



Wreck of the Vanlene, 1972. Copyright PRNPR Archives

14, 1972, when a giant freighter, the *Vanlene*, ran aground near Austin Island. The ship was carrying 300 Dodge Colt automobiles en route to Vancouver from Japan.

The crew members (from Honk Kong) all survived, but they were not able to save the ship. They sent out a Mayday call erroneously reporting they were off the coast of Washington state. Search-and-rescue teams took a long time to find the *Vanlene* due to the wildly inaccurate position report. The vessel was finally located, but despite the involvement of several rescue vessels the *Vanlene* could not be saved. Her captain had apparently lost his way, and investigators found that all navigation instruments on the ageing vessel were non-functioning. The captain had navigated across the Pacific with just an ordinary compass!



Helicopter airlifting cars from the Vanlene wreck, 1972. Copyright Parks Canada

The wreck of the *Vanlene* caused a major oil spill and the federal government was unprepared for such a catastrophe in its brand new national park. A boom was hastily strung together to contain the leaked oil. More oil was pumped directly from the *Vanlene*, and Mother Nature helped dissipate the rest. Nearly half the cars were salvaged from the sinking vessel by helicopter. Some years later, west coast storms broke the vessel in two and the *Vanlene* settled deeper and disappeared from sight. The wreck used to be a tourist attraction and is still visited by divers. Salt water corrosion ate away at the ship and its cargo of metal cars, but the rubber bits and pieces occasionally floated to the surface. Twenty-six tires were found on Clarke Island on one day.



Sea arch on Effingham Island. Copyright Parks Canada

EFFINGHAM, GILBERT AND RAYMOND ISLANDS

Effingham Island was originally called Village Island because there was a large First Nations village on the island, located where the reserve is today. The name was changed to Effingham in 1905. There was a secondary village site in Effingham Bay which may have been used as a trading post. The bay's large size and sheltered position near the Gilbert Island trading post made the Effingham Bay an important anchorage for trading schooners (McMillan and St.Claire, 2003:21). A fishing station was also established on the island by the Anderson Company in about 1866 (Peterson, 1999:104).

Permission must be obtained prior to landing at or walking through the Indian Reserve. A 15-minute trail connects the reserve to Effingham Bay, which is a popular, sheltered overnight anchorage for sailing yachts and motorboats. The bay has two gravel beaches where kayakers can land. A canoe run can also be found in the small bay on the northwest tip of Effingham. Hiking to the lake on the island is very difficult and people often get lost trying to do so. If you get there, you may find one species of fish in the lake: stickleback.

There is evidence of a structure on the southeast side of Effingham Bay that might possibly have been the winter quarters of Captain John Meares. Meares explored the area in 1788, one year after Captain Charles Barkley. Meares' name was given to the steep bluff (Meares Bluff) on the southeast