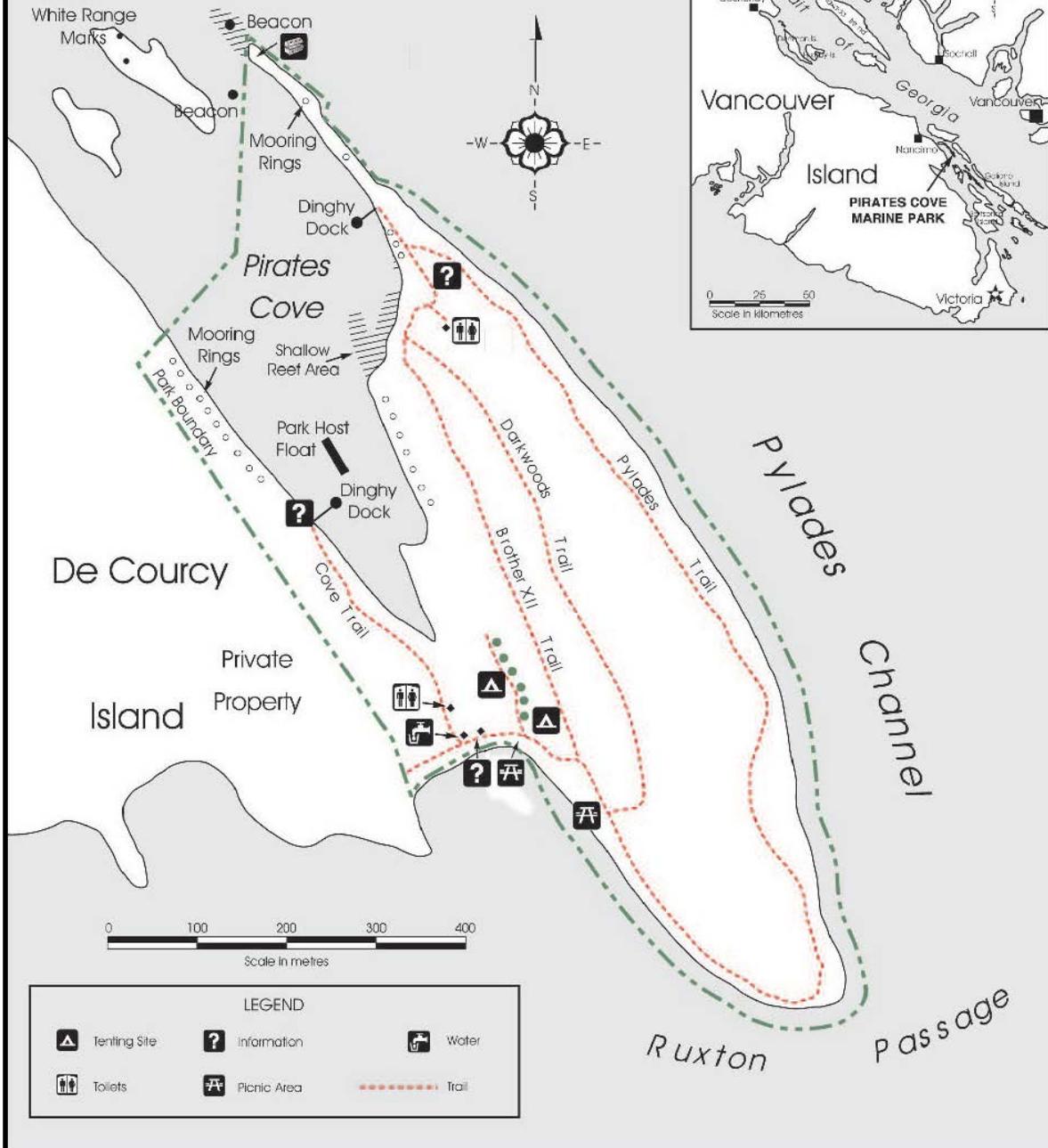




BC Parks

Pirates Cove Marine Provincial Park



LOCATION

Pirates Cove Marine Park is found on the south east corner of De Courcy Island, part of the De Courcy Group, 16 kilometres south east of Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. It is accessible by boat through Dodd Narrows from Nanaimo, up through the Gulf Islands from Victoria, and Vancouver boaters would come through Gabriola Passage.

