


BAERIA ROCKS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT


August 2003

Approved by:



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Date: Jan. 21/04

BAERIA ROCKS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE Purpose Statement

Ecological reserves are areas selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features and phenomena. The key goal of ecological reserves is to contribute to the maintenance of biological diversity and the protection of genetic materials. All consumptive resource uses and the use of motorized vehicles are prohibited.

Baeria Rocks Ecological Reserve is closed to the public by OIC to protect nesting seabirds, which are very vulnerable to disturbance at this location. Research and educational activities may be carried out only under permit.

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Baeria Rocks Ecological Reserve is to protect nesting seabirds and to preserve rich intertidal and subtidal communities. The ecological reserve is located in Barkley Sound at the head of Imperial Eagle Channel, and it comprises two low bedrock islands 500 metres apart, and a substantial subtidal area (48 ha) between the shoreline and the 20 fathom (36.5 metre) depth. Vascular plants are limited to one species (*Lasthenia maritime*; hairy goldfields), which is blue-listed in B.C., and several crustose lichens, adapted to salt spray, also occur. Nesting seabirds include pelagic cormorants, glaucous-winged gulls, black oystercatchers, and pigeon guillemots. Harbour seals use the rocks as haul-out sites; other marine mammals are present in low numbers all year.

Despite the predominantly bedrock substrates, a variety of intertidal habitats are present, including rock faces exposed to the surf, crevices, tide pools, and a protected lagoon in the north island. The intertidal shoreline is almost completely covered with marine invertebrates and algae, the most common of which are barnacles, mussels, sea anemones, starfish, and numerous marine plants. The surrounding subtidal area supports a diverse invertebrate fauna that is particularly abundant in hydroids, ascidians, and anemones, and several species of algae. Common fishes in the subtidal zone are the black, yellowtail, copper, quillback, and China rockfishes, and the kelp greenling.

Secondary Role

The **secondary** role is to provide research and education opportunities. The Bamfield Marine Station is nearby and it provides year-round research facilities to scientists and students in the marine sciences, and runs a public education program. Baeria Rocks provides a protected site for research on numerous topics related to the marine sciences such as marine mammal behaviour and marine biodiversity.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of knowledge of cultural values	➤ Conduct a traditional use study and cultural inventory using offsite information sources in conjunction with First Nations.

<p>Impact of recreational activities, commercial fishing, recreational fishing, and potential oil spills on the nesting seabirds and other marine values</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work with DFO to ensure that the groundfish and salmon fishery do not negatively impact on the marine values. ➤ Continue to work toward closure of all fishing and marine harvesting in the ecological reserve (ER). ➤ Monitor activity around the E R and ensure seabirds are not being impacted. ➤ Pursue a stewardship agreement with the Bamfield Marine Station to ensure more formal monitoring. ➤ Participate in an overall oil spill contingency plan, when the opportunity occurs.
<p>Lack of public awareness of values and Ecological Reserve designation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Install boundary and informational signage about the ecological reserve's values and the restricted access status.

Conservation

- Representation
- ecosection It makes a very minimal contribution (0.05%) to the representation of the Vancouver Island Shelf *Marine* Ecosection (VIS), which is under protected at 5.4%.

The upland area is too small to be representative.
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant Too small to be representative
- Special Features Sea bird nesting habitat, diverse and rich intertidal and subtidal communities
- Rare/Endangered Values Blue-listed plant hairy goldfields
- Scientific/Research Opportunities Teaching and research site for the Bamfield Marine Station, which is 13 kilometres away

Recreation

- Representation
backcountry Not Applicable
destination Not Applicable
travel corridor Not Applicable
local recreation Not Applicable
- Special Opportunities Not Applicable
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities Seabirds and marine biodiversity -- offsite

Cultural Heritage

- Representation Values unknown
- Special Feature None known at this time

Other Management Considerations

- Other Designations Not Applicable
- Relationship to other PAs Part of a system of protected areas focused on bird breeding areas on the west coast of British Columbia. Close to the Broken Group of the Pacific Rim National Park.
- Co-operative Management Arrangements Not Applicable

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| Partnerships | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Currently negotiating a stewardship agreement with Bamfield Marine Station |
| Vulnerability | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Natural values area at risk from recreational activities, commercial marine biota extraction, and potential oil spills |
| Relationship to other Strategies | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Marine Protected Area Strategy |

Area: 53 hectares (5 ha upland; 48 ha foreshore)

Date of establishment: May 04, 1971 (amended Oct. 1975 to include subtidal area)