

Aboriginal Fishery Patrol Sunday 2 August 2026

Delta Lifeboat conducted a 13-hour Aboriginal fishery patrol between Garry Point and Shoal Point in the Fraser River. Vessel Traffic informed Delta Lifeboat in the morning that a deep-sea vessel, Westwood Olympia, would depart at 1830 hour from Fraser Surrey docks. At the end of the afternoon Delta Lifeboat moved up river to be ready to escort Westwood Olympia down river.

At 1830 hours there was no movement seen and a decision was made to move downriver to the Alex Fraser Bridge. At 1900 hours RCM SAR 7 contacted Delta Lifeboat that they received a report from Delta Police that there was a report of a person who possibly jumped off the



Alex Fraser Bridge. Delta Lifeboat joined RCM SAR 7 and first commenced a search at the Delta side of the Fraser River followed by a search at the north side downstream of the Alex Fraser Bridge. Near the BTU (Barge Tie Up) the Delta Lifeboat RHIB was launched to search the area behind the tied-up barges - nothing was found.

At 2008 hours RCM SAR 7 came alongside to let Delta know that Delta Police had stood the search down. Delta Lifeboat continued the Fishery Patrol while the lookouts kept an eye out for any floating objects. At 2118 hours a lookout crew reported spotting something in the water, near Shelter Island. A plastic bag with unidentified items was retrieved. Coast Guard was informed of the finding and Delta Police were contacted to arrange a handover of the items that were found. At 2035 hours Delta Lifeboat conducted a box pattern search but no other items were found and Delta Lifeboat proceeded downriver. At 2135 hours Delta Lifeboat secured at the Ladner Lifeboat Station where a Delta Police officer waited to receive the items found during the search.

August 6, 2026 **The Delta Optimist** A7

Swimmers to embark on epic Fraser River journey

RADHA AGARWAL

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

Beginning Aug. 7, a team of women scientists, strategists, and Indigenous swimmers will plunge into the glacial waters near Mount Robson.

Their goal is monumental: a 30-day, 1,375-km relay swim down the Fraser River, culminating at Garry Point in Richmond on Sept. 4.

The relay is the centrepiece of the Fraser River Challenge, an expedition that also features a 1,000-km solo walk by endurance walker Justin Smith.

Together, the team is rallying public support to hold Canada to its commitment to protect 30 per cent of its lands and waters by 2030.

Naomi Devine, a Victoria-based environmental planner and one of the relay's core swimmers, notes that currently, only 17.6 per cent of the Fraser River watershed is protected. The team is advocating for First Nations-led conservation projects—specifically Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas to secure the remaining 12.4 per cent.



NAOMI DEVINE PHOTO

Kinney Lake, Mt. Robson Provincial Park is part of the Fraser River watershed because its waters flow into the Robson River, which joins the Fraser River near its headwaters. From this mountain lake, the water begins a journey that eventually reaches the Salish Sea.

"That would mean adding another 2.9 million hectares, roughly the size of Vancouver Island, as protected areas to the rivershed."

Devine will be swimming alongside SFU marine ecologist Dr. Isabelle Côté, forest disturbance ecologist Michelle Connolly, and rotating Indigenous swimmers.

Fraser Riverkeeper Fin Donnelly, a former MP and B.C. MLA who previously swam the entire river in 1995 and 2000, is leading the expedition alongside a motorized safety team.

For Delta residents, the health of the Fraser is strongly connected to local agricultural lands, fisheries, and shoreline stability.

The Fraser estuary serves as a major stop on the Pacific Flyway, supporting millions of migrating shorebirds, while providing critical sheltered waters for juvenile salmon adapting to saltwater.

"You can think of the estuary as part of Delta's life support system. It supports food production and fisheries, helps manage water and flooding," Devine explained. "People in Delta get to live next to one of the richest natural environments I've seen in Canada."

Devine's passion for environmental protection is rooted in her childhood, filled with memories of exploring a local creek with her grandmother.

It was a beloved waterway she viewed as "her close friend" until it was devastated by chemical pollution.

To prepare for the demanding condi-

tions, the environmentalist has spent the last couple of years cold-water ocean swimming, though she acknowledges the unique dangers of navigating the Fraser.

