



Bainbridge Island Shoreline Stewardship Program

BEACH SEINING PROJECT

In recent years, many fish stocks and marine mammals, including Puget Sound chinook, steelhead, and a pod of orcas, have been listed as threatened or endangered with extinction and scientists have become increasingly aware that the Puget Sound ecosystem is in trouble.

Beach Seine: (bēch sān) n. A fine mesh fishing net used to catch species in the water and on the sea bottom near shore.

The Bainbridge Island Shoreline Stewardship Program initiated the beach seining project in 2002 in partnership with the Suquamish Tribe and the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to produce a baseline inventory of species in nearshore waters around Bainbridge Island.

Such a baseline inventory has never been conducted around Bainbridge Island and was deemed important because little was specifically known about what species are found here and when those species are present. The information gathered in this project will help us be better stewards of our nearshore ecosystem.



(Juvenile pacific cod)

In order to produce a good baseline inventory, the beach seine sampling must occur at multiple sites around the entire Island at regular intervals and over several years. Our sampling typically includes six sites per day distributed around the Island. Four of those sites are called “core” sites and are sampled every time, the other two sites are called “rotating” sites and are selected from a total of seven such sites. Sampling occurs every other week during most of the year and once per month during the winter. Once a good baseline inventory has been recorded, data from future sampling can help identify trends.

Volunteers

While a biologist and at least on other staff are always part of the crew, the project relies heavily on volunteers. Volunteers learn to identify and measure fish and record data. But most important, volunteers get to learn about

nearshore ecology first hand and experience the great diversity that exists between sites with different habitats and at different seasons of the year.



(Volunteers and staff sampling at Pritchard Park)

Salmon

While the baseline inventory has documented 56 species so far, the project provides very valuable data on salmon in our nearshore waters. Specifically, we are able to record when and for how long juvenile salmon are present around Bainbridge. Additionally, the Suquamish tribe can use the salmon data to ensure that hatchery operations are not impacting wild salmon populations.



(Juvenile coho salmon)

So far, we have documented chinook, coho, chum, and pink salmon and steelhead and cutthroat trout foraging and migrating along the shorelines of Bainbridge Island. Interestingly, many of these fish appear to forage throughout Puget Sound for longer periods and over larger areas than biologist previously thought. In addition to supporting salmon originating from local Bainbridge Island and Kitsap County streams, our nearshore areas have been shown to support juvenile salmon originating from the White, Green, Skagit, and Nisqually Rivers as well as the Lake Sammamish watershed. Another study near Bremerton even documented a chinook that had originated from the Frasier River in British Columbia, Canada.

Interested in Volunteering?

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Bainbridge Beach Seine Locations

