



K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Management Plan

December 2015




BC Parks

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K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy

Management Plan

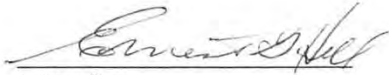
Approved by:



Arnold Clifton
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Nov 18th 2015

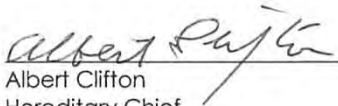
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Ernie Hill Jr.
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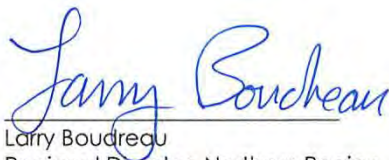
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1.0 Introduction

The K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy Management Plan has been collaboratively developed by the Gitga'at First Nation and BC Parks. In this management plan, K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy is referred to primarily as K'nabiyaaxl.

1.1 Management Plan Purpose

The purpose of this document is to guide the management of K'nabiyaaxl. This management plan:

- articulates the key features and values of the conservancy;
- identifies the types and levels of management activities;
- determines the appropriate levels of use and development;
- establishes the long-term vision and management objectives to be met; and
- responds to current and predicted future threats and opportunities by defining a set of management strategies.

1.2 Planning Area

K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy covers 454 hectares of upland in the Hecate Lowland Ecosession and 273 hectares of foreshore in the North Coast Fiords Marine Ecosession, for a total of 727 hectares. K'nabiyaaxl is on the northwest coast of British Columbia, south of Gil Island. The conservancy is 40 kilometres south of Hartley Bay and 120 kilometres southwest of Kitimat (Figure 1).

K'nabiyaaxl is in the traditional territory of the Gitga'at First Nation, near the Gitga'at seasonal village of K'yel. The area and nearby waters have been and continue to be intensively used by the Gitga'at people for cultural, social and economic purposes. In Tsimshian language (Sm'algyax), K'nabiyaaxl means “place where cliff”—which is located on the west side of Ashdown Island.

The conservancy encompasses all of Ashdown Island and the foreshore area and land covered by water within 200 metres of the high tide line (Figure 2). It has high intertidal values, especially for seaweed, and contains an important Steller Sea Lion haulout. The waters around the island support important Gitga'at community fisheries.

Access to K'nabiyaaxl is primarily by boat. Floatplane access to the shoreline is possible. Helicopter access is also possible at suitable landing locations such as wetlands and along the shoreline.

Nearby protected areas include:

- Moksgm'OI/Chapple–Cornwall Conservancy—one kilometre east; and
- Lax Ka'Gaas/Campania Conservancy—five kilometres west.

1.3 Legislative Framework

The Gitga'at First Nation identified K'nabiyaaxl as a protected area in their 2003 draft land use plan, and proposed its formal designation under provincial legislation during the North Coast Land and Resource Management Planning (NCLRMP) process.

Land use discussions involving Gitga'at First Nation and the Province, with input from other First Nations, resulted in an agreement to formally establish K'nabiyaaxl as a protected area. This agreement is documented in the Gitga'at First Nation-Province of BC Strategic Land Use Planning Agreement (SLUPA)¹.

The Province formally established the conservancy on July 14, 2006, by passing the *Park (Conservancy Enabling) Amendment Act, 2006*.

K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy is named and described in Schedule E of the *Protected Areas of British Columbia Act*, and is administered under the *Park Act*.

Conservancies are set aside for the protection and maintenance of (a) biological diversity and the natural environment, (b) recreation values and to (c) preserve and maintain First Nations' social, ceremonial and cultural uses.

Conservancies provide for a wider range of low impact economic development opportunities than Class A parks, but commercial logging, mining, and hydroelectric power generation (other than local run-of-the-river projects) are prohibited in a conservancy.

¹ The Gitga'at-Province of BC SLUPA can be viewed at: <http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/tasb/SLRP/plan17.html>

