

Aboriginal Animal Traits and Meanings



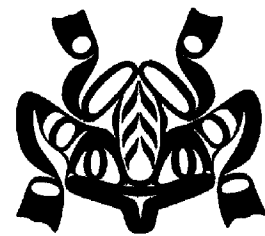
Beaver



Bear



Eagle



Frog



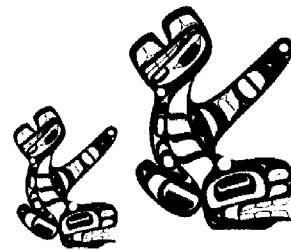
Heron



Hummingbird



Killer Whale



Loon



Moon



Owl



Raven



Salmon



Thunderbird



Whale



Wolf

Aboriginal Animal Traits and Meanings

Beaver

Creative, Artistic and Determined. Also known as the carpenter of the animal kingdom. A builder of dreams.

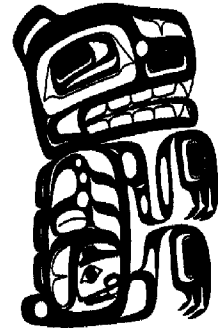
Beaver is an important crest and the subject of many legends. One legend tells of the origin of the beaver: A woman with brown hair dammed a small stream to make a pool for swimming. As she swam, her leather apron kept slapping the water. The pool became a lake and, because of scolding words from her husband, she refused to leave it. She became covered with brown fur, her apron turned into a tail, and thus she became the first beaver. Beaver reminds us that we have to act on our dreams to make them a reality.



Bear

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

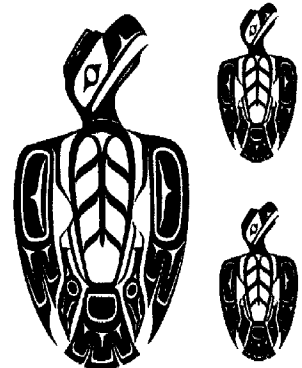
A symbol of great strength, authority and mobility, and is an important family crest. Because of its power and human-like qualities, the bear was referred to by West Coast people as Elder Kinsmen. When killed, it was taken to the chief's house, sprinkled with eagle down (a symbol of welcome and friendship)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

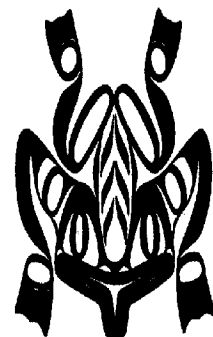
Symbol of great wisdom, authority and power. Long a symbol of spiritual power and illumination eagles inspire people of all societies. Their energy is healing and aids in creation. One of the principal crests of the West Coast Indians. Many myths and legends surround the Eagle. Eagle down, a symbol of 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.

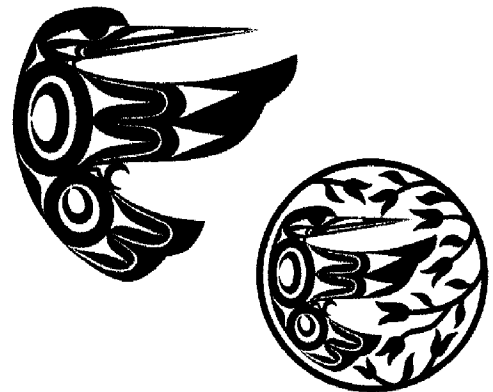
Follower of ones own path. No structure, little stability and no security.



Hummingbird

Love, Beauty, Intelligence, Spirit Messenger that represents friendship and playfulness. Tireless Joy and the Nectar of life.

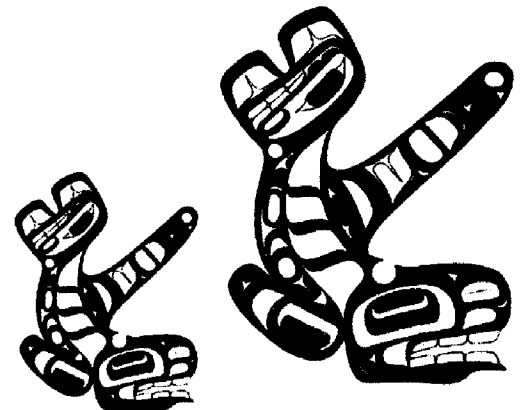
The Hummingbird is also a symbol of good luck and good fortune. It was considered a positive sign to spot a Hummingbird just prior to some major event such as hunting or traveling to another village. Hard workers and fiercely independent. Hummingbird teaches us how to find the miracle of joyful living 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 its 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 who 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.



Animal meanings from Wiki-Answers

Thunderbird: Thunderbird is the most powerful supernatural creature. He lived in the mountains and fed on whales. When he flapped his wings, thunder rolled. Known as a hero in the legends of the Coast Salish Legends.

Killer Whale: The Killer Whale is the manifestation of Wolf; it is held in great awe for its size and power.

Eagle: Is a symbol of both power and prestige as well as peace and friendship. Eagle feathers are still considered sacred and were part of many ceremonies and rituals.

Moon: Is the protector and guardian of earth by night.

Sun: Is the protector and guardian of earth by day.

Wolf: The wolf is a symbol of strength in the family and the kinship associated with it. It is known to have the strength and loyalty in all relationships, and is a great team player with effort on behalf of all in the community.

Salmon: Is known as the provider of life, he is a symbol of abundance of prosperity. Salmon was and still is one of the main sources of diets for many of Salish People.

Beaver: Has a strong sense of family and home with openness to alternatives and the power of working towards goals and attaining a sense of achievement, . The Beaver has a understanding of the power in nature and works in harmony with it.

Loon: Is a symbol of sharing peace and tranquility and having a generous and giving nature.

Owl: The owl is a symbol of wisdom and is known to warn people of danger or death.

Otter: The otter is a symbol of trust and loyalty.

Heron: The heron is a symbol of one who is very patient, graceful and easy going.

Frog: A symbol of a new beginning to all things, tho very small the frog plays a great role in our culture, he lets us know when it is time to put away winter activities and prepare for the new season.

Bear: A bear symbolizes consistency and stability of action, has the ability to discover the inner truth about oneself, and has great self awareness, with a desire to deliberate about choices and actions.

Raven: Raven is known as the Transformer or Trickster, and is a hero. Native Legends credit Raven with bravery and among other things, releasing the Sun and Moon.

http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_do_the_animals_on_a_totem_pole_mean#ixzz2BZh565li