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April 19, 2021

File No: 09-NP-3110-04-Helicopter Pad

Via Email: [omar.alghabra@parl.gc.ca](mailto:omar.alghabra@parl.gc.ca)

The Honourable Omar Alghabra, MP  
Minister of Transport  
330 Sparks Street  
Ottawa ON, K1A 0N5

Dear Minister Alghabra:

**Re: Aeronautical navigation in the Islands Trust Area**

As you are aware from [recent correspondence](#) sent to you from the Chair of Trust Council, the Islands Trust is a unique federation of special-purpose local governments (Local Trust Committees and an Island Municipality) mandated through the provincial *Islands Trust Act* to preserve and protect the unique amenities and environment of the islands and water between the British Columbia Lower Mainland and southern Vancouver Island. I am writing on behalf of the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee.

There is significant community concern around construction and use of a privately owned helicopter landing pad on North Pender Island. These concerns include but are not limited to:

- significant noise pollution;
- the dangers of landing and taking-off helicopters in a small rural residential community;
- the changes it will bring to a quiet neighbourhood and the rural character of the island;
- the distress, dangers and disturbance it causes wildlife including several protected species; and
- the precedent it will set for the Pender Islands as a whole.

The helipad is built on the Pender Island Oak Bluffs. This area is categorized as a highly sensitive ecosystem. Eagles, falcons, hawks and turkey vultures are just some of several protected and endangered species in the area. While it is possible that these species could be hurt or killed by a helicopter rotor, they will more likely simply abandon the island and their nests. Also of concern is the fact that the federally declared interim sanctuary zone (ISZ) for Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) is directly below the helipad.

As aeronautics is the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government, we are requesting your assistance. Specifically, I am now requesting that aeronautical navigation be better regulated in the Trust Area and that environmental impacts and the rural character of the community be considered.

This matter is also being forwarded to the Southern Gulf Islands Forum, a network of local, provincial, federal and First Nations leaders for discussion.

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***Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea***

Bowen Denman Hornby Gabriola Galiano Gambier Lasqueti Mayne North Pender Salt Spring Saturna South Pender Thetis

In past years, Transport Canada has recognized the special sensitivity of the Gulf and Howe Sound Islands by issuing:

- an information notice to pilots and aircraft operators,
- an Aeronautical Information Publication (A.I.P.) Canada supplement: Aircraft operation in the vicinity of the Gulf Islands and West Coast Wildlife Sanctuaries, British Columbia, and
- a map for pilots of Gulf Islands Noise Sensitive Areas which includes the recommendation of a minimum altitude over the Gulf Islands of 2000 feet ASL.

Because stronger regulation in the Trust Area may take some time to achieve, we ask that you consider what interim measures might be possible to reduce the risk to birds, orca and the community.

Thank you for considering this request and joining us in working to protect the Islands Trust Area. Located in the islands and waters of the Salish Sea, the Islands Trust Area encompasses 13 major and more than 450 smaller islands, covering 5,200 square kilometres. The area is home to the highest density of species at risk in Canada and some of the most diverse and sensitive marine ecosystems in the world.

We look forward to your assistance in this matter.

Yours sincerely,



Laura Patrick  
Chair, North Pender Island Local Trust Committee  
[lpatrick@islandstrust.bc.ca](mailto:lpatrick@islandstrust.bc.ca)

Attachments:

1. Information notice to pilots and aircraft operators
2. A.I.P. Canada supplement: Aircraft operation in the vicinity of the Gulf Islands and West Coast Wildlife Sanctuaries, British Columbia
3. Map for pilots of Gulf Islands Noise Sensitive Areas

cc: North Pender Island Local Trust Committee  
Islands Trust Executive Committee  
Elizabeth May, MP  
Islands Trust website

