

Marine Mammals – Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales – Critical Habitat

description

Killer whales (*Orcinus orca*), with their distinctive black and white colouring, are the largest members of the dolphin family. Since the 1970s, British Columbia killer whales have been well studied, using a variety of techniques like photo-identification, behavioural studies, genetic research and acoustics. These techniques have allowed researchers to identify individuals and have a better understanding of population structure, size and movements.

There are 3 types (ecotypes) of killer whales that live in British Columbia waters: resident, transient, and offshore killer whales. Each group has distinct differences in their range, diet and social dynamics, and they do not associate with one another. In the summer and fall northern residents are most commonly found in Johnstone Strait, Queen Charlotte Strait and adjoining channels, but range between Dixon Entrance and Alberni Inlet. During the summer and fall southern resident killer whales are found in the southern portions of the Strait of Georgia, eastern Strait of Juan de Fuca and the transboundary waters between BC and Washington State. Northern and southern residents' principal diet is chinook and chum salmon. Little is known about diet and distribution of residents during the winter months.

Critical habitat for killer whales is associated with feeding, resting, socializing and mating areas, as well as beach rubbing for the northern populations. The three areas defined as potential critical habitat are of seasonal importance to northern residents.

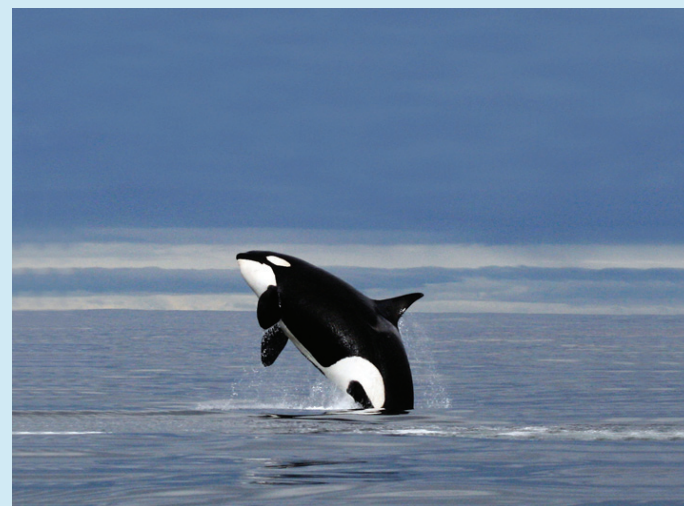


PHOTO: EVGENIYA LAZAREVA



PHOTO: CHARLIE SHORT

data sources

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada

data resolution

- None provided.

date of analysis

- 2006

date collected

- Data collected by numerous observers during 1973-2005 were compiled into a database maintained at the Pacific Biological Station, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, for the analyses of resident killer whale distribution reported in Ford (2006).

reviewers

- Not reviewed.

reviewer comments

- None provided.

caveats of use

- See the “Northern Resident Killer Whale Distribution” page in this atlas for additional information on areas important to Northern resident killer whales in the Canadian Pacific.
- Data may also be available from the Cetacean Research Program at Pacific Biological Station, Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
- Opportunistic sightings data are available through the British Columbia Cetacean Sightings Network (BCCSN), through the Vancouver Aquarium. See: www.vanaqua.org/conservationinaction/killerwhales/network.htm
- Recommended date of expiry for use of these data in a marine planning context: Upon revision of critical habitat.

map, feature data and metadata access




- Visit www.bcmca.ca/data for more information.

references

- Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Recovery Strategy for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales (*Orcinus orca*) in Canada. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series, Fisheries & Oceans Canada, Ottawa. 2008. ix+ 81 pp.
- Ford, J.K.B. *An Assessment of critical habitats of resident killer whales in waters off the Pacific Coast of Canada*. Canadian Science Advisory Secretariat, Research Document 2006/072.

BCMCA Atlas
Marine Mammals
Northern and Southern Resident
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Legend

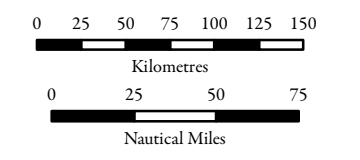
-  Designated Critical Habitat - Northern Residents
-  Potential Critical Habitat - Northern Residents
-  Designated Critical Habitat - Southern Residents

Data Sources:
 Fisheries and Oceans Canada

Base Data:
 ESRI Base Data, GeoBase, GeoBC, NOAA, Natural Resources Canada, USGS, Washington State Government

Thematic Data:
 For more information on data sources and methods please refer to the facing page to this map

Projection: BC Albers NAD83



1:4,250,000 *
 * Written scales are approximate and are based on a 11 x 17 inch paper size.

Prepared for:



Map template by Caslys Consulting Ltd.
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