

Endangered Species Toolkit

Foreword by Margaret Atwood

The Citizen's Guide to Protecting Biodiversity in British Columbia



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Foreword

Humans are highly adaptable. While most of the world's species require fairly specific life conditions to survive and reproduce, we humans seem to be able to withstand dramatic habitat alterations and natural catastrophes. This ability will serve us well in the decades ahead if drastic changes occur, but we still don't know just how far we can bend, or how much we will enjoy living with cockroaches if other life forms vanish.

Other species are more vulnerable. Many are already feeling the impacts of deforestation, toxins in the environment, global warming and other consequences of our ravenous use of resources. Scientists believe that we are already witnessing a mass extinction, which is worrying when we consider that so many of the planet's species have not even been identified, much less understood.

There is no question that biodiversity makes the world a more interesting place. We should also remember that the conditions that allow other species to thrive are the very same conditions that enable our own survival. Like a canary in a coal mine, extinctions tell us that our planet is becoming less inhabitable for others. We should care not only because it is morally right to care about canaries, but also out of a sense of self-preservation.

Biodiversity is often described as a web of life where all species are connected through infinite interdependent relationships – predator and prey, oxygen givers and takers, sun absorbers, decomposers, and so on. Scientists still don't understand our ecosystems well enough to predict the consequences of species loss. We know it will make our world less beautiful, inspiring and majestic, but might it also make it uninhabitable? While we should definitely honour that voice inside us that says it is immoral to cause the extinction of another species, we might do the world a greater service by bowing to self-preservation as our chief motivator. Save other species, save ourselves.

"Environmentalists" alone cannot reverse the trend towards species decline, nor should they. Each one of us enjoys the benefits of biodiversity. Each one of us has a role to play in its protection. The Sierra Club of BC has produced this Toolkit to empower citizens from all backgrounds to become involved in species protection. Let's put it to work and enjoy the future together.



Margaret Atwood

Preface

Gratitude and Appreciation

This Toolkit is a true communal effort. Many Sierra Club of BC volunteers and staff presided over its birth, bringing their vision, experience, and skills to this exciting project. Our most heartfelt thanks are due to:

Helen Hall: Helen was a visiting biologist from the United Kingdom who spent her sabbatical volunteering on this project. This project would not have been possible without the energy, insight, patience, and initiative she brought to getting the project started.

Allison Anderson and Chris Tollefson: Allison greatly assisted us by fact-checking, researching and re-writing much of the information about laws and policies that pertain to endangered wildlife in B.C. as part of her studies with University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre. Much of this work is contained in a companion document, *There Oughtta Be a Law: Legal Tools for Protecting B.C.'s Endangered Species*, available from Sierra Club of BC (www.sierraclub.ca/bc), Professor Tollefson was her supervisor.

Elizabeth Farries and Dr. Duncan Taylor: Elizabeth has played a crucial role in weaving multiple streams of information into a coherent whole. Her ability to sift through a labyrinth of laws and policies and distil the meaning into a readable and even enjoyable experience for a layperson has been invaluable. Dr. Taylor, a professor in the University of Victoria Environmental Studies Department mentored Elizabeth during her internship with Sierra Club, facilitating her practical application of academic theory in her Toolkit work.

Elizabeth May: Elizabeth is a well-known environmentalist, activist, writer, lawyer and long-time Sierra Club supporter and friend, and we were fortunate to mine her extensive experience and advice from her document *How to be an Activist* (www.sierraclub.ca/national/activist-how-to) when writing this Toolkit.

Thanks also to the people who helped us immensely by providing comment and corrections on earlier drafts, especially **Devon Page** and **Judy Johnson**.

Finally, thanks to our partners in the Endangered Species campaign for their guidance on this Toolkit but mostly for the skill, dedication and hard work they bring to protecting species at risk in B.C.

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Gagan Leekha, Sierra Club of BC, toolkit coordinator

Jill Thompson, Sierra Club of BC, writing

Contributing Your Feedback

We Want to Hear from YOU! This is a living document, and the authors welcome any constructive feedback, tools or suggestions that would help improve subsequent drafts. Please send your thoughts and feedback to info@sierraclub.bc.ca.



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Jenn Hoffman, Sierra Club of BC, editing
Michelle Atkins, Sierra Club of BC, design and layout

Throughout the creation of this Toolkit the authors frequently were inspired by, drew from, or reference other's works. See the References and Resources sections for more information on these and other sources of information on Endangered Species.

About the Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter

The Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter, has played a leading role in environmental stewardship in British Columbia since 1969. Our success is grounded in advocating for science-based policy, supporting grassroots initiatives and inspiring passionate commitment to the values of environmental stewardship. Our work falls under Four Pillars of Conservation: Forest, Lands and Communities; Our Fragile Ocean; The New Energy Economy; and Healthy Communities.

The mission of the Sierra Club's BC Chapter is:

- To explore and protect the wild places of the earth;
- To practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources;
- To educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and
- To use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.



Introduction

Our planet Earth is home to a vast and wondrous array of creatures, from the microscopic to the majestic. The conditions that nurture this diversity of life forms – the right balance of oxygen and carbon dioxide, clean water, fertile soils, a hospitable climate – are not a given. They are created and maintained in balance by the creatures themselves in the self-regulating web of life.

As humans, we participate in this process with every breath we take. However, our impact is of a much vaster scope than this simple biological exchange. **Because of our power to affect the entire web of life, we also have a responsibility to protect it and care for it.**

British Columbia has more biodiversity than any other province or territory in Canada. It also has the highest number of endangered species, which suggests that we are sadly failing in our responsibility to protect the web of life. Biodiversity in B.C. is increasingly under pressure from human influences such as urban sprawl, deforestation, exotic species introductions, over-harvesting and pollution. The greatest threat to biodiversity in Canada is the alteration of habitat. **Extinction is natural, but the current rate of species loss is far above natural levels.**

We don't have a strong, clear law to protect endangered species and the land on which they live. Instead, we have a patchwork of overlapping and sometimes contradictory regulations that leave far too much to political discretion. In addition, some of the regulations limit the scope of protective measures with no regard to scientific criteria. Some regulations even prevent the protection of endangered species habitat.

This piecemeal approach has resulted in many endangered species becoming nearly extinct and a continued decline in the vast majority of the species at risk.

Poll after poll tells us that a strong majority of British Columbians care about nature and wildlife. We deserve a law that reflects that. The purpose of this Toolkit is to provide you with the information, tools and skills you need to learn more and then take action on behalf of all the creatures in B.C.

How to Use This Toolkit



Photo by Juergen Baierle

This Toolkit is offered as a resource to British Columbians from all walks of life who care about wild places and the creatures that inhabit them. It contains three sections, each offering valuable information and guidance. And, most of all, we hope they inspire you to take action. It has been said that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’. In the same vein, it takes a network of concerned citizens, families and groups, all taking small actions in their daily lives, to steward the natural legacy of this province and pass it on to the next generation to admire and enjoy in its full glory.

Section One: Learning, Discussion, Reflection provides information on endangered species in B.C. and how activities that affect them are regulated and managed by various levels of government. It is divided into seven topics with suggestions for a guided discussion. At the end of each topic, we invite you to brainstorm actions that your group might want to take.

Section Two: Taking Action provides some campaign strategy ideas to get you started so you can join others who advocate the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems. Pick one that appeals to you and suits your time, group size and the level of commitment that is feasible for you at this time.

Section Three: Tools and Tactics contains specific activist tools to help you with the campaign strategy you are using. It provides tips and resources on how to deal with the media, throw a fundraiser, keep your volunteers involved and more.

Inserted throughout the Toolkit you will find portraits of species that are in particular need of help. You might consider “adopting” one of these to focus your group’s efforts.

At the end of this Toolkit you will find two helpful sections. The References and Resources section will give you some ideas about where to go to find out what species are at risk in your area, what other groups are working on this issue along with other great resources that will help you engage in this important work! The Appendices are full of tools and templates to help you plan how and what you want to do next to help protect endangered species.

WHERE HAS THE FOREST GONE?

The dire straits of the northern spotted owl.

The spotted owl is a permanent resident of British Columbia's temperate old growth forest. A medium-sized owl, it is distinguished from other owls by the lack of ear tufts and brown, white and buff-coloured body markings. The spotted owl is currently in big trouble; with only six breeding pairs left in the wild as of 2007, it has become the most endangered bird in all of Canada.

Logging in British Columbia's old growth forest is the principal cause of the spotted owl's decline. Considered an 'indicator species', its well-being directly reflects the status of the ecosystem that it inhabits. Given that over 80 percent of its habitat has been logged since the 1940's, the many species it represents are also in decline.

British Columbia has very weak endangered species legislation; in fact the government itself is the largest logger of owl habitat through its BC Timber Sales program. The spotted owl has been left to fend for itself until recently, when several independent environmental groups initiated legal action to demand that federal government take steps to protect it. These groups include the David Suzuki Foundation, Environmental Defence Canada, Forest Ethics and the Wilderness Committee. They are being represented by the Sierra Legal Defence Fund in the first legal action of its kind under the Canada Species at Risk Act (SARA).

SARA symbolizes our federal government's commitment to take protective steps towards Canada's endangered species. For the spotted owl, the Sierra Legal Defence Fund is making sure they stick to this promise. Holding them to their word sets a precedent for other species under SARA designation. The public's contribution in this regard is vital; further information can be found at:

www.sierralegal.org/wildlife.html



“When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find
it hitched to everything else in the universe”

– John Muir

SECTION ONE:

LEARNING, DISCUSSION, REFLECTION

Introduction

In this section, we introduce some key concepts related to biodiversity and its importance for human and ecosystem health. We also describe how our government is dealing with its responsibility to protect biodiversity. *Section One* is designed to provide you with a base of information before you start thinking about how you can take action in *Section Two*.

This section is divided into seven Discussion Topics. Each topic area includes a backgrounder, discussion notes, reflection ideas, and suggestions on creating an action plan. You can pick the one that looks most interesting to you and invite your community group to have a discussion about it. Or, choose a few and organize a brown-bag lunch series. If you prefer a more informal approach, you can read the material yourself and talk to some friends and family about what you have learned.

If, like us, you conclude that further action is needed to protect B.C.'s endangered species, move on to *Section Two: Taking Action*, which lays out some key ways you can help. Just as we need a diversity of plants and animals to keep our web of life functioning, we need a diversity of voices to help protect them. **Please join us in taking action to protect B.C.'s species.**

Each topic area includes a backgrounder, discussion notes, reflection ideas, and suggestions on creating an action plan. You can pick the one that looks most interesting to you and invite your community group to have a discussion about it.

Discussion Topics

Canaries in the Coal Mine

First Nations peoples in British Columbia use plant and animal species as important clues about their environment. Gitga'at seaweed gatherers use the rate of growth of stinging nettles in the spring to predict how low the seaweed is out on the offshore island and whether it is ready to harvest. For Lil'wat basket makers, the blooming of the wild rose signals that the cedar roots are ready for harvesting. In becoming aware of the signs that species give us we can learn so much more about the natural rhythms and health of our environment.

Species can send danger signals as well. When crows stop foraging on the beach, Saanich people know that it is time to stop harvesting shellfish because there might be a red tide. Similarly, coal miners once took canaries down into the mine so that the little birds could warn them when the air quality declined.

In some ways, those coal miners were acting as early ecologists, recognizing that there are inter-connections between humans, other species and the environment we all share. When canaries died, it warned miners to leave quickly because their environment was no longer safe.

On a larger scale, and over slower time periods, other species can often give us clues that something in our environment has changed. Known as indicator species, these species provide us with information on ecosystems. One such indicator could be an early warning of ecosystem decline. For example, the world is currently witnessing a massive decline in amphibian populations. Unlike many other species whose decline is caused by direct habitat loss, frog populations are crashing in protected and apparently pristine habitats. Scientists now consider amphibians to be global indicator species that are being affected by broad worldwide changes, possibly due to increased UV radiation or acid rain.

By watching the canaries, coal miners learned to make the changes needed to keep work conditions safer. Similarly, by struggling to discover the hidden reasons that frogs are dying, scientists are simultaneously attempting to understand and correct threats within our larger environment. If we can help save these frogs from environmental decline, we will be taking direct steps to save ourselves.

This is part of the reason why it is so important to protect the full diversity of life on the planet. **Each species, if understood and observed well, has something to teach us about the environment that supports us.** When we lose a species, we lose important clues about how our world works.

Discussion

In your group, discuss the following questions. If you have a large group, you might want to break into smaller groups and have each group take one question, then bring the group back together.

1. Read about one of the species described in inserts throughout this Toolkit. What might the survival (or extinction) of this species tell us about our own environment and, ultimately, about our own health and survival?
2. What plants and animals in or near your community do you feel connected to? Why? What role do they play in your life (food, recreation, health, spiritual)?
3. Why might “Save the Humans” be a logical slogan for an endangered species campaign?
4. When do we know that we have impacted our environment to the point where changes are irreversible? Once we recognise that a species is endangered, is it too late to reverse the damage?

Scientists now consider amphibians to be global indicator species that are being affected by broad worldwide changes.



Pacific Tree Frog

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on how protecting endangered species is in your own self-interest.

Conclusion

Consider wrapping up with an activity. Here is one you can try, called *Weaving Wildlife Webs*:

Assign each person in your group one part of a local ecosystem and have them write the part on a small name tag. Perhaps they can choose their favourite plant, animal or part of the forest floor in their local ecosystem (try to ensure a diversity of plant and animal species; it is okay even to include mountains, rain, sun etc.). Be sure to include a human!