"It's cold at the beginning because it's glacial fed, and it's a lot colder than people think, so that's a bit of a danger in and of itself," she said, adding that the river's fast-moving currents present distinct physical risks.

Ultimately, the expedition hopes to demonstrate widespread public backing for Indigenous-led conservation before the 2030 deadline.

Residents can support the initiative by signing a declaration at fraserriverkeeper.ca or donating to the cause.

As threats like warming waters, droughts, and historic salmon declines converge, the team says the urgency has never been clearer.

"We see it's not only an environmental goal, but it's a cultural, economic, and generational responsibility," Devine said. "We're wanting to do the expedition to meet the scale of that challenge and the attention that we think it needs."

Community

Nature Notes: New Fraser Estuary project explores a different approach to marsh creation

CHANTELLE ABMA
Ducks Unlimited Canada

The first phase of construction is complete on an innovative restoration project in the Fraser River Estuary that could help shape the future of tidal marsh restoration in British Columbia.

The Process-Based Marsh Establishment Pilot Project (ProMEPP), led by Ducks Unlimited Canada and University of British Columbia's Conservation Decisions Lab, is testing simple, nature-based techniques designed to encourage new marshes to form by working with the river's natural processes.

Instead of fortifying restoration sites with the current convention of rock berms or other hard structures, at Tilbury Island crews have installed untreated timber piles, brushwood dams made from bundles of branches,

and native vegetation like willow stakes to slow

water, trap sediment, and create the conditions needed for natural tidal marsh establishment.

The pilot builds on observations from locations throughout the estuary where even recently new marshes have formed naturally through sediment deposition and natural colonization.

Researchers hope these low-cost techniques can accelerate those same natural processes while helping native marsh vegetation become established before invasive species dominate newly formed habitat.

This phase follows a successful pre-pilot completed in 2024, where researchers tested several restoration techniques, refining designs in spring 2026.

Alongside construction, researchers have been monitoring fish, inver-

tebrates, and plant communities in constructed and natural tidal marshes throughout the Fraser River Estuary to better understand how constructed marshes function over time and which techniques provide

the greatest ecological benefits.

By combining scientific monitoring, local knowledge and nature-based restoration methods, ProMEPP aims to develop practical tools that could inform future marsh restoration projects throughout the Fraser River Estuary and in coastal ecosystems beyond.

The project is funded by Fisheries and Oceans Canada, the Province of British Columbia, Nature Force and the Pacific Salmon Foundation.

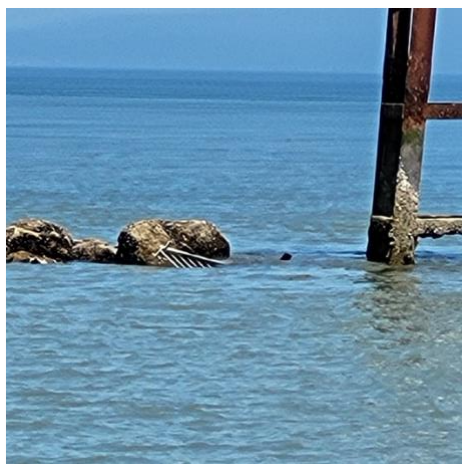
Editor's note: Nature Notes is a monthly column produced by the Delta Naturalists and its community partners. For info on monthly meetings, nature



JAMIE GAUK, DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA PHOTO

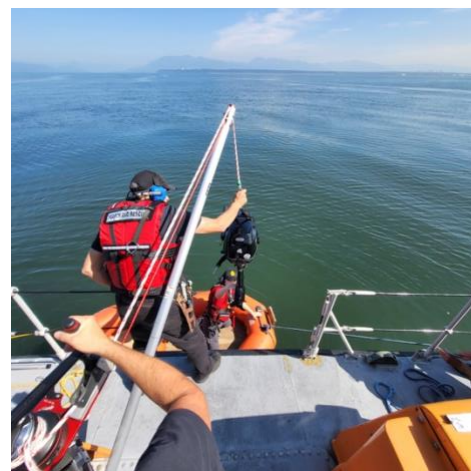
Newly-installed timber pile and brushwood dams on tidal flats beside Tilbury Island, next to the Main Arm of the Fraser River. These structures are designed to slow water, promote sediment buildup, and increase the elevation of the unvegetated mud flats which may create the conditions necessary for marsh establishment.

walks and more, see www.deltanaturalists.org and www.facebook.com/DeltaNats.



