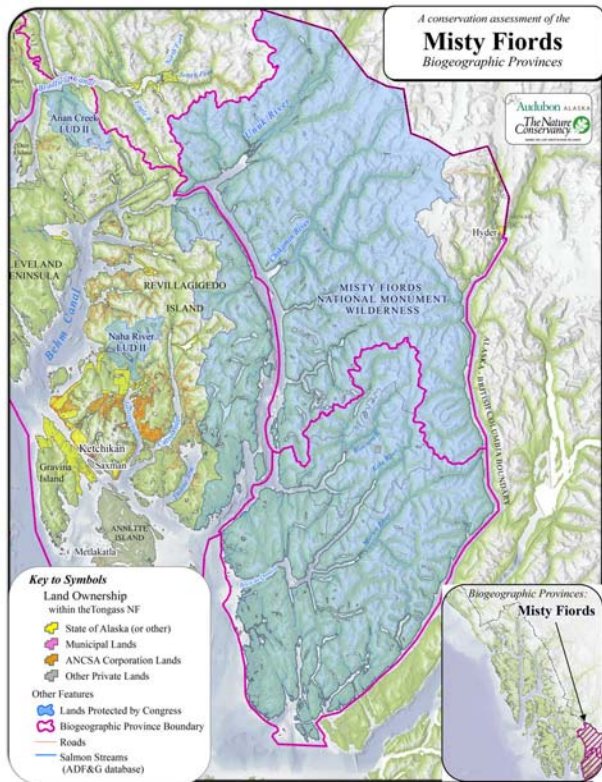


## South Misty Province



**FIG 1.** South Misty Province.

The South Misty Fjords Province is the southernmost mainland province in Southeast (Fig 1). Depending on one's definition, South Misty has the highest portion of "protected" land among Tongass provinces. Nearly the entire province is National Monument, but 20% of the Monument surrounding the Quartz Hill molybdenite deposit between Blossom and Keta Rivers has been withdrawn to non-wilderness status to allow for mineral development.

South Misty has gentler topography, fewer glaciers and nearly twice as much estuary and productive old growth as North Misty Province. All of these

contribute to greater habitat value and connectivity for most wildlife species.

Warmest of the mainland provinces, South Misty is predominantly in the low and intermediate snow zones, while all the others lie mostly within the "very deep" zone. Rainfall is high, however, and the coastal portions are lashed by storms from Dixon Entrance.

The eastern till-covered lowlands are covered primarily by shore pine bogs, a fairly unusual combination for the generally precipitous mainland coast. The largest contiguous patch of large-tree forest occupies a low bench of volcanic flow rock at Point Trollop.

The more mountainous western portion of the province is largely granitic and therefore unproductive. It supports modest hemlock forest, with large trees restricted to valley bottoms.

Forest plant associations are more diverse in South Misty than in other mainland provinces because of warmer climate and greater proximity to northward-migrating coastal flora such as Pacific yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), and bearberry honeysuckle (*Lonicera involucrata*). A Research Natural Area (RNA) has been established at the northern limit of Pacific silver fir (*Abies amabilis*).

The South Misty Province has 285 mi (756 km) of anadromous fish streams (Chapter 2, Table 11) and six of the best pink salmon watersheds in Southeast (Flanders et al. 1998). Highest ranking watersheds (VCUs) are as follows, with escapement estimates in parentheses: Wilson Lake (242,000), Mink Bay (162,400), Marten River (90,000), Keta River (87,050), Blossom River (65,800), and Tombstone Bay (62,000). The Wilson Lake and Mink Bay watersheds have the first and second highest pink salmon escapement of any watersheds surveyed by ADF&G in Southeast. Like most of the province, these watersheds fall within protected Wilderness. The Blossom and Keta

watersheds, however, were removed from Wilderness status to allow for access to eventual molybdenum mining projects by Cominco.



**FIG 2.** View up the head of a forested inlet and small estuary in South Misty. South Misty is less steep and supports more productive forested habitat than the North Misty Province. (John Schoen photo)