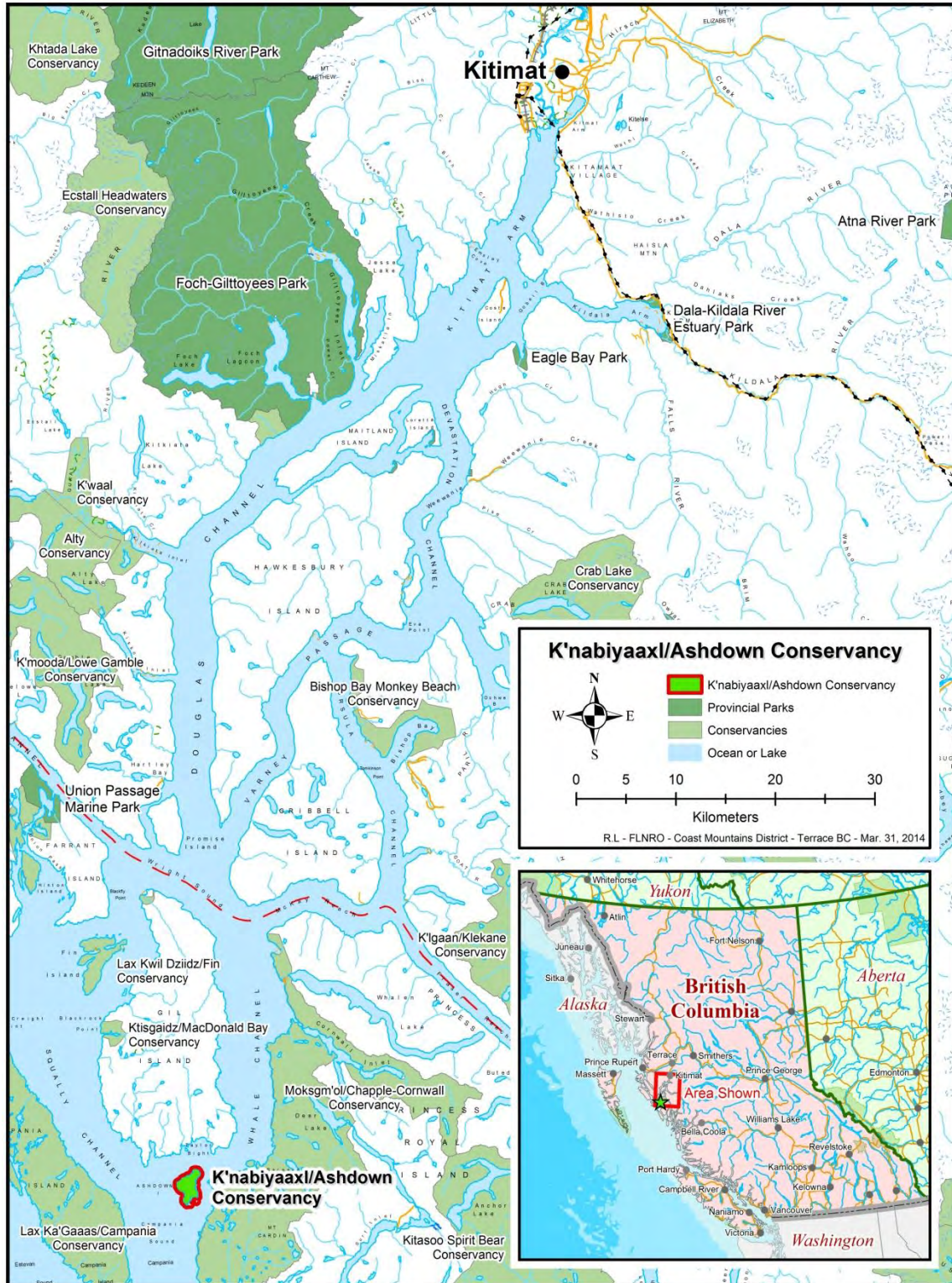


Figure 1. K'nabiyaał/Ashdown Conservancy Regional Context Map

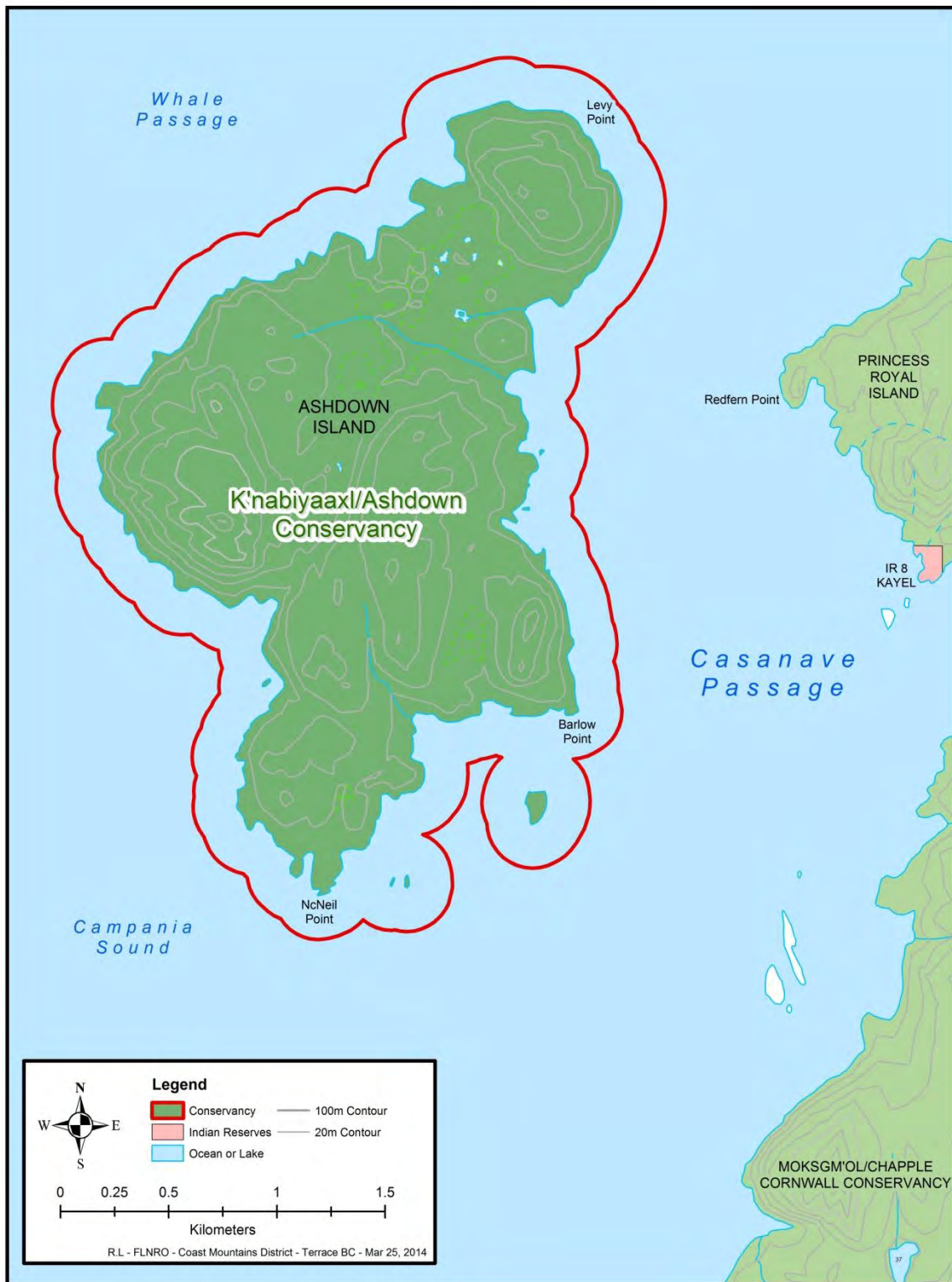


Figure 2. K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy Overview Map

1.4 Management Commitments and Agreements

Management Plan Area

K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy is part of the North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan area, in which ecosystem based management (EBM) is practiced. EBM is an adaptive approach to managing human activities that seeks to ensure the coexistence of healthy, fully functioning ecosystems and human communities.²

