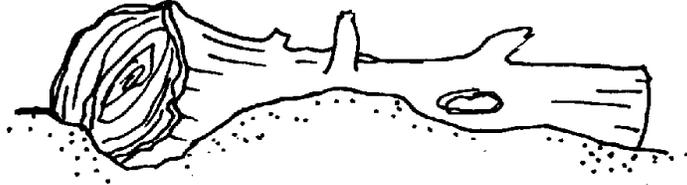




Education,
Research,
Stewardship

Beach Log

MARCH 2010



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
ISLAND COUNTY EXTENSION

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Handsome Samson Arrives in Town

When the 8-foot-4-inch-long carcass of Samson the Steller sea lion washed up on Double Bluff beach, Whidbey Island, on February 17, 2008, it came as something of a surprise to the Central Puget Sound Marine Mammal Stranding Network. Steller sea lions, which are classified as 'threatened' or 'endangered,' depending on their geographical location, had never been recorded as 'washed up' on Whidbey Island before, according to wildlife biologist Matt Klope.

Matt, together with Sandy Dubpernell of the Marine Mammal Stranding Network, set to work with over 40 volunteers to turn Samson into the third skeleton exhibit at the Coupeville Wharf.

Samson's skeleton weighs 75 pounds. In his glory days he could have weighed around 1500 to 2000 pounds, with a large chest and thick neck. Named after the German explorer Georg Wilhelm Steller, adult Stellers are light brown to blond. Their diet consists mainly of a wide range of fish. Male Stellers haul out and establish breeding territories in rookeries in May, which they can maintain for about 40 days without food. They defend these territories for an average of two years, and during the breeding season establish a harem and mate with many females. Their maximum life expectancy is 18 to 20 years, as against 30 for the females.

After a necropsy was performed and the cause of death established as pneumonia, the volunteer crew began the task of retrieving the skeleton from the carcass. Not a job for the fainthearted, the skin and tissue were removed from the bones, while the flippers were removed with the skin and bone intact. Allowing nature to take its course, the skeleton was left in Matt's yard to rot down with the help of those ever-ready-in-waiting little guys – maggots. Don't you just love this stuff?

The team is preparing to raise Samson, from left: Matt Klope, Jill Hein (BW Class of 2005), Sandra Pollard-Snowberger (BW Class of 2009), Clarence Hein, Sandy Dubpernell (BW Class of 1993), Veronica von Allworden, Mahmoud Abdel-Monem (BW Class of 2007) and Dick Snowberger.



Photo By Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



Samson (Continued)

When the dried skeleton was ready, the remains were taken into Matt's workshop so that the bones could be cleaned. Volunteers donned surgical masks to carry out the task, which entailed manual scraping, boiling water and bleach. Sandy made sure nobody went hungry while they worked, announcing brightly, "I've brought cookies."

To ensure that Samson would be put back together properly, the ribs, vertebrae and sternum were drilled and tagged before separation. Once the cleaning was done, Samson's vertebrae were strung on a cord to keep them in order. The cleaned bones were then coated with a mixture of white paint and Elmer's glue to protect them; the flippers assembled; the vertebrae secured on steel rod and suspended on a wooden frame; and the rib and skull attached. Finally, the sternum bones were added and the final coat of paint applied.

When Samson arrived at Coupeville Wharf early on Friday, January 29, 2010, some remedial carpentry was required before he could make his grand entrance. His front flippers were too long to enable him to fit through the doorway, and had to be attached after he was safely inside the building. Once this was completed, under Matt's direction willing (and slightly anxious) volunteers hoisted Samson on ropes to the ceiling. After a few adjustments, steel cable was used to attach him to his final resting place alongside Rosie the gray whale and Rudy the Dall's porpoise. After many hours of work, yet another valuable educational aid is in place at the Wharf.

To report stranded marine mammals please call: 1-866-ORCANET or 360-678-3765, or e-mail info@orcانetwork.org.

Sandra Pollard-Snowberger , BW Class of 2009



*Samson grins from his display perch.
Photo By Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999*

Greenbank Donors Support Beach Watchers Too!

