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Contact:

Karyssa Arnett, Executive Director
info@simrstofino.org, 250-266-9400



**Strawberry Isle Marine Research Society Issues Urgent Public Appeal for Donations
*Society faces financial crisis and possible inability to continue marine conservation activities***

TOFINO, BC, AUGUST 11, 2022 – The Strawberry Isle Marine Research Society (SIMRS) is seeking donations from individuals, groups, and organizations who are passionate about marine conservation in Clayoquot and Barkley Sounds and beyond. Due to lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, without assistance the society is facing a financial crisis that could lead to significant scaling down or even closure and, therefore, the ability to provide marine conservation programs and services.

SIMRS relies on grants and donations to provide valuable marine conservation research and education as well as to carry out marine emergency response activities. Over the past three years, the organization has experienced a significant decline in the number of donations and grants received. This has led SIMRS to issue a public appeal for donations in order to continue operations.

SIMRS will use funds procured to continue to contribute to vital research and education initiatives. These include the Bigg's Killer Whale Monitoring Program, which informs a multitude of government and non-government organizations focused on Killer Whale conservation, and the Sea Star Stewardship program which continues to provide valuable insights on the problematic Sea Star Wasting Disease. Funds will also be used to support their ongoing ocean education programs, primarily the one-of-a-kind mobile and hands-on Build-A-Whale program.

In addition to their marine research and outreach, SIMRS also urgently requires funding to continue to play their part in the BC Marine Mammal Response Network. The society is the only non-governmental organization in the region trained and equipped by Fisheries and Oceans Canada to respond directly to marine mammal emergencies including entanglements, live strandings, rescues, and necropsies. Unfortunately, these incidents are frequent on the West coast and response efforts are often costly.

"In order to continue our vital operations and Rod Palm's legacy in this area, we are appealing to the west coast for assistance during a time of extreme need. We hope to be back on our feet soon, but need your help in getting there." – Jen Dart, SIMRS Board President

About Strawberry Isle Marine Research Society:

Strawberry Isle Marine Research Society (SIMRS) is a registered charity established in 1991, based in Tofino, British Columbia. The society's mission is to conduct long-term marine research and monitoring, to educate communities about marine ecosystems, and provide emergency marine mammal response.

Learn more about how to support Strawberry Isle Marine Research at www.simrstofino.org/donate