

## Marine Birds – Double-crested Cormorant Colonies

### description

Double-crested Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) are black or dark brown and have an orange-yellow patch of skin on the throat. In breeding plumage, adults have a double crest of black and white feathers. Their breeding colonies are typically located on small rocky or sandy islands, or on the exposed tops of offshore rocks. They may also nest or roost in trees, especially when predators are present. Their nests, a platform of sticks and debris, may be found on a rocky cliff near water, on the ground on an island, or in a tree.

This atlas page depicts active and historic Double-crested Cormorant colonies in terms of their relative importance, a value that corresponds to the number of “nest pairs” estimated at any one site during the most recent survey year. This value was compared to the total BC population, which was determined by summing the estimated number of individuals at all colonies during the most recent survey year. Using these values, relative importance was determined as follows:

- High: colony has >5% of the species’ total BC population.
- Moderate: colony has 1-5% of the species’ total BC population.
- Low: colony has <1% of the species’ total BC population.

These categories correspond with the 1% threshold that has been applied at global and national levels by Bird Studies Canada (and other groups around the world) to identify Important Bird Areas.

Sites have been included regardless of whether breeding had been previously confirmed at a particular site. Attributes for each site also include the date that breeding was last confirmed and the most recent survey results. Colony locations were buffered to represent some of the marine habitat used by these birds adjacent to each colony, based on the distances employed in the creation of the Canadian Wildlife Service’s Marine Bird Areas of Interest dataset.



PHOTO: E.MONK

### data sources

- British Columbia Conservation Data Centre – Non-sensitive Pelagic Bird Element Occurrences
- Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service) – British Columbia Seabird Colony Inventory

### data resolution

- 1:250,000 (some points have been adjusted to match the 1:20,000 TRIM coastline)

### data collected

- 1983-2000 (years breeding was confirmed)

### date compiled

- 2008

### reviewers

- Harry Carter, Consultant
- Peter Davidson, Bird Studies Canada
- Representatives from Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service

### reviewer comments

- A new colony was found by Harry Carter at the Second Narrows Bridge in 2009.
- Colonies were often much larger in surveys conducted in the 1980s and 1990s.
- Possibly keep colonies with zero counts in the ‘low’ relative importance category as they have been occupied in the very recent past.

### caveats of use

- Gaps in the extent of this feature should not be inferred to be an absence of the species, but rather an absence in survey effort.
- Buffer distances do not represent the entire foraging area of the birds.
- Sites of low relative importance may include extirpated sites or sites where the most recent survey did not obtain a count for breeding birds. Not all colonies are surveyed each year and colonies that were active in the past may or may not still support breeding populations. Therefore, these sites are still deemed important by the experts.
- Recommended date of expiry for use of these data in a marine planning context: None provided.

### map, feature data and metadata access

- Visit [www.bcmca.ca/data](http://www.bcmca.ca/data) for more information.

### references

Species description contains material from:

- B.C. Conservation Data Centre. Species Summary: *Phalacrocorax auritus*. BC Ministry of Environment (MoE) 2010. 21 Sep. 2010 <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
- Seattle Audubon Society. *BirdWeb – Seattle Audubon’s Guide to the Birds of Washington*. Revised 2008. [www.seattleaudubon.org/birdweb](http://www.seattleaudubon.org/birdweb)

# BCMCA Atlas

## Marine Birds

### Double-crested Cormorant Colonies

#### Legend

#### Relative Importance

(range in nest pairs)

- High (33-215)
- Moderate (7-32)
- Low (1-6)
- Historic/Possible Sites

Notes:  
- Polygons of high relative importance have been drawn last and may overlap polygons of lesser importance.  
- Colonies have been buffered by 2 kilometres.

#### Data Sources:

British Columbia Conservation Data Centre, Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service)

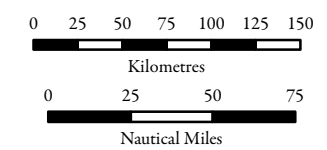
#### Base Data:

ESRI Base Data, GeoBase, GeoBC, NOAA, Natural Resources Canada, USGS, Washington State Government

#### Thematic Data:

For more information on data sources and methods please refer to the facing page to this map

Projection: BC Albers NAD83



1:4,250,000\*

\* Written scales are approximate and are based on a 11 x 17 inch paper size.

Prepared for:



Map template by Caslys Consulting Ltd.

August 19, 2010

