

Ecoprovinces of British Columbia

Use the B.C. ecoprovinces to describe the distribution and abundance of species within the province. If a species has a very specific and limited range in B.C., it may be appropriate to move down a level to the B.C. ecoregions for potential descriptors. Ecoprovinces were used in the Birds of B.C., so it is useful to compare distribution and abundance between the Birds of B.C. and the Atlas in terms of ecoprovinces.

The following is an excerpt from <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/ecology/ecoregions/contents.html>



1. Northeast Pacific Ecoprovince

Location - This ecoprovince is the oceanic portion of Canada west of the Continental Slope, it extends westward to the "200 mile Economic Expansion Zone". It consists of the Continental Rise and the Continental Slope.

2. Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince

Location – The Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince extends from the southeastern Alaska to the northern Cascade Mountains in Washington. In British Columbia it includes the windward side of the Coast Mountains and Vancouver Island, all of the Queen Charlotte Islands, and the Continental Shelf including Dixon Entrance, Hecate Strait, Queen Charlotte Strait and the Vancouver Island Shelf. The Coast and Mountains Ecoprovince consists of the large coastal mountains, a broad coastal trough and the associated lowlands, islands and continental shelf, as well as the insular mountains on Vancouver Island and the Haida Gwaii (formerly called the Queen Charlotte Islands) archipelago



3. Georgian Depression Ecoprovince

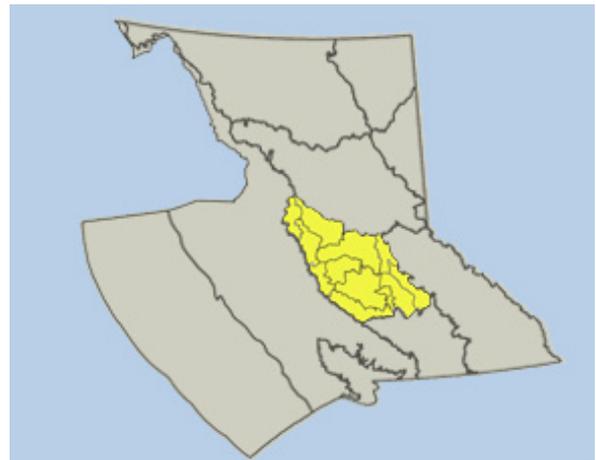
Location - This ecoprovince lies between the Vancouver Island Mountains and Olympic Mountains on the west and the southern Coast Mountains and northern Cascade Ranges on the east. In British Columbia, this ecoprovince is a large basin that encompasses the southeastern Vancouver Island Ranges and the Nanaimo Lowlands in the west, the Strait of Georgia, Gulf Islands and Strait of Juan de Fuca in the middle, and the Georgia Lowlands and the Fraser Lowlands in the east. In Washington, this Ecoprovince is also a large basin that encompasses the lower, eastern slopes of the Olympic Mountains in the west, the Puget Trough and adjacent lowlands in the middle, and the western foothills of the Cascade Ranges on the east.



The majority of the human population in British Columbia and Washington occurs in this ecoprovince and the environment has been greatly modified. Large portions have been converted to exclusive urban and industrial use. Agriculture is intense and includes dairy production, food crops, berries and cereals. Logging remains important on the periphery of the settled area, but is coming into serious conflict with recreational use of the few remaining natural areas.

