

Things to See and Do in Port Hardy

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Carrot Park

Home of the famous “Welcome to Port Hardy” sign, this park is the most photographed site in Port Hardy! The Sea Wall connects Carrot Park and Tsulquate Park at Mile “0” of the Island Highway (Highway 19) and provides a panoramic view of Hardy Bay with a backdrop of the snow-capped Coastal Mountain Range. Amber lights light the walk in the evening, providing a pleasant atmosphere for a leisurely stroll along the waterfront.

Shopping

Port Hardy has a variety of small shops and a diversity of eateries. Market Street is our main street, where you can find many souvenir shops and galleries, each with their own unique little treasures. The Thunderbird Mall is located within walking distance of downtown and the Information Centre. A list of local restaurant menu's are available at the Information Centre for your perusal.

Totem Poles

Totem Poles are located at:

- Fort Rupert Reserve
- Port Hardy Airport
- Bear Cove Terminal (BC Ferries)
- Chamber of Commerce (Information Centre)
- Thunderbird Inn (inside lobby)
- Port Hardy Secondary School (inside foyer)
- Rotary Park
- Thunderbird Mall (inside front entrance)

Carvers

The *Copper Maker Gallery* is located on the Fort Rupert Reserve. Tony and Calvin Hunt are among the local Native artists and carvers working out of this shop. This work includes Southern Kwakiutl art, carvings, bowls, masks and totem poles. Commissionable pieces are available. Many of the works have made it to museums and cultural centers all over the world. Call (250) 949-8491 for further information.

Chain Saw Carvings – A former resident of Port Hardy carved all these unique signs.

Visitors can view these truly wonderful signs at the following locations:

- Carrot Park – “Welcome to Port Hardy”
- RCMP Detachment – Salmon
- Glen Lyon Inn – Eagle
- Airport Inn – Bear
- Highway 19 and Hardy Bay Road Junction (Jessie's B&B) – Bear
- Public Library – Bear (one inside and one outside)
- Highway 19 and Bear Cove Highway – 3 Bears
- Sunny Sanctuary Campground – Eagle and Lumberjack

Tour of Murals

Port Hardy's of murals are located at:

- Airport Inn (outside)
- Malone's Oceanside Bistro (inside)
- Hardy Buoys Smoked Fish (inside & outside)
- Library (outside)
- Port Hardy Outdoor Experience (inside)
- North Island Diving & Water sports (outside)
- Thunderbird Mall (inside)
- Seagate Hotel (inside lobby)

Port Hardy Museum and Archives

The museum houses many historic North Island artifacts and photographs. Public programs focusing on local interest topics are often presented weekly during the summer months. The museum's gift shop specializes in products crafted by local and BC artists. Be sure to see the mural painted on the outside wall. Call (250) 949-8143 for more information.

Public Library

Open at various hours during the week, the public library offers an abundance of books that can be signed out or just read while sitting in the brightly lit, designated areas. Call (250) 949-6661 for hours of operation.

Beachcombing

Search our beaches for shells, rocks and other treasures. Watch for spitting clams at low tide at Storey's Beach (see the Storey's Beach heading). Other spectacular beaches (accessed via gravel roads and hiking) are located at Raft Cove, San Josef Bay, Cape Palmerston, Cape Scott, and Grant Bay.

Fresh Seafood

Many of the local restaurants serve a variety of seafood dishes. Some will also cook your catch on request. Stop in at *Hardy Buoys Smoked Fish* to purchase mouth-watering smoked fish delicacies or a variety of locally caught fresh seafood – for more information contact Hardy Buoys at (250) 949-8781.

Sport Fishing

Fishing charters and boat rentals are available. Salt water offers salmon from April to September, and bottom fish from April to October. Fresh water offers lake or stream trout and steelhead from September to March. Fishing licenses are mandatory and are available at the *Quarterdeck Marina* and *Jim's Hardy Sports*. Contact the local *Department of Fisheries and Oceans* at (250) 949-6422 or (250) 949-6731 for current fishing regulations.