Ask them to think about who eats them, what they eat, what they need to survive, or what habitat they need to survive. These things help them assess their connections to others.

Have everyone to form a circle and use a ball of string or wool, or a rope to connect everyone. For instance, ask the caribou to throw the ball to another part of the ecosystem on which the caribou is dependent for survival. Keep throwing the ball until everyone is part of the web.

Give the participants a scenario where one part of the web may be extremely affected which is to be represented by that person tugging on their string. Everyone who feels the tug is affected and responds by tugging in their turn. What happens?

Action Plan

Is there anything your group would like to do to help protect one of our indicator species, or some other endangered animal or plant community? See *Section Two: Taking Action* and *Section Three: Tools and Tactics* of this Toolkit for ideas about what you could do and for help doing those things. If so, what are the next steps? Who will do what and by when? Write this down on the *Action Planning Template* in Appendix 3.

Tell us what you are doing! Fill out the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and send it to us so we can support you in reaching your goals.



A Tangled Mess: Current Endangered Species Protection in B.C.

British Columbia has no stand-alone endangered species legislation. While the B.C. government does track the status of species at risk in B.C., and does have the ability to designate them as *endangered* (under a hodge-podge of laws and policies), in reality this amounts to very little in terms of real protection for either species or their habitat. As a result, B.C.'s record on species protection continues to be a tangled mess, and most species fall through the cracks.

We need a single clear act, one strong enough to ensure that B.C.'s biodiversity is recognized, protected and restored.

The myriad of provincial and federal laws, lists, committees and policies, pertaining to endangered species leave a lot of room for contradictions, loopholes, too much to political discretion and not enough emphasis on scientific criteria. Here is a brief summary of what tools currently exist to protect endangered species. For more detailed info see the legal supplement to this Toolkit have a look at *There Oughtta Be a Law: Legal Tools for Protecting B.C.'s Endangered Species* (www.sierraclub.ca/bc).

We need a single clear act, one strong enough to ensure that B.C.'s biodiversity is recognized, protected and restored.

The Provincial Government's Approach to Protecting Species at Risk:

The Red, Blue and Yellow Lists

This listing sorts species into groups with similar conservation risks. It is mandated by the *British Columbia Wildlife Act*.

The **Red List** includes species designated as **Endangered, Extirpated or Threatened**. *Endangered* means a species is facing immediate disappearance from the province, or extinction altogether. *Extirpated* describes species that are extinct in a specific region, though they might be found elsewhere in B.C. *Threatened* species are likely to become endangered if factors contributing to their vulnerability, like pollution or habitat loss, are not reversed.

The **Blue List** represents any species that scientists consider to be *vulnerable* in British Columbia. Such species are particularly sensitive to disruptive human or natural impacts on their habitat, but are not yet extirpated, endangered or threatened.

The **Yellow List** covers species of **special concern** because of small range or low abundance in the province.

These lists have been compiled by the Provincial Ministry's Conservation Data Centre.¹

¹ Ministry of Environment, Conservation Data Centre: www.env.gov.bc.ca/cdc/. Visit the BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer to get more information about the details of these numbers.

As of May 2007 1,367 species are Red or Blue listed, which means that B.C. has more species at risk than any other Canadian province or territory. Surprisingly, just because a species makes it on to the list, it doesn't mean that protection is automatically triggered for it. In B.C. there is no law that provides mandatory protection for listed species

B.C. Wildlife Act

The B.C. government characterizes this Act as its species protection law. However, the Act most strongly reflects an historical focus to regulate the uses of wildlife targeted for hunting and fishing. Amendments were passed in 2004 to expand protection and restoration of listed species, including a series of prohibitions against the killing, trading, trafficking and transport of such species.

However, there is no legal obligation for the province to implement any of these protective measures. Nor does the Act provide for recovery planning, action or timelines. Lastly, since the amendments were passed, *not one single species has been listed* under the Wildlife Act, an especially surprising situation given that there are currently 162 animals, 386 plants and 159 plant communities on the Red List alone.

The Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS)

In what is becoming an increasingly convoluted arrangement, species are given minimal protection under B.C.'s forestry law. This was originally the Forest Practice Code, but has now been replaced by the *Forest and Range Protection Act (FRPA)*. To specifically address forest-dependent species the FRPA is complemented by the *Identified Wildlife Management Strategy (IWMS)*, a policy which designates species at risk and designates habitat for protection.

The policy has several major failings. Firstly, although B.C. has a huge number of species at risk the IWMS lists only 85 species. Further, by design, IWMS limits protection for species at risk through a "timber supply impact cap", which restricts the amount of land that can be set aside for IWMS species so that it can affect no more than one percent of the timber supply. In other words, the policy to help species impacted by logging usually does not apply if logging is affected!

There are currently 162 animals, 386 plants and 159 plant communities on the Red List alone.



Pacific Tree Frog,
Photo: Pharis Patanaude

The Federal Response to Endangered Species:

Bill C-5: Species at Risk Act (SARA)

The Species at Risk Act (SARA) took effect in 2003. This Act is intended to prevent species extinction, to help species recover if they are extirpated, endangered or threatened, and to manage habitats to prevent other species from becoming at risk. The strategy is to prohibit the destruction of critical habitat and to promote stewardship and conservation through initiatives and agreements – all positive goals. Yet SARA may not be able to save B.C.'s species at risk. Jurisdictional disagreements between federal and provincial bodies resulted in an Act that substantially reduced the federal government's power to achieve these goals.

Today protection exists – mostly on paper – and only for migratory birds, aquatic species, or species that reside on federal lands. Since only *one percent* of British Columbia's land base is directly under federal control (and this includes post offices, army barracks, national parks and First Nations Reserves) and 99 percent is under the jurisdiction of the provincial government, B.C.'s species at risk are left without sufficient protection at the federal level.

SARA does stipulate that if a province/territory is not adequately addressing species at risk, the federal government may invoke a "safety net provision". Despite the increasing number of endangered species, and a lack of provincial action to protect them, the federal government has yet to invoke this provision.

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC)

COSEWIC conducts formal risk assessments of species and classifies them accordingly. Founded in 1977, the Committee applies an international scientific ranking system adapted from the World Conservation Union in Switzerland. It is a rigorous, singular system that has been continuously refined since its inception. However, COSEWIC only plays an advisory role. The committee has *no legal authority*. Once COSEWIC identifies a species as endangered, it will only be placed on the SARA list if such listing is approved by the Minister of Environment, who enjoys wide discretion to decide if and when such action will be taken. Scientists are excluded from the final political decision-making process.

To learn more about the existing legal tools for protecting endangered species in B.C. and federally, please refer to *There Oughtta Be a Law: Legal Tools for Protecting B.C.'s Endangered Species*, a joint publication of the University of Victoria Environmental Law Clinic and Sierra Club of BC, available from Sierra Club of BC at www.sierraclub.ca/bc. This handy manual includes clear suggestions for actions that make use of existing laws, while the campaign for stronger stand-alone legislation is underway.

To get a sense of what an effective endangered species law would look like check out the Principles in Appendix 1.

Discussion

B.C. has the highest biodiversity of any province in Canada. It also has one of the highest standards of living in the world. Our expansive natural setting and plentiful wildlife are central to both our identity and significant parts of our economy.

1. Should B.C. have the best wildlife protection in the world? Why or why not? What would have to change? Would it be worth it?
2. What are the greatest threats to species?
3. Do you think it is possible to protect species and jobs? If so, what would that look like?
4. What are some things that the average citizen could do to change laws and policies?



Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on what you would be willing to change in order to save a species from extinction.

Action Plan

Is there anything that your group would like to do to help shift British Columbia's species protection legislation towards an effective stand-alone act? See *Section Two: Taking Action* and *Section Three: Tools*

and Tactics of this Toolkit for ideas about what you could do and for help doing those things.

If so, what are the next steps? Who will do what and by when? Write this down on the *Action Planning Template* in Appendix 3.

Tell us what you are doing! Fill out the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and send it to us so we can support you in reaching your goals.

Conclusion

End with a go-around to share something that you personally would be willing to change or do to protect a species in your area.



B.C. Government: All Talk and No Action?

In 2005, the provincial government set out five “Great Goals for a Golden Decade” as part of its election platform. One of the goals was, **“To lead the world in sustainable environmental management, with the best air and water quality, and the best fisheries management, bar none.”**

While we applaud this goal, the B.C. government’s record on species protection has been dismal. Environmental groups watched in horror as law after law was gutted and economic considerations took precedence over species protection and long-term sustainability, leaving few safeguards in place for wildlife or ecosystem health.¹ For more information on the B.C. government’s track record visit: www.environmentalleadership.org/victoriawatch.

With the notable exception of the Great Bear Rainforest Agreement², which saw the designation of 2 million hectares of critical old grown habitat in central coastal BC, this government has actually instituted laws that prevent species protection! For example, the new *Government Actions Regulation* prevents the provincial Ministry of Environment from establishing objectives to protect species if these objectives “unduly reduce the supply of timber from British Columbia’s forests.”³

The previous provincial government was similarly negligent when it came to biodiversity protection. Although that government increased the province’s protected areas considerably throughout the 1990’s, it also created some of the very policies that hinder species protection today. For example, wildlife species impacted by logging were granted a scant (and unscientific) “allowance” of a one-percent reduction in logging rates to ensure their survival, even though those logging rates were 30 percent above sustainable levels. In addition, despite the stated provincial goal of protecting 12 percent of all forest types, it is estimated that currently only 2.7% of Coastal Douglas fir forests, 4.8% of Interior Douglas fir forests and 4.4% of Ponderosa pine are protected. When that low rate of protection is coupled with unsustainable logging rates outside protected areas, we are facing the loss of half of the wildlife species in these forests.⁴

We are doing poorly in comparison to the standards set by other Canadian provinces. Four provinces and territories (Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick) have full endangered species legislation already. Three others (Saskatchewan, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia) have some degree of species legislation. And another three (Yukon, Newfoundland and Northwest Territories) have stated that species-at-risk legislation will be developed. B.C., along with Alberta, is at the back of the pack. This is particularly significant when you consider that B.C. has the largest number of species at risk in all of Canada.

1 Cutting up the Safety Net, West Coast Environmental Law, 2005, pp. 3-7; Axing the Forest Service, Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter, 2004.

2 For more information on the Great Bear Rainforest, visit www.savethegreatbear.org. Section 2 (1)(b) of Government Action Regulation. BC Reg 582/2004. Effective Dec. 13, 2004.

3 Section 2 (1)(b) of Government Action Regulation. BC Reg 582/2004. Effective Dec. 13, 2004.

4 Forest Ethics, British Columbia’s Endangered Forests, 2003, p. 01.

We are doing poorly in comparison to the standards set by other Canadian provinces. Four provinces and territories (Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick) have full endangered species legislation already.

One step in the right direction would be to meet the standards set by policies south of the border, where the U.S. has established a fairly robust *Endangered Species Act* in 1973). A recent study examining this Act's effectiveness in the north-eastern U.S. found that no known endangered species has gone extinct since the Act's implementation and that 93 percent of species under protection have become stable or increased their population.¹

Even the B.C. government's own forestry watchdog agency, the Forest Practices Board, has sounded the alarm bell over our province's inadequate species protection system. In 2005, the Board warned that there is "a systemic failure in government policy to protect endangered species such as marbled murrelets on Crown lands".²

British Columbia **needs** robust legislation similar to the U.S. *Endangered Species Act*. Our current policies simply do not measure up. For example, since 1996, the B.C. government has been a signatory to the *National Accord for the Protection of Species at Risk* in Canada. This accord looks promising, given that it requires:

1. Immediate legal protection for threatened and endangered species;
2. Protection for the habitat of threatened or endangered species; and
3. The development of recovery plans within one year for endangered species and two years for threatened species.

Despite these excellent ideals, the B.C. government has yet to fulfill a single one of these promises.

B.C. citizens have much work to do to convince political leaders of all stripes that species extinction is not an acceptable cost of doing business. The time has come to walk our talk!

¹ The Center for Biological Diversity Measuring the Success of the Endangered Species Act: Recovery Trends in the North-eastern United States, 2006.

² Forest Practice Board, News Release, March 3, 2005: "Provincial Systems Fail to Protect Threatened Species". (<http://www.fpb.gov.bc.ca/news/releases/2005/03-03.htm>).

Discussion

In your group, discuss the following questions. If you have a large group, you might want to break into smaller groups and have each group take one question, then bring the group back together.

1. Should B.C. be doing more for species protection? Why or why not?
2. How does the government's "open-for-business" agenda impact species?
3. How do we know that an Endangered Species Act would be an effective tool for protecting species?
4. What factors may be preventing the B.C. government from implementing effective endangered species legislation?

When the low rate of protection is coupled with unsustainable logging rates outside protected areas, we are facing the loss of half of the wildlife species in our forests.

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on anything you have learned about the B.C. government's approach to protecting biodiversity. Is there anything you would like to do as a result of this new knowledge?

Conclusion

Finish with an activity. Assign group members roles (characters) that are involved with or influenced by Endangered Species legislation. Lead an open house event in which people are encouraged to meet and greet each other in their character. Have a social with an open microphone where players can freely share their ideas and opinions about how legislation will impact their personal interests.

Suggested characters: Mountain Caribou, Chief Forester, Premier of BC, Developer, Ecologist, Teacher, Environmental Lawyer, your MLA, Farmer, Spotted Owl, Judge...

