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IN•FLIGHT REVIEW

**Helijet**

# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

REDISCOVER THE  
EXTRAORDINARY  
RIGHT HERE  
IN B.C.

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The Vancouver Island Northern  
Pygmy-Owl is one of 76 species  
found only in British Columbia



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SPRING 2021

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IN-FLIGHT REVIEW

**Helijet**

## In-Flight Review Magazine

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## EDITORIAL

BY **STEPHANIE CUNNINGHAM**  
MANAGING EDITOR

# Survival Until Revival

"If you're going through hell, keep going."  
—Winston Churchill

**W**HEN THE World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic on March 11, 2020, it was hard to fathom at the time just how bad things were, or the far-reaching consequences still to come. COVID-19 initially seemed remote and abstract. It soon got real when friends and colleagues began losing jobs and once-thriving businesses ground to a sudden halt.

Twelve months on, I make a point of staying informed and not being complacent, but I try not to dwell on the daily dose of distressing news. At the risk of seeming Pollyanna, there are silver linings to be grateful for if one seeks them out. Perhaps the best thing to come out of the collective siege mentality is how people are getting to know and understand each other better. Over the past year I've reconnected with neighbours, reinforced bonds with family and friends, and have empathized with those singled out by the fickle finger of fate.


What's more, it is encouraging to see how creative and resilient people can be when forced to react and adapt. For example, if you turn to page 8 in this issue you will read our Q&A with Dr. Philip Steenkamp, President and Vice Chancellor of Royal Roads University, in which he details how their organization responded to COVID-19, and supported other academic institutions in transitioning to online learning. More inspiring still is how many mid-career professionals have embraced online education, reskilling or upskilling to succeed in a post-pandemic world.





**“...it is encouraging to see how creative and resilient people can be when forced to react and adapt.”**

Likewise, when Helijet’s scheduled service was impacted by mandated travel restrictions the company adjusted and began seeking out new business opportunities, many of which have borne fruit. Transportation of medical services is one new area Helijet is delving into. Specifically, the air carrier is working with the BC Cancer Agency to regularly deliver radio isotopes from Vancouver to Victoria and Kelowna for the treatment of cancer patients. Helijet is also working closely with the First Nations Health Authority to transport COVID-19 vaccine doses to remote indigenous communities throughout B.C. The company is also in the process of returning its Lear31A turbojet to service to provide corporate air travel capability to new and existing clients.

Similarly, this publication — and its many advertising partners in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors — were significantly affected by the pandemic. We have been able to carry on through a combination of creativity and cost-cutting, but many of our long-time clients have been forced to temporarily reduce or suspend operations. To those who have been affected, we wish to extend our sincere gratitude for your business and friendship over the past 13 years, and we look forward to working together again as B.C. steadily re-opens for business. 

  
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# The Best of Both Worlds



## Captain Enrique (Ricky) Sanchez

Line Captain, Helijet

**H**ELICOPTER PILOTS and airplane pilots have a lot in common, but the respective aircraft they fly are two entirely different animals requiring vastly different knowledge and skills sets. Certainly, an airplane pilot would be utterly lost trying to hover and land a helicopter. Likewise, a helicopter pilot would be out of his or her element flying at high speeds and high altitudes.

The time, energy and money required to become a licenced commercial pilot in either field is considerable, so most pilots make the decision early in their careers to pursue one or the other. Very few hold commercial licences for both rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft.

Captain Enrique (Ricky) Sanchez is one of the rare birds qualified to fly both. A long-time employee of Helijet, he is the only pilot whose monthly flight schedule is divided between the company's two separate flight departments. Specifically, he operates the Sikorsky S-76C+ helicopter on air ambulance operations for BC Emergency Health Services (BCEHS), while also flying charter on the Pilatus PC-12/47E airplane.

Transitioning back and forth between helicopters and airplanes requires an uncommon level of training and experience, but it is a natural fit for someone who has devoted their entire aviation career to one company operating both types of aircraft.

