



Species at Risk Habitat Protection, Restoration and Management on Salt Spring Island

With support from the Government of Canada's [Habitat Stewardship Program](#) (Species at Risk Stream), the Salt Spring Island Conservancy (SSIC) conducted a three-year habitat protection and stewardship project in 2013–2014 to 2015–2016 that targeted 24 Species at Risk Act (SARA)-listed species.

WHY THIS PROJECT IS IMPORTANT

Home to British Columbia's highest density of species at risk, the rare Coastal Douglas-fir biogeoclimatic zone provides habitat to 41 populations of species at risk, including the Endangered [Little Brown Myotis](#) (*Myotis lucifugus*) and [Sharp-tailed Snake](#) (*Contia tenuis*), and the Special Concern [Northern Red-legged Frog](#) (*Rana aurora*), which are listed under SARA. With 75% of the region owned privately, species at risk in this biogeoclimatic zone are threatened by urban development and other human activities.

WHAT WAS DONE

The SSIC acquired the 13-hectare Blackburn Lake Property, which supports 11 species at risk, and established the Blackburn Lake Nature Reserve. Through landowner visits, the SSIC established strong relationships with landowners to add 60 additional hectares of land conservation to the existing Makaroff Nature Reserve, an area that supports 18 species at risk. In addition, the SSIC discussed Wildfire Burn Plan recommendations with the Cowichan Fire District to minimize the use of chemical fire retardants to prevent contamination and future habitat loss for 14 species at risk in the Mt. Tuam Ecological Reserve.

During the three years, the SSIC conducted on-the-ground activities in the Blackburn Lake, Makaroff, and Mt. Tuam nature reserves to address threats identified in recovery documents for 24 species at risk. These activities included deactivating roads, installing fences and trails, removing garbage, restoring wetlands and stream segments, removing invasive plants, and planting native species.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THIS PROJECT

- Acquired 13 hectare Blackburn Lake Property and established the Blackburn Lake Nature Reserve.
- Deactivated 3.5 kilometres of roads to protect species at risk



▲ *Sharp-tailed Snake* (*Contia tenuis*)

- Restored 23 wetland pools and planted native vegetation in Blackburn Lake Nature Reserve to re-vegetate species at risk habitat.
- Installed 1.9 kilometres of trails in the Makaroff Nature Reserve so visitors have designated paths to reduce human impacts and protect species at risk habitats.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROJECT

SSIC made substantial progress in improving habitat and mitigating human impacts for 24 species at risk on Salt Spring Island.

INVESTMENT: 2013–2014 TO 2015–2016

Habitat Stewardship for Species at Risk Funds:	\$466,000
Partner Support Leveraged:	\$683,170
TOTAL:	\$1,149,170