Note how people communicate with each other, and what reactions that evokes in others. Does everyone have a similar way of communicating or doing business? Are all the characters able to really listen to each other's positions?

Action Plan

Is there anything that your group would like to do to help address our government's shortcomings regarding protection of biodiversity? See *Section Two: Taking Action* and *Section Three: Tools and Tactics* of this Toolkit for ideas about what you could do and for help doing those things. If so, what are the next steps? Who will do what by when? Write this down on the Action Planning Template in Appendix 3.

Tell us what you are doing! Fill out the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and send it to us so we can support you in reaching your goals.



All Creatures Great and Small:

Our Web of Life

It is easy to draw public attention to cute, furry creatures – the ones with soulful eyes that look great on a wall calendar. These are the creatures that can capture the public's imagination and compassion, while a campaign to save a rare “warty slug” would carry far less popular appeal. Perhaps the fact that we ourselves are mammals helps us to better understand, and sympathise with, threats to other mammals more than threats to other types of living things.

Even though less charismatic species are not discussed as often, we still recognize that all species are part of nature's balance – little-known lichens, tiny biting mites, slimy salamanders, squishy jellyfish, drab brown birds, fragile alpine grasses ... All of these are equally important and we need to protect them in their entirety with strong, effective legislation.

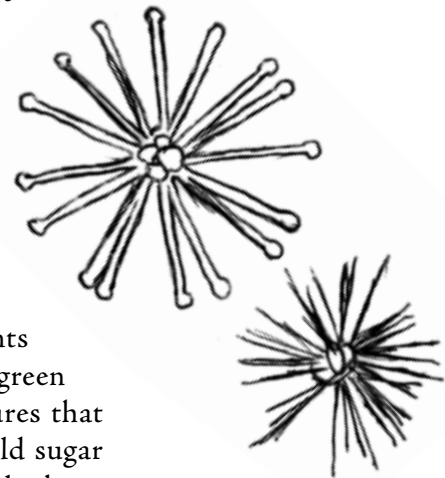
Did You Know?

Even the largest creature on the planet is endangered. The travels of the blue whale include the coastal waters of British Columbia. At thirty meters, the blue whale is as long as a city block, yet it depends on one of the smallest ocean creatures for its food. Tiny, shrimp-like creatures called krill are a favourite part of the blue whale's diet. Because krill are so small, blue whales need to eat between 3000 to 5000 kg every day to meet their energy requirements.

That's like eating the weight of a school bus, once for breakfast and again for supper, each day.

While krill are small, they are not as tiny as phytoplankton, microscopic plants that live suspended in bodies of water, one of the main components of our ocean's food chain. Collectively, phytoplankton look like a furry green mat which is actually made up of individual, microscopic plant creatures that use sunlight as a food source. Phytoplankton, like the land plants, build sugar blocks which krill, fish and even whales use for food. Since phytoplankton depend on certain ocean conditions to be healthy, they are a good indicator of change. Climate change can impact communities of phytoplankton, which in turn will affect the food supply that many marine animals need for survival.

B.C.'s coastal temperate rainforests contain equally productive land plants. A breath-taking landmark, they represent only a small fraction of the world's forests today, yet they harbour more biomass than any other type of forest. Biomass is a measurement of the forest's energy reserves, and represents all creatures within, both dead and alive. At 500–2000 metric tons per hectare, temperate rainforests easily outpace tropical rainforests in their ability to host such an immense biotic community. In B.C., these forests are also home to one of the world's most iconic organisms, our old-growth trees.



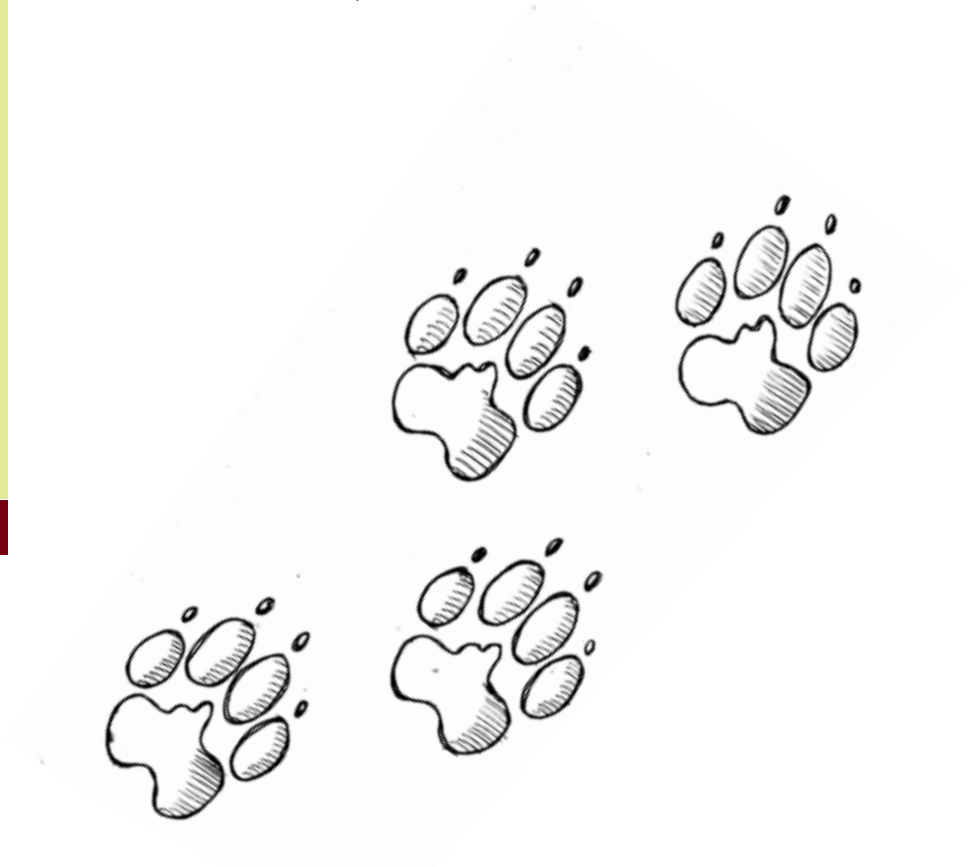
Phytoplankton

As dead and dying parts of the forest accumulate, they are broken down in order to make room and energy for the newer, still growing forest. Organisms called decomposers accomplish this. Earthworms, termites, slugs, snails and bacteria are all decomposers.

Grizzly bears, Kermode (“spirit bears”) and cougars are called **umbrella species**. These species, when protected, concurrently benefit many other species, often due to their large aerial requirements or their sensitivity to alterations to their habitats. “Umbrella” species require large home ranges and are extremely sensitive to changes in their food supply and habitat. Because of that, umbrella species serve as excellent indicators for the overall health of wilderness ecosystems. The complexity of their habitats means that efforts to help umbrella species will simultaneously protect other less recognized species.

The real miracle of nature is that each of these organisms, whether large or small, abundant or sparse, interacts in balance with the world around it, creating a sustainable ecosystem. We are light years away from understanding the biology behind how this all works, let alone being able to fix it if it goes awry. We need to take seriously our responsibility to protect and restore biodiversity.

Grizzly bears, Kermode (“spirit bears”) and cougars are called umbrella species. These species, when protected, concurrently benefit many other species, often due to their large aerial requirements or their sensitivity to alterations to their habitats.



Discussion

In your group, consider the following questions for discussion. If you have a large group, you might want to break into smaller groups and have each group take one question, then bring the group back together.

1. What is the least appealing creature you can think of? How are you connected to that creature through a food chain or the web of life?
2. Is it more important to protect an animal, or that animal's habitat? Can you do one without the other?
3. If a species is not useful to humans, should we protect it from extinction? Why or why not?
4. We all want a healthy and secure future for our children, but it is sometimes difficult to recognise the connection between our actions and the impacts of each action on everything around us. What do you think inspires people to change behaviour now in order to ensure a healthier future for future generations?

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on what you've learned about B.C.'s biodiversity and whether there is anything you'd like to do as a result of this new knowledge.

Action Plan

Is there anything that your group would like to do to help the full range of B.C.'s biodiversity? See *Section Two: Taking Action* and *Section Three: Tools and Tactics of this Toolkit* for ideas about what you could do and for help doing those things. If so, what are the next steps? Who will do what by when? Write this down on the Action Planning Template in Appendix 3.

Tell us what you are doing! Fill out the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and send it to us so we can support you in reaching your goals.

Conclusion

Finish with a go-around – invite all group members to share one difficult change they would like to make in their own lives that might benefit endangered species and their habitats, and then invite them to brainstorm a change that would be easier to commit to.



Climate Change on the Rampage:

Impact on Biodiversity



Polar Bear

Climate change is a hot topic these days. There is a growing awareness that human use of fossil fuels is warming up the globe and rapidly recreating conditions not seen on the planet in more than a million years. People are increasingly concerned about the impact of climate change on agriculture, water availability and rising ocean levels. These are all excellent reasons why we should take prompt action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But did you know that climate change also presents a serious threat to plant and animal species and entire ecosystems?

The direct impacts of climate change on species have been documented on every continent, every ocean and in all major families of species. Among the hardest hit so far are northern species such as polar bears, caribou and musk ox. Both polar bears and their main food source, the ringed seal, have suffered significant population declines because of the loss of polar ice. If the warming trend is not reversed, polar bears may soon become extinct. The home ranges of many species are moving northward at up to 30 kilometers each decade. In most cases, the change is too fast for genetic adaptation to allow species to stay in place.

One reason why climate change can be so devastating is the disruption of food chains, as predators, prey and plants develop different coping strategies. The northern migrations of many arctic birds coincide with an abundance of mosquito larvae. If spring comes too early, the birds arrive too late--after mosquitoes have already hatched. Instead of a plentiful food supply for their hatchlings, adult birds are faced with a plague of mosquitoes, forcing them to abandon their nests or die from blood loss.

What can we do? The answer is: lots! The first priority is to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, as many people and communities are already doing. Contact the Sierra Club of BC for their list of *Ten Things You Can Do To Help Stop Global Warming*. Meeting the climate challenge will also require a big shift in our forestry practices and the way we manage parks. Protection of large swathes of mature forest, and providing a network of smaller, interconnected sanctuaries to assist migration, will be crucial in preserving resilient, diverse ecosystems.¹

¹ Beyond Kyoto: Forest Management in a Time of Rapid Climate Change, Reed F. Noss, Conservation Biology, Vol. 15, No. 3, June 2001

Hoo Gives a Hoot for the Spotted Owl?

Equipped with sharp hearing, vision and special “silent flight” feathers, the spotted owl is a proficient hunter. Spotted owls mate for life, and use these hunting skills to feed themselves and their young, one or two of which are born every other year. The youngsters stay with their parents for the first four to six months while they learn to hunt and fly. In the fall, they set off on their own in search of new territories.



It is during this critical travel time that spotted owls often fall victim to the effects of logging. Clear-cuts fragment their habitats, making them easy targets for predators like ravens and hawks. Ill-equipped for such radical changes in their natural world, they sometimes simply starve to death.

Today, most Canadians would be shocked to learn that Canada’s spotted owls are almost extinct. Only 17 spotted owls remain in Canada, a sharp drop from 100 breeding pairs just 10 years ago. Despite greatly diminishing numbers, the spotted owl is still not clearly protected by any law. The B.C. government’s own logging company, *BC Timber Sales*, continues to log the owl’s old-growth habitat.¹ The spotted owl species makes a compelling case study about how B.C.’s species can fall through the cracks in our legislation, both provincially and federally.

The decline of the spotted owl shows why B.C. needs strong, stand-alone legislation to protect endangered species.

Canada’s spotted owls are almost extinct. Only 17 spotted owls remain in Canada, a sharp drop from 100 breeding pairs just 10 years ago.

Did you know?

Since most of the spotted owl’s habitat is on provincial rather than federal lands, the federal *Species at Risk Act (SARA)* does not automatically apply. It is the Federal Minister’s prerogative as to whether or not to apply the protective measures available under *SARA* to protect the spotted owl, and the federal government has so far refused to take this action.

¹ Logging to Extinction, a joint publication of Western Canada Wilderness Committee, Sierra Legal Defence Fund and Forest Watch of British Columbia, (2002) p. 42

Biologists concluded that SOMP implementation would place “the spotted owl in British Columbia in the highest category of endangerment (“critical”), like white rhinos and Javan tigers.”

In the absence of strong legal protection, owl habitat is left to the vagaries of the *Spotted Owl Management Plan* (SOMP). Described in detail in *Logging to Extinction: Last Stand of the Spotted Owl*, the SOMP was an attempt to preserve timber supply despite spotted owl management measures. Numerous features of the plan reveal that it was never intended to protect the owl and allow for recovery. For example, the SOMP:

- ✦ Permits logging and road building in core owl areas and limits owl protection measures, to no more than 10% impact on logging;
- ✦ Is predicated on a planned decline in the spotted owl population (even though only 50 pairs were believed to exist when the plan was introduced);
- ✦ Designates young forests as owl habitat without scientific confirmation that young forests are capable of sustaining spotted owls;
- ✦ Designates previously logged or unsuitable “habitat” as suitable for owls;
- ✦ Characterizes clearcuts as ‘potential spotted owl habitat’ despite the typical 60-100 year logging rotation that permanently precludes the utility of these areas to the owls; and
- ✦ Relies on the notion that if core owl habitat is logged, owls will simply fly to new territory – a biologically indefensible concept given that habitat loss and fragmentation remain a principal cause of owl deaths.