"Everybody wants to be a pilot when they're a kid," says Sanchez. "I aspired to it, too, spending all my free time in the school library reading aviation books. After graduation in 1989 I somehow ended up working in commercial banking for 10 years. The nine-to-five grind, locked in a concrete building day after day, just wasn't for me. Then a friend persuaded me to join him doing Private Pilot Licence airplane training, and when that was done I continued with my Commercial Pilot Licence. I had a great instructor, and I loved learning to fly, but there were no jobs when I finished."

Many newly minted commercial pilots get discouraged when they discover most companies are unwilling to hire low-time pilots, but those determined to break into the industry often seek entry-level positions with established air carriers. To that end, Sanchez got hired by Helijet in 2004 as a ramp agent, tasked with fuelling and loading aircraft. Flying positions were



few and far between in those days so he continued working the ramp for the next two years before transferring to Flight Operations where he worked another two years as a dispatcher. On the side, he moonlighted as a pilot flying a small single-engine Cessna 172 on Traffic Watch to keep his skills up.

“Unfortunately, Helijet’s Fixed-Wing Department decreased in size over time and there were no openings for me so I decided to go get my commercial helicopter licence and instrument rating with Pro IFR in Boundary Bay. After getting my helicopter licence I spent another year working on the ramp.” Sanchez adds, “I paid my dues!”

Sanchez’s dogged determination paid off in December 2009 when he was finally tapped to be a First Officer on the S-76A, flying scheduled service between Vancouver and Victoria. He served in this role for five years before transitioning to First Officer on the S-76C+ flying air ambulance, where he spent the next six years before being promoted to captain on scheduled service in 2016. The following year he was upgraded to air ambulance captain.

“I really enjoy the variety and challenge that goes with flying air ambulance,” says Sanchez. “You never know what you’ll be doing from one shift to the next. You could be sent to land on a highway or logging road somewhere for a scene call, then deliver the patient to the rooftop of a hospital.” He adds, “It’s very gratifying flying air ambulance, making a difference and helping people.”

Sanchez’s fixed-wing flying skills lay dormant for several years until 2020 when Helijet required a pilot to operate the Pilatus PC-12/47E. After several months training and line indoctrination he was released to conduct charters, mostly flying radio isotopes to Kelowna for the BC Cancer Agency for the treatment of patients.

“Airplanes and helicopters have different considerations, systems and procedures, so I have to shift gears and get into a different mindset depending on which aircraft I’m flying,” says Sanchez. “It’s a challenge flying both, but I enjoy the variety and rewards of each. That’s the best thing about aviation — you’re always learning.” 🍷

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# Re-tooling Your Career



Photo: Royal Roads University

## Dr. Philip Steenkamp

President & Vice Chancellor  
Royal Roads University

**Royal Roads University was a leader in online education long before the onset of COVID-19. How has the global pandemic affected the institution in terms of enrolment and the delivery of programs?**

All post-secondary institutions were affected by the pandemic. Within a matter of days and weeks everyone had to shift to online or remote learning. It was challenging to move all our in-person campus residencies online, but we had the advantage of 25 years experience offering distance learning and were able

to draw on our faculty expertise. We also provided support to other institutions while they were going through this transition.

In terms of enrolment, we've seen a decline in international students deferring until they can come in person, but on the domestic side we've seen a significant increase. That's happening across the country and the numbers are way up. Students are looking at what they need to do to get the skill sets to survive and thrive in a post-pandemic world.

**The pandemic has fundamentally changed the way people work and learn. In your opinion, what changes will continue, or revert, after some semblance of normalcy returns?**

There was already rapid technological change taking place prior to COVID-19, causing huge disruption in one sector after another. The pandemic accelerated change that was already taking place over years in a matter of months.

We've learned a lot from the pandemic and there are lessons we will carry forward. COVID-19 is not going to spell the end of on-campus learning, as some suggest. What you'll see after vaccine rollout is more, and better, online learning. People have come to realize the incredible value of online learning, as well as the capacity, flexibility and reach of programs for students who may not have access.

Another thing we will take forward is the nature of working from home and in the workplace. I believe it will be a hybrid. There is a lot of value in people working and interacting in a common space, but we've also seen we are able to continue business with people working from home.


The same applies at university. There is no substitute for lab-work, field trips and classroom interaction. I'm hoping we can get back to our in-person residencies. There's something inspiring about being on campus, developing camaraderie with peers and connecting with professors.

