

# Canada Weekly

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## Pacific Rim Park possesses ruggedness and quiet beauty

Canada's Pacific Rim National Park in British Columbia is the country's first national marine park and the only national park on the Pacific Ocean.

It stretches along 105 kilometres of shoreline and the sound of the endless Pacific swell crashing against the beach or the rocky shore is ever present. The 389-square-kilometre park is not large by Canadian standards and yet it is divided into three distinct parts. Long Beach, the West Coast Trail and the Broken Group Islands are all popular but for different reasons.

The most popular section is Long Beach with a good paved highway all along its length. It is a favourite of bathers, hikers, surfers and campers. Its 11-kilometre-long beach of almost-white sand is parallel to the highway and it is rarely crowded.

Grey whales, sometimes 15 metres long, are often seen close to shore, their tails swinging high in the air as they sift the sandy bottom for sea worms and other delicacies. Sea lions also sun themselves on offshore rocks while harbour seals do likewise on quieter stretches of the beach or in isolated coves.

Fishing from the beach or from a rocky point is popular with many, while others dig for clams, oysters and mussels or fish for crabs, starfish, shrimp and other sea creatures in tidal pools.

It is 72 kilometres from Port Renfrew to Bamfield and this rugged stretch of sea-side mountains constitutes the West Coast Trail, an arduous but rewarding experience for anyone with the stamina to complete it.

Port Renfrew is accessible by good highway from Victoria, while a logging road goes from Port Alberni to Bamfield at the northern end of the trail. Bamfield is also served by boat from Port Alberni.

### Sailors shipwrecked

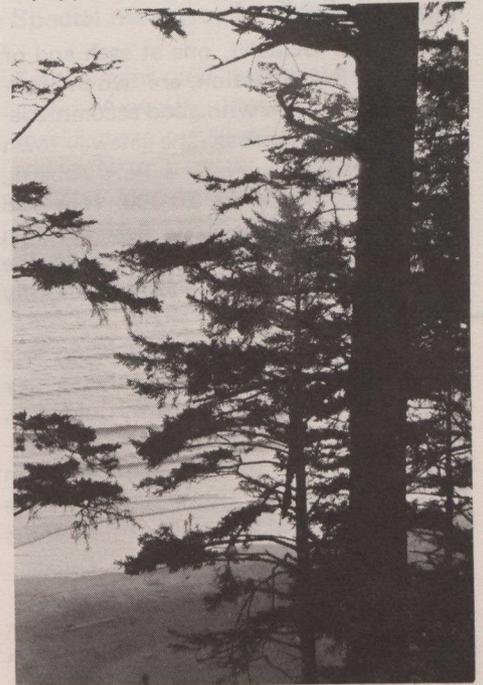
The trail was first opened in 1907 when it was used by life-savers on their way to rescue shipwrecked sailors on that part of

the coast known then as the graveyard of the Pacific. The trail, especially its southern half, is a rugged one, cut here and there by deep ravines and rushing streams. Logs have to be climbed over, primitive ladders facilitate climbing in some places and slippery wooden foot-bridges span the larger creeks and rivers.

The third section of Pacific Rim is the Broken Group Islands, in Barkley Sound at the mouth of Alberni Inlet. These islands, nearly 100 of them, are only accessible by private boat except Gibraltar Island which is served at regular intervals from Port Alberni in summer.

The islands offer a good chance to get away from it all. They are popular for what they do not have: no noise, no roads, no restaurants, no tourist traps, no pollution.

Primitive camping is allowed on only seven of the islands, where there is fresh water. The West Coast Trail also offers primitive camping only, while it's first-come, first-served at the moderately-equipped campground on Long Beach's



Long Beach at Pacific Rim National Park.



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