

## Biodiversity and Bowen

Bowen Island Conservancy  
Undercurrent May 17, 2024

*The Conservancy will soon launch a new initiative focused on Bowen's biodiversity, **Caring for Nature: The Nexwlélexwm / Bowen Biodiversity Conservation Initiative**. Watch for information in the next few weeks.*

Nexwlélexwm / Bowen Island is not just a place; it's a living, breathing tapestry of Nature's finest displays, from lush rainforests and dry coastal bluffs to streams and wetlands and vibrant marine life. Those of us who call it home share a unique bond with the island's Nature, a connection that goes beyond simple geography to touch the very essence of who we are.

So, we might ask, how is Nature doing on Bowen Island? When assessing the health of Nature in any place, whether Bowen Island or Borneo or our entire planet, scientists consider its biodiversity—short for biological diversity – as an important measure of Nature's health and resilience. Biodiversity is the rich variety of life on Earth— and it shapes every corner of Bowen Island, from the whispering trees of Crippen Regional Park to the rugged shores of the Wild Coast Natural Refuge. It's the mosaic of plants, animals, fungi, and microorganisms, along with their genetic diversity and the complex ecosystems they form.

Nexwlélexwm / Bowen Island is a mosaic of different ecological habitats – mature forests, dry coastal bluffs, wetlands, lakes and streams, and intertidal shores. Each such habitat has its own mix of life; the more diverse the life is in each habitat, the more likely its ecological function can remain healthy in the face of the climate extremes that are coming. Each species, no matter how small, has an important role to play and helps maintain the balance of the ecosystem. The decay of fallen trees, for instance, nourishes the soil, promoting lush plant growth which in turn supports a wider range of animal species.

The forests and marine plants of Bowen are more than just habitats; they are guardians of the climate, absorbing carbon dioxide and helping stabilize our climate. This natural process of carbon sequestration is vital in our fight against climate change, making the island not just a refuge for wildlife, but a player in global environmental health.



*Photo by Sheree Johnson*

The value of Bowen Island's diverse Nature extends beyond ecology. It is also the backbone of our local economy. Friends, family, and tourists visit the island, drawn by its natural beauty, hiking trails, and wildlife. Their spending supports local businesses and artisans, who find inspiration in the island's landscapes to create unique, beautiful crafts that reflect the spirit of Bowen.

Conservation efforts such as controlling invasive species and protecting wildlife habitats not only enhance the local biodiversity but also serve as a living classroom for both residents and visitors. Local schools and programs leverage these conservation efforts to teach young people about environmental stewardship, instilling a sense of responsibility and reverence for nature that can last a lifetime.



*Photo by Will Husby*

As Bowen Island grows, the challenge remains to harmonize human activity with the preservation of its unique natural landscapes. Biodiversity is not merely an indicator of ecological health but a blueprint for sustainable living. By cherishing and protecting our local biodiversity, we enhance our own quality of life and ensure that future generations can also enjoy the natural wonders of Bowen Island. This isn't just conservation; it's a commitment to life itself and our Bowen home.

*The Bowen Island Conservancy is a land trust and registered charity, that works to protect and preserve the natural environment of the island—from endangered coastal bluffs, to inland lakes, to wetlands and fens.*