Strategic Land Use Planning Agreement

The Strategic Land Use Planning Agreement (SLUPA) between First Nations and the Province of British Columbia establishes arrangements and strategic direction for the planning and management of conservancies.

SLUPAs commit the parties to fostering a respectful, coordinated working relationship in the implementation of their respective land use plans.

Within the Gitga'at-Province of BC SLUPA, the Gitga'at support the Province's designation of K'nabiyaaxl as a conservancy and state their intent to implement the agreement in accordance with their laws, policies, customs and traditions.

The Gitga'at will refer to this management plan and to their land use plan to guide ongoing management of K'nabiyaaxl, and ensure their social, ceremonial, cultural and economic interests in the conservancy are protected.

Direction in the draft Gitga'at Land Use Plan (2003) relevant to the management of protected areas is in Appendix 1.

Collaborative Management Agreements

Collaborative management agreements (CMAs) between the Province of British Columbia and First Nations provide guidance on how the parties will collaborate to prepare protected area management plans. The agreements also identify how the governments will work together to:

- implement conservancy management plans;



² The intent is to maintain those spatial and temporal characteristics of ecosystems such that component species and ecological processes can be sustained and human well-being supported and improved. Specific implementation direction is contained in the North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan.

- review and make decisions on park use permit applications and renewals; and
- undertake conservancy management operations.

The CMAs support a collaborative approach to conservancy management in which the parties and their respective Park Ranger/Watchman programs cooperate to implement approved management plans.

The CMAs also commit to identifying and providing First Nations with enhanced access to economic opportunities within conservancies.

Reconciliation Protocol Agreement

In December 2009, the Province signed the Reconciliation Protocol Agreement (RPA) with Coastal First Nations including the Gitga'at First Nation.

The Reconciliation Protocol Agreement which in part intends to:

- increase economic and legal certainty for resource and land use;
- establish a process for shared decision-making; and
- establish agreement on economic measures to assist Coastal First Nations achieving progress on socioeconomic objectives.

Specific to protected areas, the RPA provides additional direction on how park use permits will be awarded in north coast conservancies.

Schedule B of the reconciliation protocol establishes a new government-to-government engagement framework through which the Ministry of Environment and the Gitga'at will collaborate to review and make park use permit recommendations.

First Nations Economic Development

Realizing increased First Nations economic opportunities is important. The commitment to do so is set out in the North Coast Land and Resource Management Plan, strategic land use planning agreements, collaborative management agreements and the Reconciliation Protocol Agreement.

First Nations land use plans provide strong direction that First Nation communities and businesses will have a more active and beneficial role in the regional economy.

The Reconciliation Protocol Agreement with Coastal First Nations establishes a goal for signatory members to secure and develop an equitable portion of the permit and tenure opportunities in their traditional territory related to economic participation in tourism and conservancies. The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations will be working with the Gitga'at to implement this policy commitment.

1.5 Relationship with Communities

The Gitga'at village of Hartley Bay, 40 kilometres to the north, is the closest aboriginal community to K'nabiyaaxl. The Gitga'at people in Hartley Bay are expected to play a key role in the management of the K'nabiyaaxl, due to their strong cultural and historical ties to the area.

Other nearby aboriginal communities include the:

- Kitasoo community of Klemtu (60 kilometres to the southeast);
- Gitxaala community of Kitkatla on Dolphin Island (115 kilometres to the northwest); and
- Haisla community of Kitamaat (120 kilometres to the northeast).

Ongoing engagement and outreach with local communities are required to ensure residents are aware of and support the management direction contained with this management plan.

1.6 Management Planning Process

The K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy Management Plan has been collaboratively developed by the Gitga'at First Nation and BC Parks.

The Gitga'at stewardship office and BC Parks initiated management planning for K'nabiyaaxl in 2007. In March 2007, public input regarding management issues within several North Coast conservancies was collected at an open house in Prince Rupert.

In May 2007, representatives of three regional First Nation forums (Coastal First Nations, North Coast First Nations and N̓an̓wa̓kolas) and BC Parks developed guidelines and a template for preparing conservancy management plans.

In 2007 and 2008, Coastal First Nations and BC Parks also explored best practices and techniques for the development of management plans throughout the coastal area.

This management plan is based on this work and additional updates to the template since this time. It also integrates information and direction from First Nation-Provincial land use agreements including the Gitga'at-Province of BC Strategic Land Use Planning Agreement.

In the spring of 2009, information for preparing this management plan was solicited at open houses in Kitimat and Prince Rupert.

The draft management plan was posted to the BC Parks' website in November 2013 for public review and comment.

