The Wolf

The Native Symbol or Totem the Wolf represents loyalty, strong family ties, good communication, education, understanding and intelligence. Of all land animals the Wolf has the strongest supernatural powers and is the most accomplished hunter. The Wolf is a very social and communicative creature, he uses body movement, touch and sound. The First Nations had great respect for Wolves because of their alikeness. Both Natives and Wolves hunt, gather, defend and even educate their tribe or pack. The Wolf has always been respected as a very family oriented animal because he mates for life, watches and protects his young until they are old enough to be independent and protects the elders. Hunters would carve or paint lightning snakes with the head of Wolves on their canoes in belief that the hunting skills of the Wolves would help their hunting skills on the water. Some native people believe that wolves are the reincarnation of died hunters, and they are frequently impersonated at ceremonies as Wolves.

If direction and purpose are lacking in life, when clarity and persistence are needed, the steadfast determination of the Wolf can overcome fear, indecision and confusion. Healers often take the form of the Wolf in their ritual work. Wolves are fierce, loyal, independent and well able to offer support on the most challenging healing journey.

The Bear

The Native Symbol or Totem the Bear symbolizes, strength, family, vitality courage and health. He is a thoughtful creature, independent and apparently distant, has little need for fellowship and is self-contained and strong-willed. A Bear is of great support and comfort to those who crave human company simply for personal reassurance rather than for the simple pleasure of being with friends. He makes lonely periods of life far easier.

Known as the Protector of the animal kingdom the Bear is the most powerful coastal animal. In the Haida culture the Bear is known as "Elder Kinsman" and is treated as a noble guest. Whenever a Bear is killed it is brought inside and eagle down is spread upon it to show respect. The Bear is also known for its human-like qualities.

Legend says that a First Nations chief's daughter fell in love with and married a Bear, who happened to be the nephew of the Great Bear Chief. She gave birth to twin bear cubs

and was known as the Bear Mother. This created a close relationship between Bears and humans.

The Raven

The Native Symbol or Totem Raven: Mischievous and curious the Raven is the cultural focus of the Native Northwest Coast People. He symbolizes creation, knowledge, prestige as well as the complexity of nature and the subtlety of truth. He also symbolizes the unknown and is there to show that every person sees the world in a different way as another. The Raven was often called upon to clarify truths in visions, as the wise elders knew that what the eye sees is not always the truth. Many of the original peoples of the Pacific Northwest Coast refer to him as a god, and it is believed by some that messages from the creator or the cosmos are buried in the wings of the Raven only to be released to the families most deserving of his knowledge. The Raven is a long distance healer and is known as the "keeper of secrets," he helps us in our lives by exposing the truth of kept secrets that could potentially harm us, in doing so he helps us back to good health. The Raven was only ever feared if misused. Besides being a member of many different clans, every descendant from the Northwest Coast First Nations belongs to either a Raven or Eagle Clan. The membership was always defined by which clans the mother belonged to.

In many Northwest Coast Communities stories are told about the Raven and his many achievements. One of the most common stories is how the Raven stole the light in the form of the sun, the moon and stars. Many say that he transformed himself into a baby to find out where the light was hidden and then stole it from an old chief who had kept them in his house locked away in a large bentwood box. After Raven escaped with the box through the smoke hole of the house, he placed the sun, the moon and the stars in the sky for all beings to enjoy. Originally the Raven had white feathers and after flying through the smoke hole with the light, his feathers turned black and stayed black until today.

The Haida tell of how Raven stole the salmon from the Beaver people. Raven again transformed himself into a chieftain's baby to find out from the beaver people, where they were hiding the salmon from all the other beings. After living with the beaver people for many years he finally found out that they were hiding all the salmon in a hidden stream flowing into a lake. In the same night after he found out, he transformed himself back into raven and rolled up the stream and lake like a carpet and flew all over the Pacific West

Coast and back to Haida Gwaii. The stream and lake with all the salmon were so heavy that he could only fly a short distance at a time. He would stop wherever there was a tree to rest. The Beaver people transformed themselves back into Beavers in order to stop him. They would gnaw down the trees that Raven stopped at and each time some salmon and water would escape, forming great streams and rivers of Salmon all over the country.

