

ROSE ISLETS ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

PURPOSE STATEMENT

September 2003

Approved by:



Dick Heath
Regional Manager
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Sept. 6/03



Nancy Wilkin
Assistant Deputy Minister
Environmental Stewardship Division

Date: Jan. 15/04

ROSE ISLETS 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.

Rose Islets Ecological Reserve is closed to the public by Order in Council to protect the nesting seabirds which are extremely vulnerable to disturbance at this location.

Research and educational activities may be carried out but only under permit.

Primary Role

The **primary** role of Rose Islets Ecological Reserve is to protect important seabird nesting habitat. This 0.8-hectare ecological reserve in Trincomali Channel off Reid Island includes a chain of five low rocky islets which are largely inaccessible to boaters, making them a safe staging spot for birds and a haul out for harbour seals.

These islets are an important seabird colony and are an active nesting site for double-crested cormorants, a vulnerable species on the provincial blue list. The number of nests peaked in 1974 and declined over the decades with the last active nests in 1987. In the last five years, the cormorants have returned to the islets and the numbers have increased with 15 nests observed in 2000. This is significant as the population of double-crested cormorants has decreased by 70% in the Strait of Georgia since 1987 and the nearby Canoe Islets Ecological Reserve has been abandoned as a nesting site. Rose Islets Ecological Reserve is also significant roosting or feeding habitat for pigeon guillemots, black oystercatchers, glaucous-winged gulls, harbour seals, killer whales, river otters and bald eagles.

Approximately 40 species of plants, including vascular species, bryophytes and lichens are present on the three largest islets. Herbs, grasses and a few shrubs are also present, but no trees.

Management Issues

Known Management Issue	Response
Lack of foreshore protection	➤ Continue to consult with First Nations to add foreshore area to the ecological reserve.
Increasing kayaking in the area and potential increase in visitation and associated impacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recruit an ecological reserve warden and establish a formalized monitoring program to determine levels of visitation and associated impacts. ➤ Enforce closed status especially during the breeding season of the cormorants. ➤ Liaise with kayaking and boating community to inform and education about the ecological reserve and its values and to achieve user compliance to avoid disturbance of birds.
Disturbance by low flying aircraft and ferry wash	➤ Work with the local aircraft companies and BC Ferry Services to increase awareness of the ecological reserve, and to promote minimal impact activities (i.e. slowing down near the islets and flying higher)

Lack of knowledge of natural and cultural values

➤ Conduct natural and cultural values surveys, the latter in conjunction with First Nations.

Conservation

- Representation
- ecosection Too small to be representative
- biogeoclimatic subzone/variant Contributes less than 1 hectare to the representation of the Coastal Douglas-fir (CDFmm) variant which has only 2.43% protected provincially
- Special Features Seabird colony and islets in the Strait of Georgia
- Rare/Endangered Values *Blue-listed:* double-crested cormorant
- Scientific/Research Opportunities Seabird research opportunities

Recreation

- Representation
backcountry Not Applicable
destination Not Applicable
travel corridor Not Applicable
local recreation Ecological reserves are not meant for outdoor recreation; however, some kayaking, boating and wildlife viewing occurs. Management will work with groups to address potential impacts.
- Special Opportunities None known at this time
- Education/Interpretation Opportunities Potential offsite interpretation

Cultural Heritage

- Representation There are no known First Nations sites here, but the traditional uses by First Nations included harvesting of birds' eggs, fish, seaweeds and shellfish from these plentiful waters
- 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 in coastal BC, near Canoe Islets Ecological Reserve and Dionisio Point Provincial Park. One of 152 ecological reserves in the province.
- Co-operative Management Arrangements Not Applicable

Partnerships
presence

Establish ecological reserve warden/volunteer

Vulnerability

Disturbance of seabirds during nesting seasons, habitat destruction by recreational users (considerable recreational boating and kayaking occurs in the area in the summer), foreshore erosion by ferry wash, marine contamination, disturbance by low flying aircraft. Intertidal and subtidal areas are not included in the ecological reserve thus the seabird foraging habitat is not protected.

Relationship to other Strategies

Not Applicable

Area: 0.8 hectares

Date of establishment: May 04, 1971