***Preserving and protecting over 450 islands and surrounding waters in the Salish Sea***

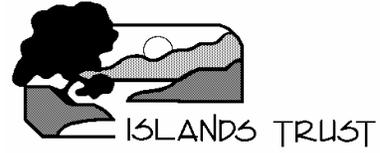


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ISLANDS TRUST

Welcome to the Gulf Islands

## Information to Pilots and Aircraft Operators

### **INTRODUCTION:** (refer to the chart on reverse)

1. The Gulf Islands are a group of islands located in Georgia Strait. These islands are a popular tourist destination and attract many visitors each year. In addition to being home to a number of full-time residents there are also several wildlife sanctuaries located throughout the Islands that protect many varied and endangered species of birds and mammals.
2. The environment surrounding the Gulf Islands is quiet. As a result, aircraft operating at legal altitudes are often audible and such extraneous noise can be extremely annoying to some residents and disruptive to wildlife.
3. It is recognised that aviation is an essential component of the national transportation system and the economic well being of British Columbia. Aviation is an important mode of travel around the Gulf Islands and between Vancouver and Victoria's major airports. With the Gulf Islands being located between these major airports and the demand for air service, a considerable volume of air traffic is inevitable. Nevertheless, with the co-operation of pilots and aircraft operators this volume of traffic need not be onerous on both the residents and the wildlife below.
4. This information sheet has been developed in co-operation with the Islands Trust. The Islands Trust as the local elected government for the residents of the Gulf Islands, has asked for the assistance of all parties in managing aircraft noise.

### **GENERAL ADVISORY:** (refer to the chart on reverse)

1. Aviation safety is foremost. Pilots are responsible for the safe operation of their aircraft and compliance with all aviation regulations. Nothing in this information sheet relieves the pilot-in-command of the aircraft from this responsibility.
2. All Gulf Islands are to be considered noise sensitive. Pilots are requested to give particular consideration to the following islands: Denman, Gabriola, Galiano, Hornby, Mayne, North and South Pender, Salt Spring and Saturna Islands.
3. Pilots are asked to operate their aircraft in the most community friendly manner possible.
4. Pilots not in the process of taking-off or landing should attempt to, where possible, avoid flying in the vicinity of any residential building or area, any marked or designated wildlife sanctuary or any site where bird nesting is known to be located. If flying in the vicinity of one of these locations pilots should attempt to do so at no less than 2000 feet ASL (or 1000 feet AGL where terrain is higher than 1000 feet.).
5. Pilots are asked to refrain from training or practising manoeuvres over the Gulf Islands.

# **A.I.P. CANADA SUPPLEMENT**

## **AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS IN THE VICINITY OF THE GULF ISLANDS AND WEST COAST WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES, BRITISH COLUMBIA**

With the summer flying season approaching it is timely to remind pilots of the procedures for use while in the vicinity of the Gulf Islands of British Columbia. These procedures while not regulatory in nature were developed to encourage pilots to co-operate in addressing the issue of noise and wildlife protection.

These procedures have had a significant effect in reducing the number of complaints. While it is recognized complete elimination of aircraft noise is not feasible it is recognized that with some forethought and care in the operation of aircraft, the degree of noise impact on residents of the Gulf Islands can be greatly reduced. Therefore again this year urge all pilots, in the interest of being a good neighbor, to help us to do whatever we can to minimize noise impact on the public.

The Gulf Islands also have been identified as home to several unique and endangered wildlife species and in this regard Transport Canada has been working with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well as British Columbia Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to establish procedures to aid in wildlife protection. These species include several types of birds as well as sea mammals including the Orca whale. The rapidly growing interest in wildlife has caused concern due to encroachment into endangered bird and animal habitat by both surface and air traffic. Therefore pilots are encouraged to avoid low level flight over bird nesting areas marked  on the VFR charts and to avoid, where possible, low flight over any area where bird or sea life activity may be encountered.

This year this reminder has been extended to include the bird sanctuaries south along the coastline from Vancouver International Airport and the area around Boundary and Mud Bay and the Serpentine Nature Reserve east of Boundary Bay Airport.

