

Mt Arrowsmith Marmot Blitz Trip Report

From July 24-25th, six Marmoteers from the Marmot Recovery Foundation helped lead a team of 10 volunteers (8 of whom were ACC members) up Arrowsmith to conduct an overnight camping trip which consisted of an evening and morning survey on various areas of the mountain in search of the endangered Vancouver Island Marmot (VIM). This event allowed ACC members to learn more about the VIM and practice citizen science in the name of a good cause. It also allowed non-ACC members to join in hopes of potentially recruiting more adventurers into the ACC by showcasing a fun outing.

The response from the ACCVI community was quick and positive. The event filled up quickly!



Group photo with Mt Arrowsmith in the background. Photo by Heather Heim.

On the Friday, we all met at Creekmore Coffee in Coombs to go over the general plan, a safety briefing and split into our groups. We then drove to Arrowsmith and our groups split up and started hiking up their designated routes. It was a hot hike up and we took our time.



Hiking up the Saddle route. Photo by Heather Heim.



Almost to the top of the Saddle from the gully. Photo by Heather Heim.



Hiking up the scree in Beehive Bowl. Photo by Shayn McAskin.

Each group set up camp at their site and then proceeded to start the evening survey period shortly after.



Camp in the Beehive Bowl. Photo by Shayn McAskin.



Tenting on the ridge above Jewel Lake. Photo by Haley Andersen.

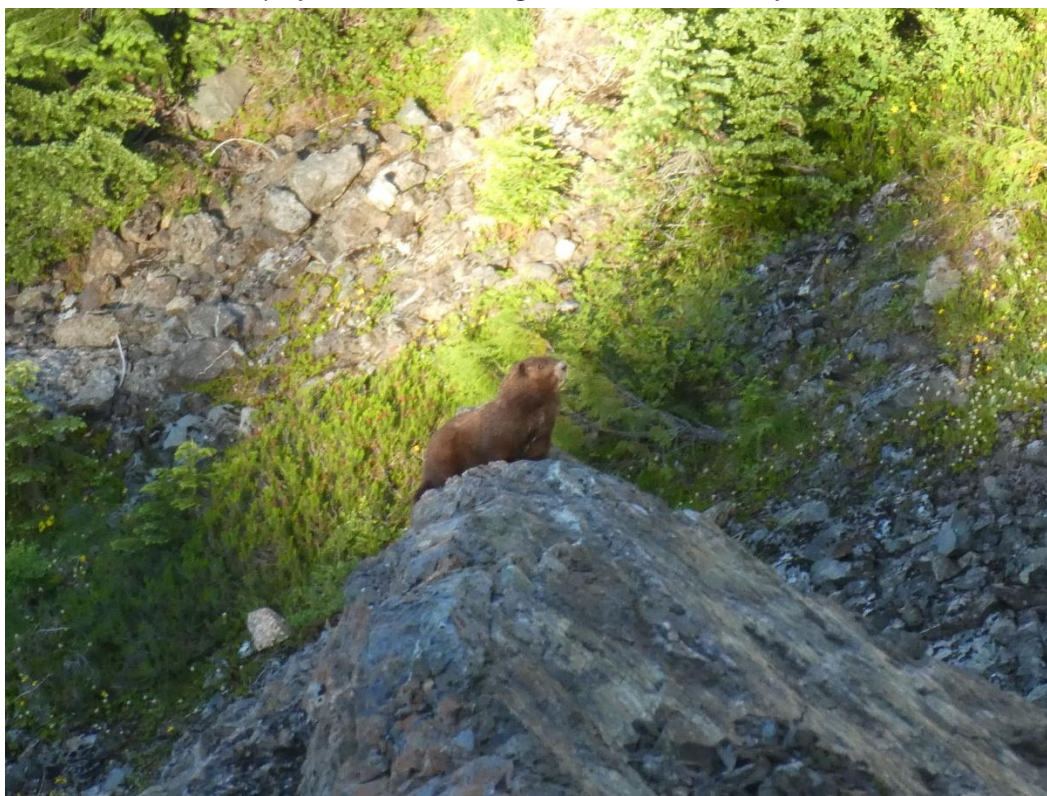
Marmots are most active during the early morning and late evening during the peak of summer. We each found a good spot to survey from and set up with our binoculars to watch for marmots emerging from their burrows once the temperature started to cool a bit. Each group saw at least one marmot in the evening survey period!