Be cautious when entering Pirates Cove. The porthand marker is placed shoreward of the reef. If you are heading north west along the north shore of the park, continue north well past the black marker then turn southwest to enter the cove. Align the white arrow on the rocks with the white cross on the trees and proceed shoreward until you are able to navigate between the two markers. There are two day use dinghy docks, one on either side of the cove. These are for tenders and are not to be used to moor vessels larger than 5 metres. There are some bright yellow eye-bolt rings to be used for stern-lines on the northwest and east shores of the main cove. Do not tie up your boats to the trees in the park.

The Cove is very small and receives very little tidal exchange. **DO NOT DISCHARGE SEWAGE OR GREY WATER WHILE MOORED HERE** - it is against park regulations.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

▲ There are designated campsites with tent pads in Pirates Cove, located just above the south beach. Some of these sites have ocean views. Pirates Cove is accessible year round. A self registration fee vault is located near the water pump.

Backcountry Camping Fee:
\$5.00/person/night and applies to everyone 6 years of age and older.

☕ This park has a day use picnic area, located adjacent to the camping area. Facilities include information shelters located near the hand pump and south dinghy dock.

🚰 A cold water hand pump is located near the south beach (this water should be boiled, filtered or treated prior to consumption).



This park has 2 pit toilets, located at the north and the south end of the park near the camping and day-use areas.



Campfires are not permitted in this park. Bring a stove for cooking.



There are 5 km of easy hiking trails that weave around the park, passing through mature second-growth Douglas fir as well as arbutus and Garry Oak. For your safety and the preservation of the park, obey posted signs and keep to designated trails. Shortcutting destroys plants and soil structure.

Brother XII Trail: Length 800 metres. Approximate walking time: 15 minutes. This trail is a shortcut of the Darkwoods Trail through the interior of the park leading to the camping area.

Darkwoods Trail: Length 1 km or 20 minutes. This trail cuts through the middle of the park through a Douglas fir ecosystem with mossy sandstone outcroppings. It links up to the Pylades Trail and the camping area.

Pylades Trail: Length 3 km or 1 hour. The Pylades trail circumnavigates the shoreline around the park, offering spectacular views of Valdes Island and Pylades Channel.



There is no designated swimming area at this park, however swimming occurs on the sandy south beach. There are no lifeguards on duty at provincial parks.



This park is a popular destination for kayakers, who use Pirates Cove as a destination area or a rest stop prior to travelling further north or south through the Gulf Islands. The sheltered waters around the Gulf Islands make it a good spot for paddlers of all abilities.



This park does not have a boat launch. The nearest one is at Boat Harbour in Cedar, approximately 12 km south of Nanaimo. Pirates Cove is a very popular anchorage.



Mooring rings for stern tying vessels are located along the shoreline in the cove. Two dinghy docks are located in Pirates Cove - one on the north side and one on the south side. These docks allow access to the park's day-use and camping areas. There is no overnight tie-up to the dinghy docks. Dinghies may go ashore at the south end beach.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

There are several middens in the park that indicate native use of the island. The largest of these shell refuse heaps underlies the campground. Please do not disturb these sites - stay on trails to minimize erosion. All shell middens are protected under the B.C. Archaeological and Historic Sites Protection Act do not disturb them.

De Courcy Island was named after Michael de Courcy, captain of the H.M.S. Pylades, a vessel that charted these waters from 1859 - 1861.

While enjoying the beauty and serenity of Pirates Cove take a moment to think about the drama that was played out on this island in the late 20's and early 30's. De Courcy was the home of the Aquarian Foundation founded by the infamous Brother XII, a man described as "downright evil", "The Great Beast" and the "blackest man to have ever lived".

Brother XII (also known as Edward A. Wilson among other names) was able to convince up to 8000 followers that he was the Twelfth Master of Wisdom, part of a line of divine perfect masters from another world who would teach his faithful the mysteries of ancient Egypt and usher in a new age. The amount of money donated to the foundation is legendary, people would give their entire life savings in support. The land purchased included De Courcy Island. A settlement was built on the north end of the island, with stories of it having gun fortifications and rock shelters. Any excess money was said to have been converted to gold coins and sealed into glass jars and placed into cedar chests - no one knows what happened to this fortune.