**How have attitudes towards on-line learning and distance education changed in recent years, particularly over the past 12 months?**

There's a much deeper appreciation for the quality of online learning, and how it provides access and flexibility to people.

Everybody has been forced into this experiment.





Prior to COVID-19, interest in high-quality online learning was increasing, but the pandemic forced everybody to confront reality. It was pretty uneven at the beginning, with some universities just awkwardly transposing their lectures online. That's not online learning; that just remote learning. Others took the time to think what online pedagogy should really look like. The result is we're seeing much more use of digital tools available online, allowing students to access content at their own time and pace.

**A lot of professionals have been laid off, or furloughed, as a result of the pandemic. How has Royal Roads University adapted and responded to individuals wanting to develop new skills, or reinvent themselves?**

The pandemic forced a lot of people to reflect on their careers and where they want to go. Most mid-career professionals don't have the ability to put their lives and careers on hold to attend a full-time degree program so they are looking for particular credentials and competencies, short-term, that will give them the skills they need to succeed in a post-pandemic world.

Micro-credentials are going to be key in helping people reskill or upskill. Royal Roads University is building a framework for micro-credentials so people can build them in a stackable way that will lead to recognized credentials, leading to graduate certificates, diplomas and eventually degrees.

If you have found your sector disrupted, or you're looking to change direction in your career, this is the place to come. We can provide you with the hard and soft skills you'll need to survive and thrive in a rapidly changing world.

**What opportunities exist for professionals who have worthwhile professional experience, but may lack formal post-secondary education?**

Those are exactly the people we want to attract.

A lot of schools require a particular credential before they'll even open your file. At Royal Roads University we have a flexible admissions policy where we look at your entire life and career experience. In fact, in some programs — particularly business — we actually require people to have a certain amount of work experience before registering. That's the point: bringing people together from different careers and

professions to learn from each other.

Our emphasis is on a lifelong commitment to learning. We offer access at any age, at any stage in a career, and at any place. We have a lot of mid-career professionals come to us who might not have formal credentials, but because of their background and experience we admit them to master's programs.


If it's too big a leap to come do a master's degree there are all sort of other entry points. A graduate certificate may be all a person needs to get into the career stream they want to pursue. They can also accumulate graduate certificates that lead to a diploma, and then go on to do a degree, if they so choose.

