



GATHERING BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL DATA ON NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA'S COAST

ECCC'S PROGRAMS ON MARINE BIRD SENSITIVITIES

As part of the Government of Canada's Oceans Protection Plan, Environment and Climate Change Canada is collecting baseline environmental data on British Columbia's northern coast. The information gathered helps emergency responders prepare for, and respond to, future pollution incidents.

PROJECTS TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON MARINE BIRDS

Under this initiative, wildlife scientists are carrying out a range of field programs to gather more information about marine birds in the area.

Projects include:

Identifying 'hotspots' for marine birds:

- Working with other government agencies, Indigenous and local communities, we are collecting information about areas that are important for marine birds across the British Columbia north coast.
- On the northern coast, we are conducting surveys of marine birds throughout the year, including several species of conservation concern (e.g., Black-footed Albatross, Pink-footed Shearwater).

- We attach tracking devices to birds to assess how individual species of particular regional importance or conservation concern use habitats year round, including Cassin's Auklet, Ancient Murrelet, Tufted Puffin, and Leach's Storm-petrel.

Assessing the toxicity of oil sands bitumen (dilbit) to birds:

- Using newly developed lab techniques, we collect baseline information that explores the effects of oil exposure to a variety of marine birds including Rhinoceros Auklet and Double-crested Cormorant.

GATHERING BASELINE DATA ALONG BRITISH COLUMBIA'S NORTH COAST ABOUT IMPORTANT SPECIES AND AREAS HELPS US UNDERSTAND ECOSYSTEM SENSITIVITIES AND INFORMS OUR FUTURE RESPONSE PLANNING.

UNDERSTANDING AND PROTECTING MARINE BIRDS

Marine birds use the marine environment in dynamic ways. For example, they often move great distances between areas of summer breeding and winter foraging. Birds may gather in large concentrations at certain times of the year, due perhaps to a high density of breeding sites or an abundance of food.

To manage the risk of impacts to marine birds from environmental emergencies, we need to know more about areas of importance to marine birds, and how to better protect birds using these areas.

By combining these sources of information (surveys and tagging) with oceanographic variables and habitat data, we will be able to predict how and where birds use the marine environment at specific points in time.

ENHANCING OUR KNOWLEDGE OF MARINE BIRD HABITAT USE IS ANOTHER ACTION THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA IS TAKING TO PROTECT THE COUNTRY'S COASTS AND WATERWAYS. THE GOVERNMENT IS INVESTING \$1.5 BILLION IN THE OCEANS PROTECTION PLAN, A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO CREATE A WORLD-LEADING MARINE SAFETY SYSTEM THAT PROVIDES ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADIANS TODAY, WHILE PROTECTING OUR COASTLINES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.



<https://www.canada.ca/protecting-our-coasts>

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