The fate of the owl under the plan was foretold. In an independent assessment of SOMP conducted by the University of California in 1997, biologists concluded that SOMP implementation would place “the spotted owl in British Columbia in the highest category of endangerment (“critical”), like white rhinos and Javan tigers.”¹ Beyond this, all that remains is the federal *Species at Risk Act*. Does this Act provide any hope?

¹ Hodum, P. and S. Harrison, “Ecological Assessment of the British Columbia Spotted Owl Management Plan” (California: University of California, 1997) p.10

Discussion



In your group, discuss the following questions:

1. The situation for the spotted owl is critical. Yet our provincial government has not enacted effective legislation to protect the owl. What implications does the lack of action have for other threatened species whose situations are less dire? What can citizens do to prevent our government from allowing these species to reach the brink of extinction?
2. Take a moment to think of any species that might become extinct within your lifetime. What implications will that have on the rest of the ecosystem inhabited by this particular species? How will this impact your own life?

Action Plan

The Sierra Legal Defence Fund has formally challenged our federal government's inactivity around the plight of the spotted owl. Write a letter or email to the federal Minister of the Environment, urging the minister to immediately halt logging of old-growth forests in the historic range of the spotted owl and to develop a recovery strategy based on sound science and ecological principles.

Is there anything that your group would like to do to help preserve the full range of B.C.'s biodiversity? See *Section Two: Taking Action* and *Section Three: Tools and Tactics* of this Toolkit for ideas about what you could do and for help doing those things. If so, what are the next steps? Who will do what by when? Write this down on the Action Planning Template in Appendix 3.

Tell us what you are doing! Fill out the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and send it to us so we can support you in reaching your goals.

Conclusion

Finish with a go-around – invite all group members to share one difficult change they would like to make in their own lives that might benefit endangered species and their habitats, and then invite them to brainstorm a change that would be easier to commit to.



What implications would the extinction of a species have on the rest of the ecosystem it inhabits?

How will this impact your own life?

Incoming! Murrelets, Moss and the Marvel of Adaptation

Imagine putting on a pair of scuba flippers and then trying to climb a tree. Pretty difficult! Yet this is along the lines of what one creative seabird does every time it visits its nest, due to a unique evolutionary adaptation.



Marbled Murrelet

This bird gets a “leg up” over other seabirds by nesting high up in trees, deep in the coastal forests of British Columbia.

The marbled murrelet, a relative of puffins, has webbed feet for paddling and diving in the ocean, where it spends most of its life. However this bird gets a “leg up” over other seabirds by nesting high up in trees, deep in the coastal forests of British Columbia. The forests provide protection from predators--but how can a web-footed bird grab onto a tree branch to keep from falling off? Easy! Coastal forests get a lot of rain and, over time, the trees have grown very large, providing thick branches for landing platforms. In addition, all that rain is great for growing moss. Not only are the tree branches wide enough for two webbed feet, but thick moss helps to soften the landing as the murrelets come in to land.

The problem is that this system only works when the forests are in the same condition as they were when murrelets evolved. **These birds can nest only in ancient rainforests, and not in the younger tree plantations that are increasingly replacing B.C.’s original coastal forests.** The loss of this old-growth habitat, combined with other threats to murrelets associated with their time at sea, is causing a rapid decline in their numbers. Surprisingly, B.C. has *no legislation to protect murrelet habitat*. The question is: will this unique creature dwindle away along with our coastal old-growth forests?

Did You Know?

Like other members of the auk family, the marbled murrelet can dive and swim with great speed and agility in order to catch fish. In water, its wings serve as powerful flippers to propel its streamlined body forward during high-speed submarine chases of prey. In the air, the murrelet’s wings can be seen furiously beating as it zigzags back and forth, a behaviour that has prompted many observers to compare it to “an oversized bumble bee”. In the winter, this wacky bird surfs coastal waters, displaying the black and white plumage indicative of its distant penguin ancestry.

In the summertime it moults, shifting to the mottled or “marbled” brown and white coloration for which it was named. Marbling represents its breeding plumage, which is a suitable colour for hiding away in its nesting grounds deep within old-growth forests. This camouflage is very effective; although there are an estimated 45,000 marbled murrelets living in British Columbia, only 50 nests have ever been found.

The marbled murrelet is a *red-listed* sea bird and is designated as threatened in Canada by COSEWIC (see page 4 for more information on these designations). Still, the only current legal protection for murrelets is through our parks system and the *BC Identified Wildlife Management Strategy*. As noted previously provisions under this strategy are so limited by unscientific “caps”, restricting the area and location of habitat reserves, that most of the best habitat is still open for logging. Even a B.C. government agency, the *Forest Practices Board*, finds this excessive. In 2005, the *Forest Practices Board* wrote: “There is a systemic failure in government policy to protect endangered species such as marbled murrelets on crown lands”.¹ *Nothing has improved for the murrelet since that statement was made.*

To make matters worse, the current proposal for marbled murrelet recovery is to reduce its habitat by another 30 percent. The potential expense that comes from trying to protect its remaining habitat is considered to be politically unacceptable. By allowing a further 30 percent impact on habitat, it is hoped that the population will stabilize and extinction will be avoided. Given that about 80 percent of Vancouver Island’s ancient forests have already been removed, however, it is unclear how this scenario will unfold.

The question is:
*will this unique
creature dwindle
away along with our
coastal old-growth
forests?*

Discussion

In your group, you might want to discuss the following questions:

1. How is the marbled murrelet impacted by the loss of ancient forests? What other species share a similar plight? What does the loss of ancient forests mean to humans?
2. How can we measure and give recognition to the value of healthy, intact ecosystems?
3. If you were in charge of managing B.C.’s forests, what would you do differently to ensure both short-term and long-term benefits for B.C.’s economy and ecosystems? How could you ensure that you and your family have access to a comfortable standard of living (e.g. access to jobs, clean air, clean water, recreation, education etc.)?

¹ Forest Practices Board, News Releases, March 3, 2005: www.fpb.gov.bc.ca/news/releases/2005/03-03.htm

Marbling represents its breeding plumage, which is a suitable colour for hiding away in its nesting grounds deep within old-growth forests.

This camouflage is very effective; although there are an estimated 45,000 marbled murrelets living in British Columbia, only 50 nests have ever been found.

Reflection

Take a moment to reflect on any changes you would be willing to make to ensure a healthy and abundant future for your children.

Action Plan

Is there anything your group would like to do to help marbled murrelets, or B.C.'s endangered species in general? See *Section Two: Taking Action* and *Section Three: Tools and Tactics* of this Toolkit for ideas about what you could do and for help doing those things. If so, what are the next steps? Who will do what by when? Write this down on the *Action Planning Template* in Appendix 3.

Tell us what you are doing! Fill out the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and send it to us so we can support you in reaching your goals.

Conclusion

Finish with a go-around. Ask group members to share one change that they would be willing to try to make in their lives to help protect endangered species.



Marbled Murrelet

Tails They Win? B.C.'s Endangered Caribou

Challenge any Canadian to a coin toss and chances are 50-50 that you'll be looking at one of our most endangered species (and we're not talking about the monarchy!). Though Canadian coin art has become quite diverse in recent years, the main symbol of our 25 cent piece is still the majestic caribou.

How many of us learned the art of pencil engraving by watching the caribou magically appear as we dragged our fat kindergarten pencils over our paper? As Canadian as ice hockey, it's hard to imagine that this icon of our vast wilderness might be vulnerable to extinction.

Yet most of us know very little about this creature and are unaware that, throughout Canada, caribou are struggling to cope with changes to their habitat caused by global warming and the loss of habitat due to resource extraction.

In British Columbia, one type of caribou -- mountain caribou -- is particularly threatened by logging. Not only has our government declined to take action to protect caribou but, in many cases, the government is actually doing the logging!

Did You Know?

Caribou are larger than deer and smaller than elk. Unlike other ungulates, both male and female caribou have antlers. They also have special hollow fur that helps protect them against wind and harsh winter cold. The mountain caribou live in B.C.'s inland temperate rainforest, where they have evolved a unique survival strategy. Different from other types of caribou, who migrate long distances, mountain caribou move up into high elevation forests in mid-winter. There, they use their large feet like snowshoes to stand on top of the deep winter snow, so they can feed on lichens found on old-growth trees.

Mountain caribou play an important role as an indicator of the ecological health of these globally unique ancient forests, some of which have not been disturbed by fire or disease for centuries. **Protecting mountain caribou habitat also benefits water quality and assists a host of other plants and animals that depend on these same forests for their habitat.** In the past decade, the number of mountain caribou has declined by 40 percent. The main threats are the fragmentation of their old-growth habitat by logging and road-building, and burgeoning motorized recreation. The B.C. government is an active participant in logging the mountain caribou's critical old-growth forest habitat through its own BC Timber Sales Program.

For more information about B.C.'s endangered caribou visit www.mountaincaribou.ca.



Discussion

In your group, discuss the following questions. If you have a large group, you might want to break into smaller groups and have each group take one question, then bring the group back together.

1. What does the caribou mean to me?
2. Since we have other caribou species, can't we afford to lose this particular species?

Reflection

Take a moment to write down what you've learned about B.C.'s mountain caribou and if there is anything you would like to do as a result of this new knowledge.

Action Plan

Is there anything that your group would like to do to help B.C.'s mountain caribou, or B.C.'s endangered species in general? See *Section Two: Taking Action* and *Section Three: Tools and Tactics* of this Toolkit for ideas about what you could do and for help doing those things. If so, what are the next steps? Who will do what, and by when? Write this down on the *Action Planning Template* in Appendix 3.

Tell us what you are doing! Fill out the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and send it to us so we can support you in reaching your goals.

Summary

Now that you have been introduced to some key concepts related to biodiversity and how our government is dealing with its responsibility to protect B.C.'s Natural legacy, we hope that you've been thinking about what YOU can do to take action. In *Section Two: Taking Action* you will find some ideas on how you can get involved, and if you are ready, on page 63 you will find an *Action Pledge Form* with more specific actions for you and your group to take on.



Mountain Caribou, Photo: Joe Scott

GARRY OAK ECOSYSTEMS

Habitat loss affects more than individual species. Whole ecosystems can also crumble beneath human encroachment pressures. Right in our own back yards is one of Canada's richest ecosystems. The majestic garry oak tree heads an ecological community that is found almost exclusively within a narrow coastal strip of southeast Vancouver Island. The garry oak ecosystem is a rich mosaic which supports 104 species of birds, seven amphibians, seven reptiles and 33 mammal species. Sadly, it is also one of the most endangered ecosystems in Canada.

More than a hundred of species associated with the garry oak ecosystem are officially listed and several have already been eliminated. Saving what is left has become critically important.

Beyond being a source of unsurpassed beauty and biological diversity, garry oak ecosystems have the potential to play an increasingly important role in climate change. Species in these ecosystems are well adapted to the increasing temperatures and extended droughts associated with global warming. They have the potential to replace Douglas fir forests should temperatures continue to rise.

Your help is needed to save this valuable ecosystem. The Garry Oak Ecosystem Recovery Team is working to add to the knowledge base for garry oak ecosystems, actively protect populations of species at risk and their habitats and involve local governments in conservation planning for these endangered habitats. They have a list of useful ways individuals can help the valuable garry oak ecosystem. (please see www.goert.ca/ecoinfo/help.htm)



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

–Margaret Mead

SECTION TWO:

TAKING ACTION

Introduction

This section gives you some ideas about actions that you or your group can take to help B.C.'s endangered species and their habitats. Before you decide on your Action Plan, consider picking a species that you want to “adopt”. This will help you focus your activities. It will also help to bring much needed attention and awareness about one of our many threatened species.

Taking Action: Three Steps to Success

Here is our three-point Action Plan recommendation:

1. Pick a Species

Find out what species are at risk in your area. Choose one that resonates with your group. Do you want to pick a fairly well-known animal that lots of people can relate to, like the orca whale or the spotted owl? Would you prefer to pick a plant or insect that few people have ever heard of but that has a really interesting story? Consider choosing one of the species highlighted throughout this Toolkit. You can also use the following routes to find out what species are at risk in your area:

- ✦ Check out the B.C. government's endangered species and ecosystems webpage at www.env.gov.bc.ca/atrisk. Use the “BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer” for specific searches.
- ✦ Call your local naturalist club to find out what species they're concerned about and would like some help protecting. To find a naturalist organization in your area, contact the Federation of BC Naturalists at (604) 737-3057, email fbcnclublink@telus.net or website www.naturalists.bc.ca/
- ✦ Find out whether or not there is a Species Recovery Team for the species you are concerned about at this website: www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/recoveryplans/rcvry1.htm. If so, the recovery team will be a wealth of information about the species.

Note: When working with recovery teams, be aware that they are restricted to using existing legislation to try to protect species—legislation that is far from sufficient! Cooperate with the recovery teams, but don't forget to help us advocate for stronger legislation so that our recovery teams will have the legal tools they need to succeed.

Each topic area includes a backgrounder, discussion notes, reflection ideas, and suggestions on creating an action plan. You can pick the one that looks most interesting to you and invite your community group to have a discussion about it.

2. Pick an Action Plan

Once you know what species you want to focus on pick an Action Plan from the options outlined further on our **Action Pledge Form** on page 63, or create your own to suit your community.

