

How We Talk About Where We Are

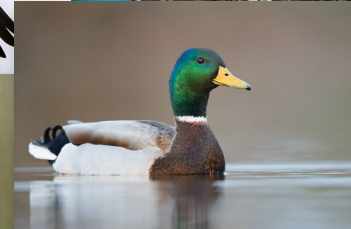
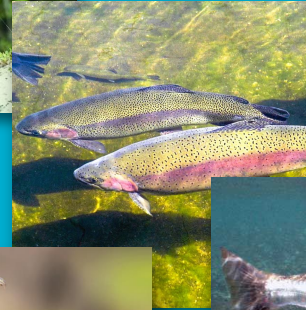
& Implications for Life on the Salish Sea

by Stuart Heslop

How do we
categorize these
organisms?

How do we name
them?

What methods
and names are
privileged?



Creatures of the Salish Sea

Evolutionary Taxonomy

Classification based on genetic descent and degrees of evolutionary change, projecting millions of years into the past

Prioritizes:

- Genetic relation and descent
- Regularization/formalization (i.e. through Latin names)
- Personal independence/objectivity

Ethnoecological/'Folk' Taxonomies

Classification based on a variety of factors relative to the linguistic community: morphology, behavior, habitat, cultivation, worldview, kinship

Prioritizes:

- Cultural relevance/relation to the linguistic community + environment
- Orienting and connecting to one's homelands and cultural worlds

"Lakhóta people practice what I'd call an applied “science” that engages with relatives in a reciprocal way. We see these plants as being people in their own right, sharing knowledge and caring for us as we care for them. **I think Lakhóta ways of knowing and naming are more invested in engaging in meaningful relationships with plant relatives than the desire to produce or consume botanical knowledge.**"

Sierra Redbow (Oglála Lakhóta), 2019 Corbett Scholar

The Salish Sea + Coast Salish languages



The Salish Sea + Coast Salish languages



Lushootseed

English

How would evolutionary taxonomy categorize these animals?
How would you categorize them?

- *sčətx^wəd* 'black bear'
- *sx̣^wiłaỵ* 'mountain goat'
- *sq^wəbaỵ* 'dog'
- *sqig^wəc* 'deer'
- *stiqayu?* 'wolf'
- *sq̣^wəcṭ* 'chipmunk'



Lushootseed

tatčulbix^w 'large animal, *food* animal'

- *sčətx^wəd* 'black bear'
- *sx̌^wiłay̓* 'mountain goat'
- *sqig^wəc* 'deer'



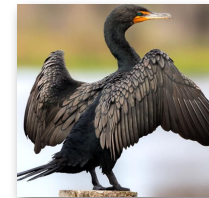
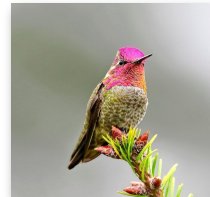
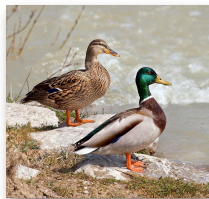
titčulbix^w 'little animal'

- *stiqayu?* 'wolf'
- *sq^wəbəy̓* 'dog'
- *sq^wəcł* 'chipmunk'



English

- *ṣatṣat* 'mallard'
- *tiid* 'hummingbird'
- *sbəqʷaʔ* 'great blue heron'
- *təkʷtəkʷəlus* 'great horned owl'
- *didšəlqid* 'hooded merganser'
- *čixʷčixʷ* 'fish hawk'
- *yəxʷəlaʔ* 'eagle'
- *səlus* 'junco'
- *qʷatqs* 'double-crested cormorant'



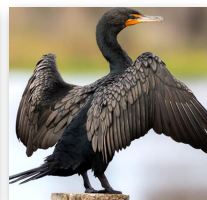
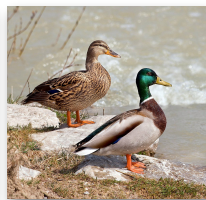
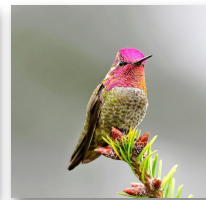
Lushootseed

- sʔəlqəb*
'bird' {
- *tiid* 'hummingbird'
 - *səlus* 'junco'
 - *sbəqʷaʔ* 'great blue heron'

- ḡibḡib*
'hawk, bird of prey' {
- *təkʷtəkʷəlus* 'great horned owl'
 - *čixʷčixʷ* 'osprey'
 - *yəḡʷəlaʔ* 'eagle'

- sqʷalaš*
'waterfowl' {
- *didšəlqid* 'hooded merganser'
 - *ḡatḡat* 'mallard'
 - *qʷatqs* 'double-crested cormorant'

> Skilled swimmers, divers;
sometimes food



How do we categorize these fish?

