

NEWS FROM THE SFU MARINE RESEARCH LAB



Third year SFU student Cassandra installing a GoPro Camera on Mitlenatch Island

A familiar seabird to visitors at Reed Point Marina is the Double-crested Cormorant. This spring, undergraduate students from Simon Fraser University (SFU) were able to visit Double-crested Cormorant colonies on Gabriola and Mitlenatch Islands in Georgia Strait to install remote GoPro cameras (photo to left). Not much is known why the provincial population declined by 70% in the early 2000s and remain 'vulnerable to extinction' by provincial definitions.

Kassandra, a student in SFU's Environmental Science

Undergrad program, is looking at breeding success rates at natural breeding colonies and comparing them to rates at the Ironworker's memorial bridge. For the first time ever, she has set up a near real-time image capture system to monitor the status of the cormorant nests. She observes how often predators like bald eagles take their eggs, forcing cormorants to start over. See here for an up-to-date look:

<https://portal.cam-do.com/folder/8757>



Graduate students learning about how an acoustic release works as part of a hydrophone deployment system

SFU is set to establish Canada's first national training program in marine bioacoustics, thanks to a \$1.65 million grant from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC). The initiative, led by a cross-disciplinary team of faculty in Environmental, Physical, and Statistical Sciences, will prepare graduate students to tackle the growing impacts of underwater noise from Canada's expanding blue economy.

In Spring 2025, the floating classroom under the SFU Marine Research Lab sign at Reed Point Marine hosted one of the new graduate courses, one that covered underwater acoustics. The facility gave students hands-on experience setting up hydrophone equipment and listening 'live' to the underwater soundscape of Reed Point Marina and the waters around Port Moody. This course was part of the new training program with a focus on skills to assess and mitigate noise pollution to protect vulnerable marine mammals in the Salish Sea.



Visiting scientist, Dr Harald Yurk delivering a lecture at SFUs Marine Research Lab at Reed Point Marina