
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Environment

COLLABORATIVE WORK BRINGS NEW APPROACH TO CONSERVATION

VANCOUVER – Biodiversity BC today released *Taking Nature's Pulse: The Status of Biodiversity in British Columbia*, a scientific report on the state of B.C.'s natural environment, and the B.C. government concurrently launched its science-based Conservation Framework to address the report's findings and conserve species at risk.

Taking Nature's Pulse covers ecosystem, species and genetic diversity, key and special elements of biodiversity, threats, and knowledge and capacity. The report's 23 major findings show that, compared to the rest of the world, biodiversity in B.C. is in relatively good shape, but could still be vulnerable to rapid deterioration.

"I am grateful to Biodiversity BC for advancing this important report and I want to assure British Columbians that we will prioritize and address these findings through our Conservation Framework and other related work across government wherever possible," said Environment Minister Barry Penner. "While B.C. has protected 14 million hectares of public land with almost 1,000 parks and conservancies – the most of any province in Canada – this work cannot be done by government alone. All British Columbians have a role to play in the stewardship of our land."

Since 2001, the B.C. government has established over 4.5 million hectares of ungulate winter range, and more than 1 million hectares have been set aside for wildlife and species at risk such as the spotted owl, mountain caribou and the Vancouver Island marmot. B.C. is also at the forefront in recovery strategies, with captive breeding programs for the marmot, spotted owl and burrowing owl.

"British Columbia is renowned for its spectacular natural diversity," said Marian Adair, co-chair of Biodiversity BC. "Our biodiversity serves as a foundation not only for our economy, but also for a wider range of recreational, spiritual, and cultural pursuits. *Taking Nature's Pulse* outlines various challenges to sustaining our province's ecological health and provides us with the knowledge needed to define priorities for future action."

The Conservation Framework is a scientific method that takes into account climate change and existing conservation work to select the right actions for species and ecosystems at risk. The government of B.C. will use the Conservation Framework to address key conservation challenges on a priority basis and Biodiversity BC will work to increase awareness of the importance of biodiversity and respect for the natural environment.

“People realize it’s no longer a case of environment versus economy but that environment is economy,” said Dr. Fred Bunnell, professor emeritus, Department of Forest Sciences, UBC, and an expert on conservation biology. “What is now important is how to take action on the findings in Taking Nature’s Pulse. It lays a scientific foundation for the Conservation Framework, which will increase the effectiveness of our conservation decisions and improve the way we allocate conservation resources.”

The report is the result of a collective effort by more than 50 science experts – both provincial and international, representing the top ecological thinking in B.C. – who validated the importance of this province’s natural biological diversity. Biodiversity BC is a partnership of government and non-government organizations established to support improved biodiversity conservation and planning.

To view Taking Nature’s Pulse and the major findings please go to www.biodiversitybc.org.

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