



Friends of Semiahmoo Bay Society

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Gray whales and crab molts signal World Ocean Day

Sunday June 6, 2010

Blackie Spit Park, Foot of McBride St., Crescent Beach, Surrey, B.C.



Carolyn Prentice and Parker Bromley, the 2010 Beach Hero marine interpreters, display a dungeness crab molt. *credit: Erik Poole*

A grey whale feeding in Boundary Bay this week was scooping up and filtering tonnes of larval animals, eggs and plankton in the same profusion as the mud worms that make Boundary Bay the #1 bird migration habitat in Canada. The eelgrass meadow carpeting the floor of the bay provides a lush nursery for 300 species including all of the commercially harvested fish, shellfish and crabs. Please join the City of Surrey and Friends of Semiahmoo Bay society at World Ocean Day to celebrate and learn more about the bounty of Boundary Bay.

Did you know that many of the “dead” crabs washing up on the beaches right now aren’t dead? They are molted shells like a snake’s shed skin. Crabs climb out the back of their shells-even pulling out their eyes- when they need more space to grow. Their new shell is soft for a few weeks while they puff it out to allow space to grow. They should not be harvested while soft because the meat is lesser quality and they are breeding. The male carries the female around on his pincers until she molts.

Whales, crabs, owls, birds, trees; over the past few weeks of the City of Surrey’s Environmental Extravaganza, programs have been offered on all these topics! Green Timbers and other parks have been given a spring cleaning. Hundreds of trees have been planted. At World Ocean Day, Surrey’s Extravaganza ends with a flourish, but the environmental work continues. Eco –Rangers will be out in Surrey parks through the summer. Beach Heroes will be roving the beaches on behalf of Friends of Semiahmoo Bay society, Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the cities of Surrey and White Rock.

Learn to be a Beach Hero at any age on a leisurely walk with a knowledgeable inter-tidal interpreter. Find out how to identify large, male Dungeness crabs that are legal for capture. Watch hermit and shore crabs scurry as their rock roof is gently moved. Learn how to conserve and protect the small – scale world that is right under your feet on the beach. The 2010 Beach Hero guided walks start at World Ocean Day and then continue to Aug. 31 at Crescent Beach and White Rock West Beach.

World Ocean Day also offers much more free family fun: local school music groups, interactive displays, organic food, crafts, face painting, a marine creature touch tank and kayak displays. Dress for possible rain and wind and wear comfortable shoes.



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