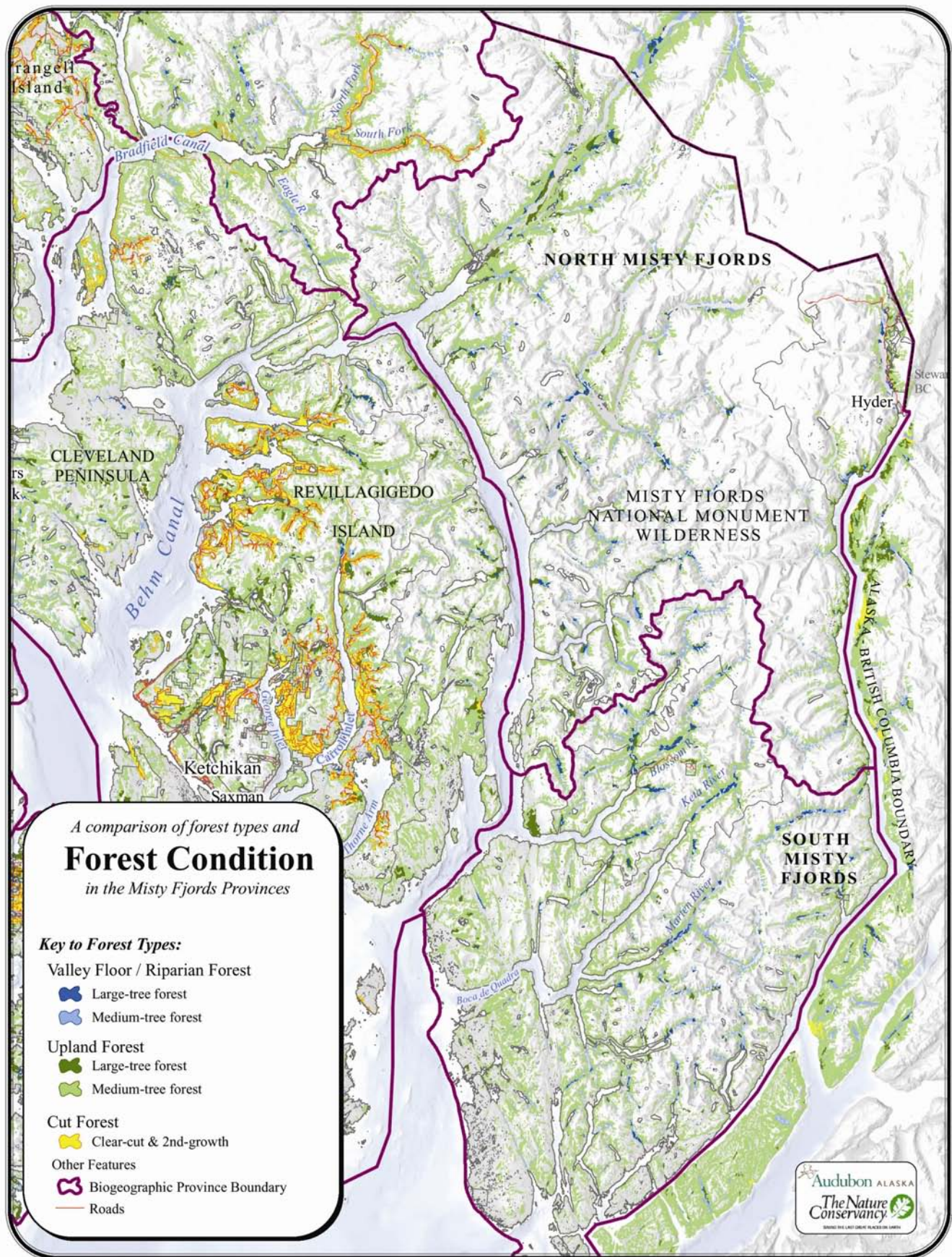
Deer numbers are relatively low in this province compared to island populations. However, deer numbers in South Misty are generally higher than North Misty and much of the northern mainland because of mellower topography and lower snow accumulations. Mountain goats occur throughout the province in high-elevation, steep, rocky habitat. Black bears are relatively common in this province on tidal estuaries at the heads of bays with productive salmon streams. Brown bears, however are more common in North Misty.

The Saxman Tlingit had a village at Cape Fox. Kah Shakes herring fishery is currently one of the only human enterprises in this essentially pristine province.

Like North Misty, there has been little timber harvest in this province and the habitat values for the focal species addressed in this assessment range between 95-100% of their original values. Over 95% of the province is protected in watershed-scale reserves. Considering the significant habitat protection measures provided by Wilderness designation, the long-term conservation of this province seems assured. However, the future of the molybdenum mining projects by Cominco may have an influence on habitat and wildlife and fish populations in the area withdrawn from Wilderness designation.

Forest types, historical logging, and roads are mapped within the South Misty Province in Figure 3.

Refer to the Arc Reader GIS database in Appendix C of this report to review detailed mapped information on location of large-tree stands, past timber harvest, roads, forest reserves, protected areas, and regions of core ecological values.



**FIG 3.** A comparison of forest types and forest condition within the South Misty Province of southeastern Alaska.