Shell Fish Harvesting

Crabs, clams, mussels and oysters can be harvested in the area. Contact the local *Department of Fisheries and Oceans* at (250) 949-6422 or (250) 949-6731 for closures and other regulations (i.e.: Red Tide Warnings).

Storey's Beach

This fantastic beach is located 11km from downtown Port Hardy – head south on Highway 19, turn left onto Byng Road and left again on Beaver Harbour Road (and then follow Beaver Harbour Road straight to the beach). This is a beautiful scenic area with something for everyone to do. The sandy beach is a popular place for building sand castles, swimming, kayaking, eagle watching, and beachcombing. This is also a great place for picnicking: there is a park, a covered pavilion area and a great view.

Tex Lyon Trail

The Tex Lyon Trail starts on Storey's Beach (see the listing for Storey's Beach). This is a difficult 4.5-hour hike with several dangerous areas. If you plan to hike this trail, please speak with the Visitor Information Counsellors at the Information Centre in Port Hardy – they can advise you of current trail conditions. The first 20 minutes of the hike is along the sandy length of Storey's Beach and is very popular with walkers.

Fort Rupert

At one time, this was the site of a Hudson's Bay Fort. The chimney from the Fort is still standing in its original spot. More recently, the Fort Rupert Band has built a Big House. There are many spectacular totems throughout the community. For a driving tour guide of Fort Rupert check with the Visitor Information Centre.

Baseball Diamonds

With eight baseball diamonds in town, baseball is becoming a very popular way of spending a sunny afternoon.

Horseshoes

The horseshoe throw areas are at Stories Beach (behind the curling rink) and at *Sunny Sanctuary Campground*.

Quatse River Trail

This lovely return trail begins at Port Hardy's seaplane base, meanders along the estuary shorefront, heads inland along the scenic Quatse River, and then divides into a number of short forest trails.

Quatse River Estuary

The Quatse River estuary is located at the head of Hardy Bay and is flanked by two river mouths. For the nature observer, this area provides abundant wildlife, birds and marsh vegetation. A viewing tower will allow the observer to view wildlife in relative comfort. You may wish to bring along your binoculars or a magnifying glass for exploring the estuary. To get to the estuary, head south on Highway 19 and take the first left past Sunny Sanctuary Campground onto Goodspeed Road. There you will find a small gravel parking area. (See website www.tourismni.com/wildlife)

Animals

Sunny Sanctuary Campground has an abundance of wildlife, as they are located in close proximity to the Quatse River Estuary. They also have over 100 resident bunny rabbits to welcome visitors! Located in the office are many taxidermy-mounted animals (all road kill) including a wolf, bear, mink, raccoon, and an eagle.

Eagle Watching

Eagles can often be seen along the Port Hardy Sea Wall, at Storey's Beach, at the mouth of the Glen Lyon River, or anywhere along the low tide line.

Quatse River Hatchery

Personnel at the hatchery can show visitors around during business hours, which are Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 4:00pm. Tours allow visitors to observe the incubation and rearing facilities for Pink, Chum, Coho and Steelhead salmon. A trout pond behind the hatchery is also open for fish feeding. Operated by the *Northern Vancouver Island Salmon Enhancement Project*, you are able to tour this facility during regular daytime hours. Nature trails along the river provide information on life cycles of various salmon species, as well as many species of flora and fauna. Contact the *Quatse River Hatchery* for more information (250) 949-9022.

Port Hardy Recreation Centre

Our recreation centre boasts a full size indoor pool, hot tub, sauna and arena. Tennis courts and racquets are available at the pool.

Scuba Diving

Port Hardy is becoming fast recognized for its world-renowned scuba diving. Due to the clarity of the water and tidal action, scuba divers rate Port Hardy as one of the top sites to dive!

