



## SOUTH COAST CONSERVATION PROGRAM

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

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### Old-field

Old-field habitat refers to abandoned or long-term fallow agricultural lands dominated by a range of herbaceous (typically grasses) and shrub species (often forming hedgerows and thickets). As an ecological community they are in pseudo early successional stage, similar to historic natural prairie, grassland and estuarine saltmarsh communities which once had a wider distribution on the South Coast.



Colony Farm Regional Park P. Zevit



Colony Farm Regional Park P. Zevit



Campbell Valley Regional Park P.  
Zevit



Crescent Beach P. Zevit



Minnehada Regional Park Farm P.  
Zevit



Pitt-Addington-Minnehada Regional  
Park P. Zevit

## Characteristics

Typically old-field communities are dominated by nonnative pasture or soil cover grasses, however over time, in the absence of disturbance and active farming, they begin to function as natural systems, replacing the ecological void of critical grassland and estuarine habitat lost to urban development and industrial farming. Old-fields are the preferred habitat of a range of species. Some like Townsend's Vole, are keystone food-chain species, providing a critical food source for grassland dependent raptors like **Barn Owl**, **Short-eared Owl** and Northern Harrier. Other species like the *fannini* or coastal subspecies of **Great Blue Heron**, depends on habitats like old-field and Townsend's Vole for foraging, especially critical for juveniles in the winter. Major old-field communities on the South Coast are found in the Fraser Lowlands from from Richmond to Chilliwack including Terra Nova in the Fraser Estuary, Boundary Bay in Delta, Campbell Heights, Crescent Beach, Tynehead Regional Park, Campbell Valley Regional Park in Surrey/Langley, the Lower Pitt River running through Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and Coquitlam and Barnston Island in the Fraser River. Some of the most significant old-field areas remaining on the on the South Coast are Colony Farm Regional Park in Coquitlam/Port Coquitlam and the Hatzic Prairie area near Mission.

## Resources

## **HERB AND GRASS ECOSYSTEMS: Old Field, Pasture Commercial/Recreational Open Space**

Biodiversity Strategy for Greater Vancouver

### **Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*) and Townsend's vole (*Microtus townsendii*) dynamics in grassland set-asides.pdf**

SHORT-EARED OWL (*ASIO FLAMMEUS*) AND TOWNSEND'S VOLE (*MICROTUS TOWNSENDII*) DYNAMICS IN GRASSLAND SET-ASIDES

### **draft old field management strategy - delta.pdf**

Boundary Bay Regional Park Draft Old Field Management Strategy

## **For further information see**

### **Delta Farmland and Wildlife Trust**

### **Metro Vancouver Regional Parks**

### **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.

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**Source URL:** <http://sccp.ca/species-habitat/old-field>

## **Links**

[1] <http://www.deltafarmland.ca/>

[2] [http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/parks\\_lscr/regionalparks/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/parks_lscr/regionalparks/Pages/default.aspx)

[3] <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/conservation-data-centre/explore-cdc-data/species-and-ecosystems-explorer>

[4] <http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/>

[5] [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)

[6] <http://www.speciesatrisk.bc.ca/>