2.0 Values and Roles of the Conservancy

2.1 Significance in the Protected Areas System

Protection of K'nabiyaaxl will help preserve and maintain the ongoing social, ceremonial and cultural uses of the Gitga'at First Nation. K'nabiyaaxl is an important part of the British Columbia protected areas system. The conservancy protects an entire small island representative of the Hecate Lowlands Ecoregion. The island's foreshore marine environments include high value intertidal areas which provide high value habitat for important marine wildlife species and migratory birds. The conservancy also protects a haulout for Steller Sea Lions (*Eumetopias jubatus*), a species of concern (provincially blue-listed³).

2.2 Biodiversity and Natural Values

Terrestrial Ecosystem

K'nabiyaaxl is located in the Hecate Lowland Ecoregion. The Hecate Lowlands Ecoregion covers a 20 to 50 kilometre-wide band of coastal lowlands and island archipelagos on the northern coast of British Columbia. The topography rises towards the Coast Mountains; numerous fjords and inlets cross it.

The area was heavily glaciated, resulting in large areas of exposed bedrock and little moraine material. Soils are mainly organic veneers, with some colluvial and fluvial deposits. Drainage is poor with large expanses of wetland occurring especially in areas of low relief.

The conservancy falls within the coastal western hemlock, very wet, hypermaritime, central variant (CWHvh2) subzone of the province's Biogeoclimatic Ecosystem Classification (BEC) system⁴. K'nabiyaaxl contributes 0.07% of the overall protected areas system representation of this subzone.

³ Species and ecological communities are assigned to the red or blue list on the basis of the provincial Conservation Status Rank (SRANK) assigned by the B.C. Conservation Data Centre. The red list includes species and ecological communities that are extirpated, endangered or threatened. The blue list contains species and ecological communities that are considered to be of special concern.

⁴ For further information see: "A field guide to site identification and interpretation for the Prince Rupert Forest Region", Banner, A., W. MacKenzie, S. Haeussler, S. Thomson, J. Pojar and R. Trowbridge, B.C. Ministry of Forests Research Branch, 1993, Land Management Handbook. No. 26.

Marine Ecosystem

The marine portion of the conservancy is in the North Coast Fjords Marine Ecosystem, consisting of deep, narrow fjords cutting into the high relief of the coast ranges.

The island's foreshore marine environments include many important intertidal areas which provide high value habitat for a number of important marine wildlife species identified in the Valued Marine Environments and/or Features Database (Table 1).



Table 1: Valued Marine Environments and/or Features Database

Species	Valued Marine Ecosystems Rating (VMER)
Urchin	Low to high
Harbour Porpoise	Medium to high
Kelp	Medium
Grey Whale	Medium
Humpback Whale	Medium
Killer Whale	Medium
Bald Eagle	Medium
Shorebirds	Low to medium
Marbled Murrelet	Low to medium
Steller Sea Lion haulout ⁵	High

⁵ The Steller Sea Lion haulout is not within the VMER database but is a high value feature.

Four wildlife species at risk have been recorded in or near the conservancy⁶:

1. Humpback Whale (Blue-listed, S3);
2. Killer Whale (Red-listed, S1 or S2 depending on sub-population);
3. Fin Whale (Red-listed, S2N); and
4. Steller Sea Lion (Blue-listed, S3B, S4N).

Steller Sea Lions use small islets off the south end of Ashdown Island as a winter haulout, with up to 12 pups and 107 adults observed. Recent data on sea lion use of this area are limited; the B.C. Conservation Data Centre indicates additional winter surveys are needed.

The conservancy contains seven hectares of potential Marbled Murrelet habitat which, although small, may provide important habitat when combined with core Marbled Murrelet habitat in nearby areas.

2.3 Cultural Heritage Values

Protection of K'nabiyaaxl will help preserve and maintain the ongoing social, ceremonial and cultural uses of the Gitga'at First Nation.

The conservancy is near the seasonal Gitga'at village camp of K'yel. The Gitga'at travel in the spring from Hartley Bay to K'yel, which they use as a base for conducting intensive marine and intertidal harvesting and hunting activity.

Since time immemorial, the Gitga'at people have harvested fish and marine mammal species in waters adjacent to K'nabiyaaxl. They also collect seaweed, plants and berries from intertidal and upland areas on the island.

Archaeological sites are known to exist in the area. The lack of B.C. Archaeological Branch registered sites in the conservancy is not indicative of the rich history of Gitga'at occupancy and use of K'nabiyaaxl.



⁶ The risk status for each species was obtained from the BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer tool, B.C. Conservation Data Centre located at <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>, in September 2014.

2.4 Recreation Values

Due to the conservancy's remote location and lack of commercial and public facilities, K'nabiyaał wilderness-based recreation and tourism opportunities are limited and receive a low level of visitor use.

Most recreational activities focus on boating in the marine portion of the conservancy and viewing of Steller Sea Lions.

Periodic use of the land portion of the conservancy for day hiking and exploration also occurs.

Interest in recreational harvest of shellfish in the area is unknown. Regardless, harvest of shellfish is currently closed due to biotoxin/red-tide concerns and lack of monitoring.

2.5 Climate Change

Climate change represents longer-term trends that occur over many decades or centuries. Monitoring of weather patterns over the last century suggest that the region's climate is changing.

Coastal British Columbia has warmed at a rate equivalent to about one half of a degree Celsius per century and precipitation in the coast and mountains eco-province increased by two percent per decade from the period 1929 to 1998.

Climate change data for British Columbia for 2010 to 2039 predicts a one degree Celsius increase in annual mean temperature and a four percent increase in annual precipitation⁷. The ocean's surface level and surface temperature are also rising.

Climate modeling suggests that over the next century these trends will continue and become more pronounced. These climate changes may pose great risks to natural resources such as salmon stocks and seabird populations.

Increased flooding of low-lying coastal areas threatens sensitive habitats and cultural sites. Of the 14 kilometres of shoreline within K'nabiyaał, 3% is highly sensitive to sea level rise and 17% is very high⁸.

