

Species at Risk & Local Government: A Primer for British Columbia

Advanced Search Search Criteria

Taxonomic Group	Mammals
Jurisdiction	All
COSEWIC	All
BC Status	All
BC Wildlife Act	All
Identified Wildlife	All
SARA	All
Management Category	All
Habitat	All
Regional District	Capital Regional District: All Districts and Municipalities
Forest District	All Forest Districts

Search Results

Mammals

Harbour Porpoise

Phocoena phocoena

BC Status	Blue	BC Wildlife Act	None	Identified Wildlife	No
COSEWIC	Special Concern	SARA	Schedule 1		

Harbour porpoises found in temperate and subarctic coastal waters throughout the northern hemisphere. They are small (to 2m), shy, short lived (to 10 yr) and social, often swimming in small groups. Small schooling fish and squid comprise the majority of the diet. They are rare and believed to be in decline along highly developed areas of the coast, suggesting sensitivity to human activities. Porpoises are prone to being killed in fishing nets, are displaced by underwater noise, and could be affected by contaminants in their food chain. Continued development and use of prime habitat by humans are likely the main threats.

[More Info...](#)

Killer Whale (southern resident population)

Orcinus orca pop. 5

BC Status	Red	BC Wildlife Act	None	Identified Wildlife	No
COSEWIC	Endangered	SARA	Schedule 1		

Three distinct populations of killer whale are found in British Columbia's inshore waters: the Southern Resident (En), the

[Northern Resident](#) (Th) and the [Northern transient](#) (Th) populations. Residents feed on fish and their abundance is closely tied to that of salmon. Transients feed on marine mammals. Small population sizes and a slow natural rate of population growth make killer whales especially vulnerable to increased adult mortality. Threats include human disturbance, toxicity, oil spills, entanglement in fishing gear, collision with vessels and accidental strandings. The southern population declined 20 percent between 1998 and 2004.

[More Info...](#)

Steller Sea Lion

Eumetopias jubatus

BC Status	Blue	BC Wildlife Act	None	Identified Wildlife	No
COSEWIC	Special Concern	SARA	Schedule 1		

Only three breeding colonies of Steller sea lions occur in British Columbia, although two of them are among the largest in the world. No new colonies have been established in over a century. The species is non migratory, but ranges up to 200 km offshore to forage over the continental shelf. They also congregate in estuaries to feed during the spring eulachon and fall salmon runs. Sea lions require both breeding sites and haul out sites on land. Extensive culls were conducted in the early 20th century and in the 1940s, the latter involving the bombing of rookeries by the Canadian air force and navy. The population is increasing at present and was estimated at approximately 19,000 individuals in 2002, but dramatic, unexplained declines are occurring in Alaskan and Russian populations. Potential threats include increasing human disturbance, entanglement in fishing gear, and human persecution. Oil spills may have toxic effects, but thermoregulation is largely unaffected, as sea lions rely on blubber rather than fur for insulation.

[More Info...](#)

Killer Whale (transient population)

Orcinus orca pop. 3

BC Status	Red	BC Wildlife Act	None	Identified Wildlife	No
COSEWIC	Threatened	SARA	Schedule 1		

Three distinct populations of killer whale are found in British Columbia's inshore waters: the [Southern Resident](#) (En), the [Northern Resident](#) (Th) and the Northern transient (Th) populations. Residents feed on fish and their abundance is closely tied to that of salmon. Transients feed on marine mammals. Small population sizes and a slow natural rate of population growth make killer whales especially vulnerable to increased adult mortality. Threats include human disturbance, toxicity, oil spills, entanglement in fishing gear, collision with vessels and accidental strandings. The southern population declined 20 percent between 1998 and 2004.

[More Info...](#)

Humpback Whale

Megaptera novaeangliae

BC Status	Blue	BC Wildlife Act	None	Identified Wildlife	No
COSEWIC	Threatened	SARA	Schedule 1		

These whales are known for their complex vocalizations. They occur in tropical, temperate, and sub-polar waters worldwide, migrating long distances between calving and feeding grounds annually over their 50 year lifespan.. Those that feed in British Columbia's inshore waters coast calve off Mexico, Hawaii, and the Philippines. Commercial whaling devastated the North Pacific population. It appears to be recovering, but remains greatly reduced from pre-whaling levels. Currently a few hundred inhabit British Columbia's coastal waters, but they have failed to return to areas where

they were locally extirpated, including the Strait of Georgia. Current threats include entanglement in fishing gear, collisions with ships, human disturbance on the breeding grounds, and changes in food availability due to changing ocean conditions and overfishing.

[More Info...](#)

Northern Fur Seal

Callorhinus ursinus

BC Status	Red	BC Wildlife Act	None	Identified Wildlife	No
COSEWIC	Threatened	SARA	None		

These seals breed in summer on islands, mostly in the Bering Sea and Sea of Okhotsk but also on San Miguel Island off southern California. They are harem breeders and males fast for up to two months while defending their territory. The seals feed, mostly by night, on schooling fish, squid, and occasionally birds. In British Columbia, most are found in offshore waters, but some, particularly juveniles, winter in protected inlets. Winter migrants, primarily females, venture as far south as Mexico and Honshu along both shores of the Pacific. The listed population breeds on the Pribilof Islands in the eastern Bering Sea and migrates along British Columbia's coast. Although still numbering up to 500,000 animals, it appears to be declining rapidly, especially since 1998. The current population is believed to be less than half of the early 1970s. The cause remains unclear. A limited commercial harvest was stopped in 1984. Entanglement, disturbance, pollution and changes in ocean conditions may all contribute.

[More Info...](#)

Townsend's Big-eared Bat

Corynorhinus townsendii

BC Status	Blue	BC Wildlife Act	None	Identified Wildlife	No
COSEWIC	None	SARA	None		

This species is found from southern British Columbia through the western United States to central Mexico. Within the Province, it is found on southern Vancouver Island, in the Fraser Valley and in southern interior valleys. It typically forages within 3 km of the daytime roosting site, which must be extremely dark. Caves, tree cavities and buildings are all used. The bats move between a number of roosts to access foraging areas 10-65 km from the hibernation site, usually a cave or mine or building. They hibernate in early fall, mate in late fall, and begin foraging again in early spring after the young are born. They are nimble flyers and forage for insects, especially moths, around the forest canopy, avoiding open grasslands even while commuting between foraging areas. Loss or disturbance of daytime roosting sites and loss of forest cover are considered the primary threats.

[More Info...](#)

Extinct or Extirpated

No Extirpated or Extinct

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