Salmon

Silver/Coho Salmon



skʷəxʷic

Trout

Rainbow Trout



qiwǣ

Dolly Varden Trout



p̥sač

sčədadxʷ

> anadromous, return yearly upriver

skʷəsp̥l̥

What's in a name?

q^watqs **'double-crested cormorant'**

q^wat 'fall, falling'

=qs 'nose, point'

g^wədbix^w **'trailing blackberry'**

g^wəd 'down'

=bix^w 'homogenous group'

stəqx^w **'beaver'**

s- 'thing, one who, thing with x quality'

təq 'stick, adhere'

What's in a name?

waḡwaḡus

waḡwaḡ

=us

'frog month, frog face'

'frog'

'face (of the moon)'

≈ March

pəḋḡwīwaac

pəḋ

ḡwīw

'whistling (robins) season'

'season, time of'

'whistle'

≈ April

pəḋčaʔəb

pəḋ

čaʔ

'time of digging (roots)'

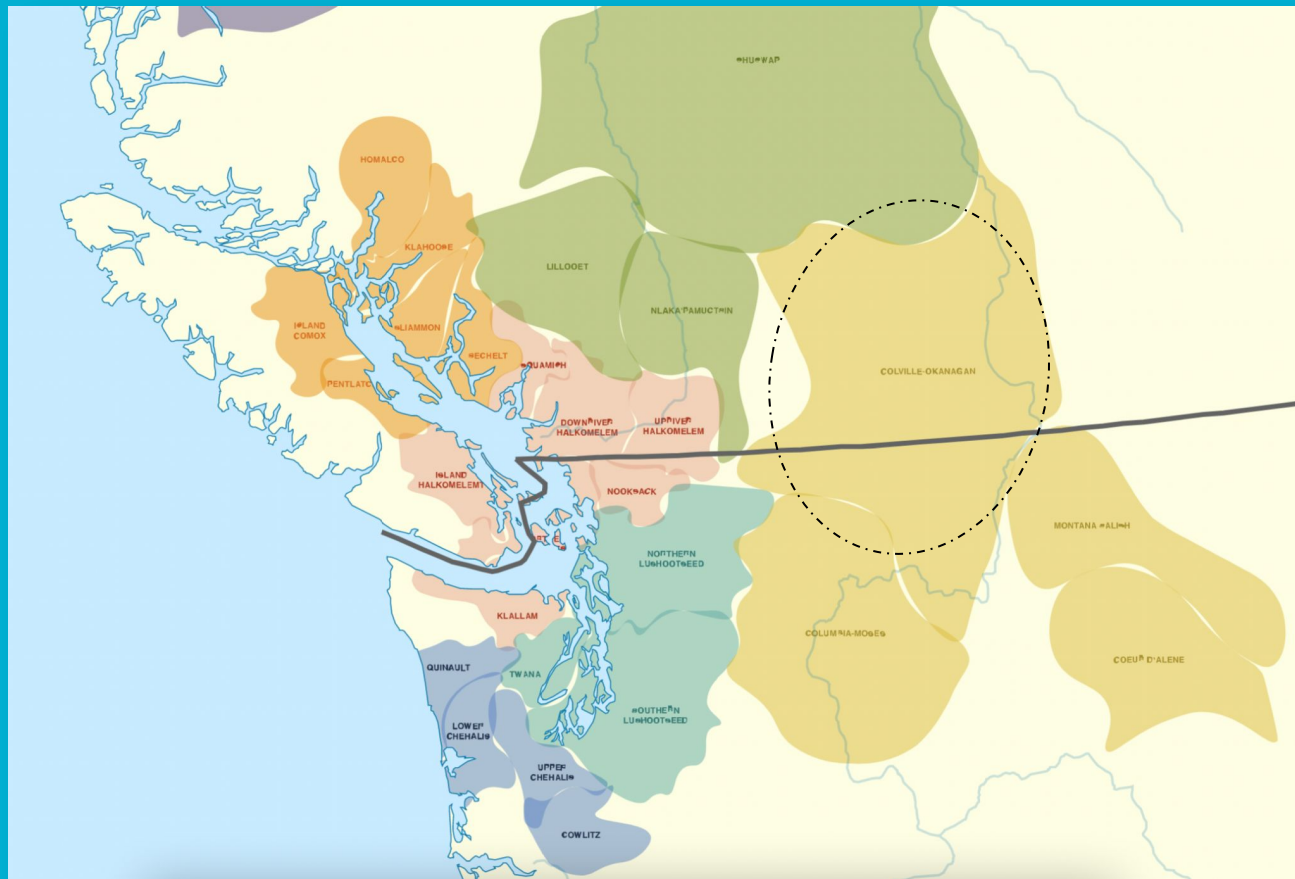
'season, time of'