⁷ Projected changes from the baseline historical period of 1961-1990. Information obtained from the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium Plan2Adapt tool, located at: <http://www.pacificclimate.org/analysis-tools/plan2adapt>, accessed October 2014.

⁸ K'nabiyaał/Ashdown Conservancy Shoreline Sensitivity Report, Ministry of Environment, Victoria, B.C.

3.0 Management Direction

3.1 Vision Statement

K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy functions as it has for thousands of years. Natural processes are the driving forces of change to the natural environment of the conservancy.

Steller Sea Lions use the two small islets off the southeast tip of the conservancy as a haulout. Recreational use is limited, sporadic, and principally focussed in the marine environment.

K'nabiyaaxl protects and sustains First Nations' social, ceremonial and cultural values and uses. The conservancy is collaboratively managed by the Gitga`at First Nation and BC Parks.

3.2 Management Objectives and Strategies

Management strategies and objectives for K'nabiyaaxl have been developed through a consideration of the key issues, the vision, public input and the values identified in section two of this management plan.

Management objectives and strategies have been compiled into three sections:

1. Preservation and Maintenance of First Nation Uses;
2. Biological Diversity and Natural Environment; and
3. Recreation Value Management.

Each section lists management objectives and strategies as well as identifies key issues that may affect the outcome of these objectives and strategies.

Preservation and Maintenance of First Nation Uses

Management of the conservancy will protect historically and currently used harvesting and traditional use areas, and their associated cultural and biological values. It will also facilitate present and future First Nations access to the area for social, ceremonial and cultural purposes, such as harvesting of seaweed in the intertidal zone.

Key issues that may affect the achievement of stated preservation and maintenance of First Nation uses in K'nabiyaaxl relate primarily to potential impacts from recreational use and commercial harvesting within the conservancy.

Identified strategies focus on resolving and managing these issues (Table 2).

Table 2. Preservation and Maintenance of First Nation Uses–Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Results

Objective	Management Opportunity/Stressor	Strategy/Result
Identify, protect and maintain First Nations' cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features.	The type and location of First Nations' cultural heritage, and traditional use sites and features are not well documented but are known to exist. This increases the risk of damage to these sensitive sites.	Perform ethnographic research and cultural heritage and traditional use field assessments.
	With more detailed information on cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features, more specific protection measures can be put into place.	Identify threats to cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features and, as necessary, implement protective measures which may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • marking areas as off-limits for public and commercial access; and, • focusing use away from known sites. Map cultural heritage sites and features.
	Potential disturbance of cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features from public and commercial use is a concern.	Monitor and document disturbance or change to First Nations' cultural heritage and traditional use sites and features. Implement protection and maintenance measures as required.

Table 2 continued. Preservation and Maintenance of First Nation Uses—Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Results

Objective	Management Opportunity/Stressor	Strategy/Result
Identify, protect and maintain archaeological and historic sites.	The type and location of archaeological and historic sites and features are not well documented but are known to exist. This lack of knowledge increases the risk of inadvertent damage to these sensitive sites.	Perform reconnaissance and site-level archaeological field assessments prior to any site disturbance.
	With more detailed information on archaeological and historic sites and features, more specific protection measures can be put into place.	Monitor and document sites for signs of disturbance. Implement site specific protective and maintenance measures as required.
	There is a concern that public and commercial use has the potential to disturb or have adverse effects on archaeological and historic sites.	
Provide for and promote First Nations' traditional and sustenance uses and harvesting activities.	First Nations' traditional and sustenance harvesting activities are not well documented. Increased knowledge of these activities provides an opportunity to increase use of the conservancy by First Nations.	Identify and monitor traditional and sustenance harvesting activities.
		Support use of conservancy by First Nations to increase First Nation community awareness, and practice of traditional and sustenance uses and harvesting techniques.
	Local First Nations have a strong interest in maintaining access to traditional resources in the area and continuing to participate in cultural activities.	Support First Nations' efforts to enhance traditional knowledge and continue to share harvesting practices.
	Increased resources for maintaining and enhancing traditional knowledge and harvesting practices would remove a current barrier that exists to enhancing First Nations' use of the conservancy.	
Large vessel wake poses a safety hazard for those engaged in traditional use activities (e.g., seaweed harvesting, clam/cockle harvesting).	Work with agencies (e.g., Transport Canada), and processes (Tempol, Environmental Assessment) to inform of these impacts with the intent to mitigate (e.g., reduce speed, alternative routes). Aim to have no safety incidents reported when undertaking traditional use activities.	

Biological Diversity and Natural Environment

K'nabiyaaxl's remote location provides an excellent opportunity for maintaining biological diversity and natural environment values.

Key issues that may affect the achievement of stated biological diversity and natural environment objectives in K'nabiyaaxl relate primarily to lack of detailed inventories and potential impacts from recreational use within the conservancy. Identified strategies focus on resolving and managing these issues (Table 3).

