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# Wildlife Management

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# Wildlife Management

## Introduction

The management and protection of wildlife in British Columbia's park and ecological reserve system extends to all vertebrates and invertebrates, terrestrial, aquatic, and marine. Additional policy for marine life is stated in the Marine System Management section. Management of wildlife is a shared responsibility within British Columbia. To ensure coordination of wildlife programs throughout the province, these policies complement those of BC Environment (Wildlife Branch), yet recognize the conservation importance of protected areas managed by BC Parks.

## Definitions

- *Exotic Species*  
A species introduced through human activities into an ecosystem where it did not formerly occur.
- *Special or Unique Wildlife*  
Wildlife that may not be endangered, threatened, or vulnerable but has significant value at a regional or local level.
- *Wildlife*  
All terrestrial, aquatic, and marine vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fishes) and invertebrates.

## Legislation and Other Guidance

- ***Park Act (BC)***
  - Sections 3(1)(b) and 3(1)(c) management of fauna and its habitat
  - Section 9 protection of natural features
  - Section 2(4) how the *Wildlife Act* applies to parks and recreation areas
- ***Park and Recreation Area Regulation***
  - Section 4 guiding permits
  - Section 5 trapping permits
  - Section 20 animal control
  - Section 30 feeding of wildlife

- ***Ecological Reserve Act (BC)***  
Provides for the complete protection of wildlife within ecological reserves.
- ***Wildlife Act (BC)***  
Applies in provincial parks and recreation areas subject to *Park and Recreation Area Regulations*; administered by Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks. Wildlife is the property of the province whether on public or private land. Wildlife management is a responsibility of the province.
- ***Fish Protection Act (BC)***  
Provides protection to fish and fish habitat; administered by Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks
- ***Migratory Birds Convention Act (CAN)***  
Gives the federal Crown responsibility for protecting migratory birds and nests, thus sharing jurisdiction with the province of British Columbia; administered by Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks.
- ***Fisheries Act (CAN)***  
All freshwater fish, except anadromous salmonid species, are a provincial responsibility. Management of offshore and tidal waters fisheries (includes fish, molluscs, crustaceans, marine mammals, and marine plants) is a federal Crown responsibility; administered by Department of Fisheries and Oceans.
- ***BC Parks Permit Administration Manual***  
Outlines policy and procedures concerning the administration of park use, resource use, research, and ecological reserve permits.
- ***BC Parks Management Planning Policy***  
Governs the formulation of park and ecological reserve management plans and management direction statements.
- ***Procedures for Avoiding Infringement of Aboriginal Rights, Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, July 1995***  
The procedures address the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' policy to avoid, mitigate, or justify infringement on aboriginal rights when carrying out its mandate responsibilities, in a manner that is timely and considerate of the rights of all British Columbians. These procedures stem from the Cabinet-approved *Crown Land Activities and Aboriginal Rights Policy Framework* (1996), which applies to all provincial ministries overseeing activities and decisions on Crown land.

In addition to its broad legal authority, BC Parks may enter into agreements with federal, provincial, or local agencies for the cooperative management of wildlife populations in, and adjacent to, parks. Existing agreements with BC Environment include:

- **Letter of Understanding Concerning Procedures for Setting Freshwater Fishing Regulations in Provincial Parks**

BC Parks and BC Environment, Fisheries Branch will cooperatively recommend and review recommendations to fishing regulations which may effect fishing or fish populations in parks.

- **Memorandum of Understanding: Cooperative Management of Shared Wildlife Resources by BC Parks and BC Environment**

Facilitates cooperation and communication between these agencies as they pertain to shared wildlife.

- **Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Procedures for Setting Hunting Regulations in Provincial Parks**

Establishes the procedures and responsibilities between BC Parks and BC Environment, Wildlife Branch with respect to hunting regulations in parks.

## **Policy – Management for Representation**

*British Columbia's park and ecological reserve system will be managed to ensure that it maintains representative wildlife species within complete and functioning ecosystems.*

### ***Associated Policy***

#### **Inventory of Wildlife**

- Wildlife inventories will be completed within the existing system of parks and ecological reserves to determine the presence and abundance of representative species and species of management interest, particularly of species at risk.
- Inventories will focus on areas where ecosystem mapping has already been completed or in the absence of ecosystem mapping, species at risk.
- Wildlife inventories will conform to Resource Inventory Committee (RIC) standards whenever possible.

#### **Wildlife Management Planning**

- Park or ecological reserve management plans will guide which actions, if any, are required to maintain representative wildlife populations and their habitats.
- BC Parks will participate in integrated management planning and activities beyond protected area boundaries to ensure adequate protection of representative and migratory wildlife, and to ensure that BC Parks' management objectives are complemented by those for adjacent lands.
- Where needed, BC Parks will undertake management activities in support of provincial, interprovincial, and international wildlife initiatives such as research and monitoring.
- BC Parks will encourage the establishment of core habitat protection areas surrounded by buffer zones where special management emphasis will be encouraged, and connected by adequate wildlife movement linkages.
- As part of the BC Parks' management planning program, separate wildlife management plans may be prepared to guide wildlife management actions.

## **Policy – Management for Biological Diversity**

*British Columbia's park and ecological reserve system will include a natural diversity of wildlife populations and natural ecological cycles, with emphasis on the protection of endangered, threatened, and vulnerable wildlife species.*

### ***Associated Policy***

#### **Wildlife Diversity**

- A natural level of wildlife diversity will be maintained by undertaking management and planning actions at a variety of scales, from entire watersheds or landscapes, to individual species or habitats.
- Some parks and ecological reserves will be managed as naturally regulated benchmarks to monitor the effects of environmental change on biological diversity.
- BC Parks' operations will not adversely impact wildlife species, or their critical habitat, within or outside a park or ecological reserve.

