

Historical Ecology Talk 1 of 2 @ UVicAnthro

April 7, 1:30-2:15pm Cornett B235, UVic Campus

Life and death on a small island:

Novel interactions between wolves, sea otters, and people in
Kyuquot Sound, BC

A Talk by **Dr. Chris Neufeld** (Quest University)

The wolves on BC's West Coast are formidable predators known to supplement their terrestrial diets with a surprising array of marine creatures including salmon, mink, small crabs, and even barnacles. Although coastal wolves have been studied for decades, until recently no one thought their diverse list of prey items might also include the sea otter, an ecologically-important predator in its own right. This view of wolf foraging ecology recently changed when Chris Neufeld took his Behavioural Ecology class to a remote island in Kyuquot Sound and observed wolves displaying some rather unusual foraging behaviour. In this talk Chris will describe the preliminary results of his ongoing research to study the remarkable interactions between coastal wolves, sea otters, and the kayak guides (and their guests) that spend summers living in the same small archipelago.



Kyuquot Sound Wolf. Photo: Meredith Lewis

Historical Ecology Talk 2 of 2 @ UVicAnthro

April 7, 2:15-3:00pm, Cornett B235, UVic Campus

The fur trade before the fur trade:

Towards a (Zoo)archaeology of Sea Otters in Coastal BC

A Talk by **Dr. Iain McKechnie** (UVic Anthropology)

The contact-era fur trade on BC's West Coast (ca. AD 1778-1850) was a historically consequential process that unfolded throughout the Indigenous territories of what is now called coastal British Columbia. Tens of thousands of astronomically valuable sea otter pelts were obtained by First Nations' chiefs and traded with visiting explorers, who then transported these pelts across the Pacific Ocean and sent profits back to eastern North America and Europe. The enormous wealth generated by this trade encircled the northern hemisphere but also amplified existing political dynamics within and between First Nations. However, much less is known about how this short-lived period of trade relates to (and was preceded by) thousands of years of intensive occupation, use, and political control of the coast by First Nations communities, including ecologically significant marine hunting and fishing practices. This brief talk reviews the archaeological evidence for sea otters in coastal BC and sketches some historical ecological hypotheses about evaluating the former abundance and cultural importance of these iconic marine mammal species.



A Sea Otter in 'Friendly Cove' (Mowachaht/Muchalaht territory) in 1778 during Cook's 'third voyage.' Illustration: John Webber