3. Tell us what you're doing!

We'd love to know what you're doing so we can help connect you with people and resources who are also working to protect that species or area. **Fill in the Action Pledge Form on page 63 and mail it in to:**

Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter
c/o Action for Endangered Species Coordinator
#302-733 Johnson St
Victoria, BC V8W 3C7
Email: info@sierraclub.bc.ca , Fax: 250-386-4453

Action Idea: Putting Democracy to Work

As discussed in Section One, British Columbia sorely needs a strong stand-alone act to protect endangered species. The only people who can make that happen are our elected representatives – our Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Lucky for us, since we live in a democracy, MLAs are responsible to us, the B.C. voters.

Let your MLA know that voters in his/her riding care about this issue and want to see him/her do something about it. To find out the name of your MLA, visit: www.leg.bc.ca/mla/.

The key to getting your MLA to champion your issue is to show them that:

- **The issue is important;** Biological diversity is important to our continued health and economic prosperity and it is threatened by inaction.
- **Your solution:** Hint – a B.C. Endangered Wildlife Act is the right one!
- **The MLA's local community/constituency cares about the issue and supports your solution:** For example, according to an Environics survey in 2000, 82% of Canadians favour urgent action to save endangered plants and animals.
- **The MLA and his/her political party will look good to voters if they make this change happen:** Let them know you will applaud them publicly for it.

There are many ways to raise public awareness and to get your message to your MLA. Four options for action are presented below.

1. **Canvass your community with a petition.** You can do this by going door-to-door, or by setting up a table at public events, like the weekly farmers' market or a festival. You can also leave the petition at local businesses for people to sign, or bring them to your bridge club, parents'

You'll see that we have provided you with a wide range of action ideas. Regardless of if you would like to get involved by working outside, meeting politicians or changing how you shop, you will make a difference!

meeting, sports team or church. When you have lots of signatures, schedule a meeting with your MLA to present a copy of the petition and talk about the issue. (See *Section Three: Tools and Tactics* for more guidance on meeting with your MLA).

Then mail the petition to the Sierra Club of BC and we'll see it delivered to the Premier's Office. See the *Appendices* for a ready-to-use petition for a BC species protection act.

In this section, we introduce some key concepts related to biodiversity and its importance for human health and well-being.

We also describe how our government is dealing with its responsibility to protect biodiversity.

2. Hold a small party at your home. Sierra Club of BC has developed a DVD presentation on endangered species that can be shown on your TV or computer. Ask us for a copy and watch it with your friends. Have a discussion and share ideas about your next steps. One step might be to simply sign a petition. Encourage your guests to stretch their comfort zone and talk to a local politician or host their own small party. Be sure to bring out paper, pens and envelopes and get everyone there to write a letter to your MLA about the issue before they leave. Help people focus on a few key points in their letters to make sure the MLA gets a clear message about what his/her constituents want him/her to do.

3. Host an information night at the local community centre, a place of worship, school, or other prominent local place. Find someone who can put on a slideshow or show a film about endangered wildlife or a particular species in your home region. (If you need help finding someone appropriate, contact your local naturalists' club (Federation of BC Naturalists, www.naturalists.bc.ca). Or contact the Sierra Club of BC and we'll connect you with someone in your area who can do this. As above, finish the evening with a letter-writing bee to get people to write personal letters to their MLAs while information is fresh in their minds.

4. Organize or join a rally. Depending on where you live, it may be a good idea to organize some sort of lively public demonstration to attract your MLA's attention, and hopefully some media as well so that your message can be spread much farther. Sometimes you can join in another event, such as an Earth Day march or an annual local fair or festival. Other times, you can celebrate a special day, such as the annual International Day for Biological Diversity (May 22), with some sort of street theatre. Environment Canada has produced a guide to hosting Biodiversity Day events which can be accessed at: www.cbin.ec.gc.ca/education (click on *Biodiversity Event Planning Guide* on the left hand side of the page).

Action Idea: Wildlife and your Wallet

– How Shopping Can Protect Biodiversity

We've all heard the expression, "put your money where your mouth is", but did you know this call to action has become one of the most effective tools for social change and environmental protection in recent decades?

As corporations become more influential in public policy, so do the shoppers upon whom those businesses depend. **If we can convince people to buy products that enhance society rather than degrade it, we can compel corporations to find better ways of doing business.**

Businesses are becoming increasingly interested in their public profile. While consumers must be wary of "greenwashing" (flashy public relations campaigns intended to make us think a brand is environmentally responsible when, in fact, it is often not), there is much genuine progress to celebrate. Some environmentally-progressive businesses are finding that doing the right thing actually boosts profits, providing an incentive for other businesses to follow suit.

On the other hand, corporations that offend public values have discovered that it can cause tremendous damage to their market share while creating a huge additional workload for staff struggling to deal with all the complaints. This also provides an incentive to fix whatever is offending the public.

Eco-Labeling: Shoppers Beware!

Not all eco-labels are created equally. Some give far more eco-credit than is deserved. If in doubt, do some research and check with environmental organizations to see whether or not they support the label. For example, there are several forest product certifiers in Canada but only one, the Forest Stewardship Council, is supported by most environmental groups. One thing to watch for is whether the product is "self-certified" or certified by an industry association, or whether the validation is coming from a third party, such as a non-profit organization.

Here are some examples of how we can applaud companies that are doing business with sustainability in mind.

Support and Promote Eco-Certification

One of the best tools to help shoppers recognize and support ecologically responsible products is eco-labels. There are many eco-labels out there and we've highlighted some of the best below.



Forest Stewardship Council

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the only wood product label that is backed by the world's major environmental groups as a true indicator of ecologically responsible forestry. Certified forests are managed to strict standards that ensure protection for sensitive species and habitats.

Before you buy ask your local wood and paper supplier if they are FSC certified. When you support companies that use FSC wood, you're indirectly helping many endangered species. A list of companies with FSC-certification can be found on the FSC Canada website at www.fsccanada.org/LeadingCompanies.htm. Make sure that when you buy from a company that subscribes to FSC standards, you tell them that you're choosing to buy from them because they use FSC.

For more information on choosing FSC products see the publication "On the Ground" (available under Publications at www.sierraclub.ca/bc) which provides a comparison of the various forest certification initiatives, showing why FSC is the top choice for consumers.



The Land Conservancy's Conservation Partners Program

The Conservation Partners Program is a voluntary labeling system where farmers agree to protect or enhance important habitat on their land in exchange for recognition with a Conservation Partners label (a butterfly logo) on their food products.

If you are a farmer and would like to learn more about how you can enhance important habitat on your farmland, or if you would like to find a Conservation Partner in your region, visit The Land Conservancy's website at www.conservancy.bc.ca and click on "Conservation and Agriculture", or call 250 479-8053.

When you support companies that use FSC wood, you're indirectly helping many endangered species.



Since 1999, *Markets Initiative* has been educating Canadian authors and publishers about the destruction of ancient forests that results from paper choices made by the Canadian publishing industry, and helping them to find alternatives. A joint project of Sierra Club of BC, Greenpeace and Friends of Clayoquot Sound, *Markets Initiative* has been wildly successful. The following are among the long list of Market Initiative's accomplishments:

- ✦ **88 Canadian book publishers** have taken steps to eliminate the use of papers originating from ancient and endangered forests
- ✦ **74 Canadian magazines** are making Ancient Forest Friendly commitments
- ✦ **65 leading Canadian authors** have pledged their support for an Ancient Forest Friendly book-publishing sector (including Margaret Atwood, Michael Ondaatje, and Alice Munro)
- ✦ **Millions of books** have been printed on Ancient Forest Friendly paper since 2001, reducing greenhouse gases and saving water and more than 200,000 trees. This included the massive best-seller "Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix" being printed on 100% ancient forest-free paper!

Be sure to check out the honour roll of book and magazine publishers who have committed to avoiding ancient forest derived pulp in their products at www.marketsinitiative.org. Tell your friends, family, community groups, neighbours, team-mates, and others to check for the words "old-growth free" or "ancient forest friendly" in their Canadian books and magazines. And ask your local bookstore to talk to their suppliers about ancient forest friendly paper sources.

For more information see: www.marketsinitiative.org

Support and Promote Existing Market-based Campaigns:

There has been a recent shift towards market-based campaigns where organizations will highlight companies that have changed the way they do business by taking leadership positions on issues such as sustainable forestry or fisheries. At the same time there is a lot of leverage in consumer buying power – highlighted unsustainable business practices can also cause business to change policies and standards with long term sustainability in mind. Here are some examples:

Sustainable Seafood Canada

More and more we are hearing how Canada's oceans and fish are faced with threats from habitat destruction, pollution, climate change, over-fishing and invasive species. *Sustainable Seafood Canada* is a coalition of leading Canadian environmental organizations working together to raise public awareness of threats to oceans and to develop solutions for sustainable fisheries.

"We would never buy paper made from dead bears, otter, salmon and birds, from ruined native cultures, from destroyed species and destroyed lives, from ancient forests reduced to stumps and mud; but that's what we're buying when we buy paper made from old-growth clear-cut trees."

– Margaret Atwood

The aim is to provide Canadians with resources to help support sustainable seafood and healthy oceans. One of the coalition's resources is *Canada's Seafood Guide* – a handy wallet-sized card that lists popular seafood under three categories: “Best Choice”, “Some Concerns” and “Avoid”. To download *Canada's Seafood Guide*, visit: www.sierraclub.ca/bc/programs/marine/index.shtml. Next time you are at the grocery store or at a restaurant, confused about which fish to buy or order, pull out your Seafood Guide for some sound advice!

The Greenpeace Kleercut campaign

As Greenpeace tells us, it takes 90 years to grow a box of Kimberley-Clark's Kleenex brand tissues. And because Kimberley-Clark refuses to use recycled products, every time you use one of their Kleenexes, or their Scott or Cottonelle toilet paper, you're using old-growth forest products.

Accordingly, Greenpeace has been pressuring Kimberley-Clark to stop destroying ancient forests. They've encouraged more than 26,000 of their supporters to contact the tissue giant, and ask for more recycled content in its products. When these requests were ignored, they staged a blockade at one of the company's manufacturing plants in Ontario.

If you're not one of the thousands of supporters that have already contacted Kimberley-Clark, it's not too late! You can still tell Kimberley-Clark's CEO to stop flushing ancient forests down the toilet. Another route is to ask a local business in your community to sign up as one of the “Forest Friendly 500” businesses that refuse to buy Kimberley-Clark's tissue products until they switch to FSC-certified and recycled tissue content. Here is a Toolkit to help you with everything you need.

http://forestfriendly500.org/files/ff_500_Toolkit.pdf.

Check out more of the Greenpeace campaign at www.greenpeace.org/usa/campaigns/forests/kleercut.



Garry Oak leaves

SUCCESS!

Forest Ethics' Victoria's Secret Campaign.

Victoria's Secret's lingerie catalogue used to have a dirty secret—the paper on which it was printed came from some of the world's most endangered forests. More than 600 protests were staged in communities across the U.S. to expose this practice. The campaign was even featured in Time magazine in December, 2005 and was profiled on the Today Show, National Public Radio, and in USA Today.

Following two years of actions and negotiations, in December 2006, Victoria's Secret parent company, Limited Brands, announced a new forest protection policy and a new catalogue contract. The policy, unprecedented in its scope, includes several landmark environmental measures and ensures that the pulp for catalogue paper will not come from endangered forests! For more information about this successful campaign visit www.forestethics.org.

Action Idea: Watch-dogging and Info-Gathering

Sometimes the biggest threat to a species is that no one is watching...

In 2001, the B.C. government drastically cut the public service. These cuts eliminated many of the people who used to be our "eyes and ears" out on the land, and removed much government oversight from industries such as logging and mining, which can have devastating effects on habitats.¹

We should never underestimate the power of public 'watch-dogging'. One citizen raising his or her voice can sometimes mean that a spotted owl's nest is saved, that toxic pollutants do not continue to spill into a waterway, or that Roosevelt elk poachers are caught. People who have the time and skills to do field research can contribute to the communal body of knowledge about a species. The more that we know about where a species lives, how it breeds and how it fits into the food chain, the more adept we will become at designing policies and habitat reserves to protect what it needs most for its health and survival.

Accurate information is very important, so this type of project is only suitable for people who have the necessary knowledge to identify species correctly and to document observations appropriately. That's not to say you have to have a PhD in biology to help collect information. Lots of people learn these skills through experience and careful observation. For example, members of naturalist groups (www.naturalists.bc.ca) or hiking clubs, hunters, fishers, photographers, loggers, farmers, and students are just some of the people who might have knowledge or observations that would be useful to those trying to protect a species.

¹ Cutting up the Safety Net, West Coast Environmental Law, 2005; Axing the Forest Service, Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter, 2004.

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We should never underestimate the power of public 'watch-dogging'. One citizen raising his or her voice can sometimes mean that a spotted owl's nest is saved, that toxic pollutants do not continue to spill into a waterway, or that Roosevelt elk poachers are caught.

Whether you decide to set up a formal monitoring program that systematically observes an area to watch for threats or damage, or whether you chance upon knowledge about a threat to wildlife, it's important to speak up. In the absence of a single clear law protecting B.C. wildlife, this can be a complicated process. You will have to consider the type of species, the type of habitat, what the threat is, and then check *There Oughtta be a Law: Legal Tools for Protecting B.C.'s Endangered Species* for tips and suggestions on how to best invoke those laws to achieve real protection (See the *Resources Section* for more information).

