



*Dive Area: Central Vancouver Island*

### ***Central Vancouver Island***

The east side of Central Vancouver Island has many different diving options and is characterized by islands, narrows and currents. The western side of central Vancouver Island has rugged coasts and inlets full of islands. It offers a wide diversity of diving experiences. There are plenty of safe and attractive dive sites at the back of the various protected inlets for both the advanced or novice diver.

If wrecks interest you, you have many choices. Nanaimo with its artificial reefs (HMS Cape Breton and Saskatchewan), Barkley Sound (Vanlene and HongKong Xpress) and the HMS Columbia at Campbell River).

### ***Nanaimo: (east side)***

Nanaimo is known for its wrecks but has also other dive attractions to offer: seals, sea lions and a number of reefs with a wide array of life. The area around Nanaimo also offers some great shore dives. Just get an air fill at one of the dive shops and go explore.

### ***From Port Alberni: (west side)***

***Barkley Sound*** is one of the more popular West Coast dive destinations. Many a diver claims that the size and colors of the nudibranchs here are unparalleled. You can gaze at fields of plumose anemones, swim with six gill sharks, or dive rock pinnacles teeming with marine life. Dive services are available at Port Alberni, Bamfield and there is an air fill station in Ucluelet.

### ***Nootka Sound***

This is probably as remote as one can get. However the fields of sea pens, sponges, tunicates, bryozoans and strawberry anemones make the trip worth while. Thasis and Tofino are the access points for exploring Nootka Sound, Clayoquot Sound, and Kyuquot Sound. These areas are more remote and are usually explored by liveaboard charter vessels.

### ***Union Bay / Hornby Island (east side)***

Hornby- and Denman Island are a short ferry ride away from the main Island and offer some great diving. Their main attraction in the summer, like a few other areas in BC, is the possibility to see six gill sharks. But even if you are not lucky enough to see these elusive animals, the rest of the diving is awesome too.

Union Bay is about an hour north of Nanaimo and just a little further (approx. 2 miles) north of the ferry terminal to Denman/Hornby Island. This is the jumping off point to dives such as the wreck of the Capilano, Wolf eel Alley and many other great sites.

### ***Comox / Courtney (east side)***

Comox is home to the base of the 442 Squadron's Search and Rescue teams. It also has some great diving in the area to offer. In Deep Bay there are two helicopters that have attracted quite a lot of life. In the spring you can dive with sea lions and it is a unique experience to see the mammals that look so awkward on land glide by with grace and ease.

### ***Campbell River / Quadra Island (east side)***

Current swept wall, cliffs full of invertebrates and even wrecks can be seen around Campbell River and Quadra Island. The HMCS Columbia is a 366 ft (120meter) wreck that was sunk in the mid nineties as an artificial reef. Other great sites are Whiskey Point (shore dive), Row and be Dammed, Seymour narrows etc. In the summer and fall various runs of salmon offer the opportunity of snorkeling with the fish. Rapid rivers and walls of fish make this a great adventure.

