

Happy Holidays

from the Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society



Hello Conservationists!

It has been two years since we came together on Gambier Island in the New Brighton Community Hall. Since that time your work has continued to enhance our Biosphere Region, thank you!

During COVID, many organizations updated their websites, so check them out as there is so much more information to share beyond some highlights

captured in this newsletter. We look forward to bringing the conservation community together before the end of March 2022, plans are in the making.

Happy Holidays and have a safe and restful holiday time.
Ruth, Joyce, Ian, Suzanne, Pat, and Hasan, Board members of
Howe Sound Biosphere Region Initiative Society

Conservation Highlights from around the Sound

Skw̓wú7mesh Úxwumixw



This summer, the [Squamish Nation](#) took steps to protect important culturally important trees and habitat in its territory. The Nation formally gave notice to the Province of B.C. to defer old-growth logging for two years in the Nation's 690,000 hectares while the Nation develops long-term sustainability plans. There is 78,000 hectares of old-growth forest within the Squamish Nation territory—44 per cent of which has been protected, though 56 per cent remains unprotected.

Also, a contentious cutblock in the Dakota Bowl area of Mount Elphinstone is being protected under an agreement between Squamish Nation and the province. This cutblock -covering approximately 70.9 hectares - was

removed from the BC Timber Sales operating schedule last year, and it is now off the auction block for timber harvesting entirely. The Squamish Nation announced a new agreement with the province to protect the Dakota Bowl and collaborate on what the land use designation will be in the future.

Work on conserving and passing on the Skwxwú7mesh culture at the St'a7mes School is featured over four pages in the winter edition of *Discover Squamish* magazine.

The Islands



On Chá7elkwnech, the [Gambier Island Conservancy](#) drew attention to logging in a woodlot referred to as Whispering Creek. A campaign focused on old-growth trees then led to monitoring for fish and red-tailed frogs. With support from BC Parks, enhanced signs to help hikers in Halkett park were added with people power support of volunteers from the Ocean Bridge program.

On Lheḱ'tines, [The Keats Island Conservancy Group](#) has been reactivated with new members working on invasive species, adding data to iNaturalist and beach restoration. Shoreline Protection Bylaws are under development. The big news was the [official protection of Sandy Beach Nature Reserve](#).

On Nexwlélexm, the [Bowen Island Conservancy](#) has been working on the management plan for the 30 acres of newly protected lands at Cape Roger Curtis. The Conservancy and Bowen Island Nature Club members collaborated and published the Bowen/Nexwlélexm Marine Conservation Atlas to foster public awareness of, and engagement in, local marine conservation issues, and to celebrate the recovery of our marine neighbourhood. A companion website is being developed.

[The Islands Trust Conservancy](#) plays an important role to 'Preserve and Protect' our islands. They are managing the Nature Reserves on the islands. This year they hired a Species at Risk program coordinator with funding received from Canada's Nature Fund. Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound is within one of eleven [Priority Places identified by Environment Canada and Climate Change](#).

Sunshine Coast



The [Sunshine Coast Conservation Association](#) initiated the West Howe Sound Watershed Protection Project that aims to preserve the forested ecosystems on the southeast slopes of Mount Elphinstone in the West Howe Sound Aquifer Recharge Areas. After years of Marbled Murrelet studies and advocacy by the SCCA, the Province has announced the protection of Marbled Murrelet habitat within the Howe Sound Region. As a consequence, approximately 8,000 hectares of old-growth forests will be protected.

The [Sunshine Coast Streamkeepers](#) have been busy with the removal of invasive plants, training new streamkeepers, and monitoring air and water temperature in a number of creeks in West Howe Sound.

Sḵw̱x̱w̱ú7mesh/Squamish Area



The [Squamish Environment Society](#) achieved registered charity status in 2021. Its Biodiversity Squamish iNaturalist project has taken off with over 34,383 observations, identifying 3,130 species! These records contribute towards the tracking of biodiversity within the Átl'ka7tsem/Howe Sound region. The Society also commissioned the first phase of reports aimed at addressing Wildlife Habitat Connectivity. This is a multi-phased project to inform planning that will inform planning decisions aimed at ultimately reducing wildlife conflicts and protecting important habitats.