Landowner Stewardship

Most of B.C. is public or crown land. Even so, some of our most endangered plants and animals live in the five percent of provincial habitat that is privately owned. Since private lands are mainly in and around urban centres, they are heavily impacted by the way we live. The hazards in these areas range from building, road use and landscaping to chemical pesticides, water pollution and more. As a result, there has been a heavy loss of native habitats and healthy ecosystems where our cities and farmlands now sit.

The B.C. government does very little to protect environmental values on private land. The good news is that B.C. residents have a relatively high interest in environmental protection. Many landowners are willing to do what they can on their own for the protection of important habitats on their property. Some farmers and private woodlot owners have already shown great leadership in this regard, as have various institutional landowners including municipalities, schools and faith organizations.

Farmers and foresters can participate in stewardship as well. The Land Conservancy's *Conservation Partners Program* aims to forge mutually beneficial partnerships between conservation and agriculture on private land in B.C. The intention is to protect and enhance important habitat by providing recognition, incentive and assistance to farmers committed to conservation. Likewise, private woodlot owners are now able to join Ecotrust's *Vancouver Island Ecoforestry Group* (VIEG), which creates strategies for sustainable forest management and provides marketing support and linkages to high-profile green development projects.

For owners of smaller properties, the B.C. government program *Naturescape British Columbia* offers many helpful suggestions for enhancing wildlife habitat in the yard and garden. A guide called *The Stewardship Series: Caring for Wildlife Habitat at Home* can be downloaded from www.hctf.ca/naturescape/principles.htm.

Minimizing the use of pesticides on private land is another way to engage in stewardship. Pesticides are poisons designed to kill insects, plants and fungi. Repeated exposure to pesticides has been linked to a wide array of illnesses, including reproductive disorders and different types of cancer. Safe and environmentally friendly alternatives to pesticides do exist. For more information about campaigns for pesticide reduction visit: www.sierraclub.ca/national/programs/health-environment/pesticides.

Suggestions for action

If you are a landowner:

Consider whether one of the options outlined above might be suitable for your property and circumstances. Depending on the size and use of your land, you might consider a covenant, a conservation partnership, Naturescaping or even Ecoforestry certification. To get started, visit the *Stewardship Series* website, which contains over a dozen free guidebooks for landowner stewardship: http://dev.stewardshipcanada.ca/sc_bc/stew_series/NSCbc_stewseries.asp#comstew.

As a group, consider the following action steps:

Pick a species or a community of species that is under pressure from development in your neighbourhood. Local land trust organizations often run neighbourhood-specific conservation programs and can help you pick a likely species. To find a land trust in your area, visit the Land Trust Alliance of BC website at <http://landtrustalliance.bc.ca/members.html>.

Naturalist clubs might also be able to help. The members of your local naturalist club are outdoor enthusiasts and many of them will be very knowledgeable about the species in your area. Invite a naturalist to lead an interpretive neighbourhood walk to help your group find out about the different species that live there. To find the name and contact number of a naturalist club in your area, visit <http://www.naturalists.bc.ca>

Start a campaign for a municipal by-law against the use of cosmetic pesticides in your community. More than 120 communities across the country have adopted pesticide reduction by-laws. Despite challenges from the pesticide industry, the right of municipalities to protect the health of their residents against environmental threats has been formally recognized by the Supreme Court of Canada in a precedent-setting decision in June 2001. For tips on how to run a successful municipal campaign, browse the Achieving a Pesticide Bylaw Toolkit by Sierra Club of Canada, Atlantic Chapter. (www.sierraclub.ca/atlantic/pesticides/frame1.htm)

Host a community night at your local community centre, school or place of worship. Invite a Land Trust naturalist or a Land Conservancy representative to give a talk or slide show about landowner stewardship. This is a great opportunity to promote the species you picked. You can set up a table, distribute leaflets or even dress up as your chosen species.

Action Idea: Getting Your Hands Dirty

Though we need a B.C. species protection act, there are also steps we can take today to protect and restore specific areas through habitat stewardship work. While these types of projects do require significant planning and organization by project leaders, they can be a great way to involve large numbers people who just like to get their

hands dirty. Kids, seniors, and folks who want a little more physical activity in their lives are often more than happy to donate their labour to a good cause, especially when they can witness the rewards, as wildlife move back to reclaim restored habitat.

Here are some ideas for projects that your group could undertake:

Hold an invasive plant removal party to clear an area of invasive plants and allow native vegetation to recover. Find or form a group in your community to get people together for an ivy pull, chit chat and - the secret to any successful volunteer party - snacks! If you are looking for other ideas on how you can bring back nature to your local community, school or backyard contact *Evergreen* and ask about their *The Nature of Cities* project, or other projects that may suit your community. www.evergreen.ca



- ♦ **Create a “naturescape”** at a local school, community centre or place of worship to attract butterflies, birds, and other species. The *Naturescape British Columbia* program has a kit with all the information you need to start your project, including an instructive booklet on native plants and animals in your region, regional resources and discounts at participating nurseries and other retailers. Contact the *Habitat Conservation Trust Fund* at www.hctf.ca/nature.htm or 1-800-387-9853.
- ♦ **Restore a degraded stream** by planting shrubs and trees, cleaning up garbage, and restoring in-stream structures. British Columbia’s streams, lakes, and wetlands are valuable natural resources. The growing number of volunteers committed to working to protect and restore aquatic habitats in our province will find support and information in the Streamkeepers Program. www.pskf.ca/program/program.html#why
- ♦ **Help track of B.C.’s amphibians** by doing some frog-watching. Frogs are very sensitive to environmental changes, so it is worrying that populations of frogs have declined or disappeared. To find out what is happening to our froggy friends, volunteers are keeping records of where and when they see (and hear) frogs – and the more eyes and ears out there, the better! So put on your rubber boots and get in contact with BC Frogwatch program: www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/

There is lots of work to be done and there is room for all kinds of people to take action for endangered species.

Summary

We hope that you now have some ideas for different ways that you can take action for endangered species – lobbying your local politicians, supporting businesses with sustainable practices, monitoring any negative impacts to your local environment or getting outside to help restore habitat. There is lots of work to be done and there is room for all kinds of people. *Section Three: Tools and Tactics* will provide you with more detailed tips on how to undertake some of these actions. Take a look at the *Action Pledge Form* on page 63 to see if there are specific actions that you would like to commit to. Let us know what they are we’d love to help support you in reaching your goals!

THE MARBLED MURRELET

A uniquely adapted West Coast animal.

Nesting in the old-growth forest of the Pacific Northwest is the marbled murrelet, a small migratory seabird. Native to the West Coast, its habitat ranges from Alaska to California.

It feeds on herring, lance and other small ocean fish before moving inland to breed on the wide branches of the giant Sitka spruce and Douglas fir. Nests can be found up to 85 km from the ocean and must be located within undisturbed coastal old growth forests, which are needed to provide suitable nesting platforms. This habitat protects the murrelet's nests from predation by jays, ravens and crows. The murrelet lays only one egg each year. Because of this low reproductive rate, its population can be seriously impacted by road-building and logging, which makes it easier for predators to access nesting sites.

Sadly, logging is replacing most of the ancient coastal forests with younger tree plantations. Population levels are now considered to be declining at 3 to 5 percent annually. The province of British Columbia has officially recognized this loss of habitat by designating the marbled murrelet as threatened (red listing). The province recommended leaving 200 hectares of intact forest surrounding a murrelet nest in order to protect the young from predators. They further recommended protecting 12 percent of the original habitat overall. However, this recommendation has not been followed by action. The current "recovery strategy" specifically plans for a further 30 percent decline in murrelet numbers in order to allow logging to continue in the bird's habitat.



“No university degree qualifies the graduate to practice grassroots organizing. Environmental problems themselves create activists.”

–Elizabeth May

SECTION THREE:

TOOLS AND TACTICS

Introduction

Section Three: Tools and Tactics is designed to be a quick primer on important skills for citizens working in the public arena. Talking to a public official or dealing with the press for the first time can seem like an ordeal, but you might come to enjoy it sooner than you think! If you have an important meeting or media event coming up, congratulate yourself for doing your homework and getting this opportunity. Take a moment with your group to acknowledge this important step forward. Then take some time to go through the relevant section of this Toolkit together and rehearse potentially tricky situations.

Parts of this section were adapted from former Sierra Club of Canada Executive Director Elizabeth May's handout *How to Be an Activist*, a distillation of more than twenty years experience campaigning for the environment.

What can you do to get some reasonably accurate coverage of your concerns?

Media

How to get your message in the news media

The environmental movement and the news media have an awkward and symbiotic relationship: media need us for stories, and the environmental movement certainly needs the media to reach the public. But many environmentalists are sometimes frustrated by the superficiality of news coverage of issues that threaten planetary survival, and the news media get sick of hearing what they often regard as predictable whining from environmentalists. What can you do to get some reasonably accurate coverage of your concerns? First, you should understand a few things about the news media. As follows are a few suggestions on how to do so.

- ✦ **Take the reporter's perspective.** It helps if you are able to see the story from the reporter's point of view. There are very few newspapers or electronic networks with a full-time environmental reporter. You are trying to get a reporter who has to cover everything from tax hikes to crime on the street interested in your story.
- ✦ **Make the story easy for them.** The whirlwind pace of electronic communication, coupled with staff cuts in many newsrooms, means that there are more stories and less time to write them. An overworked reporter would probably still investigate a corruption scandal, but will give endangered frogs short shrift. If you want a reporter to cover your story, you have to do all their work for them. Think it through. Where's the angle?

- **Remember the old adage**, “Dog bites man” is not a story. “Man bites dog” is. Make sure your story has an interesting or catchy angle.
- **Make sure to fill in the five W’s** – Who, What, When, Where and Why – for the proposed story. Give your story a “hook”.
- **Tie your issue to other political events**, like elections or previous campaign promises. What are the financial issues? Is taxpayers’ money being wasted? Are jobs being lost? Are environmental alternatives better for the economy? (They usually are.) Make it interesting to someone who doesn’t fully understand what is at stake.

Contacting the media

Below, we’ve listed four handy routes to take your environmental message to the mainstream media.

Write your own press release

Keep in mind that your press release should read like a news story, not like your group’s manifesto. Put in quotes from group representatives. Be sure to include phone numbers so that reporters can call you to get more details and rework your press release into their own story. Try to fit it all onto one page – your messages will be more focused and succinct.

Send your release in time to reach the media before or on your release date. If there is cash in your campaign kitty, you can also fax your release to the closest office of *Canadian Press* (www.cp.org), a wire service. If it puts your story on their service, it will automatically reach television, radio and newspaper newsrooms. It is up to the news director in each outlet to decide whether to use your story.

Beyond press releases, you may want to hold a press conference. This works best if you have a really good story, or if you can bring in an acknowledged expert who wouldn’t be available as a matter of course. Hold press conferences somewhere familiar to the media, and make it convenient. Try to avoid having to spend money to rent space. Is there a good community centre close to the downtown? Can you get the help of someone in city council to use City Hall or the Regional Government Centre?

For a sample Press Release, refer to Appendix 2

If you want a reporter to cover your story, you have to do all their work for them. Think it through. Where’s the angle?

Give your story a hook.

Letters to the Editor

Did you know that the letters section is the most read section of any newspaper? Not only do people in your community read the letters, government officials have clipping services that reprint letters dealing with their area or issue. The federal Minister of the Environment sees clippings from coast to coast, including letters to the editor, every day. Letters should be short, direct and well written. Of course, they should be accurate and educate readers about your issue. Watch for opportunities to respond to articles that have been in the paper.

Did you know that the letters section is the most read section of any newspaper?

Watch for opportunities to respond to articles that have been in the paper.

Opinion pieces

Opinion pieces, or “op-eds” are a very effective way to make your case in greater depth and present your perspective unmediated by a reporter’s agenda. Op-eds are read by a small but critically important audience: policy-makers and opinion leaders. If somebody in your group is a good writer, here’s your chance! Between 650 and 750 words in length, op-ed pieces typically include a compelling statement or position, three to five salient facts to support it and a call to action. It is good to include some kind of anecdote or illustration with human interest to draw people in.

Call-in radio & TV shows

There are opportunities for free access to the airwaves. Listen to a show a few times before you call in. Get a sense of the host so you won’t be surprised if they disagree with you. It is easy, anonymous and can get your message to lots of people.

Government Relations

Dealing with officialdom can be intimidating for many people. An easy way to start is by writing a letter about your issue. Generally, the harder the action, the more weight it carries (a hard-copy letter has more weight than a short email). One handwritten letter is said to represent 500 like-minded British Columbians. Starting with a letter is also a great way to alert your MLA to your issue while you research and prepare. Ultimately, however, your goal is to meet with the MLA in person.

First, Do Your Homework

In order to carry off a successful meeting with your MLA or other public official, you need to find out as much about them as you possibly can. What do they care about already? Who do they listen to and respect? What else are they working on? What or who might make them more likely to become a champion for your cause within their political party?

Understanding How Government Works

The B. C. government has made available a good general primer that covers topics such as how the Legislature works, what the role of an MLA is, how laws get made, and more. Visit www.leg.bc.ca/ and click on Discover your Legislature.

Researching Your MLA

Find out the name, contact information, and a short biography of your MLA using the “MLA Finder” on the B.C. government website here: www.leg.bc.ca/mla/. You can find a general idea of your MLA’s schedule by checking the Parliamentary calendar (www.leg.bc.ca/) and click on “Parliamentary Calendar”. This will tell you when your MLA is in Victoria and when they might be in your riding where you can meet with them.

