

LASKEEK BAY RESEARCH

14

**LASKEEK BAY CONSERVATION SOCIETY
SCIENTIFIC REPORT, 2005**

Edited by

ANTHONY J. GASTON

August 2006

Copyright: Laskeek Bay Conservation Society
Box 867, Queen Charlotte City, B.C. V0T 1S0, Canada

Suggested citation: Gaston, A.J. (ed.) 2006. Laskeek Bay Research 14.
Laskeek Bay Conservation Society, Queen Charlotte City, B.C.

Cover design: Tony Gaston

Picture: Humpbacks in Laskeek Bay, courtesy Timothy J.F. Lash

LASKEEK BAY CONSERVATION SOCIETY

The Laskeek Bay Conservation Society is a volunteer group based in the Queen Charlotte Islands. The society is committed to increasing the appreciation and understanding of the natural environment through:

sensitive biological research that is not harmful to wildlife or its natural habitat

interpretation and educational opportunities for residents of and visitors to the Queen Charlotte Islands

Since 1990, the Society has operated a field research station at East Limestone Island and is carrying out a diverse long-term monitoring, research and interpretation programme in the surrounding islands and waters of Laskeek Bay. We actively involve volunteers from our island communities, many other locations in British Columbia, as well as from overseas. For further information contact:

Laskeek Bay Conservation Society
Box 867, Queen Charlotte City, British Columbia, Canada V0T 1S0
Phone/fax (250) 559-2345; E-mail <laskeek@laskeekbay.org>

BACKGROUND

The goals and objectives of the Society are:

- 1. To undertake and support research and long term monitoring of wildlife populations of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of Haida Gwaii, especially the Laskeek Bay area.*
- 2. To provide opportunities for non-scientists, especially students and local residents of Haida Gwaii, to participate as volunteers in our field programs, and to offer training to impart necessary field research skills.*
- 3. To promote better understanding of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of Haida Gwaii, especially the Laskeek Bay area, by providing information to youth, local residents, and to the public in general in the form of publications, meetings, and exhibits.*
- 4. To promote the conservation of native species and to develop public awareness of the changes caused by introduced species to Haida Gwaii.*
- 5. To support and assist other programs aimed at providing better knowledge, management and conservation of ecosystems on Haida Gwaii.*

INTRODUCTION

Since 1990, the Laskeek Bay Conservation Society has carried out field research each summer on East Limestone Island and adjacent islands, and in the waters of Laskeek Bay. The scientific work of the Society has been carried out in collaboration with researchers and management agencies having ongoing interests in the ecology and conservation of Haida Gwaii. The research programme is coordinated and directed by a Scientific Advisory Committee that works closely with the Society's Board of Directors to develop research that is relevant to the conservation needs of Haida Gwaii and consistent with the goals of the Society.

Research activities include population monitoring of marine birds and marine mammals and ecological research on intertidal invertebrates, plants, and forest birds. The Society is a participant in the Research Group on Introduced Species, an umbrella organization devoted to studies of exotic species in Haida Gwaii and their impact on indigenous ecosystems. Research in Laskeek Bay focuses especially on the impacts of introduced mammals, including deer, raccoons and squirrels.

Our research programme is designed to provide long-term information on the biology and ecology of Haida Gwaii ecosystems. Ongoing monitoring, using simple, standard techniques that enable year-to-year comparisons to be made, and allowing the direct participation of volunteers, is the cornerstone of the Society's approach. By monitoring a variety of indicator species in ocean, inter-tidal and terrestrial ecosystems, we can obtain an overall measure of their health. Because marine waters may be subject to cyclical or directional changes operating at the scale of decades, such observations become most valuable when they are tracked consistently over many years. Such long-term monitoring is becoming increasingly important in the context of global climate change. In addition, the possibility of offshore oil developments in Hecate Strait makes the Society's long-term data on marine birds especially valuable. If such developments proceed, the Society's information on population status and trends will be vital in monitoring impacts.



Sunset over Laskeek Bay, June 2006 (photo: Tony Gaston)



Forest interior, Laskeek Bay (photo: Tony Gaston)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

With the generous contributions from the following groups and individuals, the Laskeek Bay Conservation Society has been able to provide its scientific monitoring and education programs, raising awareness and understanding of the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of Haida Gwaii:

- South Moresby Forest Replacement Account
- Gwaii Trust
- Environment Canada's Science Horizons Youth Internship Program
- Canadian Wildlife Service, Environment Canada
- Coast Sustainability Trust
- World Wildlife Fund
- Human Resources Development Canada
- School District #50 & the Community Links Program
- BC Gaming Commission
- Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve and Haida Heritage Site
- Blue Water Adventures (t-shirt purchases and donations)
- Maple Leaf Adventures (t-shirt purchases and donations)
- Our countless private donors

We would also like to acknowledge the following for loans or permits:

- Canadian Wildlife Service (equipment loans)
- Research Group on Introduced Species (equipment loans & support)
- Council of the Haida Nation (permission)
- Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection (research permit)
- Gwaii Haanas National Park Reserve/Haida Heritage Site (research permit)
- Environment Canada, Bird Banding Office (banding permit)

Thanks also to the following individuals and groups who gave generously of their time and services to the Society:

LBCS Directors for their time and efforts in keeping the Society running year after year

Dr. Tony Gaston for his valuable advice and guidance throughout the field season

Graeme Ellis (Pacific Biological Station) for providing a camera and film to document whales, even though there was less cooperation this year from the whales

This year's crew of local and international volunteers for all their enthusiasm, hard work, good humour and good company.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Project Limestone teachers and students for their dedication to the project and for teaching us just as much as we teach them.

Jeremie Hyatt and the *m/v Wanderlust* for transporting gear at camp start-up and take-down and for helping with the revered duties of biffy building and dismantling.

The *m/v Gwaii Haanas* for help with freight delivery

The *s/v Island Roamer* and *s/v Maple Leaf* for bringing such lively and interesting visitors and for their endless promotion of LBCS.

South Moresby Air Charters for the pick up/drop off of volunteers/staff all season long



Villous Cinquefoil *Potentilla villosa*, a common member of the rocky shoreline community in Laskeek Bay
(photo: Tony Gaston)

SCIENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 2005

Dr. Anthony Gaston (Chair, marine birds, plants)

*Canadian Wildlife Service, National Wildlife Research Centre, 100 Gamelin Blvd., Hull, Quebec K1A
0H3*

Kathy Heise (marine mammals)

*Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia, 6270 University Blvd., Vancouver, BC, V6T
1Z4*

Mark Hipfner (marine birds)

Canadian Wildlife Service, Pacific Wildlife Research Centre, Delta, BC,

Dr. Jean-Louis Martin (introduced species, terrestrial birds)

*Centre National de Recherche Scientifique, CEPE, Route de Mende, BP 5051-34033, Montpellier-
Cedex, France*

Joanna Smith (plants, insects)

University of Washington, Seattle, Washington USA



Pelagic Cormorants *Phalacrocorax pelagicus* roosting on the eastern tip of the Skedans Islands, June 2006 (photo,; Tony Gaston)