Fraser Lifeboat Training

Saturday August 8. While conducting training, Fraser Lifeboat noticed a ladder had come off one of the Fraser River jetty beacons. This was reported to Coast Guard Radio, after which we continued training. After conducting search pattern training, we put the new MOB davit to use. After a successful recovery, we tested the new outboard sling, using the davit to hoist up the outboard from the X-boat. This saves the crew's back and makes a lift easy.



Sailing Vessel Aground

While escorting a tug and barge during a Fishery Patrol event on Sunday August 9 the Delta Lifeboat crew spotted a grounded sailboat approximately 1 nm south of buoy S10. Coast Guard Radio was advised and requested Delta Lifeboat to send out the RHIB to get more details.

The RHIB was launched with two Delta Lifeboat crew to investigate. On scene, no people were encountered on board the sailing vessel. The vessel's name, license number, size, colour and appearance were noted down.

Once back at the Delta Lifeboat the gathered information was relayed back to the Coast Guard. No further action was required from the Delta Lifeboat and the Fishery Patrol was continued.

Compared to previous days of Fishery Patrols it appears that more salmon are beginning to entering the Fraser River as crew now report seeing salmon jumping out of the water and observing fishing nets with more salmon in them.



Tow and Near Miss

On Thursday August 13 Delta Lifeboat conducted a Fishery Patrol on the Fraser River. About 10 fishing boats were out fishing and it looked like their catch was increasing. While dinner was ready to be served a RHIB with two persons on board towing a 22.5-foot power boat was observed near Steveston Harbour heading upriver. The owner informed us that they were already towing for 6 hours with Ferry Road boat ramp as their destination.



Delta offered to take the power boat and RHIB in tow as the changing tide would make the tow to the boat ramp long and difficult. This assistance was gratefully accepted. A towline was handed to the persons in the RHIB who connected it to their tow eye at the bow of the power boat. Delta Lifeboat commenced the tow to Captain's Cove boat ramp.



In the meantime, a deep-sea vessel was coming down river in the shipping lane so Delta Lifeboat moved over to the south side. Delta Lifeboat passed a fishing vessel that was fishing in the middle of the shipping lane. There was just enough room for the Delta Lifeboat to pass on the south and the deep-sea passing north side of the shipping lane.

Delta Lifeboat towed the power boat as close as possible to the boat ramp at which time the owner used his RHIB to tow the power boat the final short distance to the boat ramp. After receiving thanks, the Delta Lifeboat continued the Fishery Patrol.



Dead Head, Fouled Prop and Broken-down Fishing Vessel

The Fishery Patrol on Saturday August 15th started at 0830 hours and ended with the Delta Lifeboat was back at the dock around 2130 hours. A long day but all crew did very well. At the end of the day many more fishing vessels came out as the rising tide brought more salmon in the river. At 1646 hours, a dead head stuck in the mud was observed at the entrance of Steveston Harbour. As this was a navigational hazard, the RHIB was launched to tow the dead head to a safe location. RHIB crew towed the dead head to the beach behind a barge at Garry Point where it was safely released.



Wellington Point boat ramp. Delta Lifeboat took the skiff in tow heading for Wellington point. While underway the RHIB was launched as it was needed to bring the skiff to the ramp.



Delta Lifeboat continued the patrol but at 1754 hours a fishing vessel was observed with a net in their prop. The fishermen indicated that no assistance was required but Delta Lifeboat stood by just in case. After the fishermen cleared their prop Delta Lifeboat continued the patrol.

While patrolling upriver near Sea Reach at 1929 hours a flashing red light coming from Sea Reach was noticed by the lookouts and Delta Lifeboat proceeded to investigate. A 24' aluminum skiff with 4 fishermen on board was anchored because their prop had problems. A tow was requested to



At 2000 hours Delta Lifeboat slipped the tow at Wellington Point and the RHIB assumed the tow to the ramp where the skiff was safely secured. After receiving many thanks from the fishermen, Delta Lifeboat recovered the RHIB and continued the patrol.



