

# Cryptic Paw

## *Nephroma occultum*

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### Conservation Status

Included in Section 7 Notice: No

Designated as Identified Wildlife: No

Federally Designated (COSEWIC): **Yes (Special Concern)**

Species identified in Kamloops, Lillooet or Merritt SFMP: No

### Description

- Rare lichen characterized by a yellowish, greenish, or bluish-grey upper surface with net-shaped ridges, and a hairless tan to sometimes blackish lower surface.
- 2-7 cm wide with rounded lobes 4-12 mm wide.
- Strongly associated with humid old growth cedar-hemlock forests.
- Colonizes a broad range of trees including (listed in decreasing order of importance): Subalpine fir, Western hemlock, Sitka spruce, Amabilis Fir, White spruce, Mountain hemlock, and Paper birch.
- Tends to grow on living branches, usually near the branch tips among live needles. Less common or absent over large branches or on the trunks of trees.

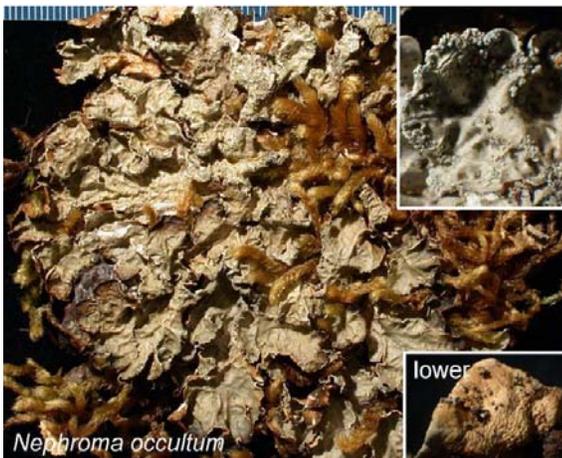


Photo: Bruce McCune



Photo: Stephen Sharnoff

### **BEC Zones**

CWH  
ICH

### **Elevation**

Below 1,200m (most are found between 400-800m).

### **Important Habitat Features**

- Moist old growth forested habitat below 1200m in ICH and CWH BEC zones.
- Key tree species including (in descending order of importance): subalpine fir, Western hemlock, sitka spruce, amabilis fir, white spruce, mountain hemlock, and paper birch.
- Requires high humidity, stable environmental conditions and nutrient rich soil.

### **Forest Districts**

Columbia  
Campbell River

### **Headwaters**

Kalum  
North Island - Central Coast District  
Prince George  
Skeena Stikine - Bulkley component  
Skeena Stikine - Cassiar component

### **Management Recommendations**

Consult with a Registered Professional Biologist prior to implementing the following management recommendations because certain situations may require custom solutions based on specific site characteristics.

- Identify locations where this species is known to occur: if available, obtain occurrence data from the Conservation Data Centre (<http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/cdc/>) and if necessary conduct surveys to confirm presence or absence of this species.

Where this species is found:

- Determine the extent of the local population and habitat area with a site visit.
- Establish a no harvest buffer zone large enough to maintain ecological site conditions associated with this species, including undisturbed forest structure, substrate, and associated microclimate. This buffer should include (in decreasing order of importance) old growth stands of subalpine fir, Western hemlock, sitka spruce, amabilis fir, white spruce, mountain hemlock, or paper birch.
- Retain old growth forested habitat in the ICH and CWH zones adjacent the no harvest buffer zone to maintain suitable microclimate and to aid dispersal.
- Do not use prescribed fire.
- Do not use herbicides.

- If necessary, use insecticides to control hemlock looper (*Lambdina fiscellaria lugubrosa*) outbreaks in the area. Defoliation of old growth forests by this species is the primary natural source of cryptic paw habitat loss.

## References

Goward, T. 1995. COSEWIC status report on the cryptic paw *Nephroma occultum* in Canada. Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada. 1-40 pp.

Leshner, R.D., C.C. Derr, and L.H. Geiser. 2003. Natural History and Management Considerations for Northwest Forest Plan Survey and Manage Lichens Based on Information as of the Year 2000. USDA Forest Service Pacific Northwest Region Natural Resources Technical Paper, Portland, OR, R6-NR-S&M-TP-03-03. 211 p.