Looking into the Jewel Lake Bowl for marmots. Photo by Malcolm Grieve.



Catrin set up by Jewel Lake looking for marmots. Photo by Dave Suttill.



Marmot at Jewel Lake. Photo by Dave Suttill.



Marmot in the Beehive Bowl. Photo by Shayn McAskin.

After appreciating the sunset, we watched the moon come up early.



Sunset from the ridge above Jewel Lake. Photo by Catrin Brown.



Watching the moon from camp. Photo by Catrin Brown.

The next morning we woke up and went right back to surveying for marmots. The weather started changing early in the morning, and we had sun, low cloud and the threat of rain. Luckily it held off, and we were able to see more marmots during the morning survey period as well.



Surveying for marmots. Photo by Catrin Brown.



A marmot seen through binoculars in Jewel Bowl. Photo by Haley Andersen.



An adult marmot seen in the Beehive Bowl area. Photo by Shayn McAskin.



Hiking up from morning survey. Photo by Catrin Brown.

Two of our groups were lucky enough to see some young-of-the-year pups!

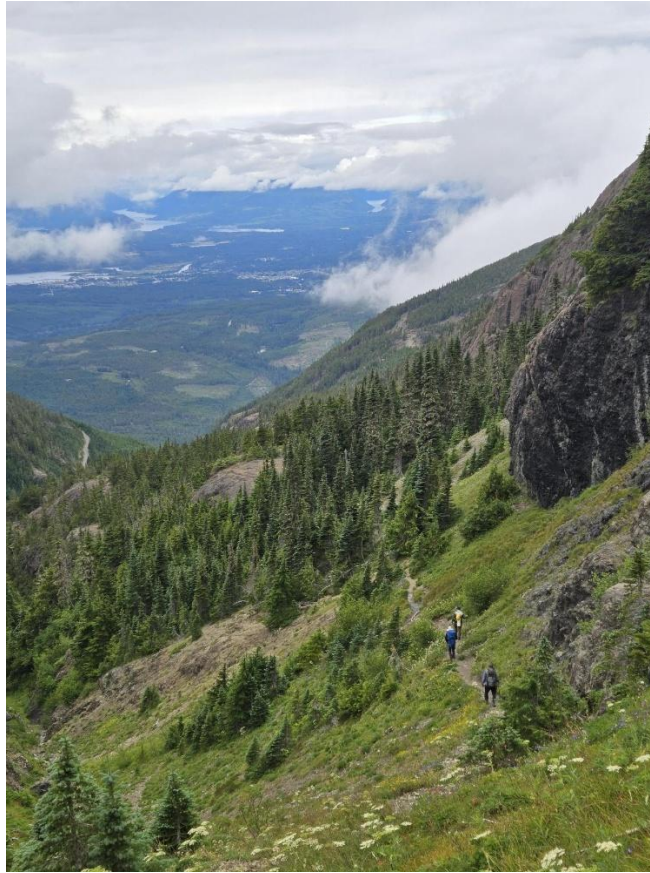


Pups seen through binoculars in Beehive Bowl. Photo by Shayn McAskin.

The hike down was just as slow and careful as our way up. We saw lots of other weekend hiking groups going up as we came down.



Hiking down the scree in Beehive Bowl. Photo by Shayn McAskin.



Hiking down the gully on the Saddle route. Photo by Heather Heim.



Hiking down the Saddle route. Photo by Dave Suttill.

We appreciated the variety of wildflowers still in bloom on our way down. We got back to the trucks just before the rain started to come down.



Wildflowers in bloom on the Saddle route. Photo by Heather Heim.

We met briefly back in Coombs to collect any borrowed gear and say goodbye before going on our separate ways. Everyone enjoyed their time on the mountain, and we all learned something new! All in all, it was a successful outing, and we were able to count a total of 13 marmots between our 4 groups across the mountain.

Thank you to Dave, Catrin, Malcolm, Haley and Shayn for the photos provided for this report.