4. Central Interior Ecoprovince

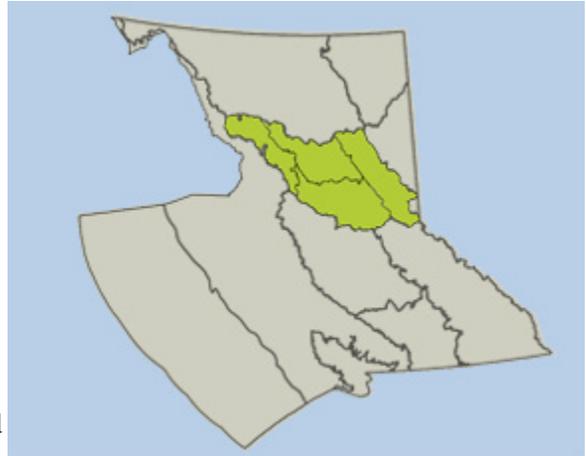
Location - The Central Interior Ecoprovince lies to the east of the Coast Mountains, between the Fraser Basin and the Thompson Plateau. This ecoprovince contains the flat to rolling Chilcotin and the Cariboo Plateaus and the southern two-thirds of the Nechako Plateau. It also contains the Chilcotin Ranges west to the centre of the Pacific Ranges and the Bulkley and Thatsa Ranges.



Agriculture is limited to grazing and small production of forage crops. Logging is the most extensive industry based on renewable resources and there are many mines.

5. Sub-Boreal Interior Ecoprovince

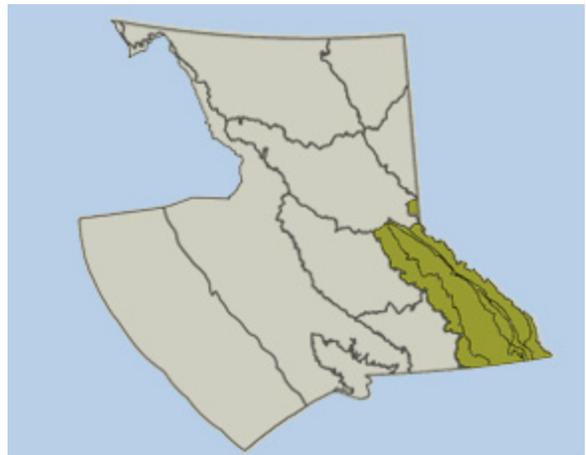
Location – The Sub-Boreal Interior Ecoprovince is located in the north-central portion of the province, to the east of the Coast Mountains and to the west of the Interior Plains. It consists of several physiographic systems: the low-lying plateau area of the Nechako Lowlands, the northern portion of the Nechako Plateau, and the McGregor Plateau, and the southern portion of the Northern Rocky Mountain Trench. The mountains to the west and north include the southern Skeena and Omineca mountains, while those to the east include the Hart Ranges and associated foothills, the Misinchinka Range and associated foothills.



In this ecoprovince, logging is the most extensive industry based on renewable resources; there are many mines. Agriculture is restricted to the area of finer textured soils in the Fraser Basin; it is limited to grazing and some forage and few cereal crops.

6. Southern Interior Mountains Ecoprovince

Location - The Southern Interior Mountains Ecoprovince consists of the Columbia Mountains and associated highlands, the Southern Rocky Mountain Trench, and the Continental Ranges of the Rocky Mountains and associated foothills. It lies east of the interior plateaus and west of the Interior Plains. In British Columbia it extends eastward to the British Columbia - Alberta boundary, however the Ecoprovince does extend as far east as the Interior Plains. The southern boundary in British Columbia is the 49th parallel or the Canada-USA border, however the Ecoprovince extends southward into northeastern Washington, northern Idaho and northwestern Montana as far south as the limit of Interior Cedar - Hemlock forests.



Forest-based industries are important and include a rapidly expanding tourism and recreation element. Coal mining occurs in the Elk River Valley and metal mining occurs in the lowlands and mountains. Extensive reservoir impoundments have occurred throughout this Ecoprovince on the Columbia and Kootenay rivers and their tributaries. Agriculture is restricted to the Rocky Mountain Trench, the Creston Valley, the southern Columbia Valley and the Robson Valley. It is largely based on grazing and forage crops, except in the extreme southwest where lowlands and floodplains have been developed for orchards and cereal crops.