'dig, dig into'

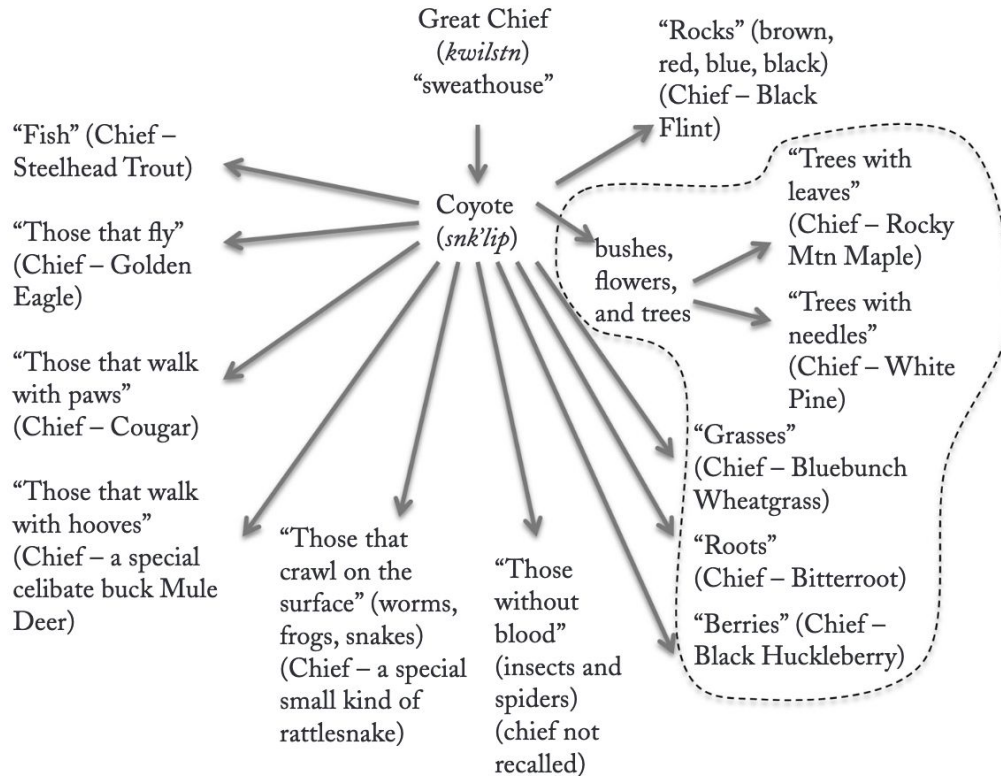
≈ May



Salish Languages



Okanagan / Okanagan-Colville



Okanagan

- Some domains correspond to conventional English categories or scientific taxa
- Some domains collect categories that are not closely related (genetically)

What do we take away from this?

In whose territory
do you live? Visit?
Study?

What plants and
animals do you
have relationships
with?

What is your
seasonal round?
How do you mark
the year?



Salish Sea + Coast Salish languages

**How do you think
understanding Indigenous
taxonomies can impact your
work and personal life,
especially in your traditional
territories?**

Owen Oliver
(Quinault, Isleta Pueblo)
2019 Corbett Scholar

The importance of understanding and implementing Indigenous taxonomies across territories is the context it gives guests to understand Indigenous lands and people.

We cannot talk about place without including Indigenous languages.

Indigenous languages are built directly from witnessing the land since time immemorial. Each element is carefully orally presented through story, trade, and family. When we give the tools for guests and visitors to understand the makeup of Indigenous languages through the past, present, and future, we are building accountability to those learning and securing the futures of the ones teaching.

TL;DR, if you want to know a place, you need to learn the language, the language was built directly from the landscape.

Learning about plants through a Lakhóta lens (language and culture) has had a greater impact on my relationship to the natural world than my 4 years in Environmental Studies. I've grown to pay more attention to the interactions between animals and plants because they can teach you a lot about how to survive.

Pika cache haypiles to survive the winter, storing grasses and flowers—many of which are poisonous. Drying the poisonous plants renders it edible, and these toxic chemicals can also serve as a preservative. I believe this may have been a way Indigenous peoples living among Pika learned to process foods like čhanphá - chokecherries whose pits contain cyanide, but when processed through drying and mashing, the pit provide a powerful edible medicine. All of that to say: **you learn a lot from more-than-human relatives, and if we all spent more time in nature, it'd do us a whole lot of good.**

How do you think understanding Indigenous taxonomies can impact your work and personal life, especially in your traditional territories?

Sierra Redhow
(Oglála Lakhóta)
2019 Corbett Scholar