

New ocean observatory and radar for Prince Rupert

Submitted by Virginia Keast Thu, 2016-03-31 10:28

Today, Ocean Networks Canada (ONC) completed installation of a community ocean observatory and two land-based high-frequency radar stations within Ts?msyen Territory at Prince Rupert, British Columbia. Similar observatories were installed at Kitamaat Village and Campbell River.



Located on Digby Island near the Prince Rupert airport, the new community observatory includes an underwater cabled seafloor platform equipped with a live-streaming video camera, instruments that measure local water quality, and a hydrophone that records the underwater sounds of whales and the noise caused by ships. On shore, a weather station and above-ground video camera tracks environmental conditions 24/7.

Monitoring the surface waters nearby, a new high-frequency land-based radar system provides data on sea surface currents and a co-located automatic identification system (AIS) antenna tracks ships in Chatham Sound.

Further south, a second radar installation at Ridley Island provides two additional complementary radar systems—one to work with the Digby Island radar to extend coverage of the region's sea surface currents, and another to measure waves, within a shorter range.

Automatic identification system antennas at both Digby and Ridley Island also track large ships in the region.

All of the observatory data are streaming to a shore station in the village and from there, to Oceans 2.0, ONC's advanced data management system. Data are freely available for viewing through the ONC website.

An initiative of the University of Victoria, Ocean Networks Canada operates world-leading cabled observatories in the northeast Pacific Ocean and Arctic Ocean. In 2014, ONC's Smart Ocean? Systems received funding from Western Economic Diversification to install a number of ocean observatories along the British Columbia coast.

By continuously collecting, archiving and delivering data from the ocean, these observatories provide information that will help make informed decisions about earthquakes and tsunamis, climate change, coastal management, conservation and marine safety.

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