

Together for Wildlife

Together for Wildlife HCTF Conservation Fellowship Recipient 2023



Persia Khan

Persia Khan (she/her) is an MSc student in the Applied Conservation Science Lab at the University of Victoria and works with the Heiltsuk Integrated Resource Management Department (HIRMD) and the Raincoast Conservation Foundation. Persia holds a BSc Honours in Geography from the University of Victoria, and is excited to continue her research in coastal systems and wildlife ecology.

Persia gained an appreciation for large landscapes, and the species that call them home, in the Mountain National Parks, where she worked for several summers on different aquatic, vegetation, and wildlife related monitoring projects. Through her work with different organizations such as the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative and Raincoast Conservation Foundation, Persia developed an understanding for the importance of applied research and conducting science that can support evidence-based policy. Throughout her early research career, Persia gravitated to working with remote camera data, and is fascinated by the stories wildlife tell when no one is watching.

Persia's thesis, in partnership with the HIRMD, investigates the potential responses of different culturally and ecologically important mammals to variation in forest seral stage. Persia along with a team of technicians and skippers deployed a remote camera grid in Heiltsuk Territory to collect data on wildlife occupancy across over twenty watersheds of varying forest age and habitat quality. While some second-growth forests, as a result of industrial logging in the Territory, are nearing maturity, other stands have been more recently reverted to early seral stages or remain as intact old growth. This has created an opportunity to understand the potential effects logging has on wildlife. This project seeks to quantify the relationship between wildlife and forest age at the stand- and watershed-scale, allowing for inferences at both site-level and over larger areas to be more consistent with species home ranges. Days in the field included bushwhacking up steep coastal terrain, tracking different species using game trails and other signs, and deploying over ninety remote cameras.

This project represents a continuation of longstanding ecological research in Heiltsuk Territory, and Persia is grateful to her project partners for the opportunity to work and spend time in such a rich environment. She is excited to grow with this project over the duration of her degree, and aspires for this work to extend beyond research, providing land managers with tools to minimize resource management impacts on wildlife. Persia believes there is immense value in working together to support wildlife through inclusive stewardship and supporting a diversity of voices in research and resource management.



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