Perhaps visitors to Pirates Cove (which was called Gospel Cove or The Haven in Bro. XII's time) sail over it every time they arrive!

Brother XII had a cohort for several years, dubbed Madame "Zee", a cruel woman who helped rule the island with an iron fist and bullwhip. In 1933 the pair were to be brought to trial in Nanaimo on charges of misuse of funds, adultery and attempted murder through witchcraft. Before the judgement was brought down they disappeared on the colony's boat never to be seen again in these parts.

There are many books on Brother XII, some fact some fantasy, - all intriguing - read some and decide for yourself!

In 1966 a 38 hectare portion of the island was acquired for a Provincial Marine Park with the assistance of the Council of British Columbia Yacht Clubs.

CONSERVATION

De Courcy Island, like many of the Gulf Islands, contains an interesting mixture of plants - some coastal, and some more typically found in the dry interior of B.C. Rocky Mountain Juniper, Satin-flower and Poison Oak are all species that are much more widely spread in the interior than they are on the coast - yet here, with De Courcy Island's dry summers, they thrive.

Pirates Cove Provincial Marine Park protects one of the few coastal populations of Poison Oak. Stay on the trails to avoid brushing against this rash-causing plant. Particularly impressive in June and early July are the large areas seen from the loop trail that are covered by Pipsissewa - a low growing evergreen plant with leathery shiny leaves and pink flowers. The stands on the east side of the park are unmatched anywhere else in the Gulf Islands.

WILDLIFE

The largest animals that use the island are Black-tailed Deer. Other animals, such as River Otters, Mink, and Raccoons are fairly common. River Otters are most easily seen in the early morning and a stroll around the loop trail on the island will likely result in a sighting or two. Watch for areas of flattened grass that otters have used for slides or sun-bathing. Please do not feed the racoons; they may become dependent on human hand outs.

Common marine mammals include Harbour Seals (year-round) and Steller's and California Sealions (most common from late August through the middle of May). The fortunate may catch a glimpse of Harbour Porpoise, Killer Whale or something even rarer!

Birders will find species such as Wilson's Warblers, Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Black Oystercatchers, and White-crowned Sparrows and other species breeding in the park, while Bald Eagles, Great Blue Herons and scores of others use the park for foraging and resting.

For More Information

BC Parks
www.bcparks.ca

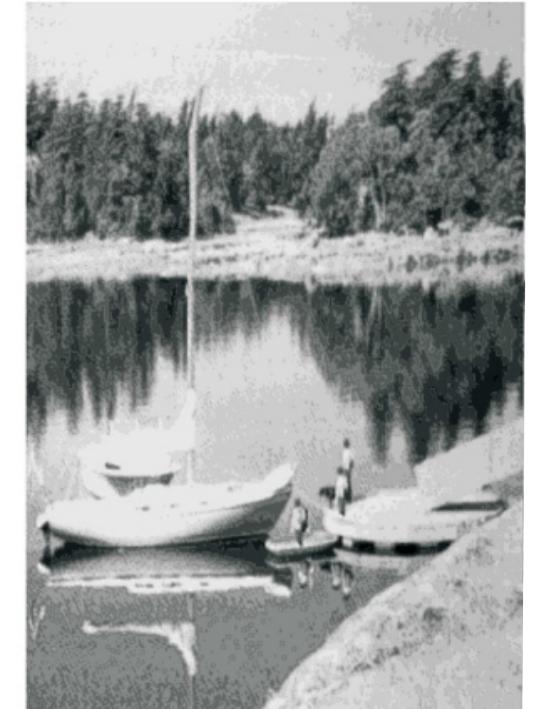
K2 Park Services
1 877 559 2115
www.k2parks.ca
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THIS IS A PACK-IN, PACK-OUT PARK,
THERE ARE NO DISPOSAL FACILITIES.
PLEASE DO NOT PLACE ANY GARBAGE
INTO THE COMPOSTING & PIT TOILETS.

Pirates Cove

MARINE PROVINCIAL PARK



"I am the Messenger of the Fire, the Messenger of the Whirlwind, the Messenger of the Day of Adjustment. The fire burneth, but dross, that the silver and the gold may remain. By the wind ye shall mount to the heavens - if ye be the children of discernment."

North Gulf Islands