



## British Columbia Community Profile...

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# Alert Bay

### Overview

The friendly community of Alert Bay is known for its magnificent scenery, First Nations culture and some of the best saltwater fishing in British Columbia. Located on Cormorant Island, off the northeast coast of Vancouver Island, it is approximately 180 miles by water from the city of Vancouver. Alert Bay offers residents a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor recreational opportunities ranging from local arts and cultural pursuits, to hiking, cycling, beachcombing and whale watching. Because of its easy access to the mainland via BC Ferries at Port McNeill, some residents commute on a daily basis.

### Accessibility

Alert Bay is accessible primarily by a 45-minute car and passenger ferry trip from the town of Port McNeill on Vancouver Island. There is a small airstrip for private aircraft on the island, as well as a commercial airport at Port Hardy, 36 km (2 ½ hours) west of Port McNeill. Campbell River is the nearest major centre, 194 km south of Port McNeill. Victoria, the provincial capital, is 463 km (approx. 7 hours) south of Port McNeill by road.

### History

Since earliest memory, Alert Bay has been the traditional home of the 'Namgis First Nations people. Once a native burial grounds, Alert Bay was first settled in 1870 when two enterprising pioneers, recognizing the abundance of fish in the area, established a small fish saltery. Lying on the direct route for all vessels traveling north and south and boasting a deep, well-protected harbour, Alert Bay quickly became a destination point for travelers up and down the coast. In 1946, the Village of Alert Bay was incorporated.



YUKON

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

ALASKA, USA

ALBERTA

WASHINGTON, USA



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### Economy

The economy of Alert Bay is primarily based in fishing with tourism growing in importance.

### Population Profile

The community of Alert Bay is comprised of three population segments: the Village of Alert Bay (556 people) and two Namgis First Nations reserves for a total catchment population of 1,267. The median age of the population here is 34.7 compared to 38.4 for the province as a whole.

### Climate

Alert Bay experiences a typical west coast marine climate which brings cool, moist weather to the area for most of the year. The average summer temperature is 17.4 degrees Celsius, while the average winter temperature is - 0.1 degrees. There is minimal snow but substantial rainfall during the winter months.

### Housing

Rental accommodation in Alert Bay, although limited, includes apartments, duplexes and single-family homes. Apartments, duplexes and single-family homes (some with views) are also available for purchase.

The average cost of a single-family home in Alert Bay is \$198,000.

### Education/Daycare

There is one public school in Alert Bay providing classes up to Grade 8. Students must travel by ferry to Port McNeill to attend high school. There is also a native band school. Some daycare services are available.



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### Recreation

Recreational facilities in Alert Bay include tennis courts, a bowling alley, a recreation centre with gymnasiums, four grass playgrounds, an 18-hole miniature golf course, an extensive bike and walking trail system and two softball diamonds. An 18-hole golf course can be accessed in nearby Port McNeill. In addition, a full complement of service clubs, sports groups and community organizations are active throughout the year in Alert Bay.

Alert Bay's island location provides for magnificent scenery and abundant wildlife. As the gateway to Knight and Kingcome inlets and the Broughton Archipelago, Alert Bay promises exciting ecological adventures. Popular outdoor recreational activities include salt-water fishing, kayaking, bird watching, boating, scuba diving, camping, whale watching, beachcombing and hiking.

The world-renowned Robson Bight Ecological Reserve, a favourite rubbing beach for killer whales, is just 30 minutes away by boat. Spectacular Mount Cain, the home of what is arguably the best skiing on Vancouver Island, is a 1½-hour drive from Port McNeill.

### Culture

Artifacts and events of Alert Bay's past can be viewed at the local museum and the U'mista Cultural Centre, an internationally known facility that houses one of the finest collections of historical items depicting the Potlatch Ceremony of the Kwakwaka'wakw. The work of local artists, including First Nations carving, paintings, weaving and metal crafting is displayed in local shops, galleries and studios.

### Services & Amenities

Services and amenities in Alert Bay are concentrated in a main street area and include 3 independent grocery stores (some of which sell clothing), a drug store, a credit union, a hair dresser, a liquor store, several automatic teller machines, a hardware store, postal services and a library. Residents also have access to the services of a dentist, lawyer, chiropractor, and accountant. Internet service is available here.

There are several places of worship in Alert Bay serving the Anglican, Catholic, and Pentecostal faiths.



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### Health Authority

Alert Bay 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

*BritishColumbia.com*

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

*Village of Alert Bay*

<http://www.alertbay.ca>

*Alert Bay Adventures*

<http://www.alertbay.com>

*Namgis Aboriginal Government*

<http://www.namgis.bc.ca>

*Statistics Canada (Community demographic information)*

<http://www.statcan.ca>

*Vancouver Island Health*

<http://www.viha.ca>

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