Fishery Patrol Saturday August 22

With Delta Lifeboat being busy with the Richmond Maritime Festival the Fraser Lifeboat was scheduled for a full day Fishery Patrol. To get an idea of where the fishing vessels were located, the Fraser Lifeboat first set course downriver to the Steveston Bend. A few fishing vessels were observed but they were all outside of the shipping lane. While returning upriver a sail boat passed the Fraser Lifeboat and to the crew's surprise it went through a fish gap in the training wall. Fraser Lifeboat turned around immediately and monitored the situation. Shortly after, the vessel ran aground. While Fraser lifeboat

monitored the situation crew prepared to launch the X-boat. The launch was aborted because the sailing vessel was able to free itself and it returned to the river. Fraser Lifeboat advised the sailboat to go around Sand Heads jetty because the path chosen was not navigational due to shallow areas. The skipper thanked the Lifeboat for their advice and continued their journey downriver.

The rest of the day a watchful eye was kept on the fishery and Victoria Traffic was kept informed of the areas of concentration of fishing vessels working the river.

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Delta Lifeboat Opens to Public at Steveston Maritime Festival

On Friday afternoon August 21 the Delta Lifeboat departed Ladner Lifeboat Station for Steveston to participate in the annual 2-day Maritime Festival in Richmond. The transfer to Steveston was uneventful and the Delta Lifeboat moored in between the wooden steam tugboat SS Master (built in 1916) and the MV Gikumi (built in 1954). A Captains Cocktail party was held for all the participating boat crews.

The following morning the festival opened at 11am. The overcast sky didn't stop the public from visiting the vessels as this year a number of vessels were open to the public. Lineups to get on board the Delta Lifeboat were seen regularly, something that hasn't been previous years when the boats were open to the public.

In the galley, pins, mugs and tumblers were on display for donations; **THANK YOU ALL who donated.** Because of people like you the CLI can do their important work like:

- Supplement local, community, provincial, and national efforts directed to the preservation of life and property and, in particular, providing equipment, and volunteers for marine safety, as well as search and rescue services
- Assist with the promotion of safe boating practices through accident prevention and safety education programmes

On Sunday the lineups continued crew hardly had time to relax or enjoy the live music provided throughout the festival. 22 Visitors showed interest and left their contact information as they were interested joining the CLI. They will be contacted in the coming week. Overall, the festival was a great event for the CLI.



Board of Directors Corner

Thanks to the many crew who have been on the boats over the past month participating in the Fishery Patrol. What was expected to be a very busy fishery event ended up being an unpredictable fishery; from, at times only a handful of boats to times where there was a dozen or so boats working in an area. To date, approximately 1300 hours of Fishery Patrol activity has been completed.

CLI participated in the Richmond Maritime Festival at Britannia Shipyards again this year. It was a very busy two-day family event with the Delta Lifeboat being open for walkthrough tours. Thanks to the crew that attended the show to interact with the public, and to those that participated in the Thursday evening pre-show vessel cleanup.

SAR t-shirt, crew pins, and hoodies have arrived and are available for pick-up, with the Delta Lifeboat being the current pick-up location.

The Delta Lifeboat has been outfitted with 20 new lifejackets, the Mustang Pro Series SAR Vest, Model: MV5606 was the chosen product. The purchase was made possible by a very generous donation.

If you have any questions or comments contact - CLI.board@canadianlifeboatinstitution.org

Board of Directors



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Like to JOIN?



M/V Namao – Crew Adventure

Hello all, I have been absent for training and patrol sessions over the last few months; I am happy to report that I have been taken on as a deckhand on lake Winnipeg's largest vessel - The M/V Namao.

The Namao, formerly a coast guard vessel built in 1975 to serve as a buoy tender, is 110 feet, 128 gross tonnes, and has two diesel engines outputting 625 horsepower. In 2005 she was donated to the Lake Winnipeg Research Consortium to carry out research and monitoring of the entire lake with a ship's crew of 9 and a compliment of 7 scientists.



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The work we do out on the lake has been very engaging. Our seasonal survey takes us to sixty-five stations all around the lake; at each station we do a fishing trawl, sample the lakebed with a dredge, take water samples at precise depths throughout the water column, measure the penetration of light through the water, and much more.



During my time here I have come across some stunning scenery. The northern half of lake Winnipeg is barely inhabited and mostly untouched, I have spent most of my downtime sitting up in the wheelhouse just enjoying the view.

That's all I have for now, I should have lots of time to show up for training and patrol starting in November once the lake freezes up.

