



August 15, 2026

Sent via Email: info@islandstrust.bc.ca

Correspondence to Trust Council Meeting to be held in September 2026

Dear Trustees:

This correspondence is to convey our concern regarding gaps identified by the consulting biologist Patricia Woodruff in her presentation to the Regional Planning Committee on February 6, 2026. Hopefully, these gaps are reflected in the report which is supposed to be in your agenda package. Ms. Woodruff identified deficiencies in data regarding the location and status of species at risk as well as trust policies and bylaws to protect such species. This is information that the Trust must have to conform with its mandate to protect the natural environment. It isn't possible to protect species at risk unless their location and status is known. Below are some significant points she made:

- 16 different species at risk populations are declining/disappearing.
- 11 populations are more persistent.
- For many species trends are unknown, there is no recent data.
- Current Riparian Area DPAs have not been updated to the 2019 regulation change.
- There is a need for new mapping layers that better match sensitive ecosystems.
- There may be critical habitat that is not protected.
- The format of professional reports is not consistent.
- There are unknowns regarding the status of a population related to amount of protection available
- There were at least 4 cases where development had a direct impact.
- She recommended that the Trust standardize professional report requirements, update DPAs, include species at risk protections and make relevant Information available for planners.

We regret that a full-time staff biologist was not funded by this Trust Council. However, the staff made very helpful recommendations to the Regional Planning Committee on July 24th, which we hope were transmitted to you. We urge you to support these staff recommendations:

- Endorse staff use of the Species at Risk – State of the Islands report, LIST, and the model natural environment Development Permit Area as operational technical inputs when advising Local Trust Committees and preparing bylaw updates.

- Endorse staff use of the Terms of Reference for Professional Environmental Assessment Reports as a staff operational standard.
- That the Regional Planning Committee request staff to draft a business case with options for retaining ongoing biological expertise.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Maxine Leichter, Secretary
Friends of the Gulf Islands Society