

August 18, 2015

New Royal BC Museum travelling exhibition comes to Kelowna

VICTORIA, BC – British Columbia is known throughout the world for its spectacular nature and magnificent wildlife, but there is little awareness of the many species under threat of extinction.

The Royal BC Museum is hitting the road this summer to spark a conversation **with British Columbians on what BC could lose if we don't make big changes to our relationship with the natural world.**

Species at Risk is a new travelling exhibition produced in-house at the Royal BC Museum, with the support of TELUS, The Robert Bateman Centre and the John and Joan Walton Innovators Fund. Beginning this summer, and for the next three years, *Species at Risk* **will deliver essential information on BC's endangered species** to the doorsteps of communities around the province.

"This is one of the most important conversations British Columbians should be having right now, and yet you don't hear much about it," said Gavin Hanke, Curator of Vertebrate Zoology at the Royal BC Museum. **"We're excited to be spreading the word and starting conversations with BC residents, on the ground, face-to-face, out in the province."**

Over 50,000 plants and animals live in BC, more than anywhere else in Canada. **But many could soon disappear forever; when we don't act, threatened species** can quickly become endangered – or worse. Over 1,500 species in BC alone are now at risk. Change is happening much too fast and their survival – and ours – depends on the choices we make today.

Housed in an inventively modified trailer and accompanied by skilled and personable interpreters, *Species at Risk* will visit Vancouver Island, the Lower Mainland and the Okanagan this summer, setting up shop at summer camps, community museums and other important regional partners.

As a legacy component of this initiative, beautifully designed Mini-Museums will be made available to BC schools in the fall, giving students the opportunity to study four notable species at risk through actual specimens and hands-on learning. These Mini-Museums will also be included in the touring exhibition.

Species at Risk will be hosted by Kelowna Museums for the week of August 24.



An opening event for the launch of *Species at Risk* in Kelowna will be held at the Laurel Packinghouse (1304 Ellis St.) on Monday, August 24 at 10am. Attending will be Kelowna-Mission MLA and Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson and Royal BC Museum Vice President, Collections, Knowledge and Engagement Scott Cooper.

Species at Risk will then be on display at Mission Creek Park on Tuesday, August 25 and Wednesday, August 26 from 9 am to 3 pm.

On Thursday, August 27 there will be a special panel discussion, **The Nature of Museums, at 7pm at the Okanagan Heritage Museum, hosted by CBC's Chris Walker** and featuring experts from the Royal BC Museum, UBC Okanagan and the Regional District of the Central Okanagan. The discussion will focus on environmental stewardship and the role of museums in communities. Attendance is by donation.

The exhibition will be on display at the Okanagan Heritage Museum on Thursday, August 27 from 10 am to 5 pm and Friday, August 28 from 10 am to 1 pm.

About the Royal BC Museum

The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Looking to the future, by 2017 the Royal BC Museum will be a refreshed, modern museum, extending its reach far beyond Victoria as a world-class cultural venue and repository of digital treasures.

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Media are encouraged to attend the opening event on Monday, August 24.

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