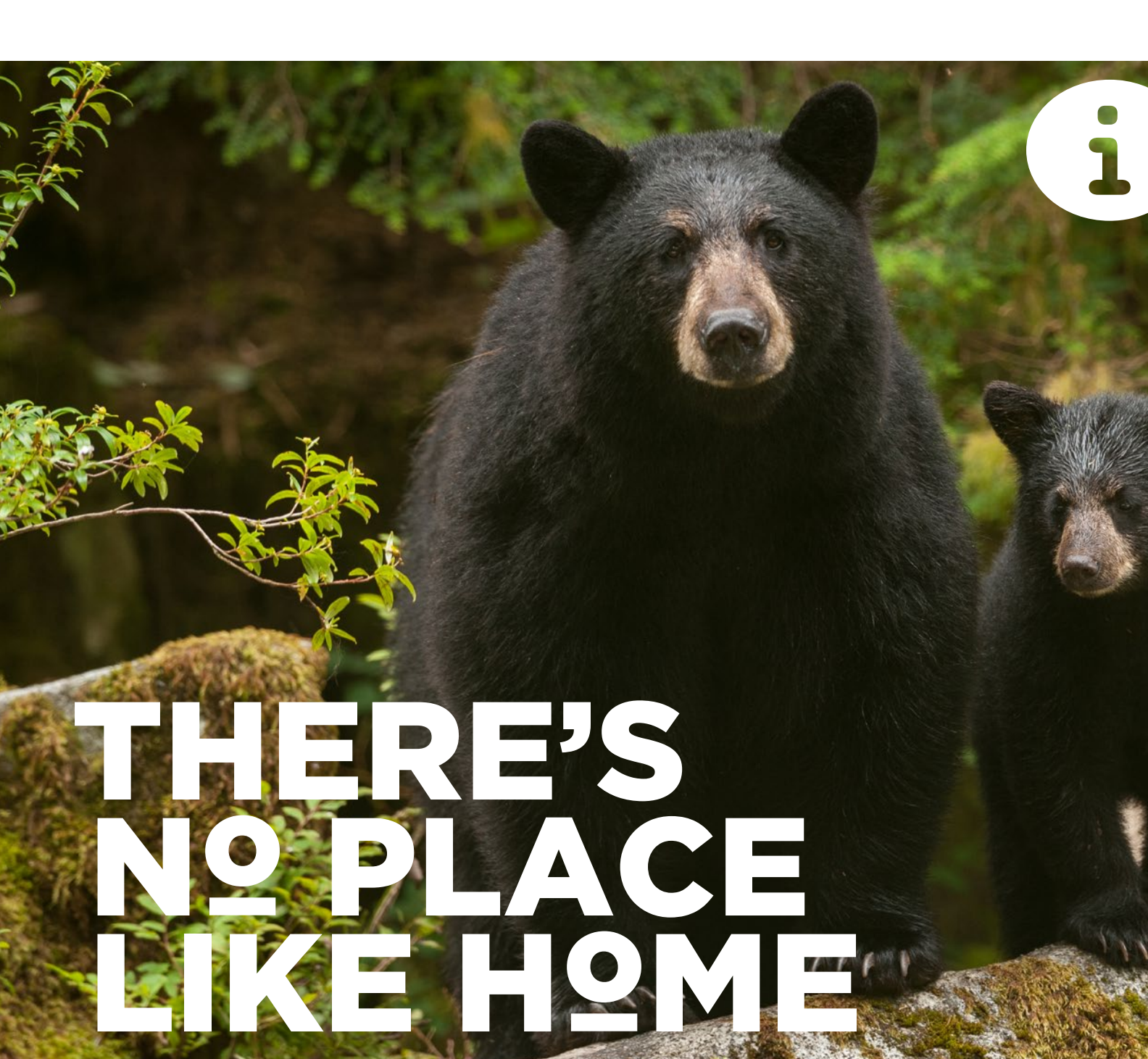
**What do you have to say to individuals who may be at a crossroads in their career, seeking to improve their personal and professional fortunes? How does Royal Roads University accommodate and support these people?**

A lot of online learning programs are completely self-directed with hundreds — sometimes thousands — of other students. There is very little interaction and support from faculty. Unsupported online learning such as this generally has poor outcomes in terms of completion and graduation.

Our retention and graduation rates are way higher than traditional institutions for a number of reasons. Specifically, we have mature students who are highly motivated. The average age of our students is about 36 or 37, and most are mid-career professionals. They are not able, or willing, to put their lives and careers on hold for several years to go back to school full-time with hundreds of 19-year-olds in a large undergraduate class. Mature students with work and life commitments generally prefer to access programs online at their own pace. Indeed, there are programs that can be completed in a year, or up to 30 months, depending on a person's capacity.

These individuals also value the high-touch experience Royal Roads University provides. Classes are broken down into small cohorts and students have direct access to faculty. The professors will know you by name. There is a lot of human interaction, even if it's in a digital space.

Lastly, it's worth noting our programs are customized to meet the individual needs of students in a lifelong educational journey — ultimately inspiring people with the courage to transform their world. 



# THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

By Stephanie Cunningham

**MORE THAN A YEAR** into the pandemic, it's tempting to long for exotic destinations far and wide. Truth is, you don't need to look far to find the extraordinary. There's plenty right here in British Columbia that is one of a kind and not to be found anywhere else on Earth. From endangered animals to exceptional landscapes, rediscover the many reasons why there's no place like home.

## Bears, owls and marmots – oh my!

Exclusive to the northwest corner of B.C., the elusive Kermode is a rare bear indeed. A black bear with a recessive gene that results in its distinctive blonde coat, the Kermode (also known as a Spirit Bear) was officially made B.C.'s provincial mammal in 2006.



### FAST FACT:

Beyond just its good looks, the Kermode's light coat gives it an apparent advantage: According to researchers, Spirit Bears are less visible to fish during daylight hours, making them 30 per cent more successful at catching salmon than their black-fur kin.



