

Marine Birds – Cassin’s Auklet Colonies

description

The Cassin’s Auklet (*Ptychoramphus aleuticus*) is small grey-brown bird with a white belly, a short tail and a distinctive white spot above each eye. This species is one of the most widespread alcids in the northern Pacific. For the majority of their lives, Cassin’s Auklets are found far offshore, at the outer edge of the continental shelf. During the breeding season, the birds dig burrows in the ground, nesting in colonies found on isolated islands. British Columbia is home to approximately 80% of the world’s population of Cassin’s Auklets.

This atlas page depicts active and historic Cassin’s Auklet 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 that 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: BLAKE MATHESON

data sources

- Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service) – British Columbia Seabird Colony Inventory
- Parks Canada – Nesting Seabird Colonies

data resolution

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

data collected

- 1971-2003 (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

- Relative importance classes were revised to address comments from the initial review

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.
- Possible breeding sites are sites where breeding is suspected but has not been confirmed or counted. This information is only available for the Parks Canada dataset for Haida Gwaii.
- 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

Species description contains material from:

- B.C. Conservation Data Centre. *Species Summary: Ptychoramphus aleuticus*. BC Ministry of Environment (MoE) 2010. 21 Sep. 2010 <http://a100.gov.bc.ca/pub/eswp/>
- Environment Canada (Canadian Wildlife Service). *The Scott Islands* Revised 2004. www.pyr.ec.gc.ca/scottislands/mwa_e.htm
- Seattle Audubon Society. *BirdWeb – Seattle Audubon’s Guide to the Birds of Washington*. Revised 2008. www.seattleaudubon.org/birdweb

BCMCA Atlas
Marine Birds
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Legend

- Relative Importance**
(range in nest pairs)
- High (68,067-548,000)
 - Moderate (13,614-68,066)
 - Low (5-13,613)
 - Historic/Possible Sites

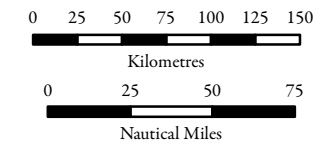
Notes:
- Polygons of high relative importance have been drawn last and may overlap polygons of lesser importance.
- Colonies have been buffered by 5 kilometres.

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

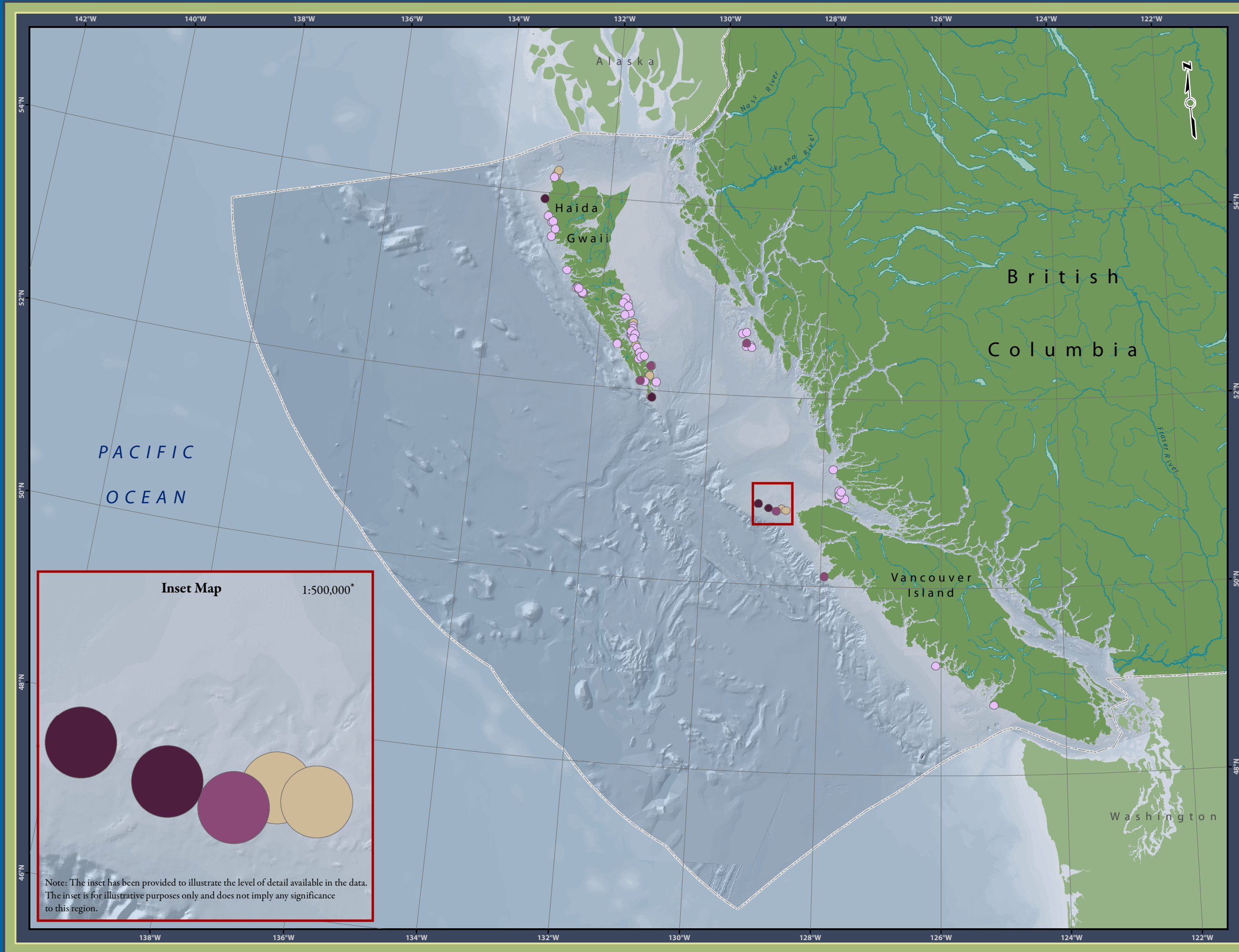


1:4,250,000 *
* Written scales are approximate and
are based on a 11 x 17 inch paper size.

Prepared for:



Map template by Caslys Consulting Ltd.
August 19, 2010



Inset Map 1:500,000*

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.