

# Research Day | March 15, 2017

**Title:** Collaborative research activities in Ladysmith Harbour, Vancouver Island, “the warmest harbour north of San Francisco”

**Presenter:** Rick Harbo, Research Associate (Nanaimo)  
Invertebrate Zoology, Natural History

**Abstract:**

Ladysmith Harbour is a protected bay in the Strait of Georgia, with shallow mudflats at the head of the harbour. The mudflats are exposed at mid-day during the spring and summer low tides and this heat is transferred to the overlying waters during flood tides. Originally charted as Oyster Harbour, the harbour has a long history of fisheries and aquaculture. It was seed from Japanese oysters and manila clams in Ladysmith Harbour that spread and eventually populated the lower Strait and Gulf Islands.

In addition to the survival and spread of introduced Japanese oysters are the many non-native marine species that accompanied the seed. In surveys in Ladysmith Harbour, 2014-16, undertaken with the Pacific NW shell club and RBCM, the first recorded surviving populations of introduced Japanese chitons and limpets in North America were found and they are among the few records for introductions of chitons and limpets worldwide. An introduced orange Japanese sponge in the harbour is the first Canadian record for this species. Studies in Ladysmith are collaborative with studies of tsunami debris washed up on the coast from California to B.C.

Other activities include supporting a marine interpretation program for schools and boaters at the Ladysmith Maritime Society marina. Interpretive signs have been posted and a touch-tank aquarium is planned for 2017. An industrial history of oyster culture is being developed for the Ladysmith Archives and Ladysmith Maritime Society.



ROYAL BC  
MUSEUM