

Shoreline Stewardship of Baynes Sound

The shoreline is defined as...

"coastal land immediately adjacent to the tidal zone,
the tidal zone & the marine area just below the tidal zone"

Preserving & Protecting Shorelines

What makes Baynes Sound Important?

Baynes Sound functions as a single estuary. Protected from extreme winds and continually flushed by fresh water, the Sound is a vital haven for wildlife. Dependent on the resources of Baynes Sound for food, shelter or nesting are numerous species of fish, marine mammals and resident and migratory birds, some of which are endangered. As a shallow enclosed water body, much of the Sound's key wildlife habitat is found along the shoreline. A series of low gradient deltas, sand and gravel beaches, tidal flats, estuaries, wide expanses of mud and sand flats, and rocky shorelines overlooking deep water, provide essential habitat for wildlife.

50% of British Columbia's shellfish industry operates in Baynes Sound.

Plants & Animals of Baynes Sound:

Eelgrass - This precious & essential resource is vulnerable to human activity. Eelgrass (as illustrated in border) grows in the marine area adjacent to the tidal zone. Eelgrass beds provide food & shelter to fish, shellfish, waterfowl & faunal invertebrates. If you refer to the map on the back of this brochure you will see patches of red in the ocean. These are eelgrass beds as mapped in 1995 by Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

Herring - Pacific Herring are central to the marine food web and spawn extensively in Baynes Sound—directly on eelgrass plants. (herring illustrated on left, roe in bottom left hand corner of border)

Shellfish - Baynes Sound is home to numerous native and cultured species of shellfish such as Geoduck, Pacific Oyster and Littleneck Clam. (shellfish illustrated on left)

Coho & other species of salmon - utilize Eelgrass beds for refuge and foraging. Baynes Sound is an important rearing and spawning area for coho and other species of salmon. (coho illustrated on left)

Birds - 176 bird species have been identified using Baynes Sound. At least 60,000 birds depend on Baynes sound for some portion of their life. Migratory, over wintering and resident birds utilize the marshes & eelgrass beds along the shoreline of Baynes Sound for food and shelter. During periods of freezing when farms and freshwater marshes are no longer accessible, estuaries are the only ice-free areas for foraging, and are critical to the survival of many birds. (Black Oystercatcher illustrated on left)

Migratory - Trumpeter Swans, Brant and Canada Geese; Osprey and Sandhill Cranes... are a fraction of the birds that, without areas such as Baynes Sound to rest and feed in, would be unable to complete their migratory journey. (Brant illustrated on left)

Waterbirds - Widgeon; Pintail; Mallard and Harlequin Ducks, are just a few of the hundreds of Baynes Sound waterbird species. Shorebirds utilize shoreline habitat for foraging. Sandpipers depend on mud flats where they feed on tiny organisms. Black Oystercatchers feed on limpets, chitons or mussels in rockier shoreline areas. The presence of too many people on shorelines will deter birds from using these areas, increasing competition for food resources. (Harlequin illustrated on left)

Pacific Great Blue Heron - Of specific concern, listed as a species at risk, is the Pacific Great Blue Heron. This majestic bird is a year round resident, using the marshes, estuaries & eelgrass beds of Baynes Sound for foraging & refuge. (illustrated in border on right)

Why are shorelines important?

- Shorelines support an intricate community of plants, algae, invertebrates, fish, birds & mammals. Healthy shorelines act as natural filters, trapping sediment, pollutants and fertilizers. Shorelines are the interface between land & water environments where people frequently choose to live and recreate.
- Shorelines are places created by dynamic though predictable processes, unique to the geography of the shoreline area.

What are the threats to Baynes Sound shorelines?

- ✗ Clearing and alteration of natural shorelines for residences, industrial developments, agriculture and aquaculture.
- ✗ Overuse for recreation and tourism.
- ✗ Faulty municipal wastewater systems, toxic waste from businesses, boater waste, failing septic systems and agricultural run-off.
- ✗ Water quality in the Sound is also affected by the health of the many watersheds that drain into Baynes Sound

What can you do to help preserve the shoreline of Baynes Sound?

- ✓ Plant native vegetation or let a strip adjacent to the beach grow wild. A variety of native plants and trees will help anchor your shoreline preventing erosion and providing homes, food & refuge for wildlife.
- ✓ Use "soft" shoreline retention structures. See the accompanying brochure for information on how "hard" (i.e. concrete) seawalls can aggravate erosion.
- ✓ Maintain your septic system. Fecal coliform can leach into Baynes Sound and contaminate shellfish beds, causing harvesting closures, and creating potentially unsafe swimming areas.
- ✓ Use "environmentally friendly" cleaning & household products. Pollutants can enter the water from leaching septic fields or overland runoff.
- ✓ Keep your portion of the shoreline natural. Avoid dumping refuse, even "organic" matter such as grass clippings. Keep domestic pets away from wildlife.

Development along the shoreline is regulated by the Regional District of Comox Strathcona in compliance with Fisheries & Oceans Canada. If you are planning shoreline development contact the RDCS at 334-6000.

Fisheries & Oceans Hotline 1-800-465-4336

Comox Valley Project Watershed Society 250-339-1619

Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Pêches et Océans Canada

Environment Canada



The majority of the earth's population now lives in "coastal" areas.