LEPAS BAY ER #93

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To preserve habitat for nesting seabirds, mainly petrels, and their habitat

OVERVIEW

Date established:	2 Nov. 1978	**Location:**	Unnamed island in Lepas Bay 3 km SE of Cape Knox, NW corner of Graham Island, Queen Charlotte Islands
ORC #:	3093		
Map number:	103 K/3		
Marine chart number:	3862; 3868		
		Latitude:	54º10'N
		Longitude:	133º02'W
Total Area:	4 ha	**Elevation:**	0-20 m
Land:	4 ha		
Access:	Accessible only by boat.		
Biogeoclimatic Zone:	Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH)		
Biogeoclimatic Variant:	CWHvh2 Central Very Wet Hypermaritime		
Ecosection:	Windward Queen Charlotte Islands Mountains		
Region:	Skeena		
Management Area:	Queen Charlotte Island		

COMPOSITION

Physical:

The reserve comprises a small, oval-shaped island near the head of Lepas Bay, about 150 m from shore. Although the island is low, most of its shoreline is steep and rocky, including vertical cliffs on the southwest side, which is exposed to the open ocean. Beaches are absent. The hilly central part of the island has a thin soil cover which varies from stony to organic in composition, and is enriched by seabird feces and food remains.

Biological:

The interior of the island supports an open stand of wind-swept, stunted, Sitka spruce, with an understory of moss and false lily-of-the-valley. Grassy slopes, largely peripheral to the central forest, cover about 60% of the island and support dense stands of Pacific reed-grass, with Siberian miner's lettuce scattered among the grass, and occasional salmonberry shrubs. Small moist meadows among and at the edge of the forest support northern rice-root, Pacific hemlock-parsley, monkey-flower, and seacoast angelica. Villous cinquefoil and roseroot grow in crevices between rock exposures. Small stands of dune wildrye occur on poorly developed soil at the south end of the island.

The island is a nesting site for an estimated 3400 pairs of fork-tailed storm-petrels, 4300 pairs of Leach's storm-petrels, 60 or more pairs of Cassin's auklet, 50 pairs of pigeon guillemots, and two pairs of black oystercatchers. The island is one of only eight storm-petrel nesting sites in British Columbia and may be the largest mixed-species petrel site in the province. These interesting burrow-nesting seabirds lay only one egg. They leave and return to the nest only at night, and feed on the ocean surface far from shore. By day their rather inconspicuous burrows are the only evidence of their presence. The fork-tailed species begins nesting in late May, but Leach's not until mid-June. Young may be in the burrows until late

summer.

Cultural: The reserve is used for traditional egg collection by the Haida First Nations.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES and ECOSYSTEMS	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Gmelin's sedge	Blue listed		2
beach groundsel	Blue listed		2
sea bluebells	Blue listed		2
angled bitter-cress	Blue listed		2
Sitka spruce / tall trisetum	Red listed		1
Sitka spruce / false lily-of-the-valley (Wet Hypermaritime 1)	Red listed		1
red alder / false lily-of-the-valley	Blue listed		4
Sitka spruce / Pacific reedgrass	Blue listed		3
Sitka spruce / slough sedge	Blue listed		1
Sitka spruce / Pacific crabapple	Blue listed		2
Sitka spruce / sword fern	Blue listed		3
western redcedar - Sitka spruce / devil's club (Very Wet Hypermaritime 2)	Blue listed		1
western redcedar - Sitka spruce / sword fern	Blue listed		2
western redcedar/Sitka spruce - skunk cabbage	Blue listed		3
western hemlock - Sitka spruce / lanky moss	Blue listed		2

THREATS

Climate Change: Increased storm activity and raised sea levels are projected to occur along BC's coasts, possibly leading to habitat degradation and/or loss. This island is very small and low-lying, increasing the risk of habitat loss due to raised water levels. Warming sea surface temperatures may continue to alter the life cycles and distribution of marine life, subsequently affecting the seabird populations which depend on marine life for food sources.

Non-native species: Raccoons are extremely invasive and are eating the eggs of nesting seabirds.

Recreation: Foot traffic on the island is impacting the habitat.

Transportation: Noise from air and marine traffic disrupts nesting seabirds.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE LEPAS BAY ER ACCOUNT

Flora

alder, red (*Alnus rubra)*
angelica, seacoast (*Angelica lucida)*
bitter-cress, angled (*Cardamine angulata)*
bluebells, sea (*Mertensia maritima)*
cabbage, skunk (*Lysichiton americanus)*
cinquefoil, villous (*Potentilla villosa)*
crab apple, Pacific (*Malus fusca)*
devil's club (*Oplopanax horridus)*
fern, sword (*Polystichum munitum)*
groundsel, beach (*Senecio pseudoarnica)*
hemlock, western (*Tsuga heterophylla)*
hemlock-parsley, Pacific (*Conioselenum gmelinii)*
lily-of-the-valley, false (*Maianthemum dilatatum)*
miner's-lettuce, Siberian (*Claytonia sibirica)*
monkey-flower (*Mimulus* spp.)
moss, lanky (*Rhytidiadelphus loreus*)
redcedar, western (*Thuja plicata)*
reedgrass, Pacific (*Calamagrostis nutkaensis)*
rice-root, northern (*Fritillaria camschatcensis)*
roseroot (*Sedum integrifolium* spp. *integrifolium*)
salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis)*
sedge, Gmelin's (*Carex gmelinii)*
sedge, slough (*Carex obnupta)*
spruce, Sitka (*Picea sitchensis)*
trisetum, tall (*Trisetum canescens)*
wildrye, dune (Leymus *mollis* ssp. *mollis)*

Fauna

Auklet, Cassin's (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus)*
Guillemot, Pigeon (*Cepphus columba)*
Oystercatcher, Black (*Haematopus bachmani)*
Storm-petrel, Fork-tailed (*Oceanodroma furcata)*
Storm-petrel, Leach's (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa)*