

ZOOLOGY

The New Beachcomber's Guide to the Pacific Northwest

By J. Duane Sept. 2019. Harbour Publishing. 432 pages and 880 photographs, 32.95 CAD, Paper.

A Field Guide to Marine Life of the Protected Waters of the Salish Sea

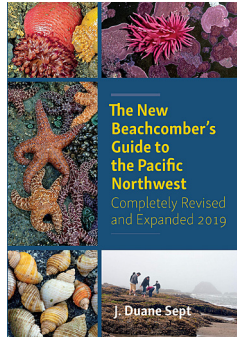
By Rick M. Harbo. 2019. Harbour Publishing. Pamphlet, 7.95 CAD, Folding Guide.

A Field Guide to Marine Life of the Outer Coasts of the Salish Sea and Beyond

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My recent move from Ontario to British Columbia (BC) introduced me to a number of new environs, each with their own suite of organisms. Mountains, glaciers, and temperate rainforests were all new to me. Perhaps most exciting of all were my first encounters with shoreline and intertidal life on the Pacific Ocean. Being more acquainted with the Carolinian Forest and Great Lakes shores, I was unable to identify most of what I saw. This similar situation must present itself to many who visit Canada's Pacific Coast or the United States' Pacific Northwest for the first time.

A series of new field guides, all by the same BC-based publisher, aim to provide a quick introduction to the species found on the shorelines and beaches of BC and the Pacific Northwest. Two different formats are employed. The first is a full field guide: *The New Beachcomber's Guide to the Pacific Northwest* by J. Duane Sept. This compact but hefty softcover book gives a detailed introduction to life in the intertidal zone. A brief opening chapter explains tides, shoreline zones, and microhabitats within the coastal ecosystem. What follows is 300+ pages of accounts of the most common invertebrate, algae, lichen, and plant species to be found on the beach. Each species is given one or two full colour photographs, a common name, scientific name, and brief outline of range, physical description, and life history notes. Species accounts proceed taxonomically with sections on sponges; anemones, hydroids, and jellies; comb jellies; worms; molluscs; lampshells; arthropods; bryozoans; echinoderms; tunicates; fish; seaweeds; plants; and lichens. No keys or identification guides are provided, so the book is best used by flipping through to find a photo that looks most like the strange crea-



ture you just found under a rock. For easier comparison, full colour plates of a range of limpets, snails, bivalves, and urchins are provided separately. This book is big, certainly bigger than a back pocket, but will likely provide greater chance of identification for those that must know about everything they find.

Parallel to, but separate from, this approach are the two pamphlets written by Rick Harbo: *A Field Guide to Marine Life of the Protected Waters of the Salish Sea* and *A Field Guide to Marine Life of the Outer Coasts of the Salish Sea and Beyond*. These two works take a similar approach to quick identification of intertidal life, but are definitely designed to be thrown into any pocket. In order to accommodate a drastic reduction in size, a more targeted region and fewer species are included. Both guides focus on the Salish Sea, the region roughly encompassing the marine region east of Vancouver Island, west of the lower BC mainland, and stretching down into Puget Sound in Washington State. The two guides roughly divide this region into an inner protected region and an outer coastal region. Understandably, there is some overlap in species. Like Sept's book, species accounts are presented taxonomically. Sticking with the condensed format however, fewer biological details are given for each species. Despite these restrictions, each species still gets a full colour photograph and over 75 species are included in each pamphlet.

All three of these publications can be valuable tools for those venturing out on the Pacific Coast. The cost is very reasonable and durable construction ensures that they should survive more than a few trips to the shore. The only difference is the relative size and biological depth that each provides. Certainly, any one of these works would be a valuable purchase for those, like me, who want to go to the shore and be able to identify most of the fascinating lifeforms that they will encounter.

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