

## KOTCHO LAKE ISLANDS

ER #148

**ORIGINAL PURPOSE** To protect colonial water bird nesting sites and their migration stop over

### OVERVIEW

<b>Date established:</b>	29 June 2000	<b>Location:</b>	100 km ENE of Fort Nelson
<b>ORC #:</b>	8325	<b>Latitude:</b>	59°04'N
<b>Map number:</b>	93 P/5	<b>Longitude:</b>	121°07'W

<b>Total Area:</b>	64 ha	<b>Elevation:</b>	623 m
<b>Land:</b>	49 ha		
<b>Foreshore:</b>	15 ha		

**Access:** Accessible by boat or float plane in Kotcho Lake.

<b>Biogeoclimatic Zone:</b>	Boreal White and Black Spruce (BWBS)
<b>Biogeoclimatic Variant:</b>	BWBSmw2 Fort Nelson Moist Warm
<b>Ecosection:</b>	Etsho Plateau
<b>Region:</b>	Peace
<b>Management Area:</b>	North Peace

### COMPOSITION

**Physical:** This reserve includes two flat islands located 1.5 and 2.5 km from the closest shoreline on the southeast side of the lake. Kotcho Lake is a large, very shallow lake located within the Etsho Plateau Ecosection, a region of extensive wet lowlands and rolling plateau.

**Biological:** The islands are composed of mostly boggy ground. Only the larger, western island has scattered black spruce trees; the smaller island is partly covered by shrubby vegetation. The lake has extensive aquatic vegetation. This is the only nesting colony in British Columbia where three species of gulls (Herring, Mew and Bonaparte) breed. This is the only colony of Mew and Herring Gulls in Northeastern British Columbia and extends breeding range for Mew gulls considerably eastward in the province. In addition it is a breeding site for other waterfowl and an important migration stopover. Forty-seven species of birds, including 26 water birds and 15 breeding species were recorded on one day (June 26, 1982).

The islands are used as calving sites for moose. Caribou and varying hare have also been observed.

**Cultural:** The reserve protects a First Nations burial site, traditional settlement and resource use, and contains significant fishery, cultural and archaeological values.

### MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Caribou (boreal population)	Red listed	Threatened (2002)	1

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**THREATS****Climate Change:**

Warming temperatures and changed hydrology may alter the lake and wetland habitats which serve as important colonial water bird nesting sites and migration stop over areas. Changes in water quality may result in changed distribution, representation and assemblage of aquatic species, thus affecting the bird populations.

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**RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES**

Reserve represents significant migratory stop over for birds; it is an important nesting site for colonial water birds.

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**SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE KOTCHO LAKE ISLANDS  
ER ACCOUNT**

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**Flora**

spruce, black (*Picea mariana*)

**Fauna**

Caribou (boreal population) (*Rangifer tarandus* pop. 14)

Gull, Bonaparte's (*Chroicocephalus philadelphia*)

Gull, Herring (*Larus argentatus*)

Gull, Mew (*Larus canus*)

Moose (*Alces americanus*)