

Bryde's Whale Washes Ashore in Port McNeill, BC

May 15, 2025 | Port McNeill, BC — On May 14, the 'Namgis First Nation was informed that a deceased whale had washed ashore in Port McNeill Bay on northern Vancouver Island, BC. Thanks to a quick report by a local resident and collaboration with the Marine Education and Research Society (MERS), the incident was promptly relayed to both 'Namgis and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) via the Marine Mammal Incident Reporting Line.

Initial photos suggested the whale was a Minke whale, but once on site, MERS confirmed—with the support of Bay Cetology, a cetacean research group based in Alert Bay—that the whale was in fact a **young Bryde's whale**, a species rarely seen in these northern waters.

The Nation is deeply concerned by the death of any whale, but the rarity of this species appearing so far north makes this event particularly significant. 'Namgis Guardians were dispatched on May 15 to monitor the site, educate onlookers, and ensure public and pet safety with respect for the animal.

A **blissing ceremony** is planned to honour the whale and provide a respectful foundation for the scientific work to follow. A **necropsy is scheduled for tomorrow** to help determine the cause of death.

"'Namgis First Nation is very sad and concerned with the climate crisis and the health of our oceans. We will work with all parties to determine what has happened to this individual and hopefully come to better understand how to be the best stewards of our *awi'nakola*—our territory."

— **Chief Victor Isaac, 'Namgis First Nation**

Bryde's whales are baleen whales that feed primarily on plankton and small schooling fish. They are rarely seen in waters north of 35° latitude—roughly the same latitude as Los Angeles, California.

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