

Synopsis of HAT Biologist's Preliminary Survey of Mary Lake Property

Christian and I have now visited the Mary Lake property twice (on 5 June-17 and with you on 18 October-17). During our first visit we conducted a reconnaissance survey of wildlife habitats as part of Habitat Acquisition Trust's Species At Risk Program. The focus was to identify important habitats and survey needs for focal species, which include Western Painted Turtle and Blue-grey Taildropper, both listed as endangered under the Species At Risk Act, as well as owls, amphibians and bats.

Important habitats:

Shallow areas of lake in bays along convoluted shoreline: Western Painted Turtle (endangered; potential); Northern Red-legged Frog (special concern; potential); Northwestern Salamander (potential); Rough-skinned Newt (anecdotal observation from access road)

Auxiliary seasonal pond by fish ladder (provides a refuge for native species from permanent water areas with Bullfrogs): Pacific Treefrog breeding site (confirmed); Long-toed Salamander breeding site (potential)

Creeks and associated riparian areas: Northern Red-legged Frog foraging and movement habitats (potential)

Skunk cabbage swamps: Northern Red-legged Frog foraging and movement habitats (potential)

Moist coniferous forest with some large trees, coarse woody debris and snags: Terrestrial salamanders (potential): Western Red-backed Salamander, Wandering Salamander (special concern), Ensatina; terrestrial phases of aquatic breeding salamanders; Western Screech Owl (COSEWIC Threatened, SARA Special concern, potential)

Woodland habitats on Arbutus – Douglas-fir knolls and their fringes: Blue-grey Taildropper (endangered; potential), tree-roosting bats

Structures by lake shore & foraging habitat above lake and forest openings: Bats, including Little Brown Bat (endangered; potential)

Survey recommendations:

Blue-grey Taildropper and other gastropods: place cardboard cover-objects and survey this fall and next spring

Bats: Inspect structures before renovations/removal; acoustic monitoring in spring and summer; install bat boxes

Amphibians: Survey lake and pond for breeding activity in spring (late February – May); search forest floor for terrestrial salamanders

Owls: Conduct an owl call survey in early spring (February - March)

Install wildlife camera(s) to monitor larger animals such as bear, cougar and deer

We're looking forward to working with you further.

Sincerely,
Kristiina Ovaska, PhD
Christian Engelstoft, MSc