#### **Ecological Processes**

- Parks and ecological reserves will be managed to maintain ecosystem function in as natural a state as possible.
- Natural processes such as wildfire, succession, or predation will prevail unless they threaten the existence of a species or critical habitat that has been identified for conservation.
- Native animal and fish species, if extirpated from the protected area, may be reintroduced when scientific research indicates that the original extirpation was human caused, the prospect for natural re-establishment is minimal, and no significant negative ecological impacts on the protected area, or adjacent lands, is evident.
- The use of chemical treatments in parks and ecological reserves will be eliminated where possible in favour of biological or mechanical methods.

## **Policy – Conservation and Use**

*The conservation of viable, natural wildlife populations, their habitat, and ecological processes that affect them in British Columbia's park and ecological reserve system will always take precedence over their use by people.*

### ***Associated Policy***

#### **Visitor Use**

- Permanent or temporary closures of selected areas are appropriate means of reducing or eliminating undesirable impacts of human use on critical wildlife, even if such closures affect visitor use or park operations.
- Programs to ensure that wildlife populations are not endangered, placed at risk, or substantially altered as a result of visitor use are of higher priority than sustaining a recreation activity.
- Emphasis will be placed on park-wide visitor use management to reduce opportunities for negative human-wildlife interactions. However, public safety will always be the primary consideration in dealing with negative human-wildlife interactions.
- The management of bear/human conflicts will be managed in accordance with the BC Parks' Bear-People Conflict Prevention Plan.

#### **Consumptive Use**

- Within British Columbia's park and ecological reserve system there will exist a representative spectrum of terrestrial and aquatic habitats closed to consumptive use (i.e., strict preservation management category, Protected Areas Strategy).
- Consumptive use of wildlife may occur only in a sustainable manner and provided conservation objectives are not compromised.
- Once conservation needs have been met, consumptive uses that may be allowed include recreational hunting (includes guided hunting), recreational fishing (includes guided fishing), and the harvesting of shellfish when consistent with the conservation and recreation objectives of individual parks.
- Allowable harvest levels of all wildlife (includes fish) will generally be more conservative in parks than in adjacent areas.
- For wildlife management purposes, hunting and fishing may be necessary to reduce un-natural population levels or to reduce or eliminate exotic, non-native species.

- Although a non-conforming use, trapping may be permitted for expressed management purposes as defined by the protected area management plan. Existing tenures will be continued and are normally renewable but no new tenures will be allowed.
- Consumptive use of wildlife (includes but is not limited to recreational hunting, fishing, and the harvesting of shellfish) are not permitted within ecological reserves.
- Artificial enhancement of all wildlife (includes fish and shellfish) populations for consumptive purposes within parks will not be permitted unless specifically stated in an approved management plan. It is not permitted at any time in ecological reserves.

### **Sustenance Use**

- Those First Nations who have an aboriginal or a treaty right to hunt and fish for sustenance or ceremonial purposes may do so in all protected areas managed by BC Parks, subject to conservation requirements and public safety concerns.

## **Policy – Management of Special Features**

*Endangered, threatened, and vulnerable species and special or unique wildlife will receive high management priority.*

### ***Associated Policy***

#### **Species Focus**

- Native species most threatened by human activities will receive priority management action.
- BC Parks' operations will not adversely impact endangered, threatened, and vulnerable species, special or unique wildlife, or their critical habitat, within or outside a park or ecological reserve.

## **Policy – Management of Exotic Wildlife Species**

*Exotic or non-native wildlife species will be managed or controlled as necessary to protect, and without jeopardizing, ecosystem health and biodiversity.*

### ***Associated Policy***

#### **Exotic Species**

- The active management of exotic species will be considered a priority where a substantial impact on the ecosystem is evident or likely, where successful control can reasonably be expected, and where ecosystem health and biodiversity are not adversely affected.
- BC Parks will consider control measures against exotic species where:
  - 1) such species lead to competitive elimination of native species,
  - 2) such species pose a danger to the public in high-use areas,
  - 3) the presence of such species will impair the ecological integrity of the protected area, and/or
  - 4) the control measures will not lead to a long-term loss of native species.
- No control measure will be undertaken in protected areas without an adequate problem analysis (including a baseline inventory of species in the treatment area), and commitment to a monitoring program to evaluate the significance of exotic species to that particular area and the effectiveness of any control actions.
- The introduction or retention of exotic species to “enhance” biological diversity or for any other purpose will not be supported.
- Horses, mules, donkeys, llamas, and alpacas may be allowed for pack animal use in parks subject to veterinary certification of animal health and current knowledge of disease and management risks associated with their presence. Their use will be limited to designated zones or trails. Other species, for example, goats, sheep, and camels, will not be allowed for this purpose.

## **Policy – Management of Knowledge**

*BC Parks will promote acquiring and sharing of knowledge to facilitate the effective conservation of wildlife within British Columbia's park and ecological reserve system.*

### ***Associated Policy***

#### **Staff Training**

- BC Parks will train its staff to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to apply sound wildlife management principles.

#### **Community/Partner Involvement**

- Recognizing that the effective conservation of wildlife relies on a well-informed and involved public, BC Parks will assist academic, public, and private groups and individuals by providing existing wildlife data related to parks and ecological reserves or by promoting inventories by qualified, local naturalist groups.
- BC Parks will encourage involvement with partners, academic, private, and public, in such activities as inventory, monitoring, and research to assist in acquiring more knowledge.

#### **Sensitive Information**

- Data which is sensitive for conservation reasons will not be released in response to routine requests, in accordance with the *Freedom of Information Act*, s.18. Exceptions will be made only under specific circumstances (e.g., research necessary for conservation management purposes, impact assessments, etc.) and on the understanding that the information will not be released.