

TUFTED SAXIFRAGE *SAXIFRAGA CESPITOSA* FOUND BLOOMING ON EAST LIMESTONE ISLAND

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Tufted saxifrage *Saxifraga cespitosa* is a widely distributed circumpolar species common in mainland British Columbia and other mountainous regions of North America. The species is rare on the Queen Charlotte Islands (Haida Gwaii), and is known only from several isolated locations: Towustasin Hill (Juskatla Inlet), South Low Island (Laskeek Bay) and East Limestone Island (Laskeek Bay) (Calder and Taylor 1968). The only record from East Limestone Island dates to a collection made by C. F. Newcombe in 1913 (Calder and Taylor 1968).

A small colony of *S. cespitosa* was observed flowering on E. Limestone Island on 10 May 2009 (Fig 1). The plants were located on an outcrop in Boat Cove just to the West of a much more obvious colony of *Polemonium pulcherrimum* (position N 52° 54.569' W 131° 37.053' ±3m WGS 84 Datum). The colony consisted of approximately five tightly clumped plants growing on relatively bare limestone substrate 3 m above the high water mark. Calder and Taylor (1968) located *S. cespitosa* growing on a similar limestone outcrop on nearby South Low Island in 1964. It is interesting to observe this typically alpine species persisting at isolated sea-level sites on Haida Gwaii.



Figure 1

Saxifraga cespitosa growing on limestone outcrop, East Limestone Island, May 2009

Photo: Jake Pattison

REFERENCES

- Calder, J. A. and R. L. Taylor. 1968. Flora of the Queen Charlotte Islands, Part 1. Research Branch, Canada Department of Agriculture, Monograph No. 4 Part 1.