Table 3. Biological Diversity and Natural Environment–Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Results

Objective	Management Opportunity/Stressor	Strategy/Result
Identify and protect ecosystems, ecological communities and species of conservation concern.	An inventory of ecological values has not been completed. This increases the risk of inadvertent damage to sensitive species or fragile habitats. This could include site-level disturbance or declines in the abundance and distribution of rare and at risk ecosystems, ecological communities and species.	Conduct inventories of ecosystems and species in the conservancy, including species at risk. Based on ecological inventories, develop and implement measures, reflective of ecosystem based management techniques, to protect special ecological features.
	Provincial and federal government database information on the presence of Steller Sea Lions and the sea lion usage of the conservancy is not up-to-date.	Monitor use of conservancy by Steller Sea Lions. Regular winter haulout surveys should be conducted and results submitted to BC Parks for inclusion in provincial and federal monitoring reports.
	Use, including marine harvesting, may cause site-level disturbance or cause declines in abundance and distribution of flora and fauna.	Monitor rare wildlife and plant communities, and species and ecosystems at risk to determine if degradation is occurring, and implement protective measures as required.
	Intertidal and shoreline areas, and wildlife dependent on these habitats, are vulnerable to oil spill pollution.	Staff are trained and available to assist as part of their role in the BC Marine Oil Spill Response Plan. Ensure Steller Sea Lion haulout and high value seaweed areas are included in value mapping associated with marine traffic and/or oil spill response planning.

Table 3 continued. Biological Diversity and Natural Environment—Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Results

Objective	Management Opportunity/Stressor	Strategy/Result
Identify and protect ecosystems, ecological communities and species of conservation concern.	Large vessel wake may impact intertidal values	Monitor intertidal values and work to ensure agencies (e.g., Transport Canada), and processes (Termopol, Environmental Assessment) are informed of these impacts with the intent to mitigate (e.g., reduce speed, alternative routes).
Respond to climate change impacts.	Of the 14 kilometres of shoreline, 3% is highly sensitive to sea level rise and 17% is very high. ⁹ Climate change impacts for ecosystems, ecological communities, and species of conservation concern (Steller Sea Lions) may be mitigated through adaptive management.	Monitor environmental change and impacts. Where needed, determine appropriate adaptive management practices and processes in response to sea-level rise and initiate those actions.
Sustain the abundance and distribution of intertidal and sub-tidal species.	There is concern that increases or changes in marine harvesting activity will adversely impact intertidal and sub-tidal species.	Monitor and, if necessary, limit harvesting of sub-tidal and intertidal species.

⁹ K'nabiyaxl/Ashdown Island Conservancy Shoreline Sensitivity Report, Ministry of Environment, Victoria, B.C.

Recreation Values

Key issues that may affect the achievement of stated recreation value objectives in K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy relate primarily to potential impacts to First Nation values and conservation values and sensitive species.

Identified strategies focus on resolving and managing these issues (Table 4).

Table 4. Recreation Values–Objectives, Issues, Strategies and Results

Objective	Management Opportunity/Stressor	Strategy/Result
Provide visitors with cultural and wilderness recreation opportunities.	The lack of guided marine-oriented wildlife viewing opportunities limits public access to learn more about the conservancy's natural values.	Share information on Gitga'at and other interpretation and guiding services as they are developed.
	Visitors unaware of appropriate viewing guidelines can potentially disturb Steller Sea Lions.	Boaters are to maintain a distance of at least 100 metres from the haulout, and more if sea lions are displaced. Boaters follow the Department of Fisheries and Oceans marine mammal viewing guidelines. ¹⁰
	Maintenance of pristine wilderness values.	No facilities development will occur. Recreational opportunities will be no-trace, and low-use, which will help to ensure that the Conservancy remains in a relatively untouched state.
Support tourism opportunities that contribute to local communities.	As indicated in the Reconciliation Protocol Agreement, the Province and Coastal First Nations are working to achieve a substantial increase in First Nations' economic participation in conservancies and the tourism sector.	Support development of cultural and wildlife viewing tourism activities in the conservancy.

¹⁰ Marine mammal viewing guidelines in Appendix 3 and at www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/species-especes/mammals-mammiferes.view-observer-eng.htm

3.3 Zoning Plan

This management plan uses zoning to assist in the planning and management of K'nabiyaaxl. In general terms, zoning divides an area into logical units to apply consistent management objectives for protection of protected area values. The zones reflect the intended land use, existing patterns of use, the degree of human use desired, and the level of management and development required (Figure 3).

Appropriate activities for each of the management zones are identified in Appendix 2. The following management zones have been identified within the conservancy:

Cultural Zone–West K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Island (111 hectares including 74.5 hectares of foreshore)

The cultural zone covers 15% of the conservancy along the west and south coast of K'nabiyaaxl.

The purpose of this zone is to provide for and promote First Nations' traditional and sustenance uses and harvesting activities. Within this zone, there are higher levels of First Nation use than other areas within K'nabiyaaxl. The area is used by the Gitga'at for seaweed and intertidal harvesting from April to June each year.

No facilities will be developed within this zone. Management will focus on providing for continued traditional use by the Gitga'at.

Wilderness Recreation Zone–K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Island (589.5 hectares including 172 hectares of foreshore)

The Wilderness Recreation Zone covers 81% of the conservancy and includes all of Ashdown Island and the majority of the intertidal area.

The purpose of this zone is to protect Ashdown Island and ensure the island continues to be relatively undisturbed by human use.

No facilities will be developed within this zone. Keeping Ashdown Island in a relatively untouched state will maintain the high cultural values and recreational experiences in the area.

Management will focus on providing for continued traditional use by the Gitga'at and on maintaining the wilderness recreation values and experiences Ashdown Island contributes to the area.

