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Tours from Ganges

Goat Island Tour

This tour is a spectacular introduction to some of the wonders of Salt Spring Island. After leaving our sandy beach in Ganges we will first come to Grace Point where there are often Great Blue Herons fishing. We then cross Ganges Harbour and head over to Goat Island. Goat Island is private property; however its owners have turned the island into an ecological reserve making it an excellent wildlife viewing area. The North end of Goat Island is quite shallow allowing us to explore the vibrant and bountiful intertidal life. The island is also home to several Mother Seals and their Pups in the summer. Traveling along its shoreline gives us the opportunity to see an active Bald Eagle's nest, Belted Kingfishers fishing, Cormorants drying their wings, river otters swimming along the shore, and mink scampering along the rocks looking for lunch. On the west side of Goat Island we paddle past sandstone rock formations before returning "home" to Island Escapades Beach.

Chocolate Beach

Similar to our Goat Island tour this is suitable for people with little or no kayaking experience and enjoyed by those who have paddled for years. It takes us past the intertidal life and wildlife of Goat Island to the shoreline of Deadman's Island. Along the way we may be followed by Harbour Seals, see Belted Kingfishers diving into the water, and Cormorants drying their wings. Bald Eagles are also a common sight; however, they leave for the early Salmon run in August. Our paddling will then bring us to the white shells of Chocolate Beach named for the exquisite Chocolate Lilies that grow

there in the spring. The Beach has a tropical feel and is a perfect spot for a scrumptious snack of tea, juice, and fresh muffins.

After stretching our legs it's back into the kayaks to travel along the west side of Deadman Island viewing the sandstone formations along the way. Then we cross over to Walter's Bay viewing the Bird Sanctuary, which is protecting the Black Oyster Catchers. Here we have chances to view more intertidal life and see Great Blue Herons fishing or perched in gnarled fir trees.

Sunset and Moonlight Paddles

These are a 2.5 & 3 hour tours that paddle around Goat Island and to Chocolate Beach depending on the tides and the winds. Sunset paddles typically leaving between 5:30-6:00pm, allowing time to see wonderful intertidal life and time to enjoy the glow of the waning sun and the rise of the evening moon. Sunset paddles offer beautiful scenery and the view of the setting colours - it is by far the best picture taking light of the day! Half way through the paddle we raft our kayaks together to enjoy tea and cookies on the water. Enjoying the calmer waters of the Gulf Island evenings, we often view eagles feeding over the water and seals catching their early evening meals. The Moonlight Paddles are offered around the full moon. These paddles typically leave at 8:30-9:00 and allow paddlers to enjoy the afterglow of the sunset and the enchantment of the moonrise. Here we often get to view the magic of the phosphorescence glowing in the water! This paddle also enjoys a sack of tea and cookies.

Marine Park Tours

The Marine Park tours allow you to paddle further a field and outside of Ganges Harbour to several Provincial and National Marine Parks around Salt Spring. These tours usually occur during the lower tide cycles of the day when intertidal life, marine mammal & bird viewing is best. We often see a large number of seals and depending on the season we may also see: Stellar Sea Lions, Dall's Porpoises, Orcas, Bald Eagles, Osprey, Falcons, and Herons. The ocean vistas and Gulf Island views are ever changing with the seasons, making these tours great year round.

There are several locations that we venture out to on our Marine Park Tours. The location for the day is often determined by the weather but and we try choose the Parks where we are viewing the most amount of wildlife lately.

Tours that we run regularly are:

Wallace Island

This island has a great history stemming back to the early 1900's. In the 1930's a resort was built in Conover Cove which was frequented by rich and famous actors/actresses of Hollywood, most notably Marilyn Monroe. This gem of an island is unique in its intricate sandstone formations and the frequented seal sunning spots on the Islets off the islands west side. We also view a magnificent array of intertidal life along the shorelines and often observe eagles, osprey, mink, otter and the ever present raccoons of Wallace Island. For interested paddlers we do co-ordinate overnights to this unique Provincial Park area.

Beddis Beach to the Mid Channel Islets

This tour allows us to visit both a National and Provincial Park. Leaving from Beddis beach, a midden dating back over 1200 years, we paddle along the coast of Salt Spring Island. Right at our launch spot we view a huge cross section of intertidal life as the river delta of Cusheon Creek empties into the ocean. Continuing along the shoreline we pass by sandstone formations as we head south to Ruckle Park, a designated Provincial Park. At Yeo Point, the northerly section of Ruckle Park, we head to the National Park Mid Channel Islets where there is a seal colony, and nesting sites for Oyster Catchers. This area is sometimes frequented by Orcas, Sea Lions and Porpoises. We circle the National Park and then head back to Yeo Beach to have our snacks or lunch in the Provincial Park. Continuing back along the shores of Salt Spring Island, we end off where we started from on Beddis Beach.

Secretary Islands

These islets are privately owned just North of Wallace Island. We access them from Southey Point the most northerly tip of the Island. South secretary has a large seal colony on its south western location and between south and north secretary we view a plethora of intertidal life and smaller marine mammals like otters and mink. Here we get a chance to view moon snails and giant Ochre Stars. Longer Day paddles may also venture over to Tent Island part of the Indian Reserve owned by the Penelecut Band.

Samson Narrows

This can be a half day or full day paddle and ventures into our newest park on Salt Spring in Burgoyne Bay from Baider's Beach. The waters here are

teaming with wildlife as the narrow channel between Salt Spring and Vancouver Island attracts lots of fish which in turn attract the large marine mammals like seals, sea lions and the occasional Orcas. The sandstone formations are extremely pretty here and we see at least 6 varieties of sea stars, sea cucumbers anemones, plus juvenile and adult bald eagles during early spring and summer months. Longer paddles venture to Burial Island where there is a seal colony and some exciting water to paddle in.

Fulford Harbour to Russell Island

Leaving from the south western shores of Fulford Harbour we head off on our Marine Park tour and paddle across to Menhinnic Indian Reserve where the midden beaches are spectacular and intertidal life is diverse. We may see seals on the Islets off the reserve, and on the crossing to Russell have the opportunity to spot sea lions or Dal Porpoise. On occasion the Orcas from "J" and "K" pod come in for feeding in this area. Russell has a pretty white shell beach on its south western shore where we stop for snack/ lunch it's a nice spot for swimming on a hot summer's day. The group circumnavigates the island and sees some ancient sandstone rock formations and often gets escorted by a family of River Otters on the eastern shores. Returning back the views of Mt. Maxwell and Mt. Tuan silhouette the western skyline

Prevost Island

One of the fascinating Islands of the National Park Reserve. This Island has so many beaches and coves that we are always finding new and exciting locals to pull out and view great intertidal life and marine mammals. We leave from our beach in Ganges or from Long Harbour. The trip out allows us to pass the sisters Island and have a stretch on Chocolate beach. The paddle takes us along the kelp beds of Welbury Bay and then out to Nose point at the end of Long Harbour. Here we are careful to time the tides and currents as we cross over to James Bay and have lunch in an old Orchard let by the Homesteaders on Prevost. Depending on the length of the tours we will either circumnavigate the island or head to along the Mid Channel Islets and view the seal colony out there heading back along the Salt Spring shores to Beddis Beach.

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