

## COVID-19 Prevention Protocols for Sea Star Stewardship Program

The following guidelines are to help ensure the safety of volunteer participants and staff members during Sea Star Stewardship surveys. These protocols are based on the current government of BC recommendations and may be updated or adapted as the situation evolves.

- 1. Stay home if you are sick.** Participants & staff are required to be in good health prior to and during the surveys with no signs or symptoms of sickness. SIMRS can and will refuse participation if they feel you may be sick.\*
- 2. Wear a mask (optional).** It is recommended, although not required, that participants wear a mask or face covering for the duration of the survey.
- 3. Sanitize & wash!** Please wash your hands thoroughly before and after participating in the survey and avoid touching your face. Hand sanitizer will be provided by SIMRS, but it is recommended you bring your own.

### **\*Note about COVID-19 symptoms:**

Symptoms may include: fever, tiredness and dry cough, aches and pains, nasal congestion, runny nose, sore throat, difficulty breathing and diarrhoea. It usually takes 5–6 days from when someone is infected with the virus for symptoms to show, however it can take up to 14 days. Please see the BC Government Self Assessment tool: <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>. If you or someone you are physically close to has experienced any of these symptoms within the two weeks after the survey please inform us as soon as possible at [info@simrstofino.org](mailto:info@simrstofino.org).

SIMRS Sea Star Stewardship Program Protocols Updated: June 24, 2020

## SSSP Information & Pre-survey checklist

There are a few things you should know in preparation of joining the survey:

1. What is sea star wasting and what does it look like?
  - Learn about our program at: <https://www.simrstofino.org/sea-star> •
  - Get to know the signs and symptoms of SSWS for [\*Pisaster ochraceus\*](#), [\*Dermasteria imbricate\*](#) & [\*Patiria miniata\*](#)
  - Learn more about current research at [seastarwasting.org](http://seastarwasting.org)
2. What do I need to do before the survey?
  - Sign the volunteer waiver and photo release form and send to [info@simrstofino.org](mailto:info@simrstofino.org)
  - Read the Covid-19 Safety Protocols outlined above and assess your health •
  - Read the survey methods outlined below and take a look at the datasheet to familiarize yourself (you do not need to print these)

### 3. What do I need to bring:

- Your own ruler to take measurements with
- Hat, sunscreen, glasses for sunny days
- Raincoat/rainpants for wet days
- Water bottle for drinking
- Phone or camera for taking pictures
- **\*\*Rubber boots or waterproof shoes with good grip\*\***

## Survey Methods

Similar to how we must take precautions to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we must take these same precautions to prevent the spread of wasting disease between sea stars. Please avoid touching any sea stars with your hands and sampling gear. Accidents happen, so if touched please sterilize hands and/or equipment before continuing the survey.

Survey methods and protocols are based on those of [MARINE's Intertidal Sea Star Protocol \(updated October 2, 2018\)](#). Take care to only sample within the designated survey area – ambiguous sites have been clearly marked with red start and end points. Use chalk or lumber markers to divide areas of the survey site between samplers to prevent overlap and double-counting. If you are unsure of whether a sea star falls within the survey area, take a picture of its location and make a note on the datasheet. Start surveying at the side of the site closest to the water line and work your way up the beach to give yourself optimal time.

### **Step 1: Choose your partner & survey section**

Split into pairs, designating 1 person as the recorder, and 1 person as the data collector. Clearly mark out your section of the survey area with chalk to avoid overlap with other partners.

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### **Step 2: Start collecting Data**

Carefully search for sea stars in cracks, crevices, and covered by seaweed – using a headlamp or flashlight can help. Once a sea star is located the data collector will tell the recorder these three things:

1. What species it is ex: Ochre star, Leather star, Bat star etc.
2. What size it is – measure from radial center to the tip of the longest arm to the **nearest 10mm** (or 5mm if <10mm in size)
3. Is it Healthy, Mildly Wasting, Severely Wasting, or <100% visible? (If you cannot see a portion of the animal, we don't know if it is healthy or not so it gets put into the <100% visible category)

If you are unsure of anything, please ask the site leader for confirmation. Note any unusual observations such as arm twisting, falling off rocks, arm regrowth, lesion healing, and consumption by other animals (such as anemone).

### **Step 3: Take pictures**

If you happen upon washing, take a picture of the animal and send the photos to [info@simrstofino.org](mailto:info@simrstofino.org) after the survey is finished. Feel free to take photos and videos during the survey to post to social media, but make sure to tag us [@SIMRS\\_Tofino](https://twitter.com/SIMRS_Tofino).

## **Site Locations & Meeting Spots**

### **Tonquin Beach (Tofino):**

Meet at the parking lot at the end of Tonquin Park Rd.

### **Frank Island (Tofino):**

Meet at the parking lot in the middle of Chesterman Beach (where Lynn Rd turns into Chesterman Beach Road).

### **He-Tin-Kis (Ucluelet):**

Meet at the “Otter” parking lot at the Wild Pacific Trail entrance next to Terrace Beach Resort.

For any questions or concerns contact:

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**[info@simrstofino.org](mailto:info@simrstofino.org)**