You can also look up what other communities or neighbourhoods are also in your MLA’s riding so you know who else you need to mobilize. Maps and other information about electoral ridings are at the Elections BC website: (www.elections.bc.ca/map/maps.htm). You may be able to get the information by phone, at 1-800-661-8683.

You can also read *Hansard* which is the full record of all debates in the Legislature. Use the “Members Index” to search for remarks made in the House (www.leg.bc.ca/hansard/).

One handwritten letter is said to represent 500 like-minded British Columbians. Starting with a letter is also a great way to alert your MLA to your issue while you research and prepare.

Researching your MLA's staff

Find out who your MLA's staff are. These people are likely well trusted by your MLA and you should start by ensuring that they understand your issue and are willing to help you get your MLA to represent you on the issue. Depending on whether your MLA is a Minister or not, they might have all or some of the following:

- Ministerial Assistant
- Executive Assistant
- Administrative Coordinator or Assistant
- Constituency Assistant

To find the names and contact information for these people, try the online B.C. government directory <http://www.dir.gov.bc.ca/>, often a good way to find just about anybody in government. For example, under the "Advanced Search" section, choose "People" where the "Title Contains" and then type "Constituency Assistant" and in a few minutes you'll get a list of all the Constituency Assistants.

Scheduling a Meeting with a Public Official

If you've ever been job-hunting at a big company, you already know how to reach people whose doors are guarded by obstructive underlings. Reaching a public official is no more difficult than landing a job interview. In fact, it's often easier! While companies have no responsibility to rejected job applicants, an MLA cannot afford to ignore his constituents forever. If you are patient, determined and courteous, you will get there in the end. Here are some tips on how to interact with public officials:

- Start by sending a letter asking for a meeting. You can use it as an opener when making phone calls.
- Rehearse telephone calls with other members of your group. Imagine different scenarios before you speak with the politician's assistant. Have fun role-playing various eventualities.
- Be unfailingly polite. Being persistent is not the same thing as being rude. You may be in this for the long haul, so don't burn any bridges.

Reaching a public official is no more difficult than landing a job interview. In fact, it's often easier! While companies have no responsibility to rejected job applicants, an MLA cannot afford to ignore his constituents forever.

Refuse to be intimidated.

If you are told that a subject is too technical or scientific for you to understand, don't believe it. Elected politicians make these decisions all the time based on general knowledge and their sense of public opinion. You may not be an expert - but you can read and understand what experts have to say. Make a note of good quotes (including the source) of expert views concerned with endangered species. Start your own card file of references that you can consult if you need to back up your arguments with scientific evidence.

Holding A Meeting With Public Officials

Getting more than fleeting attention from a public official can be difficult, given their hectic schedules and the many demands that are being made on their time. If you have managed to schedule a meeting, you've likely done your homework and engaged the official in a polite, efficient and pertinent way. It's important to carry this behaviour into the actual meeting.

Preparing For Your Meeting

- ✦ Send an agenda in advance. If possible, prepare and send a brief agenda in advance of the meeting. This gives the official a chance to get briefed by staff beforehand, if they wish, or to invite specific staff people to attend the meeting who may have more relevant information or experience with the issue. This can sometimes help to advance your issue in a more substantive way in the meeting than in a more general meeting.
- ✦ Personalize your approach and find an opportunity for praise. You should also prepare for the personal side of the visit. If nothing else, you will have advanced your cause if the politician is left with a favourable impression - if you've started the process of building a relationship. Be especially sure to research any previous good deeds for the environment. The best way to start any meeting is to thank the politician for something they accomplished in the past. Even if it was twenty years ago, they'll feel great to know someone still remembers. And you'll have them remembering that these issues are (or were) important to them. Don't ignore the small talk. It may be the best part of your meeting.
- ✦ Prepare a one-page note to leave with the politician at the end of the meeting. It is an excellent idea to reduce your key points to a one-page document you can leave with the decision-maker. It's always easier to write a long document than a short succinct one, but the effort to boil down your case is well worth it. Busy people (and the more powerful they are, the busier they are) will never read more than a page.

During Your Meeting

The best way to start any meeting is to thank the politician for something they accomplished in the past. Even if it was twenty years ago, they'll feel great to know someone still remembers.

- ✦ Break down stereotypes of environmentalists. Many people have a one-dimensional image of environmentalists. Somehow they don't think we have real lives, children, jobs or other interests. Breaking down the stereotypes is a significant part of your task.
- ✦ Move quickly to the main agenda. Once you've had a bit of small talk, you need to quickly address the main focus of the meeting. Be courteous. Show awareness that this person is probably very busy. Ask at the outset how much time the person has until their next appointment, bearing in mind that meetings often start late and keep backing up. Do not take up more time than has been allotted.
- ✦ Present your case clearly and calmly. Give the decision-maker your one-page note so they can follow along. Provide any more detailed papers you would like to leave as well. If your issue has a visual element, bring photos. Be sure to ask if the person has any questions. If you don't know the answer to something, don't bluff! Make a note and promise to get the information. And, then, remember to get it and send it to the decision-maker quickly, the same day if possible. Remember to state clearly what you want. And thank them, first verbally, and then after with a thank-you letter which reminds them graciously of any follow-up they offered to do.
- ✦ Listen actively. The meeting will be most productive if you engage the official in conversation that forces him/her to disclose his/her point of view. You will need to listen as well as talk during this meeting. Ask what his/her views are on the issue at hand and ask for clarification if your official is ambiguous in any way.
- ✦ End the meeting proactively. Thank them for the meeting and ask for specific steps you can take and what steps your public official will take to keep lines of communication open. Be clear about when you will contact the office again for further information.

- ✦ Promptly follow up on the meeting. Send the official another thank-you note, reminding them graciously of any follow-up they offered to do. A phone call is another effective route. Strictly adhere to the schedule laid out at the closing of the meeting and keep the lines of communications open.
- ✦ Stay informed. Do your best to stay on top of the issue at hand. Educate others about your meeting as well.

Building Support: Grassroots Organizing

In local organizing, joining a group is one of the first things you'll probably want to do. Don't re-invent the wheel, but rather – look around. Is there an existing group, with goals similar to your own, which would accept your group as a working committee, or affiliated chapter? If you can avoid going through the incorporation process and the charitable number ordeal by joining an existing group, why not try?

If you are organizing your own group, try not to get bogged down in by-laws. In order to maintain momentum - and volunteers - make the meetings fun by including some social activity. Plan a potluck supper first and then work through the agenda efficiently. Folk singer and environmental activist Pete Seeger organized a very successful campaign to clean up the Hudson River. He advised, "Don't have meetings that only attract the kind of people who like going to meetings."

Be sure to assign tasks as you make decisions. If someone suggests something new, don't reject it just because everyone who is heavily involved is already too busy. Say "What a great idea! Will you take that on?" Delegate!

Pick achievable goals. Positive reinforcement is important. So deciding to make your goal "achieving world peace" or "ending hunger" will likely result in burn-out and disillusionment. On the other hand, making your goal to get 10,000 names on a petition to do either of the above is do-able and will have a positive reinforcing impact - you'll gain strength and enthusiasm for the next goal.

And most importantly, be creative and have fun!



Campaign Planning 101

Any project or campaign is more fun and rewarding for everyone involved when it feels successful. Whether you are planning a multi-year campaign or a simple event like a garage sale, having a campaign plan drastically improves your chances of not only achieving success but also knowing when you have achieved a victory so that you can all celebrate together.

There are many ways to do campaign planning. Opinions about the amount of time required for planning also vary widely between group members, and can be a point of contention. Try not to get too bogged down in planning as it can quickly sap the energy of your group's go-getters who are eager to act. At the same time, having everyone running off in different directions with no plan is just as likely to burn out your precious volunteers. The trick is to find the right balance for your group's needs.

As a rule of thumb, if you're a new group, consider starting with one simple, achievable, short-term objective. Spend a maximum of one to two hours planning, and then get on with the task. Once you've achieved and celebrated that success, you're ready to take on a slightly more ambitious project and increase your planning time as needed.

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Fundraising

Grassroots fundraising not only raises money, but it also raises awareness. Plan your event to include information (with a table, display, short speech or slide show) as well as fun activities for adults and children. Grassroots fundraising should involve lots of people as volunteers. Try to get local donations of supplies, advertising and prizes from local merchants (and of course give them public credit and thanks).

What kinds of events are good grassroots fundraisers? Below is a sample list to get you started. You can build on these ideas, but better still, come up with your own.

- Potluck suppers with an entrance fee. Fun, and great food! Also generally inexpensive, meaning you'll have something for the campaign pot when the dishes are done.

- ✦ Bake sales. You can get lots of people involved. Hold it at the local mall, or after church.
- ✦ Raffles. Go for donated prizes or make your own. Elizabeth May raised thousands of dollars with quilt raffles in Cape Breton to stop the spraying of harmful pesticides.
- ✦ Hold a community fair! Have clowns. Kids' events. Sell baked goods, home-grown organic veggies, preserves, handcrafts. Include an auction.
- ✦ Pub entertainment. Ask a local bar if you can have an evening of entertainment for a cause. The kind of music or entertainment you select will attract different kinds of people. Musicians are notoriously generous in their support of environmental causes.
- ✦ Hold an auction. It could be an art auction. Organize a flea market for odd items. Donate services — a deluxe brunch in someone's home or catered to your place, a sailboat outing, babysitting, carpentry, barter for cash for the cause!
- ✦ Hold a massive yard sale. Recycle all your stuff and raise funds. Get your whole group to do it together – more variety will attract more people.
- ✦ Host a church supper. Church halls can often be rented cheaply, and they have big kitchens that are well-equipped for a crowd, as well as a friendly ambience.
- ✦ Order t-shirts or mugs with your message and sell them at all your events. Remember to have your merchandise reflect your values – choose fair trade, local and/or recycled materials.

You can order great posters from many environmental groups, as well as calendars, t-shirts, postcards and other merchandise. Contact the Sierra Club of BC or Western Canada Wilderness Committee for various items.



How to Give an Effective Presentation

You may have an opportunity to address a group regarding your campaign. The key to the success of any speaking engagement is the time you spend preparing for it and your ability to stick to the message once you get there.

Keep It Simple:

Use plain English. Jargon and “tech speak” will create a barrier between you and your audience.

- ✦ **Be Prepared:** Know your material, know your audience, practice your speech, and stick to the key points.
- ✦ **Be Yourself:** Speak from personal experience. Everyone can relate to personal, anecdotal stories.
- ✦ **Speak Slowly and Clearly:** Pause frequently, especially after making your strongest points or after saying something complicated.
- ✦ **Stay On Message:** Message discipline is always critical in any campaign. Avoid going off on tangents or into unnecessary detail and do not let anyone else get you off the subject.
- ✦ **Move People to Action:** Offer a concrete action so people can get involved. List three ways that people can help. Don't just say “write to your MLA,” tell them “write to your MLA in favour of a single species protection act in BC.”
- ✦ **Honesty is the Best Policy:** Speak about what you know. If you don't know the answer, say so. The audience will respect this response. Tell your questioner you will get back to him or her ASAP... then do it! Feel free to call the Sierra Club of BC (250-386-5255) for answers to questions. We are here to help you.
- ✦ **Keep It Simple:** Use plain English. Jargon and “tech speak” will create a barrier between you and your audience.
- ✦ **Avoid “Non Words”:** Statements such as “like”, “so” and, of course, “um” or “ah” or “uh” are non-words. They clutter your speech and distract your audience's attention.

- ✦ **Use Body Language And Humour.** Smile and engage the audience. Your face, eyes, hands, arms and body should be used to impart vitality and conviction. Laughter is a universal language; don't be afraid to use a little humour to promote a friendly, confident image.
- ✦ **Stay Cool:** People with opinions that oppose your goal may disrupt your presentation or make you angry. Stay cool and don't lose your temper. When someone is rude to you and you don't resort to rudeness in response, the rest of the audience will emotionally take your side.

Remember, for your speech to sway a crowd, you need to think of it as selling an idea— if you have a positive vision, you need the people you're talking with to fall in love with the idea and to want a piece of the action. Try and show how the issue is relevant to your audience, how your strategy will help that issue, and why they should participate. A great on-line resource can be found at: www.lionsgatetraining.com/trainer_chapter.htm#simple, where, author and coach Margaret Hope give tips on how to engage with your audience. And Toastmasters Clubs offer a great opportunity to practice public speaking and improve your skills in a supportive setting. They are relaxed and fun, and a great way to meet new friends. To find one in your community, go to www.toastmasters.bc.ca.

Summary

We hope that this Toolkit has given you the information, guidance and inspiration to act on behalf of B.C.'s endangered creatures and places. More importantly we hope for this Toolkit to act as a platform for creating a solid network of citizens that are working towards one common goal: *one strong, clear law to protect endangered species and the land on which they live.*

In the words of Margaret Mead, "never doubt that a small, group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has".

THE SLUG SMACKIN' SHARP-TAILED SNAKE

Originating on Pender Island, it loves Victoria gardens.

Though the sharptailsnake shares a close resemblance to the common garter snake, it is actually one of the rarest snakes in Canada. A shy snake, it prefers to hide out under moist rocks, rotting logs or remain completely underground.



This defence mechanism isn't enough now that its habitat is being overrun by urban sprawl. Accordingly, the sharp tail's population has become threatened to the point where its future is insecure. It has been placed on British Columbia's red list.

