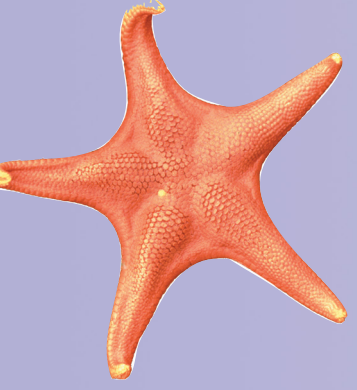


Healthy Whatcom County habitats support a wealth of plants and animals that are important economically, aesthetically and ecologically. How many of your nearshore neighbors can you recognize on this display?



From tiny planktonic organisms to the 30-foot orcas that visit our shores — Whatcom County’s marine waters are home to an amazing array of plants and animals. They provide food for our tables, jobs for our citizens and feelings of peace and wonder for our souls.

Directly or indirectly, every animal and plant in the marine environment depends on the nearshore habitat — the area that extends from the tree line on shore to an offshore depth of about 90 feet. Intricate food webs and complex life histories connect each species, including humans, with the others in this watery world.



Cobble beaches offer food and shelter for hundreds of species of invertebrates. These animals attach themselves to rocks or are buried in the sand between rocks and boulders.



Eelgrass beds are underwater meadows for fish, crabs and many other marine animals. These creatures feed, breed and seek shelter in this rich habitat, which is even more productive than any tropical rainforest on land.



Sandy shores are homes to clams, oysters, shrimp and crabs. Protecting these habitats will help ensure healthy harvests for the commercial and recreational shellfish industry.



Estuaries are places where fresh water from rivers and streams meets salt water from the ocean. The salt marshes that thrive at these intermingling places provide feeding and nesting sites for waterfowl and nurseries for juvenile fish.

Whatcom’s Wealth : Treasured Shores and Nearshore Neighbors



SHELLFISHING

Crabs and clams abound at many Whatcom County Beach parks. Birch Bay consistently shines as a top recreational shellfish harvesting location in the state.



FISHING

Whether by boat, on a dock or from shore, the many species of fish in Whatcom county waters are only a hook and line away.



PICNICKING

What better way to spend a sunny day? A picnic at the beach offers time to explore tide pools, stroll, paint, play or reconnect with life, nature and family in your own way.



WILDLIFE VIEWING

Eagles are soaring, ducks are diving, seals are peeking above the water and whales are spouting offshore – and all you need is time at a beach to enjoy the show.



HIKING

Nearly all our parks offer trails for hiking or casual sunset strolls. Some even provide bike and horse trails.



CAMPING

When you wish to extend a visit overnight and enjoy a campfire and stargazing, Birch Bay or Larabee State Park are the places for you. At Lighthouse Marine Park, you might have the experience of a lifetime, witnessing porpoises and orcas feeding nearby.



Many animals and plants of the nearshore environment are in trouble. Water quality problems, dramatic declines in salmon runs and herring schools and the loss of essential habitats are among the key threats to our marine resources. Some species are so seriously threatened they may disappear... unless we turn our concern into action.

Everyone is part of the shoreline • is part of the challenge • is part of the answer.

- INDIVIDUALLY** Each of us acting alone means thousands working together.
- AROUND YOUR DOG** Pick up poop, bag it and place it in the trash (not in the yard waste bin).
- WITH YOUR CAR** Take your car to a commercial car wash and have oil leaks fixed.
- IN YOUR YARD** Use fertilizer only if your plants need it, and if you must use pesticides, use the bare minimum.
- COLLECTIVELY** We can expand our impact by becoming involved with the Marine Resources Committee and other organizations to work together on projects throughout Whatcom County



THE WHATCOM COUNTY MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Helping to connect people with activities that keep our shorelines healthy

Established in 1999, the Whatcom County MRC strives to protect and enhance the local marine environment. It is one of seven MRCs created to assist the federal Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative to safeguard northern Puget Sound.

