

BERESFORD ISLAND

ER #12

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To protect colonies of nesting seabirds and their habitat

OVERVIEW

Date established:	4 May 1971	Location:	23 km W of Cape Scott on the Cook Bank, between Lanz and Sartine Islands in the Scott Group
ORC #:	3012		
Map number:	102 I/15		
Marine chart number:	3625	Latitude:	50°47'N
		Longitude:	128°46'W

Total Area:	425 ha	Elevation:	-80-100 m
Land:	13 ha		
Marine:	412 ha		

Access: Closed to the public to protect nesting birds and their habitat. A permit is required to land on the island. It is accessible by boat, but landing is difficult.

Biogeoclimatic Zones:	Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH)
Biogeoclimatic Variant:	CWHvh1 Southern Very Wet Hypermaritime
Terrestrial Ecosection:	Vancouver Island Shelf
Marine Ecosection:	Vancouver Island Shelf
Region:	Vancouver Island
Management Area:	Cape Scott

COMPOSITION

Physical: A small, rocky island, roughly oval in shape, which rises steeply from deep water to a rounded top. The shore is rock and the upper slopes tend to have less soil cover than Triangle and Sartine islands. A number of rocks and reefs occur in close proximity to the main island.

Biological: Of the three outermost islands in the Scott group, this is the only one which supports trees. These are Sitka spruce, very old and much battered by the elements, growing on the rounded summit of the island. Red elderberry and black twinberry, confined largely to the summit, are the dominant shrubs, and tufted hairgrass is the most widespread herb. Interesting rare plants of the rocky slopes are hairy goldfields growing in crevices just above the surf, and North Pacific draba somewhat higher up. Twenty-five species of vascular plants have been recorded.

A 1987 survey by the Canadian Wildlife Service recorded approximately 168,000 nesting seabirds on Beresford Island. The only land mammal present is a large-bodied endemic race of Deermouse. Stellar Sea Lions use Beresford and adjacent rocks as a breeding rookery. In recent years 600-800 Sea Lions have been present in summer; about 100 in winter. Up to 6000 Sea Lions bred at Beresford in the early part of this century but numbers were reduced by shooting of over 12 000 animals between 1913 and 1966. It is likely Sea Otter were common in the surrounding marine environment prior to extirpation. Occasional sightings are becoming more frequent indicating that Sea Otter are re-establishing colonies in this area.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Northern Abalone	Red listed	Threatened (2000)	2
Cassin's Auklet	Blue listed		2
Steller Sea Lion	Blue listed	Special Concern (2003)	2
Tufted Puffin	Blue listed		2
Peregrine Falcon, ssp. <i>pealei</i>	Blue listed	Special Concern (2007)	1
hairy goldfields	Blue listed		3
Glaucous-winged Gull			5
Pelagic Cormorant			5
Pigeon Guillemot			2
Fork-tailed Storm-petrel			4
Leach's Storm-petrel			4
Bald Eagle		Not At Risk (1984)	6
Fox Sparrow			5
Song Sparrow			6
Black Oystercatcher			5

THREATS

Climate Change: The IPCC has projected an increase in sea surface temperature and raised sea levels, both of which could result in changes in the presence and life cycles of marine species which are important food sources for the protected seabird populations. The loss of synchrony between seabird phenology and seasonal food source availability has already been documented on Triangle Island. Such shifts would have a resounding effect in all other biotic members of the community.

Harvest: Commercial and recreational fishing disturbs marine ecosystems and shorebird activity. Vessel traffic in the vicinity can be the cause of mortality in seabirds and marine mammals especially as the source of chronic oiling.

Recreation: Close approach by marine or air traffic disrupts marine mammals and seabirds.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Very little previous research and inventory is available. The reserve is well suited to studies of sea bird and marine mammal breeding. The marine environment has not been inventoried. Possible warden activities include monitoring of vegetation cover and intertidal communities.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE BERESFORD ISLAND ER ACCOUNT

Flora

draba, North Pacific (*Draba hyperborea*)
elderberry, red (*Sambucus racemosa* var. *arborescens*)
goldfields, hairy (*Lasthenia maritima*)
hairgrass, tufted (*Deschampsia cespitosa*)
spruce, Sitka (*Picea sitchensis*)
twinberry, black (*Lonicera involucrata*)

Fauna

Abalone, Northern (*Haliotis kamtschatkana*)
Auklet, Cassin's (*Ptychamphus aleuticus*)
Cormorant, Pelagic (*Phalacrocorax pelagicus*)
Cormorant, Brandt's (*Phalacrocorax penicillatus*)
Deermouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)
Eagle, Bald (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
Falcon, Peale's Peregrine (*Falco peregrinus pealei*)
Guillemot, Pigeon (*Cephus columba*)
Gull, Glaucous-winged (*Larus glaucescens*)
Murre, Common (*Uria aalge*)
Otter, Sea (*Enhydra lutris*)
Oystercatcher, Black (*Haematopus bachmani*)
Puffin, Tufted (*Fratercula cirrhata*)
Seal Harbour (*Phoca vitulina*)
Sea Lion, Steller (*Eumetopias jubatus*)
Sparrow, Fox (*Passerella iliaca*)
Sparrow, Song (*Melospiza melodia*)
Storm-petrel, Fork-tailed (*Oceanodroma furcata*)
Storm-petrel, Leach's (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)