The Loon

The Native Symbol or Totem the Loon: A solitary bird of the wilderness, the Loon symbolises tranquility, serenity and the reawakening of old hopes, wishes and dreams. The Loon relies on water and water is a symbol for dreams and multiple levels of consciousness, therefore Loons teach us to pay attention to our dreams, wishes and hopes. A Legend says that to see a Loon is a symbol of a dream come true or an answered wish.

The Hummingbird

The Native Symbol or Totem Hummingbird teaches you to appreciate and love the miracle of living, and to help you focus on the positivity in your life. They are messengers of peace, they heal your body and soul and they guide you through life's challenges. Hummingbirds are very independent and seem to have an unlimited energy supply. They symbolize wonder and beauty.

A legend from the Kwakwaka'wakw says that Dzunuk'wa (the mythic guardian of the mountains and Wild Women of the Woods) loved this little bird so much, she let him nest in her hair, in return the Humming bird looked like a jewel pinned in her hair. Of all the birds, they are the most talented flyers. They can hover in one place, fly sideways, backwards and forwards. They teach us to look back to our past, but not to dwell, instead to move forward. As well the Hummingbirds tell us to savour every sweet moment as they do when hovering over each flower. Native Americans believe that it brings luck to see a Hummingbird before major events such as long hunting trips or travelling to other villages.

The Eagle

The Native Symbol or Totem Eagle is known as "The master of skies" and is a symbol of great significance. He is believed to be the creature with the closest relationship with the Creator. By soaring great heights, he can travel between the physical world and the spiritual world. He is said to be a messenger to the Creator. Unlike the raven's ability to send messages down, the eagle sends messages and prayers to the Creator. If an Eagle was seen during a Prayer session it was a sign of having a prayer accepted If a prayer needed immediate attention from the Creator an eagle feather would be held up towards the sky. Although every part of the eagle has separate and significant meanings, the Eagle as a whole signifies focus, great strength, peace, leadership and incredible prestige. The wings of an eagle symbolise the balance and co-dependency between females and males, and how each gender must work unitedly in order to achieve harmonious results. The eagle feather plays a substantial part in religious and shamanic practices and ceremonies. The feathers were only allowed to be worn by people who had earned the privilege. For example warriors that had done extremely well in battles would have a feather rewarded to them. The eagle feather transmits strength; it gives the ability to speak honestly from the heart, without hurt or anger. The middle vane in the feather symbolises the path that every man walks in their life time, and every barb that comes of the middle vane symbolises the choices we all have in life, and that every choice we make is attached to the middle or main path that we take. Eagle down is scattered in entrances as a friendly welcome when people of great importance come and it is also often used in dances. Besides being a member of many different clans, every descendant from the Northwest Coast First Nations belongs to either a Raven or Eagle Clan. The membership is always defined by which clan the individuals mother belonged to.

Bear

Strength, Learned Humility, Motherhood, Teaching. The protector of the animal kingdom, awakening the power of the unconscious.

A symbol of great strength, authority and mobility, and is an important family crest. Because of its power and human-like qualities, the bear was referred to by West Coast people as Elder Kinsmen. When killed, it was taken to the chief's house, sprinkled with eagle down (a symbol of welcome and friendship) and generally treated as a high ranking guest.



Eagle

Great Strength, Leadership, Prestige, Spirit healing and Creation. Eagle also has a strong connection to Peace

Symbol of great wisdom, authority and power. Long a symbol of spiritual power and illumination eagles inspire people of all societies. Their energy is healing and aids in creation. One of the principal crests of the West Coast Indians. Many myths and legends surround the Eagle. Eagle down, a symbol of peace and friendship, was, and still is, sprinkled before guests in welcome dances and other ceremonial occasions.



Frog

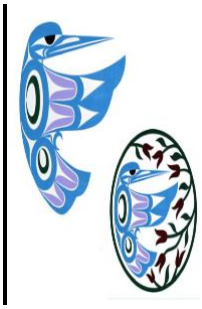
Spring & New Life - Communicator, Stability

The Frog was a guardian symbol. When strangers approached, the croaking of the frog would serve as a warning. The Frog was said to have warned humans of impending danger. The Frog is frequently depicted in the art of the Northwest Coast and many legends are attached to this whimsical little animal.



