

Bluewater Adventures Educational Programs

The educational program that we follow while the students are onboard is an all-encompassing program, intended to give students a 'taste-tester' sampling of the different activities, sightings and experiences found in the Gulf Islands.

Depending on the wildlife, the weather and the interest of the group we try to provide a program that will best represent the area and will best suit the group. For example, some groups prefer a focus on sailing and kayaking, some groups prefer a focus on marine biology, and some groups just come for the adventure and team building.

Aboard our ship students will have the opportunity to learn about natural history and marine biology, weather, environmental stewardship, vessel operation and marine navigation. Students learn through hands-on experience, group activities, observations and discussions. The following education topics are examples of some of the subjects that we cover in a trip.

Education Topics for School Trips

Natural History

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Explore and discover the marine flora and fauna. Depending on the tides, we will try and schedule at least one outing where we can have hands on experience with the marine invertebrates of the intertidal zone.
- Explore and discover the terrestrial flora and fauna of various Gulf Islands. We will identify some of the major trees that are found in this unique ecosystem, and will talk about why some of these trees are unique to the Gulf Islands.
- Explore different rock formations that play a role in what animals and plants can survive.
- Watch for marine mammal sightings using binoculars.
- Go ashore every day to explore, play games, or hike.

Weather

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Observe weather patterns.
- Listen to marine weather forecasts and attempt to understand the predictions from Environment Canada as well as the implications they will mean for our trip.
- Gain an understanding of why the climate of the Gulf Islands is unique.

Environmental Stewardship

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about the fragility of ecosystems and how their balance can be disrupted.
- Learn how to interact with animals on land or in a boat, so as to minimize their disturbance.
- Learn about, and sometimes participate in, local environmental issues.
- Participate in the recycling and composting systems on the vessel.

Vessel Operation

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Learn about the major structural features of sail boats.
- Experience raising, lowering and trimming the sails.
- Experience jibbing and/or tacking while under sail.
- Practice knots that are useful in sail/motor vessel operation.
- Learn about the physics behind sailing (points of sail, how boats can sail into the wind, etc).
- Participate in ship duties and chores, including meal preparation and clean-up, deck maintenance, head cleaning and general tidiness of the vessel.
- Participate in our watch roster system: Students are teamed up in a group and will be responsible for either meals, clean-up, navigation, or watching for wildlife. We will rotate watches throughout the day

Navigation Skills

Students will have the opportunity to:

- Learn how to read a marine chart.
- Learn how to plot a course and then practice going through with that course.
- Learn how to observe the landscape to determine the ship's position on a chart.
- Practice using navigation tools such as GPS, radar, depth sounder, and compasses.
- Steer the vessel.

Whether on the water or on land 'Mother Nature' has a way of pleasantly surprising us! Though we often have an agenda in mind, we like to remain flexible in our plan so as to allow time for these 'teachable moments'. If there is a specific program or topic that you would like to focus on during your trip, please advise the office well in advance of your trip departure and we will find a Naturalist to accommodate your needs.