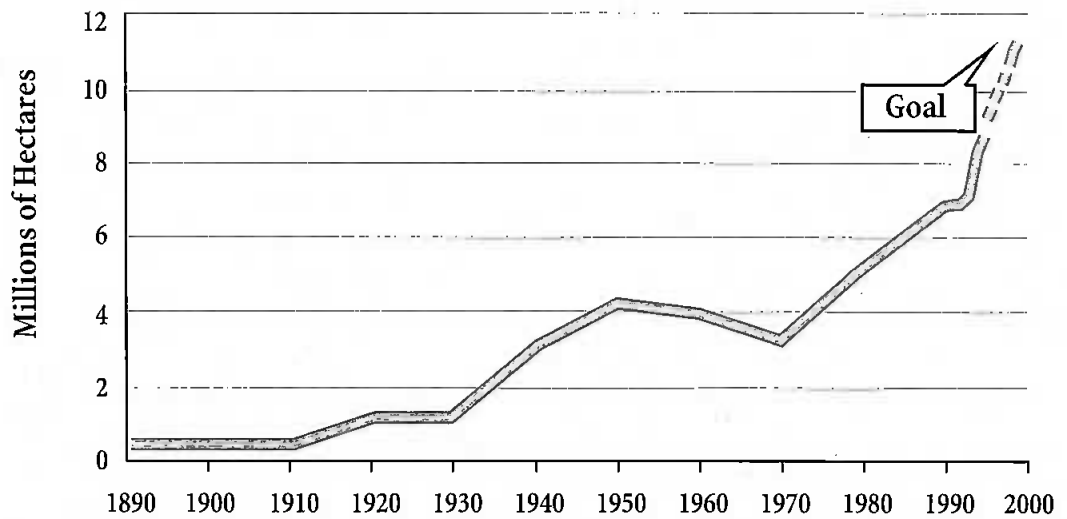


Protected Areas in British Columbia

The area protected in British Columbia was increased at more than twice the rate, from 1992 to 1995, of any period since 1890.



Source: British Columbia Land Use Coordination Office and BC Parks, September 1995. Data for this graph were compiled by decade until 1991, and do not reflect annual trends.

Status and trends in protected areas

- In 1990 approximately 6.3% (5.95 million hectares) of the land base of British Columbia was dedicated to protected areas; by fall 1995, approximately 9.1% (8.6 million hectares) was dedicated to protected areas.
- In British Columbia protected areas include fully protected areas as well as other designations, such as forest wilderness areas and recreation areas.
- Historically, in the late 1930s and 1940s park expansion was used to encourage tourism; in the 1950s and '60s, the area with protected areas status was reduced by 1 million hectares; in the 1970s and '80s park creation began to focus on protection of unique natural environments; in the 1990s representation of British Columbia's biological and cultural diversity, recreational resources and habitat protection have become primary objectives.

Why is it important?

- In British Columbia protected areas are one key element of a strategy to protect the province's biological and cultural heritage.
- Improvements in the way lands and resources outside protected areas are managed is an equally important aspect of how British Columbia is protecting its biological and cultural diversity.
- From a global perspective, protected areas have become an important means of preventing the disappearance of ecosystems, species and genetic resources.

British Columbia is Canada's most biologically diverse province.

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S GOAL: *British Columbia has set a goal to protect 12% of the land base (11.35 million hectares) by the year 2000, supporting recommendations made by the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development. At the current rate of establishing protected areas, British Columbia's goal can be achieved. Strong regional and sectoral input, from land use planning processes, is a critical part of identifying areas to protect.*