B.C.'s Kermode bears are named after Francis Kermode, original director of the Royal B.C. Museum and one of the first to discover the species.

Photo: Ian McAllister/Pacific Wild

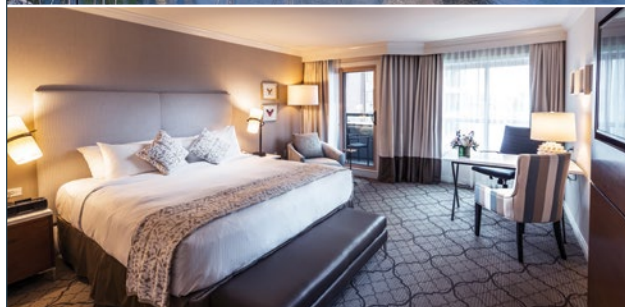
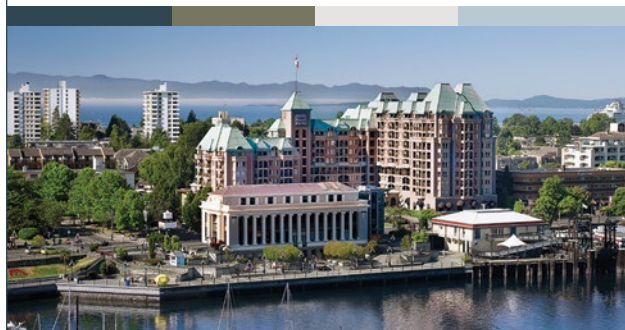
But as famous as the Kermode bear may be, it isn't the only animal endemic to B.C. A new report released last year by the Nature Conservancy of Canada and NatureServe Canada details 76 species (both animal and plant) found only in British Columbia. Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii are "hotspots" for the list of rarities, which includes everything from a sub-species of the Northern Pygmy-Owl, to the Vancouver Island Marmot to the Haida Gwaii Slug.



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## A rainforest like no other

The Great Bear Rainforest on B.C.'s northern and central coast is nothing less than a global treasure. As the world's largest intact temperate rainforest, this area is one of the most pristine wilderness environments on Earth. Covering 6.4 million hectares and stretching along some 400 kilometres of coastline from Knight Inlet to the Alaskan Panhandle, this vast ecological wonder is about the same size as Ireland.

Packed with diverse plant, marine and animal life (including the Kermode bear), this area includes some of the most biologically diverse habitats in the world. Up and down the coast, nutrient-rich waters support an abundance of whales, while the world's largest kelp forests provide a buffer zone that protects the intertidal areas and shorelines. A keystone species for the entire food web, Pacific salmon replenish the ecosystem and link land with sea, providing nutrients for both animal life and the towering old-growth forest.

**FAST FACT:** More than 1,000 tonnes of carbon are stored in each hectare of coastal rainforest, making the massive Great Bear Rainforest a precious resource in the battle against climate change.

## Dryest, hottest and wettest – B.C. has it all

There's no need to leave B.C. to visit the desert. Tucked away in around the town of Osoyoos, sits Canada's only "pocket desert," an antelope-brush ecosystem that is considered one of Canada's most endangered habitats. Home to rare rattlesnakes, at-risk falcons and unusual butterflies, this brushland area boasts three Canadian records: lowest annual precipitation, warmest annual temperature and warmest freshwater lake.



Follow the yellow footsteps painted on the sidewalks for a self-guided tour of Duncan's 41 totem poles.



**FAST FACT:** While Osoyoos may enjoy the driest climate in Canada, Vancouver Island is home to the soggiest spot on the continent. Located in between Port Alberni and Barkley Sound, the croissant-shaped Hucuktlis Lake (also known as Henderson Lake) receives almost 7296 mm (23 feet) of precipitation annually. Rainiest year ever? That would be 1997 when more than 9000 mm (30 feet) of precipitation drenched the area.

### First footprints


In 2014, archeologists made an incredible discovery: clear evidence of ice-age humans who walked the shores of B.C. some 13,000 years ago. The remarkably well-preserved footprints – 29 in all – trace the path of two shoeless adults and a child along the shoreline of Calvert Island and are now recognized as the oldest known human footprints in North America.

