

ROSE SPIT

ER #10

ORIGINAL PURPOSE To conserve a sandy coastal marine environment and the associated flora and fauna

OVERVIEW

Date established:	4 May 1971	Location:	Northeastern point of Graham Island, Queen Charlotte Islands, 35 km NE of Massett
Date amended:	8 June 1971		
ORC #:	3010		
Map number:	103 J/4	Latitude:	54°10'N
		Longitude:	131°40'W

Total Area:	170 ha	Elevation:	0-40 m
Land:	170 ha		

Access: Access to this reserve is by water or long hiking trails through Naikoon Provincial Park.

Biogeoclimatic Zones:	Coastal Western Hemlock (CWH)
Biogeoclimatic Variant:	CWH Submontane Wet Hypermaritime (wh1)
Ecosection:	Queen Charlotte Lowland
Marine Ecosystem:	Dixon Entrance
Region:	Skeena
Management Area:	Queen Charlotte Island

COMPOSITION

Physical: This unique spit, the largest of its kind in British Columbia, has been created by sand and gravel deposited by prevailing southeast winter winds and wave action in Hecate Strait. Large dunes were formed which, unless stabilized, move inland from the Hecate Strait side of the point. These are up to 10 m high. Masses of driftwood accumulate at the high tide line bordering the dunes. Lands inland from the dunes are flat and low-lying.

Biological: Driftwood communities, dunes, meadows and forest constitute the four major habitats in the reserve. A seabeach sandwort-sea mertensia-European searocket association pioneers the driftwood zone along the west side of the spit. Exposed sand dune habitat is colonized by seashore bluegrass-western dune daisy-big-headed sedge and dune bluegrass-dune wildrye-big-headed sedge associations. In the lee of the forest, dune ridges support a dune bluegrass-purple horntooth moss-pixie-cup lichen community. Three Sitka spruce forest communities are differentiated respectively by the presence of Oregon beaked-moss, salal or Pacific reedgrass. Several rare plants which are adapted to sandy substrates occur here.

The rich and varied bird fauna includes Common, Red-throated and Arctic loons, three species of geese, ducks of many kinds, three species of scoters and gulls, and numerous shorebird species. On the upland are found hawks, falcons, Bald Eagles, Northwestern Crows and many passerines such as sparrows and warblers. The current bird list for the reserve includes 64 species.

The mammals include Marten, Red Squirrel, Deer Mouse, Black-tailed Deer and Raccoon. Harbour Seals are common offshore while Steller Sea Lions are occasional visitors.

Cultural: An archaeological site located on the eastern shore of Rose Spit, Graham Island, Haida Gwaii, 2 kilometres north of the northern extent of the tree line in the mid upper intertidal zone 100 meters from the vegetated shore protects ancient lithics.

MANAGEMENT CONCERNS

SIGNIFICANT SPECIES	BC LIST STATUS	COSEWIC STATUS	CF PRIORITY
Ermine, ssp. <i>haidarum</i>	Red listed	Threatened (2001)	2
Giant Black Stickleback	Red listed	Special Concern (1980)	1
beach groundsel	Blue listed		2
beach bluegrass			4
sea bluebells	Blue listed		2
Sandhill Crane		Not At Risk (1979)	5
Sitka spruce – Oregon beaked-moss association	Blue listed		1
Sitka spruce - Pacific reedgrass association	Blue listed		3
Sitka spruce – salal association	Blue listed		1
Nootka lupine			6
dune wildrye,			6
Kamchatka spike-rush	Blue listed		2
red fescue			6
beach pea			6
redtop	Exotic		4
ribwort plantain	Exotic		6

THREATS

Climate Change: The northern location of this reserve, as well as its coastline composition may make it vulnerable to substantial change. Possible increased sea levels, storm activity and offshore winds could erode the sand beach and spit and degrade the fragile dune ecosystems for which this reserve was designated. All changes would be reflected in shifts in the biotic components of the associated aquatic, terrestrial and marine communities.

Adjacent Land Use: Windmills have the potential to negatively impact sea bird populations at this site.

Recreation: Illegal ATV use is damaging to dune ecosystems.

RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Reports available on vegetation, sand dune formation and management for background material. This is a great opportunity to observe the effects of sea level rise and increased storm activity on spit and dune building processes.

SCIENTIFIC NAMES OF SPECIES MENTIONED IN THE ROSE SPIT ER ACCOUNT

Flora

bluebells, sea (*Mertensia maritima*)
bluegrass, dune (*Poa macrantha*)
fescue, red (*Festuca rubra* ssp. *rubra*)
groundsel, beach (*Senecio pseudoarnica*)
lupine, Nootka (*Lupinus nootkatensis*)
moss, Oregon beaked (*Kindbergia oreganum*)
pea, beach (*Lathyrus japonicus* var. *maritimus*)
pixie-cup lichen (*Cladonia fimbriata*)
plantain, ribwort (*Plantago lanceolata*)
purple horntooth moss (*Ceratodon purpureus*)
redtop (*Agrostis gigantea*)
reedgrass, Pacific (*Calamagrostis nutkaensis*)
salal (*Gaultheria shallon*)
sandwort, seabeach (*Honckenya peploides* ssp. *major*)
searocket, European (*Cakile maritima*)
sedge, large-headed (*Carex macrocephala*)
spike rush, Kamchatka (*Eleocharis kamtschatica*)
spruce, Sitka (*Picea sitchensis*)
wildrye, dune (*Leymus mollis* ssp. *mollis*)

Fauna

Crane, Sandhill (*Grus canadensis*)
Crow, Northwestern (*Corvus caurinus*)
Deer, Black-tailed (*Odocoileus hemionus hemionus*)
Eagle, Bald (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)
Ermine, *haidarum* subspecies (*Mustela erminea haidarum*)
Loon, Arctic (*Gavia arctica*)
Loon, Common (*Gavia immer*)
Loon, Red-throated (*Gavia stellata*)
Marten (*Martes americana*)
Mouse, Deer (*Peromyscus maniculatus*)
Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*)
Sea Lion, Steller (*Eumetopias jubatus*)
Seal, Harbour (*Phoca vitulina*)
Squirrel, Red (*Tamiasciurus hudsonicus*)
Stickleback, Giant Black (*Gasterosteus* sp. *1*)