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Royal BC Museum's book about orcas breaches the surface on May 15, 2020

VICTORIA, BC—The Royal BC Museum's publishing department is gearing up to release a much-anticipated book about orcas, the emblematic mammal of BC's wild coastline and apex predator of all oceans.

Spirits of the Coast: Orcas in Science, Art and History, brings together the work of marine biologists, Indigenous knowledge keepers, poets, artists and storytellers. The book is edited by Royal BC Museum curators Dr. Martha Black (retired), Dr. Lorne Hammond and Dr. Gavin Hanke, with Nikki Sanchez.

"Orcas are complex social beings with a culture and language of their own," said Royal BC Museum CEO Prof. Jack Lohman. "This book reflects many of the similarities between orcas and humans, and challenges us to think of our responsibilities as a part of nature, so inextricably linked to these enigmatic animals."

With contributors ranging from Briony Penn to David Suzuki, Gary Geddes and Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, the collection features diverse voices that explore the magic, myths, and ecology of orcas.

Spirits of the Coast: Orcas in Science, Art and History was conceived as a literary companion piece to the Royal BC Museum's 2020 feature exhibition, *Orcas: Our Shared Future*, now postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The book's emphasis on three different, but interconnected ways of viewing the orca—through Indigenous cultural traditions, science and popular culture—reflects the tripartite perspective of the upcoming exhibition.

The 216-page book is replete with both colour photographs and illustrations, including (on the inside of the dust jacket) a complete, frameable reproduction of the mural *Orcinus orca SKAAanaa* by Haida mixed media artist Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, which was commissioned for the *Orcas* exhibition.

Spirits of the Coast: Orcas in Science, Art and History will retail for \$29.95 as a hardcover book and \$14.99 as an ebook. It will be available through local bookshops, the Royal Museum Shop and online at rbc.ca/books.

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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. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

Media contact:

news@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca

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