Heron

Patience, Graceful, Aggressive self determination and self reliance.
Follower of ones own path. No structure, little stability and no security.



Hummingbird

Love, Beauty, Intelligence, Spirit Messenger that represents friendship and playfulness. Tireless Joy and the Nectar of life.
The Hummingbird is also a symbol of good luck and good fortune. It was considered a positive sign to spot a Hummingbird just prior to some major event such as hunting or traveling to another village. Hard workers and fiercely independent. Hummingbird teaches us how to find the miracle of joyful living from your own life circumstances.



Killer Whale

Traveler & Guardian - Symbol of Good, Power of Song, Awakening Inner Depths
The Whale is a popular symbol for romance as they mate for life. The Whale like the Wolf, stays with its family and travel in large pods.



Loon

Peace, Tranquility - Generous Giving Nature, reawakening of old hopes wishes and dreams.
The Loon is very much a part of the West Coast aura; it plays a significant part in the symbols of the West Coast Indians. The loon is always around water, and water is the ancient symbol for the astral plane, dreams and other levels of consciousness. Loons ask you pay attention to your dreams. The Loons call though melancholy and eerie may also be telling you that all your hopes, wishes and dreams you may have tucked away in the back of your heart are about to come to the surface. If you compromise your dreams you may truly find yourself haunted.



Moon

Protector and Guardian of the Earth by Night
The Moon lightens the darkness of the night. The Moon was the exclusive crest of only a few of the highest ranking chiefs. The Raven is said to have released the Moon into the sky. The stars are pieces of the Moon that flung off when Raven threw it into the sky. An eclipse was said to be a Codfish trying to swallow the Moon. In order to prevent this, a bonfire was set with green boughs to add smoke. As people danced ceremonially around the fire, thick smoke rose to the sky causing the codfish to cough and spit out the Moon. When the people saw the Moon appear at the edge of the mountain they would drum to bring the Moon higher into the sky.



Owl

Wisdom, Omens, Vision of the night

No bird has as much myth and mystery surrounding it than the owl. Part of this mystical aura is due to the fact that the bird is nocturnal and the night time has always seemed mysterious to humans. The owl is a symbol of the feminine, the moon, and the night. Because of it association with the moon it has ties to fertility and seduction. The owl is bird of magic and darkness of prophecy and wisdom.



Raven

Creation & Knowledge - Bringer of the Light, magic

One of the most prominent figures of the first peoples. The Raven is credited with giving the light, fire, and water to the Indians. He had the power to change at will into an animal form or to that of a human being. The Raven is the transformer, trickster and creator. Known in legends as the one who released the sun, moon, and stars; discovered man in a clamshell; brought the salmon and the water; and taught man how to fish and hunt.



Salmon

Dependability and Renewal - A Provider

Symbol of abundance and prosperity, the salmon was the chief sustenance for the West Coast Indians. The Pacific Northwest Coast people believed that Salmon were actually humans with eternal life how lived in a large house far under the ocean. In the Spring, they put on their Salmon disguises and offered themselves to the villagers as food. The tribes believed that when entire fish skeletons were returned to the sea, the spirits would rise again and change into Salmon people. In this way, the cycle could begin again the following year.



Thunderbird

Powerful & Mystical - A Leader of All.

A mythological bird who was the creator and controller of all elements and spirits. When he flew, the flapping of his wings caused the thunder, and the flashing of his eyes caused the lightning. He lived in the highest of mountains.



Whale

Bravery and Strength

Often depicted as a symbol of great strength and bravery, but was sometimes feared, as the Indians believed the whale would capsize their boats.



Wolf

Intelligence & Leadership - Strong Sense of Family, Guardianship, Ritual and Spirit
Revered because it was a good hunter, the wolf symbolizes cunning and was often associated with a special spirit a man had to acquire to become a successful hunter. As Wolves mate for life and live in close family units usually traveling in packs, they are regarded as a family-oriented symbol in West Coast Native culture. Wolf is the land manifestation of the Killer Whale as they mate for life, protect their young and do not separate from their families.