Whale Watching

Visitors can take these fascinating tours daily between late June and early October. Tours leave from Port Hardy, Telegraph Cove, Alder Bay, Port McNeill, and Alert Bay. Visit the InfoCentre for more information.

Jaw Bones of a Blue Whale

The 20-foot jawbones can be seen by traveling a scenic 16kms of paved highway to Coal Harbour, a quaint, little town to the west of Port Hardy. Be sure to stop at the InfoCentre for a brochure about this incredibly historic town.

Golf

The *Seven Hills Golf & Country Club* is located 20 minutes south of Port Hardy. It is here that you will find a 9-hole course and a super clubhouse with all the trappings. The challenging 2.5km course is rated at 69 for men and 70 for women. RV sites are also available. Contact Seven Hills for further information (250) 949-9818.

Marble River Trail

This canopied trail is about a 30-minute drive from Port Hardy, towards Port Alice. This is a beautiful trail through the forest, with sections coming out to the river. This is a great place to hike in and watch the salmon go up the river waterfall to spawn in the fall. Allow at least 3 hours for round trip hiking time.

BC Ferries

Schedules are available at the InfoCentre for most of the BC Ferries routes. The Inside Passage and Discovery Coast cruises are both very popular trips and are the only two that leave from Port Hardy. Reservations are required. Call (250) 949-6722 or 1-888-BCFERRY (223-3779) for information or reservations.

Caving

Little Huston Lake Arches and Caves are located on the Island Highway just south of the Nimpkish Lake. Watch for signs. Also of interest in this area are Devil's Bath, the Eternal Fountain, and the Disappearing (and later Reappearing) River.

Forestry Tours

The *North Island Forestry Centre* conducts these tours and although each tour is different, most take about five hours. There is something here for just about everyone. You will see areas of scenic beauty and wildlife that you never knew existed. Call (250) 956-3844 for further information or reservations.

Cape Scott Provincial Park

Cape Scott Provincial Park and San Josef Bay are wilderness-hiking adventures. These popular hiking area's are can be accessed by driving 63 km on an active logging, gravel road to the parking area. The west coast often experiences strong Pacific winds, tides and rains. It is a naturalist's paradise, but requires good guide maps and preparation. Be sure to stop at the InfoCentre to pick up your Park map, as well as check in with the Visitor Information Counsellors for current Park information. Remember that this is a wilderness area and that you must pack-in camping supplies with you, and pack-out your camping refuse, as well. There is an overnight camping fee inside the park, just register yourself at the self-registration box at the head of the trail.

Ronning's Garden

This was an old homestead established in 1910 by Bernt Ronning. He planted a variety of different plants and trees from around the world in his fantastic garden. Following Mr. Ronning's death, the garden was abandoned and fell into neglect. Today, Ron and Julia Moe have taken over and brought the garden back to life. Follow the signs to Cape Scott Park and watch for the Ronning's Garden sign on the right hand side (between Holberg and the Cape Scott parking area). You will find a parking lot and a gravel path leading to the site. Allow 10 minutes to walk into the site and then enjoy your self-guided tour.

Raft Cove Provincial Park

This is a great place to see the West Coast of Vancouver Island. This small cove is about one and a half hours drive from Port Hardy (past Holberg but prior to Cape Scott Park -- follow the signs to the parking area at Raft Cove). The hour-long, rugged trail can get quite muddy in the rain. However, once you are at the cove, you'll find that the beach was well worth the effort – the cove is a great place to look for the rare glass balls that wash up on the beaches. This is also a popular spot for body surfing. Exercise caution and be aware of undertow and strong currents.

Cape Palmerston

This forestry site is one of the only West Coast sites that is accessible with a vehicle. There is a short, well-maintained walk from the parking area to the beach and walk-in campsites. Just follow the signs to Raft Cove, continue past Raft Cove, and watch for the Cape Palmerston signs.