

Marine Mammals – Harbour Seal Haulouts

description

Harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*) are one of the most common marine mammals in British Columbia. These true seals have spotted coats in colours ranging from white to grey to brown and measure up to two metres in length, weighing between 60 and 80 kilograms. They are commonly seen around marinas and harbours, relatively close to shore in the water or hauled out on small islets, rocks tidal reefs and sandbars along the British Columbia coast. They can sleep under water if no suitable haulout site, or resting spot, is available. Although these animals move around to feed, breed, and moult, they are not considered migratory. They exhibit a high degree of site fidelity, meaning they often return to the same haulout year after year.

In the Pacific, harbour seals occur from central Baja California to Alaska. The population is growing to estimated historic levels. Males live up to 20 years while females live past 30 years. The birthing season lasts two months but varies from February-March to August to September depending on location (May-June in northern BC and July-August in southern BC).

Harbour seals are opportunistic predators that feed on a variety of small fishes and invertebrates found in shallow waters, including sculpins, flatfish, rockfish, greenlings, smelt and perch. Winter diet includes hake and herring. Salmon are an important component of their diet during spawning season when they congregate in river mouths and estuaries.

Data illustrated represent known haulout locations for harbour seals in British Columbia. These points have been buffered by one kilometre for illustrative purposes.



PHOTO: CHARLIE SHORT



PHOTO: 2009 FOTO FRIENDS

data sources

- Province of British Columbia – Harbour Seal Haulouts
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Harbour Seal Haulouts (Olesiuk, P.)

data resolution

- None provided.

date collected

- Province of British Columbia - 1996 (date that dataset was last updated).
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada - based on aerial surveys conducted between 1966-98.

date compiled

- 2010

reviewers

- Not reviewed.

reviewer comments

- None provided.

caveats of use

- 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 for more information.

references

- Olesiuk, P. An assessment of the status of harbour seals (*Phoca vitulina*) in British Columbia. *Canadian Stock Assessment Secretariat Research Document* 99/33. 1999

BCMCA Atlas
Marine Mammals
Harbour Seal Haulouts

Legend

 Haulouts

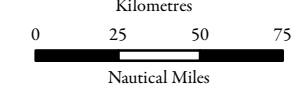
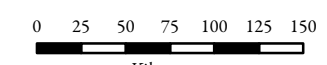
Note:
 - Haulouts buffered by 1 km for illustration purposes.

Data Sources:
 Province of British Columbia

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 *

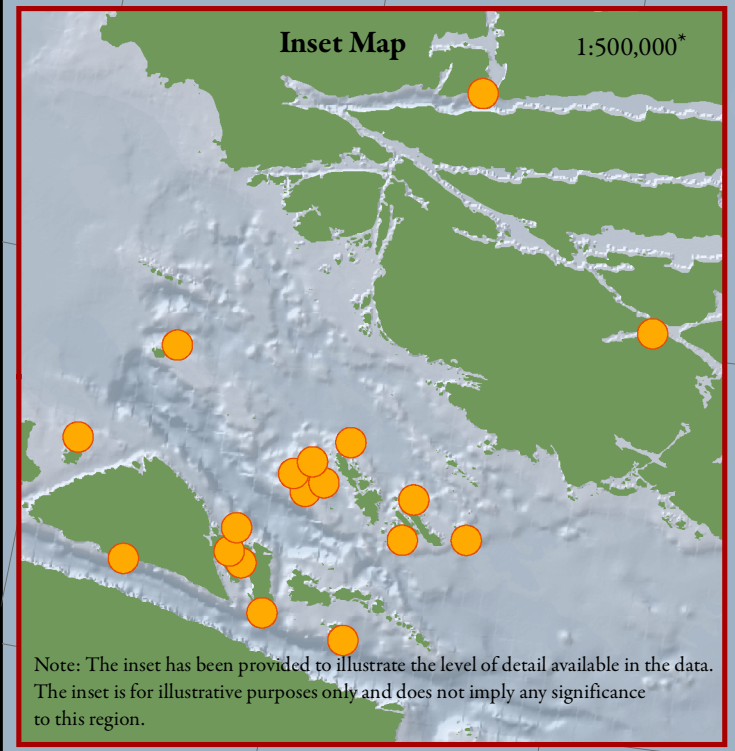
* Written scales are approximate and are based on a 11 x 17 inch paper size.

Prepared for:



Map template by Caslys Consulting Ltd.

June 3, 2010



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.