

Marine Birds – Great Blue Heron Nests and Foraging Areas

description

The Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) is the largest heron in Canada and adults stand over one metre high with their necks extended. Adult Great Blue Herons have white heads with a black stripe on each side and slender black plumes at the back of the head. They have greyish blue backs and white breasts streaked with black. Great Blue Herons forage in coastal marine and freshwater habitats and nest on islands or in wooded swamps, often in colonies. These birds are listed as special concern by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

This atlas page illustrates Great Blue Heron nest sites and associated foraging habitats. Data processing followed the methodology developed for the Canadian Wildlife Service's Marine Bird Areas of Interest dataset. Data representing nests were received as points and were buffered by three kilometres. Only nest sites that fell within an estuary or were within 100 metres of the coastline are illustrated here because these areas represent marine habitat use. Colonies with more than 10 nests are symbolized differently on the map, as these sites meet the abundance threshold to be considered in the Marine Bird Areas of Interest, and therefore represent nest sites prioritized for conservation.



PHOTO: B.G. SMITH



PHOTO: CHARLIE SHORT

data sources

- Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service) – Marine Birds Areas of Interest
- Parks Canada – Great Blue Heron nest sites

data resolution

- None provided.

data collected

- 1920-2005

date compiled

- 2009

reviewers

- Rob Butler, Bird Studies Canada
- Gary Kaiser, Consultant
- James Kenyon, Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Representatives from Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service

reviewer comments

- The coastal subspecies is *Ardea herodias fannini*. It breeds as single pairs or in colonies of up to 400 pairs. The foraging and colony map is confusing to me. It would be more helpful to show the historical distribution of colonies as separate dots perhaps 1-10, 10-50, 51-100 and >100 pairs. Then the foraging distribution would make more sense.

caveats of use

- Gaps in distribution should not be inferred to be an absence of the species, but more likely a lack of survey effort/coverage. Some locations may still be important to herons but currently lack associated data to confirm their value.
- The source datasets of colony locations should be used for any modelling work designed to predict the location and size of colonies in areas that have not been surveyed.
- Recommended date of expiry for use of these data in a marine planning context: 2012

map, feature data and metadata access

- Visit www.bcmca.ca/data for more information.



references

Species description contains material from:

- B.C. Conservation Data Centre. *Species Summary: Ardea herodias*. BC Ministry of Environment (MoE) 2010. 21 Sep. 2010 <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
- Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service). *Hinterland Who's Who*. Revised 2005. www.bww.ca

BCMCA Atlas
Marine Birds
Great Blue Heron Nests and Foraging Areas

Legend

-  Colony sites (>10 nests) and associated foraging areas
-  Colony sites (<=10 nests) and associated foraging areas

Data Sources:

Environment Canada
 (Canadian Wildlife Service),
 Parks Canada

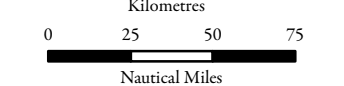
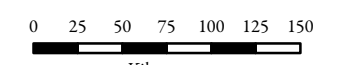
Base Data:

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.

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Note: The inset has been provided to illustrate the level of detail available in the data. The inset is for illustrative purposes only and does not imply any significance to this region.