




the Heron



A newsletter from the Islands Trust Conservancy, protecting islands in the Salish Sea | islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy

SPRING 2024

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What is a Nature Reserve?



ITC Nature Reserve on Salt Spring Island within the territory of many Coast Salish Nations.

Photo: Islands Trust Conservancy



 SCAN ME

For links and additional media, visit the Heron Newsletter online.

www.islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy/heron-newsletter/

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE



Erica Wheeler (l), Mike Richards (r)
Photo: Islands Trust Conservancy



Herbaceous ecosystem
Photo: Islands Trust Conservancy

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The Herons Return to Salt Spring Island

It was a warm afternoon in the summer of 2022 when Nuala Murphy, Islands Trust Conservancy's Property Management Specialist, was on her last monitoring visit of the day at one of ITC's properties on Salt Spring Island. As she walked down the trail from the road, joined by our summer Conservation Technician and a staff member from Salt Spring Island Conservancy, they all stopped as they heard sounds coming from the trees above them. Looking up, they saw three large and messy nests, and on the ground, broken shells.



Great Blue Heron. Photo: Lisa Wilcox

"I felt so lucky to be there that day as the Herons hadn't been seen in years."

– Nuala Murphy, Property Management Specialist, Islands Trust Conservancy

As they pulled out their phones to record the sounds, a Great Blue Heron swooped into the nest, returning to feed the hungry babies crying out. Seeing the Great Blue Herons return is one of many examples of species that have been conserved through the creation of an ITC Nature Reserve.

What is a Nature Reserve?

The purpose of Islands Trust Conservancy's Nature Reserves is to preserve and protect natural ecosystems and species forever. In her role, Nuala undertakes activities in the Nature Reserves including monitoring, surveys, research, and trail maintenance to preserve the biological integrity of the protected areas.



Community learning in an ITC Nature Reserve. Photo: Islands Trust Conservancy

14 of ITC's Nature Reserves are not open to the public. In our 20 public Nature Reserves, we welcome visitors, and allow activities including hiking on trail, bird watching, and dog walking on leash. To limit human impact in the unique and sensitive places we protect, we don't allow camping, fires, horseback riding, cycling or the use of motorized vehicles. Thank you for treading lightly!

Reflecting back on that moment of seeing the Heron two years ago, Nuala is reminded that our health and well being is inextricably linked to the health and well being of species and ecosystems. "When we work together to preserve these protected areas, we're ensuring not only their survival, but our own, and that brings me hope and encourages me to keep going."

Learn more about ITC Nature Reserves at <https://islandstrust.bc.ca/conservancy/protected-places/>.



Photo: Lisa Wilcox

Islands Trust and Islands Trust Conservancy respectfully acknowledge that the lands and waters that encompass the Islands Trust Area have been home to Indigenous peoples since time immemorial and that their deep connection to the islands continues to this day. We are committed to reconciliation, to upholding the rights of Indigenous peoples, and to working together to preserve and protect this ecologically, culturally, and spiritually significant region in the Salish Sea. The Islands Trust Area is located in the treaty and territorial lands and waters of the BOKÉĆEN, Cowichan Tribes, K'ómoks, Lyackson, MÁLEXEĒ, Qualicum, seáwaθən, səliw'ətəl, SEMYOME, shishálh, Skwxwú7mesh, Snaw-naw-as, Snuneymuxw, Songhees, Spune'luxutth', STÁUTW, Stz'uminus, łaʔəmen, Ts'uubaa-asatx, Wei Wai Kum, We Wai Kai, W JOĒĒLP, WSIKEM, Xeláltxw, Xwémalhkwa, Xwsepsum, and xʷməθkʷəy.

Meet our New Team Members



Erica in Griswold Pass in the Coast Mountains.

Erica Wheeler, Species at Risk Program Coordinator

Introducing Erica: nature-lover, plant enthusiast, and beginner knitter. Erica grew up at the base of Mount Seymour on the territory of many Coast Salish Nations, spending time outside on the Salish Sea or in the rainforest. "It's a place that very much feels like home." Erica has worked as a tree planter, and most recently, a Botanist, studying plant species at risk. She used DNA to understand genetic variation within species at risk, and whether genetic variation can be bolstered to increase survival in the face of threats such as climate change.

In her spare time, Erica enjoys swimming in the ocean, hiking in the alpine, and jamming out to Songbird by Fleetwood Mac. Ask

Erica about botanizing, also known as "doodling along and looking for cool plants," and her favourite species at risk, the slim-leaf onion (*Allilium amplexans*). Connect with Erica today to learn more about our Species at Risk Program at SAR@islandstrust.bc.ca.

Mike Richards, Strategic Fund Development Specialist

When asked to describe himself in three words, Mike shared that he is a knowledge-seeker, outdoor-lover, and eternal optimist. Originally from Australia, Mike came to Canada in 1997 and has lived in the Gulf Islands for 26 years. "I have a deep love for this area and the biodiversity in the region."

Mike came to Islands Trust in 2014 as the Grants Program Manager excited to contribute to the preserve and protect mandate. When the opportunity became available to lead Strategic Fundraising at the Conservancy, he jumped at it! He is looking forward to strengthening relationships with landowners, donors, and organizations in supporting them to make an impact and give back to the islands we love.

Ask Mike about his love of squirrels, fear of bears, and his adventures travelling the Gulf Islands in his sailboat. Connect with Mike today to discuss strategic giving workshops, estate planning, and leaving a gift in your Will at itcmail@islandstrust.bc.ca.



Mike partaking in one of his favourite pastimes; sailing the islands in the Salish Sea.

Calling all ITC landowners and donors! Share your story

We want to share your story about why you supported Islands Trust Conservancy through protecting land, donating or helping out in other ways. Contact our Communications Specialist to have your story featured in a Heron Newsletter.

📞 250-405-5171

✉ communications@islandstrust.bc.ca




The Heron Newsletter

The Heron Newsletter is Islands Trust Conservancy's good news and stories publication. Shared three times a year in the spring, summer, and fall, the newsletter is created for our subscribers in both print and digital formats.

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