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At Risk or Dismissed?: The Development of Designated Species at Risk Legislation in British Columbia

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The Holocene extinction event is an ongoing global loss of biodiversity. It is also called the Anthropocene extinction as the disappearance of species are primarily linked to human activity. Species at risk is the term used in Canada to describe a species that is in danger of extinction or disappearance from a region. Species at risk legislation are the laws created to conserve and protect biodiversity. BC has the highest biodiversity of any Canadian jurisdiction, and subsequently the highest number of species at risk. However, BC is one of the few Canadian jurisdictions without dedicated species at risk legislation. I will compare BC to provinces with species at risk legislation to show whether a lack of legislation results in less effective conservation. I will do this by comparing legislation, species listing decisions, and recovery action plans from different jurisdictions. I will also interview conservation stakeholders from different types of protected areas in BC to find out whether the absence of designated legislation has created variability in how species at risk are managed in different areas of BC. It is critical to identify the most effective policies that could be used as a model for the development of potential legislation.