7. Southern Alaska Mountains Ecoprovince

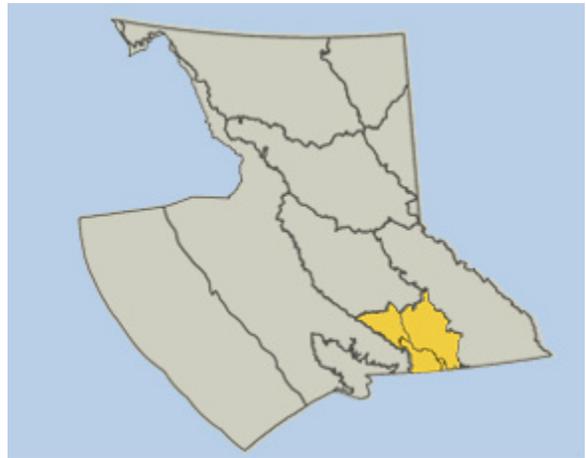
Location – This Ecoprovince is located on the north side of the Gulf of Alaska. It extends from Lynn Canal in the east, across the Alsek, St. Elias, Wrangell, and Chugach Mountains to the Kenai Mountains in the west.



8. Southern Interior Ecoprovince

Location - the Southern Interior Ecoprovince lies east of the crest of the Coast and Cascade Mountains and west of the Columbia Mountains. In the north it abuts the Central Interior Ecoprovince, and it extends southward across the Canada-USA border to the northern edge of the dry Columbia Basin. It is the southernmost part of the Interior Plateau system. The leeward portion of the coastal mountains and the drier portion of the Columbia Highlands are included because they share much of the same climate as the main plateau.

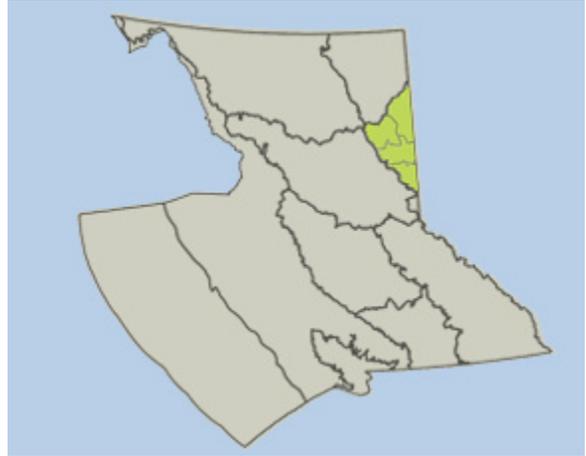
The largest human population in the interior of British Columbia occurs in this Ecoprovince. Agriculture is largely based on grazing and forage crops, but orchards and vineyards are integrated with a large and successful tourist industry in the Okanagan Valley.



9. Boreal Plains Ecoprovince

Location – The Boreal Plains Ecoprovince lies east of the Rocky Mountains, south of the Fort Nelson Lowlands. It occurs on the Alberta Plateau, and consists of plateaus, plains, prairies, and lowlands, and away from the deeply incised large rivers is generally of low relief. It extends eastward, across northern Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and southern Northwest Territories.

Agriculture is limited to grazing with some cereal and forage crop production in the Peace Lowland Ecoregion. Natural gas production and mining occurs throughout the hinterland and many seismic lines criss-cross the area. Logging of white spruce, lodgepole pine and trembling aspen has been occurs where good timber stands permit, but most forest removal is through clearing for agricultural fields.



10. Taiga Plains Ecoprovince

Location - This ecoprovince lies to the east of the northern Rocky Mountains in the northeastern portion of British Columbia. It extends into the northwestern portion of Alberta above the Peace Lowland and into the Northwest Territories to Great Slave Lake where it follows the Mackenzie River to the mouth of the Liard River, then south along the eastern flank of the Mackenzie Mountains back into B.C. It is characterized as a large lowland that has been dissected below the Alberta Plateau surface by the Liard River and its tributaries, namely the Fort Nelson and Petitot Rivers.