Whoops! In the wonderfully long list of generous donors to the Whidbey Holiday Party auction and raffle, I inadvertently omitted the business donors from Greenbank, and I offer my apologies. As you visit and support the following businesses, as a Beach Watcher please thank them . . . Greenbank Café, Greenbank Cheese, Whidbey Pies and Whidbey Pies Café.

Nicole Luce, BW Class of 1997, BW Events Planning Team

Beach Watchers Class of 2000 Reunion

The class of 2000 will have their 10 year reunion on April 15th. It will be a pot-luck dinner at the Ledgewood Beach Firehouse [1903 Pinescrest Ave, Coupeville]. An evening of great food, camaraderie, memories, and merriment is planned.

Please contact Liz Berg [\[wardberg@galaxynet.com\]](mailto:wardberg@galaxynet.com) or Joan Gerteis [\[jgerteis@whidbey.net\]](mailto:jgerteis@whidbey.net) for more information.



The Olga Symphony

The Olga Symphony will return to Whidbey Island for a concert Saturday, April 17, 2010, at 7:30 p.m. at the South Whidbey High School, 5675 Maxwellton Road, Langley.

The group last appeared on Whidbey Island in 2006 at the Whidbey Island Center for the Arts in Langley. They have previously performed in Coupeville through the Concerts on The Cove series.

This very popular group of musicians from Orcas Island will present a fun filled evening of anything but symphonic music. They perform amazing feats of musical skill with guitar, fiddle, bass, mandolin, banjo, concertina, dobro, ukulele, saw (yes, saw!!) vocals and more. They have recorded four albums, all of which are available through www.cdbaby.com.

“The Olga Symphony got its start in the early 80’s when a group of young women from the village of Olga on Orcas Island wanted to learn to play the fiddle. Locals heard of the group and, perhaps thinking they were playing another type of classic tune, gave them the name of Olga Symphony. Over the years, most of the members of the group have changed, and the musical styles have varied to suit their various tastes. What hasn’t changed is that a group of folks get together about every week to share tunes and good times.” (From the album notes for “The Wreck of the Olga Symphony”)

Money raised from all of their performances and record sales goes to local non-profit charities or organizations. **Proceeds from the April 17 concert will benefit the WSU Island County Beach Watcher program, the sponsoring organization.**

Advanced ticket sales will begin March 15. Tickets will be \$15 advance purchase, and \$20 at the door. Ticket outlets will be announced in the next Beach Log.

Mussel Fest Extravaganza!!!

Good grief!! How many people were attending Mussel Fest this year?? I don’t have an exact count but there had to be thousands of people in Coupeville. It was good for the merchants and great fun for the visitors.

Beach Watchers, Marine Mammal Stranding Network, and Orca Network participants were well represented at the wharf and Recreation Hall. At the wharf, we talked to at least 575 people and we estimated that we had about 1500 people come through. That’s right, 1500. Amazing!! On Sunday, we talked to at least 464 people and probably had about 800 folks come through.

The visitors loved Samson, the new Stellar sea lion skeleton. Because of where he is hanging, we will not have to ask folks to look up. He is in the line of site when you come in the double doors. Saturday was such a beautiful day for all of us to enjoy and Sunday was great, even though it was cloudy. The folks that come down to the wharf love to have us there. They have many questions to ask about the displays and really like hands on activities.

Talking about hands on, we even had a youngster (about 6 years old) attend, who was blind. Oh my, did he love having some critters to touch. However, when he had had enough sensory overload, he put his hands behind him and said “no more”. This is just one of the special things that happened this weekend.

Saturday was such a beautiful day that I took my telescope from home and set it up on the deck outside. Beside it I placed two bird books. It was a good idea but really too busy a day for it to work well. There was so much boat traffic with visitors and the mussel raft tour boat that the birds were not hanging around. However, I do believe that it would be a fun thing to repeat this summer on the weekends. Even binoculars would be good to take down there. This is just an idea for some of you to use.