Any questions or comments may be sent to the Regional Director Civil Aviation (Pacific)

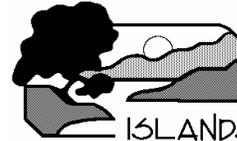


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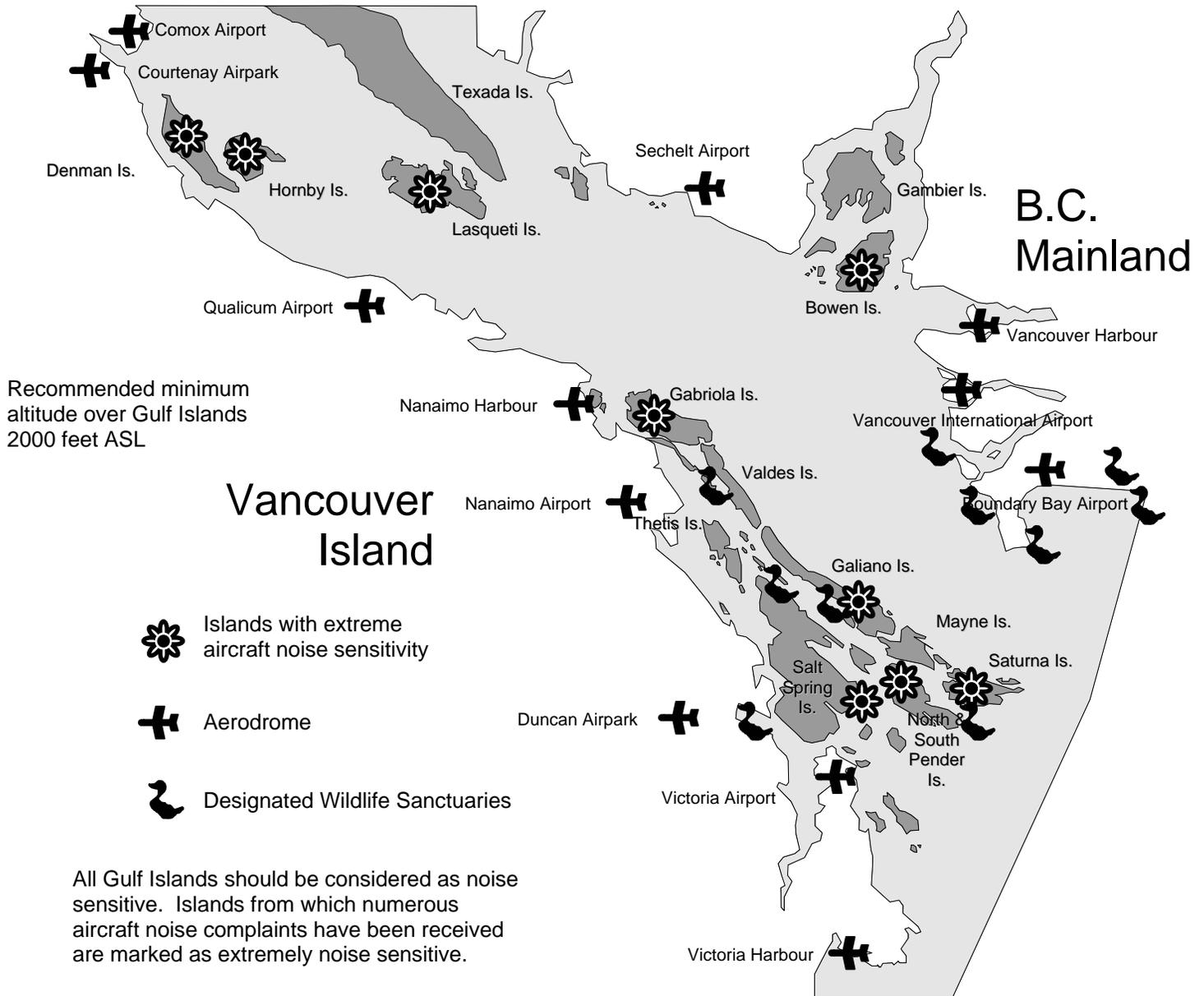
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# Gulf Islands B.C. Noise Sensitive Areas