddy Keith Clements also got several excellent images of the little fellow. Three captives (two alive and one dead) were eventually transported to the Vancouver Aquarium. Verification via two California ichthyologist confirmed suspicions that these were snubnose sculpins *Orthonopias triacis*.



Photo: Tracy Clarke

It is a significant find as this species had never before been

documented north of the Farallon Islands in California! Virginia and Andy are most thankful to have been part of this wonderful excursion and the outstanding hospitality of Captain Mike and his super crew.

It's been a quite year so far on Thetis thanks to the recession we assume. That said we have had one of the best Viz years that I can remember. Andy and I have been out exploring as usual when we don't have customers and think we have a few more nice sites that we would like to show you folks. We have plenty of openings through the fall and spring as well as some mid week diving through out.

The New Years eve week trip is full again this year and should be another great time. If you have any idea's for special event dives or weekend trips give us a shout and lets put together a special trip for you and your buddies.

We are talking about another round Vancouver Island on the Nautilus for 2013, if you would like to join us, let us know.

Hope to see you all soon, so happy dive, and may the viz be with you.

Peter, Simone, Andy & Virginia

Call or email us soon to arrange your next diving vacation.