**FAST FACT:** Today, British Columbia is home to more than 200 First Nations, making it the most diverse province in Canada for Indigenous peoples. In fact, B.C. has the most First Nations languages of any province, with 34 languages and some 60 dialects spoken by the approximately 200,000 Indigenous peoples that have lived on this land for countless generations.

### Totem treasures

While Indigenous languages are often called “the voice of the land,” West Coast First Nations artists have also used house posts or totem poles to tell their ancestral stories. Archeological evidence suggests the earliest totem poles were carved by the northern peoples of the West Coast, including the Haida, Kwakwaka’wakw, Tsimshian, Nuxalk and Tlingit.

In 1986, Duncan was officially designated the City of Totems and today it is home to the world’s largest outdoor collection of publicly displayed totems poles. Located on the traditional lands of the Quw’utsun’ (Cowichan) people, visitors can follow the yellow painted footsteps on sidewalks through the downtown core to find 41 totems, each with signage telling the stories of the poles and the carvers who created them.

**FAST FACT:** Standing almost 39 metres tall, the Story Pole in Victoria’s Beacon Hill Park was the tallest freestanding totem pole in the world when it was first erected in 1956. Since then, the pole has been restored twice and following tradition, the totem will one day be returned to the Earth at the end of its natural life so that its stories can continue for future generations. 

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# The Health Benefits of Rain

BY STEPHANIE CUNNINGHAM

*Even on the soggiest of days, choose to focus on the health benefits of rain and you just might find yourself looking forward to the drizzle, rather than dreading it.*

## Nature's air purifier

In 2015, atmospheric chemists at MIT carried out a series of experiments that once and for all confirmed what had long been suspected: rain is a great air purifier.

As a raindrop falls, it attracts tens to hundreds of tiny aerosol particles during the journey from cloud to ground. This process of attraction, called coagulation, sweeps the air of all kinds of pollutants including soot, sulfates, bacteria and other organic particles. Researchers discovered the smaller the drop-let, the more likely it is to attract a particle, so greet that foggy, misty morning with gratitude – it's doing a superb job of cleaning the air we breathe.

## A natural lullaby

There's a reason why so many apps use the pitter-patter sound of rain to lull users to sleep. Our brains process the regular, predictable pattern of rainfall as a calming, non-threatening noise, the perfect soundtrack for meditation and slumber.

While the flat hum of white noise has long been the go-to for sleep-inducing calm, "pink noise" is a deeper mix of high and low frequencies, like the rustling of leaves, waves hitting the shore or – you guessed it – the steady fall of raindrops.

By reducing the high pitches of white noise, pink noise is a more gentle, pleasant sound and researchers are conducting studies to determine if it does indeed produce a deeper, more stable sleep. So far, results are promising but it's too early to expect a prescription for

pink noise as a sleep aid. In the meantime, take advantage of those rainy nights, crack the window and fall asleep to nature's lullaby.

## The sweet, sweet smell of rain

No, you're not imagining it – rain does have a distinct scent.

In the mid-1960s a pair of Australian scientists studying the smell of wet weather discovered a pair of chemical reactions that results in the earthy, pleasant odour associated with rainfall after a warm, dry period. They even coined a term for it: petrichor.

Turns out, when raindrops hit the ground, a certain type of soil-dwelling bacteria releases a molecule known as geosmin. And while many animals can smell the scent of geosmin, human beings are particularly sensitive to it – so much so, geosmin is sometimes used as an ingredient in perfume.

## Cool runnings

Going for a run on a beautiful sunny day may be the perfect way to boost your spirits – until it turns into a hot, sticky workout that slows your performance. A run in the rain, however, might just be what you need to exercise a little bit longer, extend your distance and build your sense of accomplishment.

Rain acts as a natural air conditioner, helping to keep your body temperature down, your effort up and reduce the risk of heat illness. Cooler temps associated with rain also force the body to stay warm, which over time can increase your metabolic rate and help burn more fat during exercise. **H**





**petrichor**  
[pet-ri-kawr] *noun*

a distinctive scent, usually described as earthy, pleasant, or sweet, produced by rainfall on very dry ground





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