

An Eagle? Swimming?

There are plenty of North American bald eagles in British Columbia. For me they are a spectacular bird to photograph and I could sit and watch them all day. Early in my second survey with Raincoast, over breakfast one morning someone asked if I'd ever seen an eagle swimming? I told her I hadn't but that I would love to and hoped that we would get the chance one day.

Later, that very same day, I could not believe my ears when someone called from up top to say there was something in the water and quickly followed with 'it's an eagle, swimming'. Grabbing my camera I rushed out on deck and there it was ahead of us, its white head bobbing up and down and its black wings flicking forward and back to propel it through the water to the nearby shore. Having reached land, the bird hopped out onto the rocks with a prize salmon in its talons. I was told how they will often dive down on to and catch a prey and be unable to take off again due to the weight. Something in their chemical makeup prevents them from being able to open their claws and release their catch, thus freeing themselves to return to the air. So, with little alternative, eagles have adapted to swimming.