The [Squamish River Watershed Society](#) (SRWS) Central Estuary Restoration Project (CERP), now known as [Restore the Shore](#), is in Partnership with the Squamish Nation and also Fisheries & Oceans Canada. This is a Reconciliation project that creates habitat improvement for Chinook Salmon. The SRWS has been restoring the central estuary for 20 years and has been monitoring the effects. The major project currently in progress involves the removal of the training berm known as the Squamish Spit. SRWS staff were able to resume hosting school groups on location at the estuary.

[The Squamish Streamkeepers](#) were among the groups rescuing fish during the drought and the sudden lack of water caused by BC Hydro ramping in the Cheakamus River in October.

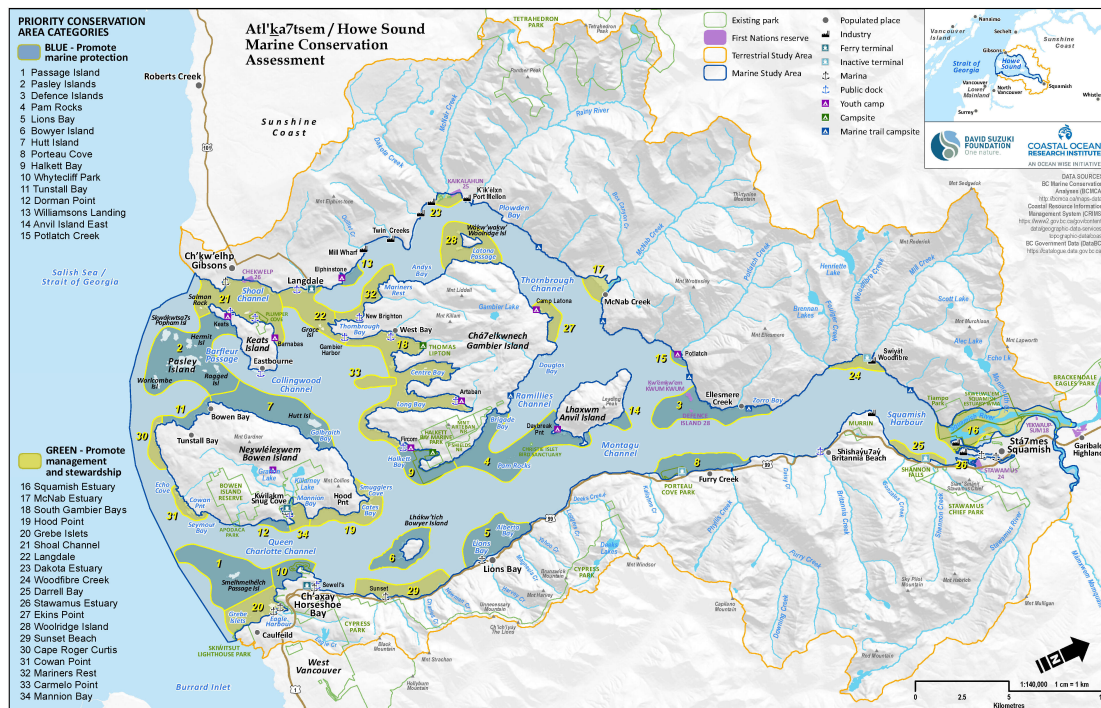
West Vancouver



The [Lighthouse Park Preservation Society](#) volunteers are kept busy with invasive plant removal and are preparing once again to lead the annual Christmas Bird Count. The lower Howe Sound is part of the Burrard Inlet, English Bay, Howe Sound Important Bird Area (IBA). The two IBAs in our region are under consideration to be counted as [Key Biodiversity Areas \(KBAs\)](#).

The [West Vancouver Streamkeepers](#) Association continues to work on the restoration and monitoring of creeks. Members were encouraged to see pink salmon return to Cypress Creek following their absence in 2019.

Marine Area



[SeaChange Marine Conservation Society](#) concluded its three-year funding program with additional eelgrass planting and monitoring and also marine debris removal. There is now a pilot project in Bowen Island's Mannion Bay with mid-line float mooring buoys aimed at reducing harm from scouring of the seabed.

[The Marine Reference Guide](#) project is also at the end of a three-year project to develop the online interactive map with many layers of data and resources intended to serve as a decision-support tool for maximizing ecosystem benefits. Plankton and herring surveys and a community map were also outcomes of the team's work

Fisheries and Oceans Canada continues with the engagement process related to protecting nine more glass sponge reef areas in West Howe Sound.

For more information, visit the [Action Tracker](#) that is updated during the year. The [Ocean Watch Action Committee](#) meets four times a year - please [visit our website for more information.](#)



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