

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How Big is Stuart Island?

A. Stuart Island is roughly 2 miles by 4 miles and includes 1786.45 acres.

Q. How many people live on Stuart Island?

A. About 15 in the winter and many more in the summer.

Q. Where do residents get their groceries?

A. There are no stores on Stuart Island. Residents bring their supplies from Roche Harbor, Friday Harbor, and/or the mainland.

Q. Is there commercial electricity on the Island?

A. No. Stuart Islanders generate their own power using wind, solar, generators, and even fuel cells.

Q. How do Islanders get their water?

A. Most property owners have their own drilled wells. A smaller number share a well with one neighbor. There are a couple community water systems. Water is a scarce resource.

Q. Is there fire fighting equipment on the Island?

A. Very Little. Islanders can respond to small fires but large fires are the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Call 360-378-4141.

Q. How do Islanders get their mail?

A. Currently, mail is delivered three times a week by boat from Roche Harbor. Stuart Island had its own Post Office until the 1950s when the mail was brought by freight/mail boats. For about 40 years (1960s – 2000s) the mail was flown to the Island three times each week.

Q. Is there telephone and Internet available?

A. Islanders generally use cell phones. Cell phone coverage varies by location and carrier. Internet is available by satellite and proprietary wireless ISPs. Line of Sight (LOS) is required which precludes much of the Island.

Q. Without ferry service, how do residents get to the Island?

A. Many residents use private boats. Some use airplanes. There are two airstrips on the Island and both are private. A few people charter boats or airplanes to travel. Heavy equipment and vehicles can be barged using commercial operators.

Q. How are medical emergencies handled?

A. Islanders understand that living here is a risk. There are a couple defibrillators on the Island as well as people with some medical training. In case of an emergency, call 360-378-4141 (not 911) and the sheriff's office will dispatch EMTs and a helicopter if the situation warrants it.

Q. When do the Killer Whales (Orcas) go past the Island?

A. Whenever they feel like it! The Orcas are constantly hunting for their favorite food which is king salmon. Consider yourself extremely lucky if you happen to see the whales.