

Biodiversity in Your Backyard

The Alouette River Watershed provides both residents and visitors with wonderful places to live and play. Part of what makes the area so special is the diverse natural environment. This includes forests, rivers, creeks, wetlands and open fields which support many native plants and animals.



Starting in the nearby mountains and flowing into the Pitt River, the Alouette River and its tributaries are an essential natural connection across the local landscape.

Species Under Threat

Local natural areas needed to support native species are vanishing due to various human-related threats such as habitat loss, invasive species and pollution. The Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley are hotspots of biodiversity with over 260 species at risk, 150 of which may be found in Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge.



The Pitt-Addington Marsh and the area around it provides important habitat for many species.

What defines a “Species at Risk”?

In BC, species and ecological communities are analyzed and then listed by the BC Conservation Data Centre. On a Canada-wide basis, species are listed by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) and then can be added to Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act (SARA)*.

Species at Risk Listing Definitions in BC and Canada:

Red-listed	Any BC species being considered for designation as Endangered or Threatened under the <i>BC Wildlife Act</i>
Blue-listed	Any BC species not immediately threatened, but of Special Concern due to their sensitivity to human activities or natural events
Extinct	A species that no longer exists
Extirpated	A species that no longer exists in its native BC or Canadian habitat, but may occur elsewhere
Endangered	A species facing imminent extinction or extirpation
Threatened	A species that is likely to become endangered if limiting factors such as diminishing population sizes, isolated geographic distribution, and habitat threats are not reversed
Special Concern	A species of special concern because of characteristics that make it particularly sensitive to human activities or natural events

Help Protect Endangered Species!

Positive Activities:



- Control the spread of invasive plant species
- Add native plants and nest boxes for birds to your backyard
- Never release your pets or aquarium animals into the wild
- Do not disturb or collect wildlife, or their eggs
- Get involved with your local stewardship or field naturalist group
- Obey ‘dogs on leash’ signs to avoid disturbing wildlife habitat

Watch for endangered species! Help is needed to collect additional location data. If you spot a rare species, record and report your sighting. Information to document includes the location, date/time, the species and number seen. If feasible, take a photo.

For more information on Species at Risk or to report sightings, visit

www.sccp.ca



The FWCP is a partnership of:



Fisheries and Oceans Canada



Endangered Species

of
the Alouette River Watershed



Pitt Meadows • Maple Ridge, BC

Local Species at Risk:

Plants:

Streambank lupine (*Lupinus rivularis*)
Federal Status: **Endangered**, BC Status: **Red**

Vancouver Island beggarticks (*Bidens amplissima*)
Federal Status: **Special Concern**, BC Status: **Blue**

Culturally Valued Plant: Wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*)

The streambank lupine is a blue flowered perennial with multiple stems found in gravelly soil on river floodplains. Threats include development, herbicides, collectors and hybridization with other lupines. The Vancouver Island beggarticks is a tall annual herb with yellow flowers that is found in the shallow shorelines of ponds, lakes and bogs.



Vancouver Island beggarticks



Wapato

Over 80 plants are considered to be of cultural value in the Katzie traditional territory of the Alouette. This includes the Wapato, a semi-aquatic herbaceous perennial with arrowhead shaped leaves whose starchy tubers were once an important food source for the Katzie.



Streambank lupine

Photos courtesy: Greta Borick-Cunningham, Mike Botherston, Chris Currie, Ryan Durand, Gord Gadsden, Brian Klinenberg, Denis Knopp, Roma Leon, Aimee Mitchell, Marie O'Shaughnessy, winnu Flickr and Pamela Zevit

Amphibians:

Northern Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora*)
Federal Status: **Special Concern**, BC Status: **Blue**

Found across the Lower Mainland, these frogs prefer a range of aquatic and upland environments. When mating, Red-legged Frogs prefer shallow ponds and slow-moving streams. Once mature, adults will spend much of their time on land. However, every year they return to breed in the same freshwater location that they were born.



Western Toad (L) and Northern Red-legged Frog (R)

Other rare amphibians to be on the lookout for are the **Western Toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*)** and **Pacific Tailed Frog (*Ascaphus truei*)**. Both are listed as Special Concern/Blue. But be aware to not confuse these frogs with non-native frogs such as the American Bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) and the Green Frog (*Lithobates clamitans*). Search on-line for the BC Frogwatch Program to learn how to identify frogs.

Reptiles:

Western Painted Turtle (*Chrysemys picta*)
Federal Status: **Endangered**, BC Status: **Red**

The only native turtle left in BC whose population has been greatly reduced in the Alouette area. The best way to not confuse them with the non-native Red-eared Sliders (*Trachemys scripta*) is that the Western Painted Turtle has a red under-shell, whereas Sliders have a yellow under-shell and side. Many Sliders have distinct red marks behind their eyes, but the simple absence of the mark does not mean it is a Western Painted Turtle.

Birds:

Great Blue Heron (*Ardea Herodias fannini*)
Federal Status: **Special Concern**, BC Status: **Blue**

Populations of this majestic bird are likely on the decline even though it is a common sight as it hunts for food in areas ranging from fresh and saltwater marshes, streams and open grassy fields. Herons generally find quiet forests to build their nests in colonies to court, nest and raise their young between February and April. Main threats include habitat loss, disturbances to their nests (including loud sudden noises) and predation by Bald Eagles.



Great Blue Heron

Owls

Two owls are Blue-listed in the Alouette River Watershed. These are the **Western Screech-owl (*Megascops kennicottii kennicottii*)**, and **Short-eared Owl (*Asio flammeus*)**. The Short-eared Owl is more likely to be found in open fields, while the Western Screech-owl can be found in forests. The Western Screech-owl is under threat partially due to being in competition with the more common **Barred Owl (*Strix varia*)** whose range is expanding.



Western Screech-owl (L) & Short-eared Owl (R)

Mammals:

Pacific Water Shrew (*Sorex Bendirii*)
Federal Status: **Endangered**, BC Status: **Red**

This elusive mammal is the largest shrew in BC and Canada, and is only found in the riparian areas of the South Coast. It feeds on invertebrates both in and out of the water and has a fringe of stiff hairs on its back feet that help it swim and even run on the top of water for short periods of time.



Pacific Water Shrew

Molluscs:

Oregon Forestsnail (*Allogona townsendiana*)
Federal Status: **Endangered**, BC Status: **Red**

This snail is one of the largest land snails in BC. It can be found mostly in deciduous forests dominated by big-leaf maple and red alder with stinging nettle and sword fern. Adults can be identified by the thick white aperture lip when viewing the snail from below.



Oregon Forestsnail