

**ORIGINAL PURPOSE** To preserve the nesting sites of several species of colonial seabirds

#### OVERVIEW

<b>Date established:</b>	4 May 1971	<b>Location:</b>	Off Aristazabal Island, E side of Hecate Strait, 100 km NW of Bella Bella
<b>ORC #:</b>	3023	<b>Latitude:</b>	52°39'N
<b>Map number:</b>	103 A/11	<b>Longitude:</b>	129°24'W
<b>Marine chart number:</b>	3726		

<b>Total Area:</b>	206 ha	<b>Elevation:</b>	0-58 m
<b>Land:</b>	206 ha		

**Access:** Closed to the public by Order-in-Council no. 1920, 16 June 1977 to protect nesting birds and their habitat. A permit is required to land on the islands and they are accessible by boat.

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

#### COMPOSITION

**Physical:** The reserve comprises a group of low-lying islands, islets, and reefs along the east side of Hecate Strait. The largest island, South Moore, makes up most of its land area. The islands are deeply incised, and have generally rocky, sloping shorelines with few cliffs. Though exposed to the southwest, the effects of surf are probably moderated slightly due to protection given by the Queen Charlotte Islands, which lie to the west.

**Biological:** The larger islands have forest dominated by Sitka spruce over most of their area; headlands and some small islands have shrub and herb cover. Typical spruce forests have an understory of salal or false lily-of-the-valley and mossy ground cover. In sheltered locations the forest also contains yellow cedar, western hemlock, western yew, and shore pine. Common shrubs include salal, Sitka alder, and red elderberry. Exposed headlands have wind-pruned trees, often festooned with lichens. Treeless headlands and islands commonly have stands of Pacific reedgrass and/or dune wildrye, and several forbs including North Pacific draba, a species which occurs on sites enriched by droppings of nesting seabirds.

The Fork-tailed Storm-petrel nests on the smaller islets; Leach's Storm-petrel uses both the small islets and headlands of Moore Island. Scattered pairs of Cassin's Auklets nest on the small outer islands, as well as about 30 pairs of Tufted Puffins and 40 pairs of Glaucous-winged Gulls. An unknown number of Ancient Murrelets, previously not known to breed outside the Queen Charlotte Islands (in British Columbia) is present on South Moore and the

smaller islands. At least 40 000 pairs of Rhinoceros Auklets nest on Moore Island. This island also supports numerous pairs of Pigeon Guillemots, and is a probable nesting place of Marbled Murrelets. Other birds thought to nest on the islands but not confirmed, include the Black Oystercatcher, Belted Kingfisher, Northwestern Crow, Chestnut-backed Chickadee, Winter Wren, Varied Thrush, and Swainson's Thrush.

#### MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Ancient Murrelet	Blue listed	Special Concern (2004)	1
Cassin's auklet	Blue listed		2
Gmelin's sedge	Blue listed		2

#### THREATS

**Climate Change:** The IPCC has projected an increase in sea surface temperature and raised sea levels, both of which could result in changes in the presence and life cycles of marine species which are important food sources for the protected seabird populations. The loss of synchrony between seabird phenology and seasonal food source availability has already been documented on Triangle Island in developing Cassin's Auklets and their marine food sources, as well as decreased Tufted Puffins population due to the growing absence of their main food source, the sand lance. (source: based on research by Dr. Colleen Cassidy St. Claire from Uof A and Doug Bertram from Simon Fraser University) Raised sea levels could also result in loss of habitat.

**Transportation:** There is the threat of fuel spills from marine vessels in proximate waters

#### RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

This reserve is open to researchers only. It is set aside for nesting sea birds and offers many opportunities related to sea level rise, interspecific allocation of resources and island biota.

#### SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE MOORE, MCKENNEY, AND WHITMORE ISLANDS ER ACCOUNT

##### Flora

- alder, Sitka (*Alnus viridis* ssp. *sinuata*)
- draba, North Pacific (*Draba hyperborean*)
- elderberry, red (*Sambucus racemosa*)
- hemlock, western (*Tsuga heterophylla*)
- lily-of-the-valley, false (*Maianthemum dilatatum*)
- reedgrass, Pacific (*Calamagrostis nutkaensis*)
- salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)
- sedge, Gmelin's (*Carex gmelinii*)

spruce, Sitka (*Picea sitchensis*)  
wildrye, dune (*Leymus mollis* ssp. *mollis*)  
yellow-cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*)  
yew, western (*Taxus brevifolia*) Shore pine

**Fauna**

Auklet, Cassin's (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) Glaucous-winged gulls  
Auklet, Rhinoceros (*Cerorhinca monocerata*)  
Chickadee, Chestnut-backed (*Poecile rufescens*)  
Crow, Northwestern (*Corvus caurinus*)  
Guillemot, Pigeon (*Cepphus columba*)  
Kingfisher, Belted (*Megaceryle alcyon*)  
Murrelet, Ancient (*Synthliboramphus antiquus*)  
Murrelet, Marbled (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) Black Oystercatcher,  
Storm-petrel, Fork-tailed (*Oceanodroma furcata*)  
Storm-petrel, Leach's (*Oceanodroma leucorhoa*)  
Thrush, Swainson's (*Catharus ustulatus*)  
Thrush, Varied (*Ixoreus naevius*)  
Wren, Winter (*Troglodytes troglodytes*)

---