Identifying impacts from port activities

Through our Project and Environmental Review process, we must consider how proposed projects might affect species at risk. Knowing where these species are located and how port activities affect them helps the port authority determine whether a proposed activity or development is likely to have a negative impact and, if so, what mitigation measures are required.

Little brown bat

The little brown bat is one of B.C.'s most common bat species. However, there is limited understanding of their distribution and the factors that influence where they are located. Bats generally use habitats, such as mature trees for roosting, and vegetated shorelines for foraging. In 2016, we undertook a field study to improve our understanding of how industrial activity, such as noise, light and movement, on port authority-managed lands might affect their use of these habitats. The results show that little brown bats are distributed throughout our jurisdiction, except for areas with high nighttime light conditions, high noise levels and a lack of natural vegetation. These findings will inform our decisions on proposed development and activities through our Project and Environmental Review process by better identifying potential project-related impacts and by informing measures to manage and mitigate those potential impacts. This work may also help us protect existing habitat and identify areas in which to create new habitat such as bat roosts on port authority-managed lands.

White sturgeon

The port authority maintains the navigation channel in the Fraser River through an annual dredging program, to enable trade by providing ocean-going vessels with unimpeded access to terminals. Recent studies indicate that juvenile white sturgeon may be present in areas of the river where we regularly dredge, and that dredging may affect this species. We are supporting work by the B.C. Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations to collect data on the timing, distribution and habitat use of the lower Fraser River white sturgeon population. This data will help us identify the risks to this species from dredging and develop measures to avoid harm to juvenile salmon, for example, potentially by adjusting the timing of our dredging activities.

Learn more about our review process at portvancouver.com/environmental-reviews