Together for Wildlife HCTF Conservation Scholarship
Recipient 2025

Johanna Griggs

Johanna (she/her) is a MSc student in the Applied Conservation Science (ACS) Lab and advised by Dr. Chris Darimont at the University of Victoria. Johanna works in collaboration with the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department (HIRMD) and Raincoast Conservation Foundation on the Haíłzaqv (Heiltsuk) Wildlife Remote Camera Project.

Johanna is a settler of Swedish-English descent who grew up in mountains, forests and ocean around Vancouver, BC. Following a love of the outdoors and wildlife, Johanna completed a BSc in Natural Resources Conservation with a major in Science and Management from UBC's Faculty of Forestry in 2022. During her undergraduate degree, she worked in two different labs (Stream and Riparian Research Lab and the Wildlife Coexistence Lab) supporting research on human impacts on wildlife, spent a semester abroad in Botswana's Okavango Delta contributing to community-based wildlife monitoring, and assisted with habitat restoration efforts for juvenile salmon in the Lower Fraser River Estuary. All these opportunities led Johanna to develop an appreciation for applied community-based research and long-term monitoring efforts. She is thrilled to continue this kind of important work with project partners and her colleagues in the ACS Lab.

Johanna's project responds to the interests of Heiltsuk land managers, who seek to understand how industrial logging may influence wildlife to minimize future impacts. Almost a century of industrial logging on the Heiltsuk Territory on BC's Central Coast has created a patchwork of harvested areas, logging roads, and old-growth forest. Despite these changes, little is known about its ecological influence on wildlife. In partnership with HIRMD, the ACS Lab initiated a long-term monitoring project to address these questions. A grid of ~100 remote cameras was deployed across 25 watersheds in the Territory in 2023, providing over 200,000 images to date. Both wildlife and economic opportunities from future forest tenures are highly valuable for the Heiltsuk First Nation, and this research can support evidence-based management of both wildlife and forests by HIRMD.

Johanna's research specifically investigates how industrial logging may influence spatiotemporal interactions between wolves and their prey, Sitka black-tailed deer. Although industrial logging can directly result in the loss and fragmentation of wildlife habitat, how logging might affect community structure and interspecific relationships, like those between predators and their prey is less known. Owing to the critical role of predators within ecosystems through top-down regulation, changes in predator-prey interactions can have broad effects on community structure and overall ecosystem health. This research provides a broader understanding of the indirect effects of habitat change on predator-prey interactions, while also informing future forestry policy for HIRMD.

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