

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To protect nesting seabirds, raptors and marine environments

OVERVIEW

Date established:	9 April 1981	Location:	Off Aristazabal Island, Hecate Strait, 90 km NW of Bella Bella
ORC #:	3103		
Map number:	103 A/11	Latitude:	52°32'N
Marine chart number:	3726; 3737	Longitude:	129°25'W

Total Area:	11,923 ha	Elevation:	-110-50 m
Land:	215 ha		
Marine:	11,708 ha		

Access: Accessible by boat or float plane.

Biogeoclimatic Zone:	Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH)
Biogeoclimatic Variant:	CWHvh2 Central Very Wet Hypermaritime
Ecosection:	Queen Charlotte Sound
Region:	Cariboo
Management Area:	Mid Coast

COMPOSITION

Physical: The land area, less than 4% in total, is comprised of four significant islands and many associated islets and reefs, located in four groups. These are the outermost islands of the central mainland coast, located within an area of low relief along the eastern edge of Hecate Strait. Reserve waters are mostly less than 20 m in depth, but reach 110 m in the north.

Biological: The largest islands support forest cover dominated by Sitka spruce. This covers most of the land area. Small areas of herbaceous meadow, in which cow-parsnip is conspicuous, and windswept grassy headlands are present. The combination of tidal channels, protected bays, sandy beaches and rocky intertidal areas provides varied habitat for extensive kelp beds and associated invertebrates.

The following numbers are from the first version of the Ecological Reserve Guide published in 1993. Eight species of seabirds nest on these islands. An estimated 2000 pairs of Leach's and fork-tailed storm-petrels nest on the forest floor at scattered locations where substrates are suitable for burrowing. In excess of 7000 pairs of Cassin's auklets and 1500 of rhinoceros auklets, as well as burrow-nesters, utilize open forest and grassy slopes near shoreline. A colony of 50 pairs of tufted puffins, the only significant breeding site along the Mainland Coast, is present on grassy slopes at Byers Island. A population of about 250 pairs of glaucous-winged gulls nest on exposed headlands, while an estimated 50 pairs of black oystercatchers utilize rocky headlands and some beaches as nest sites. At least two pairs of peregrine falcons nest in trees here, the only recent occurrence of such nesting known in North America. Their usual nest sites, steep cliffs, are lacking but food in the form of seabirds is abundant, therefore the falcons have resorted to using old bald eagle nests.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Killer Whale (West Coast Transient population)	Red listed	Threatened (2008)	1
Northern Abalone	Red listed	Threatened (2000)	2
Sea Otter	Red listed	Special Concern (2007)	1
Grey Whale	Blue listed	Special Concern (2004)	4
Harbour Porpoise	Blue listed	Special Concern (2003)	4
Humpback Whale	Blue listed	Threatened (2003)	2

THREATS

Climate Change:	Raised sea levels, and increased storm activity may degrade and/or reduce the habitat on this reserve. Warming sea surface temperatures may alter life cycles and distribution of some subtidal and inter-tidal marine species, effectively changing the predator/prey dynamics on the islands, and altering the community composition. Impacts of this loss of synchronism may be visibly reflected in the seabird populations.
Access:	Public access threatens nesting sea bird colonies.
Harvest:	Log theft from Conroy Island removes valuable biomass from the ecosystem.
Recreation:	There is a large amount of accumulated human waste due to recreation on Conroy Island as well as on other areas of the coast.
Transportation	There is a risk of fuel spills due to marine vessel traffic off the coast of BC.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES	Only one brief reconnaissance of these remote islands has ever been undertaken.
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SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE BYERS, CONROY, HARVEY, AND SINNETT ISLANDS ER ACCOUNT

Flora

cow-parsnip (*Heracleum maximum*)

Fauna

Abalone, Northern (*Haliotis kamtschatkana*)

Auklet, Cassin's (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*)

Auklet, Rhinoceros (*Cerorhinca monocerata*)

Eagle, Bald (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

Falcon, Peregrine, *palei* subspecies (*Falco peregrinus pealei*)

Gull, Glaucous-winged (*Larus glaucescens*)

Otter, Sea (*Enhydra lutris*)
Oystercatcher, Black (*Haematopus bachmani*)
Porpoise, Harbour (*Phocoena phocoena*)
Puffin, Tufted (*Fratercula cirrhata*)
Storm-petrel, Fork-tailed (*Oceanodroma furcata*)
Storm-petrel, Leach's (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)
Whale, Grey (*Eschrichtius robustus*)
Whale, Humpback (*Megaptera novaeangliae*)
Whale, Killer (*Orcinus orca*) (West Coast Transient population)