It is such a privilege for us to be able to educate some of the folks that come to our beautiful island. I hope that we can encourage more people to volunteer their time down on the



Octopus Week at the Seattle Aquarium

February 13th-20th was octopus week at the Seattle Aquarium. As I was preparing to teach a couple children's classes on the Giant Pacific Octopus (GPO) for the 4H Super Saturday, I had to go down to check it out and get some ideas. The Aquarium had a lot of octopus related events going on during the week, including a very exciting octopus 'blind date' on Valentine's Day (which I unfortunately wasn't able to witness). This is how the Seattle Aquarium briefly described the event via facebook: "Captain and Buster met on their Octopus Blind Date today. It was love at first sight with a tangle of 16 arms and 6 hearts! (Octopuses have three hearts each)." For those of you, like myself, who missed out on seeing this, here is a link so you can watch a clip from Komo news over the internet. <http://www.komonews.com/home/video/84359182.html>

They consider the mating date a success because the two cephalopods stayed tangled up like that for nine hours. Buster was then released and Captain is scheduled to be released on Saturday the 20th. When I went to see Captain, the male octopus, they attempted to feed him but he was not interested. This was partially due to the fact that they treated him with a live Dungeness from Pike's Place Market the day before. Dungeness crab are one of the giant pacific octopus's favorite foods. But the other reason why Buster may not have been interested in eating is that after mating, octopuses begin a process of senescence. Male octopuses will die within a few months of mating. The females will lay their eggs (up to 100,000) and protect them in a den, and as soon as they hatch, she too will die. After both octopuses have been successfully released back to their homes in the Sound, the Seattle Aquarium will get two new young octopuses in, and begin the cycle again.

Text and Photos by Melody Kuschnerit, BW Class of 2009

Fun Filled 4H Super Saturday

This years 4-H Super Saturday event was a great success. Super Saturday is similar to our Sound Waters Event except it is classes geared for 4-H members and the public. Parents are invited to attend as well as the kids. They had 175 registrants and 60 classes to choose from. The instructors were 4-H'ers, 4-H leaders, parents of 4-H'ers or community citizens.

I was one of the instructors and had two fun filled classes. There was plenty of hands on activity and many questions. Kids have a wonderful imagination and ask the most interesting questions. The adults that attended the class had a great time as well. Education about beach critters is fun and interesting to all age groups. The classes were one hour long so there was plenty of time to have a lot of interaction.

At the end of the class, I had a great little critter guide to give each participant. The Beach Guide was provided by the People for Puget Sound organization and had beautiful pictures of critters as well as interesting information about them.

(Right) Melody Kuschnerit and (Below) Sammye Kempbell, at 4H Super Saturday, February 20th.



Sammye Kempbell, BW Class of 2005

Photos by Jackie Vannice



Nighttime Tidepooling

Four adventure-bound Beach Watchers took in an evening of tidepooling on January 27th, when the tide was predicted to drop to the minus 2.1 foot level. Although the tide didn't fall as low as predicted, the group had great fun and saw some top-notch critters. Sea lemons were in abundance and proved to be a popular find. On her first nighttime tidepooling trip, Virginia Allen revealed a real gift for spotting the 2-3 inch molluscs. Two of the nudibranchs were tinted in a shade of green instead of the usual yellow and were promptly tagged as the world's first sea limes.

Several shaggy mouse nudibranchs were observed, some with nearby egg ribbons. Half a dozen hand-sized kelp crabs clambered along the edge of the trough just below the water level. Massive Christmas anemones showed off their colorful rings of tentacles and a few of the anemones displayed everted stomachs, a feat that astounded Kathy Fritz.

As the first car revved up to pull out of its parking space at the end of the evening, a pair of great horned owls hooted a spooky serenade from the treetops.



(Above) A Christmas Anemone.

(Below) The nighttime tidepoolers, from left: Kathy Fritts (BW Class of 2007), John Purcell (BW Class of 2008) and Virginia Allen, BW Class of 2009.



Photos by Mary Jo Adams, BW Class of 1999



Dates to Remember

Upcoming Camano Island and Whidbey Island Events

Camano Events

March 24 4th Wed. Lecture "The Honorable Farmer-Living Locally"

7:00 pm to 8:00 pm Camano Is Center (blue bldg.)

