Shorebirds frequently migrate long distances. Staging areas are resource-rich sites along migratory paths that provide the birds access to food and a place to rest and clean their feathers. Because there are few places that provide the right combination of resources, some sites may host the majority of the population of a species at some point during their migration.

This atlas page depicts observations of Surfbird (Aphriza virgata) as a surrogate for rocky staging areas. This species was recommended by experts to represent the rocky staging areas as it is less widely distributed than other shorebirds that also use rocky staging areas (e.g. Black Oystercatcher, Black Turnstone and Rock Sandpiper). Source data used to develop this map consisted of a range of surveys, which were focused on identifying, counting and recording marine birds. The majority of the surveys were conducted at sites with defined boundaries and areas.

data sources
- Bird Studies Canada – Coastal Waterbird Survey

data resolution
- Unknown

data collected
- 1990-2008

date compiled
- 2009

reviewers
- Peter Davidson and Rob Butler, Bird Studies Canada
- Gary Kaiser, Consultant
- Representatives from Environment Canada, Canadian Wildlife Service

reviewer comments
- Surfbirds (SURF) collect on specific small islands in very large numbers at a few sites compared to the population estimates for BC: Bariera Rocks, a small island off Powell River, etc.
- Staging areas illustrated may be more accurately called “stop over areas.” Staging areas are places birds stay for long periods whereas stop over areas are places where they remain for a few days. Most of the areas illustrated fit in the latter category.
- Surfbirds congregate in flocks at relatively fewer small islands and hard substrate mainland sites than other shorebirds that are also rocky shore specialists, e.g. Black Oystercatcher and Black Turnstone, which are more widely distributed and tolerate a broader range of hard substrate types.

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 as rocky staging areas but currently lack associated data to confirm their value.
- 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.