

September 9, 2014

New Royal BC Museum book the ultimate resource on marine mammals

VICTORIA, BC – The rich variety and stunning species of mammals in British Columbia’s coastal waters are among the proud gems of this province, with sightings thrilling residents and tourists alike.

Now, with *Marine Mammals of British Columbia*, a new book from the Royal BC Museum, Nanaimo-based author Dr John K.B. Ford is taking an in-depth look at these marvellous creatures, delving deep into the traits of animals ranging from the iconic Orca to the playful dolphin to the beguiling Sea Otter.

This comprehensive new book, being released on Monday, Sept. 15, presents the latest information on **31 species of marine mammals that live in or visit Canada’s west-coast waters.**

“Marine mammals are intrinsically appealing to people because they are attractive, graceful and have a mysterious quality,” Ford said. **“They spend so much of life out of sight while underwater, when they do pop up there’s something fascinating about it.”**

Included in the book is information on 25 cetaceans (whales, dolphins and porpoises) and six carnivores (seals, sea lions and the Sea Otter). Through full-colour photographs and extensive analysis, Ford **discusses the animals’ general biology, including** how they feed, communicate, socialize and reproduce, providing a full picture on the fascinating lives of these beloved creatures.

The book also tackles each species’ distribution, habitat, social organization, exploitation by humans, conservation status and more.

“A quarter of all marine mammal species in the world have been recorded in BC waters,” Ford said. **“I think that diversity is what surprises people the most.”**

In a supplement to the book, Ford will be heading to the Royal BC Museum on Wednesday, Oct. 1 for a Live@Lunch talk titled *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly with Dr John Ford*. This free event will give readers a chance to meet the author and learn more about the past exploitation and current conservation status of marine mammals in BC waters.

For those wanting to get up close and personal with marine mammals and other creatures, the Royal BC Museum is also hosting the *Race Rocks: Ecological Reserve Tour* on Saturday, Oct. 4.

In partnership with Eagle Wing Tours, Royal BC Museum experts Dr Melissa Frey, Curator of Invertebrates, and Heidi Gartner, Invertebrate Collections Manager, will take a group of participants on a rarely allowed visit to the Race Rocks Marine Protected Area off the coast of Metchosin to see sea lions, birds of all sorts and other animals in one of the most spectacular marine areas on the West Coast.

For more information on these events and on *Marine Mammals of British Columbia* visit royalbcmuseum.bc.ca.

About John K.B. Ford

Ford, an expert in his field with over 35 years of experience, is head of the Cetacean Research Program at the Pacific Biological Station (Fisheries and Oceans Canada) in Nanaimo, and adjunct professor in the Department of Zoology and the Fisheries Centre at the University of British Columbia.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province’s human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for

reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, by 2017 the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

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Interviews with the author are available.

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