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PACIFIC BRIEFING

Primary threats: Climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation, and pollution of various sorts (noise, light, heat) are affecting wildlife in British Columbia – a province with diverse ecosystems.

PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS:



British Columbia serves as an example of how carefully protected area planning can and should be applied. The province is a leader in both area-based targets and ecological representation. Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Heritage Site and the Great Bear Rainforest – home to the Kermode Bear – are both well-represented within the province's protected area network. However, there are still key zones – such as climate refuges and the Okanagan region – that should be prioritized to safeguard wildlife both now and in the future.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



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HUMPBACK WHALE

IUCN Status: Least Concern

COSEWIC Status: Not at Risk/Special Concern

Commercial whaling depleted humpback whale populations, which were prized for their blubber, in the early 20th century. To deal with overharvesting while accounting for migratory behaviour and global distribution, the humpback whale became legally protected under two international conventions. Commercial harvesting of humpbacks was banned in 1955 in the North Atlantic and in 1966 in the North Pacific which has helped to reverse the decline of humpback populations.

SPECIES SPOTLIGHT



VANCOUVER ISLAND MARMOT

IUCN Status: Critically Endangered
COSEWIC Status: Endangered

The Vancouver Island marmot is a ground squirrel that is only found on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Without dedicated conservation efforts, Vancouver Island marmots might disappear — not just from Canada, but the entire planet.



COLLARED PIKA

IUCN Status: Least Concern
COSEWIC Status: Special Concern

The northern, high-altitude, mountainous habitat of collared pikas is currently being altered by climate change — their primary threat, and one that is anticipated to accelerate and intensify over the long term. Collared pikas are considered indicators of climate change as they are sensitive to climate variability.

TRUMPETER SWAN

IUCN Status: Least Concern
COSEWIC Status: Not at Risk

In the early 1930s, trumpeter swans were considered locally extinct in Canada as a result of hunting and habitat loss. To reverse the loss, different conservationists and governments undertook swift and substantial conservation efforts to recover the population, including land acquisition, management plans, law enforcement, public education, and captive breeding and reintroductions to the wild. In addition, development and implementation of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan helped to conserve and restore wetlands and other key habitats for waterfowl, including the trumpeter swan.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Help restore ecosystems. Nature-based climate solutions — like protected areas and restoration — can help to stop this wildlife loss by addressing multiple threats to biodiversity while reducing climate change by sequestering carbon in natural ecosystems.

WWF-Canada funded project on Salt Spring Island Conservancy restored a golf course to a wetland ecosystem, creating habitat for wildlife.



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