These days, most of the sharp tail habitat is on private land. Landscaping projects can make the snake more vulnerable if rocks, logs and other sources of its shelter are removed. It can also become the victim of lawn mowers and weed eaters. However, with a little care, the snake can also prove to be a reliable ally to Victoria gardeners. Though the sharp tail is non-venomous and completely harmless to us, it is deadly to garden slugs – one of its preferred snacks. Unlike other snakes in British Columbia it becomes most active during cool, moist mornings from spring until fall. Since this corresponds with the same time slugs are active, the sharp tail acts as a natural pest control.

The sharp tailed snake needs our help in order to successfully coexist amongst its human neighbours. The Habitat Acquisition Trust site has more information on what individuals can do to lend the sharp tail a hand. Please check out the sharp tailed snake brochure at: www.hat.bc.ca/projects/documents/sts_brochure.pdf

“Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the Earth from our Ancestors, we borrow it from our Children.”

- *Ancient Proverb*

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RESOURCES

When you start looking, you find that there are many resources (organizations, print publications, websites, maps) on endangered species out there. We've selected just a few to get you started...

Finding Species At Risk in Your Region

The **B.C. government** provides a searchable database of species at risk through the BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer: <http://srmapps.gov.bc.ca/apps/eswp/>. This website allows you to search by Forest District (a map is provided so you can find out which forest district you live in), bioclimatic zone (ecosystem type), and habitat type (e.g. terrestrial or marine). You can also narrow your search according to your interests. The search engine will provide a chart of the species that match your description. Within the chart, each species has a link to species summaries and other information. Alternatively, you can call or email the **Conservation Data Centre** and ask them to send you a list. Phone (250) 356-0928 or e-mail: cdcddata@victoria1.gov.bc.ca.

Environment Canada also provides a searchable, map-based database: www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca/map/default_e.cfm. Use the "zoom" functions to search for species within your geographic area. A species list will appear with the species in your area highlighted. You can then click on the report icon beside any species on the list to get more information (including photos) about that species, or on the globe icon to get a map of exact locations where the species has been observed.

NatureServe Explorer allows you to search for species or ecosystems: www.natureserve.org/explorer/. In the U.S. you can search by county or watershed, but the search function is not as refined for Canada. (You can get a list by province). It is better to find the species in your area using one of the above websites, and then check this site for more information about the species or ecosystem.



Orca whales.

Non-profit Organizations Working on Species Conservation Projects

The **Species at Risk Working Group** is provincial coalition of Conservation Northwest, David Suzuki Foundation, Forest Ethics, Sierra Club of BC, Sierra Legal Defence Fund, Western Canada Wilderness Committee
www.environmentalleadership.org/safeguardingbcwildlife/.

Mountain Caribou Project aims to protect the species by saving its winter feeding ground: the inland temperate rainforests of British Columbia, Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

www.mountaincaribou.org; www.caribounation.org

Sierra Club of Canada is a wealth of resources on SARA, including reviews of species recovery plans.

www.sierraclub.ca.

Garry Oak Ecosystems Recovery Team a partnership of a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies working to protect and restore Garry Oak ecosystems.

www.goert.ca/

Publications Online

www.wildernesscommittee.org/campaigns/species/forest/spotted_owl/reports/fall2002

Logging to Extinction: Last Stand of the Spotted Owl (describes how the spotted owl reach this stage of crisis in Canada)

www.sierralegal.org/reports2005.html

In Defence of Canada's Spotted Owl (contains an excellent overview of the legal and regulatory systems for species at risk, and their weaknesses).

www.mountaincaribou.org/media/latest.asp

Key reports on mountain caribou, including *Staring at Extinction: Mountain Caribou in British Columbia* (Mountain Caribou Project) and BC's *Mountain Caribou: Last Chance for Conservation?* (Forest Practices Board)

www.fpb.gov.bc.ca/special_reports.htm

Forest Practices Board, *Implementation of Biodiversity Measures under the Forest Practices Code: Implications for Transition to the Forest and Range Practices Act*, March 2004. Also good special reports on mountain caribou, marbled murrelet, and biodiversity protection under current management regimes can be found at this site. ■

Government Websites

B.C. Government Websites

Conservation Data Centre (provides information on species and ecosystems at risk)
www.env.gov.bc.ca/cdc/

Ministry of Environment page on Species and Ecosystems at Risk
www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/serisk.htm

Species at Risk Coordination Office of the Integrated Land Management Bureau, Minister of Agriculture and Lands (responsible for provincial coordination of species at risk issues). <http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/sarco/>

Federal Government Websites

Federal Species at Risk. The main website for species at risk in Canada.
www.speciesatrisk.gc.ca.

Species at Risk Act Public Registry. SARA is a gateway to information and documents relating to the Species at Risk Act ; including documents open for public comment. www.sararegistry.gc.ca

Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. COSEWIC is a committee of experts that assesses and designates which wild species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada. www.cosewic.gc.ca

Hinterland Who's Who. This site provides interesting and easy to read fact sheets about Canadian wildlife, including a Species at Risk fact sheet series. www.hww.ca

Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk (HSP). A Federal program that funds projects that conserve and protect species at risk and their habitats. The overall goal of the HSP is to "contribute to the recovery of endangered, threatened, and other species at risk, and to prevent other species from becoming a conservation concern, by engaging Canadians from all walks of life in conservation actions to benefit wildlife." www.cws-scf.ec.gc.ca/hsp-pih/default.asp?lang=En&n=59BF488F-1.

Federal Nature and Wildlife. The portal page contains links to many programs and resources regarding wildlife, biodiversity, and species at risk. www.ec.gc.ca (click on the *Nature* button).

Other Endangered Species Websites



Resources For Youth

The **Sierra Club' of BC's Education Program** offers a wealth of resources on biodiversity, including an Eco-province Map and monthly Green Star newsletters (pdf) with fun activities for kids from kindergarten to Grade 7. www.sierraclub.ca/bc/programs/education/ and education@sierraclub.bc.ca.

The Land Conservancy's Eco-Activity for Kids: Featuring Rare and Threatened Species of British Columbia. This is a great little booklet full of games, artwork and poems by kids, and facts about B.C.'s interesting but endangered animals, insects, and plants. Kids are invited to send in their own artwork for future editions. Copies can be ordered from: The Land Conservancy, 2709 Shoreline Drive, Victoria BC. V9B 1M5. Phone: 250-479-8053

Green Street: Although not specific to endangered species, this website is a goldmine of environmental information, ideas and resources for Canadian teachers and students. www.green-street.ca/home/index_e.html. Also check out the Green Street Youth Action Centre, a special environmental action site dedicated to teenagers: www.youthactioncentre.ca.

Kids' Planet from Defenders of Wildlife: This site has fact sheets from endangered species from around the world, as well as games, an action centre and other kid-friendly resources to introduce young people to the idea of protecting species. www.kidsplanet.org.

Appendix 1:

Principles for Effective Legislation to Protect Endangered Species in B.C.

Biological diversity (“biodiversity”) is the collective term for British Columbia’s incredibly diverse wildlife, spanning from minute, simple organisms living on the limbs of ancient trees to complex ecosystems and landscapes. Inextricably linked to our quality of life, protecting B.C.’s web of life lies at the heart of sustainable development. To safeguard our children’s future, we must protect and recover BC’s biodiversity. This goal requires a strong and effective law.

Such a law must:

1. Enshrine the principle that healthy ecosystems are essential to healthy human societies and economies; ¹
2. Recognize that biological diversity (biodiversity) is essential to healthy ecosystems;
3. Identify, protect and recover at-risk biodiversity across British Columbia; ²
4. Protect and recover biodiversity by protecting habitat; ³
5. Identify, assess and develop recovery strategies for at-risk biodiversity on the basis of sound science; ⁴
6. Enshrine the precautionary principle; the principle of inter-generational equity; and the polluter-pays principle; ⁵
7. Require citizen, community and First Nations participation; ⁶
8. Require accountability and transparency;
9. Be enforced; ⁷
10. Be funded. ⁸

1 By fairly reflecting the value (including ecosystem services, market and non-market values including intrinsic, cultural and spiritual) to society of our living legacy and resources

2 Including at-risk species, ecosystems and ecological communities across their geographic range, throughout the province in a mandatory, anticipatory and timely manner

3 Protect sufficient survival habitat upon listing to halt decline and protect sufficient recovery habitat to maintain sustain viable populations across their geographic range

4 Science-based listing, science-based identification of critical habitat, science-based, peer reviewed recovery plans, and a science-based component of action planning development with clear separation between independent and objective scientific advice and policy decisions

5 Precautionary principle: if there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation; Principle of inter-generational equity: the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity and productivity of the environment is maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations; and, Polluter-pays principle: the polluting party pays for the damage done to the natural environment

6 Incorporate community and traditional knowledge if supported by scientifically collected information; permit citizen enforcement to uphold the law

7 Backed by effective penalties and enforcement commensurate with the value to society of protecting and recovering biodiversity

8 Adequate to attain the purposes of the law

Appendix 2:

Sample Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

(Your logo appears here)

Headline in Boldface Appears at Top

DATE: Put the date on which you want the story to be released, or put the words “For immediate release:” (followed by the date) at the beginning of your release.

TEXT: The first sentence should be clear, factual and grab the attention of the reader. It should tell the press what the story is about.

TEXT EXAMPLE: Owl Island, BC – Citizens for Biodiversity, a local organization that monitors the status of endangered species, has released a report warning that only two breeding pairs of spotted owl remain on the island after the takeover of a locally-owned timber company by Clearcutting Unlimited, Inc. last year.

Beyond poor corporate practices and lack of governmental oversight, the group points to the lack of a strong, clear law to protect species in B.C.

“The current legislation is a tangled mess,” said group chair Robert Owlsson. “It is fragmented, full of loopholes and bedevilled by overlapping jurisdictions.”

“This is not the “best environmental protection bar none” that Premier Campbell promised. B.C.’s rich biodiversity deserves better,” he said.

Citizens for Biodiversity and affiliated groups from across the province will rally outside the Legislature at 12 noon next Tuesday. Dressed as endangered species, they will form a giant labyrinth to illustrate the ineffectiveness of current legislation and the need for a strong, well-enforced species protection act.

- 30 -

(It is a convention of news releases that they end with “- 30 -”. It tells reporters that the text has ended.)

Contact information:

(Don’t forget to include the name and phone number where people quoted in the release can be reached for comment.)

Appendix 3:

Sample Action Planning Chart

Goal:				
Action	Responsibility Who is going to make sure this happens?	Resources funding, time, people, materials	Time When will it be done? (month/year)	Done ✓
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

Appendix 4:

Action Pledge

Take Action!...

and help protect B.C.'s Endangered Species.

(Tips on how to carry out these actions are outlined in this Toolkit – see pages referenced below for more info)

Check the action that you or your group are committed to doing:

- ☐ Start an Endangered Species petition drive (page 65)
- ☐ Write an article for your local paper (page 41)
- ☐ Write a letter to the editor (page 41)
- ☐ Call your MLA's constituency office and ask for a meeting (page 45)
- ☐ Host a small party for Endangered Species (page 27)
- ☐ Host a community night at your local community centre, church or school to promote landowner stewardship (page 27)
- ☐ Host an information rally at a community centre, school or church (page 29)
- ☐ Become a landowner-steward (page 35-36)
- ☐ Monitor what is happening to _____ (insert species) in _____ (area) for _____ (time frame) (page 34,36)
- ☐ Participate in a habitat enhancement or restoration project (page 36-37)
- ☐ Start a citizens' advocacy group (page 48)
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____
- ☐ Other _____

see next page

Name _____
Organisation Name (if applicable) _____
Address _____
City _____
Postal Code _____
Phone number _____
Email _____

Name _____
Organisation Name (if applicable) _____
Address _____
City _____
Postal Code _____
Phone number _____
Email _____

Today's Date: _____ Signature: _____

Comments _____

Please mail us your Action Pledge so we can support you in reaching your goals. There may be other people and resources in your community that are working to protect species in your area.

Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter
c/o Action for Endangered Species Coordinator
#302-733 Johnson St
Victoria, BC V8W 3C7
Email: info@sierraclub.bc.ca
Fax: 250-386-4453

Thank you for your commitment to protecting endangered species in B.C!

Petition to Safeguard British Columbia’s Wildlife

British Columbia is internationally renowned as a place of glorious wilderness. Although BC has the richest and most abundant wildlife of any province in Canada it is one of the few provinces to have no stand-alone endangered species legislation. Instead BC relies on a patchwork of weak legislation and voluntary measures that do not adequately protect our wildlife. It’s not too late. The solution is for BC to have strong, effective legislation that actually protects our endangered wildlife. Therefore:

To the honourable the Legislative Assembly of the Province of British Columbia, in Legislature Assembled:

We, the undersigned, hereby request that the BC government pass one strong clear law that effectively protects our endangered wildlife and their habitat.



Full Name (please print)	Address	City	Postal Code	Telephone #	Signature	Email address (To keep you informed and engaged on this issue – will not be submitted with petition)	Check here if you do not want to receive timely and important updates on this issue.
Sandra Voigt	246 Linden Ave.	Victoria	V8V 4C6	250-370-1731		sandrav@telus.net	

Please return completed petitions to: Sierra Club of Canada, BC Chapter - #302-733 Johnson St, Victoria, BC, V8W 3C7

If you are a community organization and are using this toolkit for your outreach you may want to include your contact information here so that citizens in your area can get in touch with you directly. Good luck!