Camano Center Lecture Series by Beach Watchers.

Jon Stevens of Open Gate farms on Russell Road will be talking about sustainable living.

March 31 Camano Steering Committee Meeting

9:30 am to 11:00 am Camano Annex Office

April 5 Camano Island BWs Monthly Meeting

9:00 am to 12:00 noon Camano Center

April 9 Camano Naturalist Training for Beach Watchers

10:00 am to 4:00 pm PUD Bldg in Stanwood, WA

April 16 Camano Beach Naturalist Training cont.

Camano Beach TBD

April 17 Plastic Plant Pot Recycling and Greener Garden

Camano's Four Springs

April 28 Camano Steering Committee Meeting

9:30 am to 11:00 am Camano Annex Office

April 28 Wed. Lecture "Primer on Saving Energy"

7:00 pm to 8:00 pm Camano Center, Camano Is

\$\$ saving around your home. Speaker Dick Kent, WSU Climate Steward.

May 3 Camano Island BWs Monthly Meeting

9:00 am to 12:00 noon Camano Center

Greater Puget Sound Events

April 17 COASST Training

10:00 am to 4:00 pm Padilla Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve

For more information go to infor@coasst.org

Whidbey Events

March 10 Whidbey Beach Watchers Regular Meeting

10:30 am to 1:00 pm Race Road Fire Hall

Come for a showing Dr. Florian Graner's "Under the Salish Sea". Bring a bag lunch and relax!

March 23 Beach Watchers Advisory Council Meeting

10:00 am to 12:00 noon Whidbey Island - Deception Pass Parks Office

April 5 Whidbey Island Beach Watchers Training,

Coupeville Recreation Hall.

Training starts 4/5 on Mondays and Wednesdays
Coupeville Recreation Hall.

April 10 Grey Whale Cruise

11:00 am to 3:00 pm Coupeville Wharf

Join WSU Island County Beach Watchers on a Whale-Watching Cruise
\$75 per person includes a four-hour cruise, lunch, beverages and on-board naturalists
This is a fundraiser for WSU Island County Beach Watchers

The Mystic Sea will be leaving LaConnor at 9am.

To reserve space, call 360-331-1030 or email wsu.bw.island@gmail.com

April 17 Olga Symphony

7:30 pm to 9:30 pm South Whidbey High School

Fund raiser for the Island County Beachwatchers. This very popular group of musicians from Orcas Island will present a fun filled evening of amazing feats of musical skill with guitar, fiddle, bass, man dolin, banjo, concertina, dobro, ukulele, saw (yes, saw!!) vocals and more.

Advanced ticket sales will begin March 15. Tickets will be \$15 advance purchase, and \$20 at the door.



A Message From WSU Extension:

It is 2010!!

This means it is time for you to **STAND UP & BE COUNTED** in the 2010 US Census. Your participation makes a difference for the City of Coupeville, Island County and the state of WA.

- You matter to redistricting for representation at the state level and congressional level.
- You matter to appropriation of Federal Dollars back to states in support of state infra structures, roads, schools, hospitals, emergency services.
- You matter in being counted to the non profits organizations working in Island County. When applying for Community Block Grant funding for Shelters, or grants to support Emergency Services to work with families and individuals in crisis , or youth agencies working with local programs, all need to have the most current and accurate data available from our communities.

The list goes on for non profits and the importance of current data in applying for funding to support the many social service programs. Applicable for funding at the city state and federal level, Census Data is also important to applications for Community and Business Foundation Funding. Whether it is a community health clinic or a county health clinic Census Data plays a role in being funded. Whether it's a public /private partnership or a federal grant Census Data plays a role in funding.

From youth ball fields to Senior Day Activity Center, Census Data plays a role in awarding funding.

Island County needs to stand up and be counted for many reasons, the most important is to support the many services that support us. Be involved in your community Be Counted in 2010.

It's easy, safe and important, TEN questions to answer, mail back in a postage paid envelope by April 1.





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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT BEACH LOG
APRIL 16, 2009**