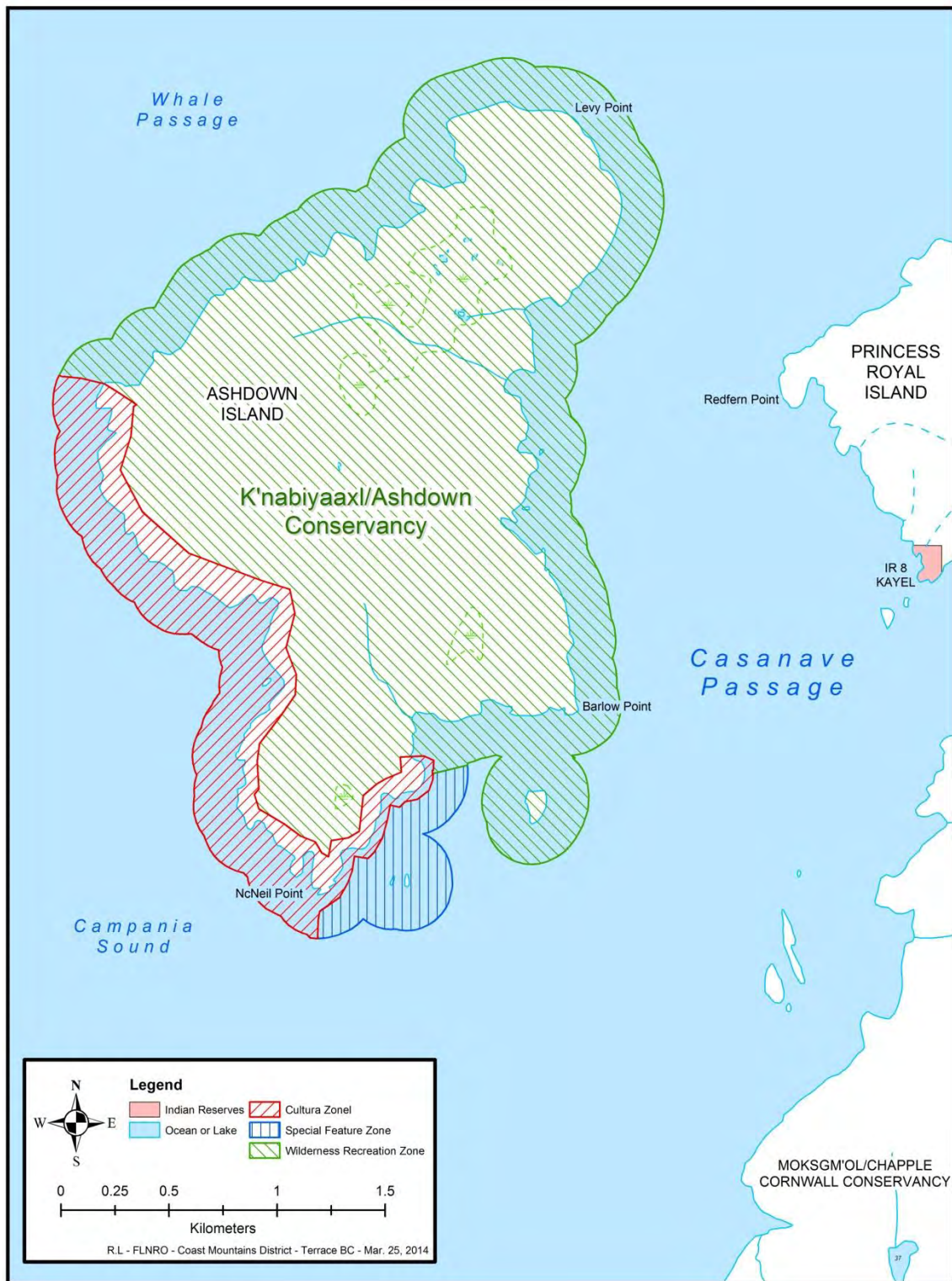


Figure 3. K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Conservancy Zoning Map

Special Feature Zone–K'nabiyaaxl/Ashdown Islets (26.5 ha including 0.24 ha of upland)

The Special Feature Zone covers approximately 4% of the conservancy and 9.7% of the foreshore in the conservancy. This zone consists of a number of small islets on the southeast tip of the conservancy and the nearby intertidal zone. The principal feature protected is the Steller Sea Lion haulout. All other uses are secondary to protecting and leaving a relatively undisturbed environment for the sea lions.

Visitors will be required to follow Canada's Department of Fisheries and Oceans marine mammal guidelines (Appendix 3).

4.0 Plan Implementation

4.1 Implementation Plan

The First Nations and BC Parks' Park Ranger programs are expected to develop and maintain collaborative work plans and operating budgets that identify timelines, responsibilities and resources required to implement this management plan.

Activities to implement strategies within K'nabiyaaxl and other conservancies will be prioritized based on multiple criteria including available resourcing, cost, feasibility and overall benefit toward conservancy objectives.

BC Parks will be directly engaged in the work plan development and work to ensure allocated funding is focussed on implementing priority strategies and on monitoring key indicators.



The Gitga'at Stewardship Program will dedicate program staff and resources as program funding permits.

Park use permit holders are also expected to collect and provide information related to indicators and the overall state of the conservancy. Such requirements will be defined in approved park use permits and in any protocols between the user and the Gitga'at Stewardship Office.

The Gitga'at Stewardship Program and BC Parks will collaborate to prepare an annual summary that amongst other items summarizes progress on implementation of approved conservancy management plans.

4.2 Plan Validity Assessment and Review

This management plan will be reviewed and revised as necessary to address improvements in local and regional knowledge, and the results of conservancy management and monitoring.

If management operations and/or monitoring reveal issues that need to be addressed, First Nations and BC Parks will meet as required to resolve those issues as part of the collaborative management process.

In order to ensure that the management direction for the protected area remains relevant and effective, BC Parks staff will ensure that the management

plan is assessed by BC Parks staff on a regular basis (i.e., at least every 5 years). Minor administrative updates may be identified and completed at any time (e.g., correct spelling errors, update protected area details where needed), and will be documented according to BC Parks guidelines.

