



British Columbia Community Profile...

Hornby Island

Overview

The breathtaking views and seaside tranquility of Hornby Island provide both a source of enjoyment as well as inspiration to residents. A natural paradise close to urban amenities, this unique community off the north central coast of Vancouver Island, is noted for its creative talent and independent, self-reliant way of life. Recreational activities here include fishing, diving, kayaking, mountain biking, and bicycling. Both Denman and Hornby Island are part of a group of 13 islands administered by the Islands Trust, an organization mandated to preserve and protect the unique character and environment of the area.

Accessibility

Hornby Island is accessible via a short car and passenger ferry trip from Denman Island. Denman Island is located opposite Buckley Bay on the eastern coast of Vancouver Island, approximately an hour north of the city of Nanaimo and 2 ½ hours north of the capital city of Victoria. It is accessible by BC Ferries vehicle and passenger scheduled ferry service, a 15-minute ride. The city of Courtenay, a major centre with a population of over 18,000, is located just 23 km north of Buckley Bay and is accessible via regular bus service. Charter floatplane service directly to the island is available and the nearest commercial airport is located in Comox, just outside of Courtenay.

History

Hornby Island derived its name in 1850 after British Rear Admiral Phipps Hornby. Prior to western settlement, Hornby Island was inhabited by the Coast Salish First Nations, who came to the island on a seasonal basis to collect berries, fish and shellfish for the winter months. The first actual settlers to Hornby Island came from Devon, England in the late 1860s. A whaling port operated on the island from 1871 until the decimation of the whaling population.





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History Continued...

Fishing, logging and farming originally sustained the community, which had reached a population of approximately 100 by 1930. The next major growth period occurred in the 1950s with the establishment of the car ferry service and provision of electricity. In the 1960s it became a haven for alternate lifestyles. Many of the 1960s residents remain on the island today as organic farmers, artisans and artists.

Economy

Whereas agriculture, fishing and forestry supported early settlers on the islands, tourism and the arts predominate today.

Population Profile

The combined population of Hornby and Denman Island is 1,982 with a median age of 39 compared to 38.4 for the province as a whole. The population of Hornby Island is estimated to be around 1,000 people with seasonal fluctuations to as high as 4,500.

Climate

Denman and Hornby Islands enjoy a moderate, west coast marine climate characterized by warm, dry summers and short, mild winters with considerable precipitation. Summer temperatures average around 28 degrees Celsius, and winter temperatures around 6 degrees Celsius.

Housing

About 60% of the land on the island is held by the government as either park or reserve. The remaining land is owned privately, with more than 50% held by off-island owners. The average cost of a single-family home on Hornby Island is \$450,000. Rental accommodation is limited.



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Education/Daycare

Hornby Island has one elementary school (Kindergarten - grade 6) as well as a pre-school and some daycare services for small children. Junior and senior secondary students travel by bus and ferry to schools in the Courtenay area.

Recreation

With its relatively remote location, scenic views and beautiful beaches, Hornby Island offers a range of outdoor activities including swimming, fishing, world-class diving, kayaking, mountain biking, bicycling, and horseback riding. Considered by many to be the “jewel of the gulf”, its beaches are known for their sun-warmed aquamarine waters and near tropical temperatures.

Nearby, the Comox Valley region of Vancouver Island offers downhill skiing and snowboarding at Mt. Washington and some of B.C.’s best cross-country skiing, golf, equestrian facilities, as well as marinas.

Culture

Hornby Island is home to a significant population of artists, musicians and craftspeople and there are several galleries on the island. Every summer the annual Hornby Festival features Canadian artists and internationally acclaimed instrumental, vocal, dance and theatre performers.

Services & Amenities

Hornby Island is known for its community spirit. The island’s commercial hub is centered around the Hornby Island Co-op, which has a large membership and is located centrally around Tribune Bay. Its services include grocery and hardware departments, postal services, and a gas outlet. Hornby also has several restaurants and cafes, a credit union with an automatic teller machine, a regional library and a beautifully designed community hall. The twin cities of Courtenay and Comox, located just 23 km North of Buckley Bay, offer easy access to a wider range of services and amenities.

There are both Anglican and United churches on nearby Denman Island.

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Health Authority

Hornby Island is located within the North Island Health Region of the Vancouver Island Health Authority. Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) provides healthcare services that include acute care facilities, mental health & addictions, environmental and public health, home, and community care. For comprehensive information on Vancouver Island Health Authority, visit their website (see Internet References below).

Internet References

British Columbia.com

<http://www.britishcolumbia.com/regions>

HornbyIsland.com

<http://www.hornbyisland.com>

The Gulf Islands Guide

<http://www.gulfislandsguide.com>

Statistics Canada (Community demographic information)

<http://www.statcan.ca>

Vancouver Island Health

<http://www.viha.ca>

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