

News Release

17 January 2023

Ecoguardian Shoots Incredible Video of Elephant Seal Giving Birth on Race Rocks Island

METCHOSIN, B.C. – A [Pearson College UWC](#) Ecoguardian recently recorded and shared incredible video of a Northern elephant seal recently giving birth on Great Race Rock Island.

“I literally shot this footage from the doorway of the [Ecoguardian](#) residence on the island,” said Derek Sterling who emphasized that long lenses are used to minimize any disturbance to the flora and fauna on the Race Rocks Marine Ecological Reserve.

[Sterling](#), an experienced volunteer Ecoguardian, wilderness guide and photographer who is currently living on Great Race Rock shared his video with Pearson and a Field Naturalists of Vancouver Island site. The minute-long recording [can be viewed on YouTube](#) and other College social media platforms.

The Race Rocks group of small islands is sometimes called the “Galapagos of the North,” thanks to its unique high tidal current area that attracts a rich variety of marine life including marine mammals, sea birds, fish, marine invertebrates, marine algae and sea grass. It is a [haul out](#) area for California and Northern sea lions and a birthing rookery for harbour seals and the most northerly birthing colony on the Pacific Coast of North America for the Northern elephant seal.

As a B.C. Parks-designated Ecological Reserve since 1980, access to the marine environment and islands is restricted. Since 1997, Pearson College UWC took over management of the historic, now-automated Canadian Coast Guard lighthouse on the main island which was first inhabited in the 1860s. The reserve is an [unparalleled outdoor marine biology classroom](#) for Pearson students from across Canada and around the world who visit under carefully managed circumstances.

Pearson, Canada’s only United World College and one of only 18 UWCs around the world, has ties to Race Rocks going back to the late 1970s when teachers Garry Fletcher and Marks McAvity and students raised awareness of this area of great biodiversity and ecological importance. Fletcher also narrated the Race Rocks portion of a [video](#) commemorating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of B.C. Parks Ecological Reserves posted to the Friends of Ecological Reserves website.

The reserve, about 30-minutes by from the Pearson campus, is located In the Strait of Juan de Fuca, 17 km SW of Victoria, 1.5 km off the extreme southern tip of Vancouver Island.