If an internal assessment reveals that the management plan requires updating or substantial new management direction is needed, a formal review by BC Parks and the Gitga'at First Nation may be initiated to determine whether the plan requires an amendment or if a new plan is required.

The management plan amendment process or development of a new plan includes an opportunity for public input.

5.0 References

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Appendix 1: Gitga'at Land Use Plan

The Gitga'at land use plan contains the following description of the general management objectives that apply to protection areas.

The primary purpose of protection areas is to protect and sustain important cultural heritage value, ecological and wilderness values by excluding industrial resource development activity such as logging and mining, and by managing commercial and public recreation access and use to within area and site carrying capacities. The goal is to maintain protection areas in a natural state, while allowing for a range of cultural, spiritual and other compatible commercial and public uses.

General management objectives apply to protection areas. Additional general management objectives specific to protected areas include:

- Maintain opportunities for Gitga'at people to continue cultural and social resource uses including:
 - hunting, fishing and trapping
 - harvesting of timber and non-timber forest products and traditional plants for cultural and social purposes
 - cultural and spiritual activities.
- No logging, mining or other commercial resource extraction.
- No grizzly or black bear hunting.
- Protect and/or restore cultural heritage values.
- Allow for limited commercial wilderness recreation (guiding, sportfishing, hiking, etc.).
- Allow small-scale hydro to support local tourism infrastructure.

Gitga'at protected area interests specific to Ashdown Island are:

Area	Name	Area (ha)	Values	Management Objectives
15	Kitsmk'al / K'nabiyaaxl (Ashdown Island)	454	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant Gitga'at cultural and social • Coastal zone (sea lion rookery etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General protected area management objectives. • Provision/maintenance of marine wildlife viewing.

Appendix 2: Appropriate Use Table

The following table lists existing and potential future uses in the *conservancy*. This is not an exhaustive list of uses that may be considered in this conservancy.

The table is provided to summarize the uses which the management planning process has confirmed are not appropriate in the conservancy. The table also gives a general indication of the management direction for other uses. The table must be reviewed in conjunction with the other sections of the management plan, including the role descriptions, vision, objectives and strategies.

Legend		
N	Not an appropriate use in this zone	It has been confirmed during the management planning process that this use is not appropriate in this zone. This may be an existing use which the management planning process has determined is no longer an appropriate use in this zone. The management plan details strategies for addressing this inappropriate use (e.g., phasing out, closing).
Y	May be an appropriate use in this zone	<p>Indicates that some degree or scale of this use may be appropriate. For existing uses, the management plan will provide guidance on the appropriate level or scale of this use (e.g., direction to reduce, restrict or increase the current level of this activity) and may address specific restrictions or enhancements (e.g., capacity, appropriate sites, designated trails, purposes, party size, time of year, etc.).</p> <p>For new or expanded uses, this does not constitute approval. This indicates that the use <u>may be considered</u> for further evaluation and possible approval (e.g., park use permit adjudication, completion of a review as part of the BC Parks' Impact Assessment Process). In some cases the appropriateness may not be confirmed until further assessments are completed.</p>
N/A	Not an applicable use in this zone	Applied where it is not feasible for the use to take place in this zone (e.g., mooring buoys in a terrestrial zone).

Activity/Facility	Cultural Zone	Wilderness Recreation Zone	Special Feature Zone
Aircraft Access	Y	Y	Y
Boating (non-power)	Y	Y	Y
Boating (power)	Y	Y	Y
Camping – motorized boat accessible	Y	Y	N
Camping – no trace (backpacking)	Y	Y	N
Commercial Recreation (facility-based)	N	N	N
Commercial Recreation (non-facility based)	Y	Y	Y
Cultural Tourism	Y	Y	Y
Filming (commercial)	Y	Y	Y
Fishing	Y	Y	Y
Forest Insect/Disease Control	Y	Y	N/A
Hiking/Backpacking/Walking	Y	Y	N
Hunting	Y	Y	N
Marine Invertebrate Harvesting	Y	Y	N ¹¹
Natural and Cultural Values Appreciation (birding, photography, wildlife viewing)	Y	Y	Y
Scientific Research	Y	Y	Y
Trapping	Y	Y	Y
Communication Sites	N	N	N
Navigation Lights and Aids	Y	Y	N
Lodges and Other Serviced Accommodation	N	N	N
Utility Corridors (power/transmission lines and other rights-of-way)	N	N	N

¹¹ First Nation Aboriginal Rights are affirmed and protected by the Canadian Constitution. First Nations can exercise their aboriginal rights subject to conservation and public safety concerns. This table is not intended to reflect specific conservation or safety concerns but rather the intent of the parties in managing the conservancy.

Appendix 3: Marine Mammal Guidelines

Excerpt taken from *Be Whale Wise – Marine Wildlife Guidelines for Boaters, Paddlers and Viewers*.¹²

Seals, Sea Lions and Birds on Land:

1. *BE CAUTIOUS AND QUIET* when around haul-outs and bird colonies, especially during breeding, nesting and pupping seasons (generally May to September).
2. *REDUCE SPEED*, minimize wake, wash and noise, and then slowly pass without stopping.
3. *AVOID* approaching closer than 100 metres/yards to any marine mammals or birds.
4. *PAY ATTENTION* and move away, slowly and cautiously, at the first sign of disturbance or agitation.
5. *DO NOT* disturb, move, feed or touch any marine wildlife, including seal pups. If you are concerned about a potentially sick or stranded animal, contact your local stranding network where available.

To report a marine mammal disturbance or harassment:

Fisheries & Oceans Canada
1-800-465-4336

¹² Found at: <http://www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/fm-gp/species-especes/mammals-mammiferes/view-observer-eng.htm>