State of
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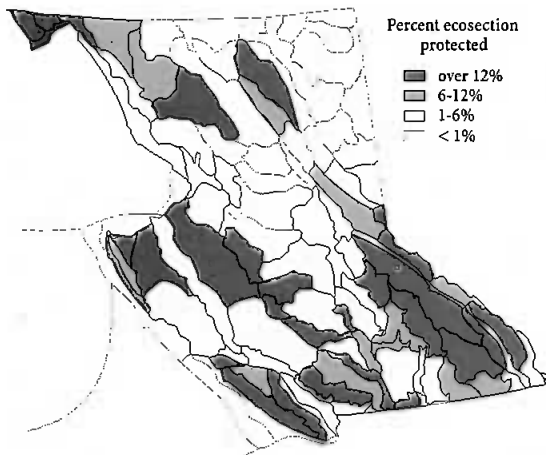


Ministry of Environment,
Lands and Parks

October 1995

Is British Columbia's rich ecosystem diversity protected?

- An ecological classification system divides British Columbia into 110 ecoregions, representing different ecosystem types. Ten of these are predominantly marine.
- One objective of the Protected Areas Strategy is to increase the protection of ecosystem diversity. The amount protected will vary within each ecoregion to meet the provincial goal of 12%.
- 42 ecoregions with a predominant terrestrial component have over 6% of their area dedicated to protection; 35 have less than 1% of their area dedicated to protection.
- Marine ecosystems are poorly represented, with less than 2% of British Columbia's marine waters under some form of protection.

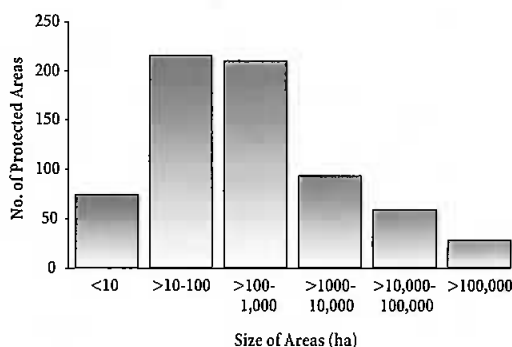


Source: BC Land Use Coordination Office, Sept. 1995.

42% of the predominantly terrestrial ecoregions in British Columbia have over 6% of their area protected.

What size are British Columbia's protected areas?

- Large protected areas generally have more ecological value and are better able to maintain biodiversity than small protected areas.
- 29 protected areas in British Columbia are greater than 100,000 hectares.
- Small protected areas play an important role by affording protection to some rare and endangered species and their habitats, as well as linking larger reserves.
- 75 protected areas in British Columbia are less than 10 hectares.

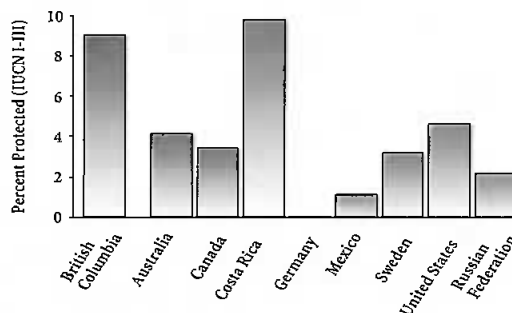


Source: BC Parks, Oct. 1995. Includes fully protected areas, forest wilderness areas, recreation areas, national wildlife reserves and migratory bird sanctuaries. Does not include NGO sites and regional parks.

9% of protected areas in British Columbia are larger than 10,000 hectares, and include some recently announced areas such as Ts'yl-os, Kitlope and Tatshenshini-Alsek.

How does British Columbia compare to other places?

- The World Conservation Union (IUCN) categorizes protected areas according to management intent and objectives.
- Categories I-III are considered strictly protected, and are the main IUCN categories for achieving ecosystem representation.
- British Columbia is one of the leading jurisdictions in dedicating a significant portion of its land base to the strictly protected categories.



Sources: World Conservation Monitoring Centre & IUCN 1994; 1993 United Nations List of National Parks and Protected Areas; BC Parks, Sept. 1995, for BC statistics. Includes protected areas >1000 hectares.

99% of the area protected in British Columbia is in IUCN categories I-III.

