



## SOUTH COAST CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Protecting and Restoring at Risk Species and Ecological Communities on BC's South Coast

Published on *South Coast Conservation Program* (<http://sccp.ca>)

### Coastal Sand Ecosystems

The interface between uplands and the marine environment, dunes and other sand dominated ecological communities provide significant buffers for upland areas from the effects of wind and tide. The unique soil conditions also limit the vegetation communities and associated fauna they support and like bogs this has meant distinct adaptive properties of the species that do survive in this community.



Boundary Bay Regional Park Image  
credit: C. Schaefer



Iona Beach Regional Park Image  
credit: D. Hanna



Buccaneer Bay, Thormanby Isl. Image  
credit: T. Baker



Large-headed sedge Image credit: D. Hanna



Beach pea Image credit: D. Hanna

## Characteristics

Coastal sand ecosystems encompass the terrestrial portion of beaches, spits, and dunes in which sand is the dominant substrate. They contain sparsely-vegetated or herbaceous ecological communities, as well as associated forest, wetland, and bluff communities. Coastal sand ecosystems occur at the intersection of marine and terrestrial realms where ecological patterns are structured by geomorphic and oceanographic disturbance processes (e.g., sand movement, wind erosion, tides, storm surges, ocean spray), soil development, local climate, and vegetation succession). Source: Coastal Sand Ecosystem Recovery Team. A number of red-listed communities occur on the South Coast including: northern wormwood - red fescue / grey rock-moss, large-headed sedge Herbaceous Vegetation, dune wildrye - beach pea. Both waterbirds and migratory songbirds are heavily dependent on sand communities for seasonal and year round nesting, foraging and refuge during storms and weather events.

## Resources

### [Sand Ecosystems of BC's South Coast - brochure](#)

General brochure about the Sand Ecosystems of British Columbia on the South Coast. Brochure includes information and photos about where to find them, what species and ecological communities can be found, the threats that exist and what we can all do to help.

## For further information see

### [Coastal Sand Ecosystem Status Report](#)

Coastal sand ecosystems such as dunes and spits are rare in British Columbia and support a disproportionately high number of rare species and ecological communities.

### [Global Restoration Network: Coastal, Dune & Upland](#)

### [Green Shores](#)

### [SCCP's Coastal Sands Ecosystems Project](#)

This initiative of the SCCP, begun in 2013 is working to raise awareness of and help coordinate recovery and conservation efforts for one of the South Coasts rarest ecological communities.

### **BC Species and Ecosystems Explorer: Species and Ecosystems Search**

A source for authoritative conservation information on thousands of plants and animals and hundreds of ecological communities in BC. From here connect to all provincial and federal recovery plans (including the SARA Registry), COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada), Identified Wildlife guidance and conservation requirements for specific species and ecological communities of conservation concern impacted by forestry activities) and links to E-Flora and E-Fauna (the Electronic Atlas of the Plants and Wildlife of British Columbia).

### **British Columbia's Coast Region Species & Ecosystems of Conservation Concern**

A joint venture resource providing comprehensive information on a range of species and ecological communities specific to the Coast Region of BC (including the South, Central and North Coast, Vancouver Island and Haida Gwaii).

### **Develop With Care Guidelines (see Lower Mainland Region section)**

Environmental guidelines for urban and rural land development in BC.

### **Species at Risk & Local Governments a Primer for BC**

Learn what species are at risk in your area, search by name, habitat type, regional district and forest district.

### **E-Flora the electronic atlas of the Flora of BC**

A volunteer-driven GIS-based biogeoclimatic atlas of the vascular plants, fungi, algae, bryophytes and lichens of BC.

---

**Source URL:** <http://sccp.ca/species-habitat/coastal-sand-ecosystems>

#### **Links**

- [1] <http://www.raincoastappliedecology.ca/coastal-sand-ecosystem-status-report/>
- [2] <http://www.globalrestorationnetwork.org/ecosystems/coastal/coastal-dune-upland/literature/>
- [3] <http://www.greenshores.ca/>
- [4] <http://sccp.ca/projects/coastal-sands-ecosystems-project>
- [5] <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/explore-cdc-data/species-and-ecosystems-explorer>
- [6] <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/>
- [7] [http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop\\_with\\_care\\_intro.html](http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare2006/develop_with_care_intro.html)
- [8] <http://www.speciesatrisk.bc.ca/>