

## A2 Marine Mammal Guidelines and Marine Protected Areas

### 5 General Guidelines for Aquatic Species at Risk and Important Marine Mammal Areas

Fisheries and Oceans Canada is responsible for ensuring the protection, conservation and recovery of aquatic species at risk listed under the [Species at Risk Act](#), and the protection of a species' designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined in the *Species at Risk Act* section 2(1) as "...the habitat that is necessary for the survival or recovery of a listed wildlife species and that is identified as the species' critical habitat in the recovery strategy or in an action plan for the species." The *Species at Risk Act* defines habitat for aquatic species at risk as "... spawning grounds and nursery, rearing, food supply, migration and any other areas on which aquatic species depend directly or indirectly in order to carry out their life processes, or areas where aquatic species formerly occurred and have the potential to be reintroduced."

Under the *Species at Risk Act*, it is an offence to: kill, harm, harass, capture, or take an individual of a wildlife species listed as extirpated, endangered, or threatened; possess, collect, buy, sell or trade an individual (or any part or derivative of such an individual) of a wildlife species listed as extirpated, endangered, or threatened; and, damage or destroy the residence of one or more individuals of a wildlife species listed as extirpated, endangered, or threatened. It is also prohibited to destroy any part of the critical habitat of any listed endangered or threatened species. Individuals who contravene the *Species at Risk Act* prohibitions may be found guilty of an offence and liable for a fine or penalty pursuant to section 97 of the *Species at Risk Act*.

In cases where it is not possible to avoid causing prohibited effects, proponents of works, undertaking, or activities may apply to the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans for a permit under the *Species at Risk Act*, and/or an authorization under paragraphs 34.4(2)(b) and 35(2)(b) of the [Fisheries Act](#). Under section 73 of the *Species at Risk Act*, the Minister may enter into an agreement with a person, or issue a permit to a person, authorizing the person to engage in an activity affecting a listed aquatic species, any part of its critical habitat, or the residences of its individuals, provided that the requirements of subsections 73(2) to 73(6.1) of the *Species at Risk Act* are met. After it is entered into or issued, the Minister must also comply with the requirements of subsection 73(7). To view the list of extirpated, endangered, threatened, and special concern species currently listed under Schedule 1 of the *Species at Risk Act*, please visit the [Species at Risk Public Registry](#).

The [Marine Mammal Regulations](#) under the Fisheries Act prohibit disturbance to marine mammals (whales, porpoises, dolphins, seals, sea lions, walrus and sea otters) except in the following circumstances: when fishing for them under the authority of those Regulations; when carrying out a work, undertaking or activity that is authorized, otherwise permitted or required under the Act; or in a manner authorized under the *Species at Risk Act* or set out in a licence issued under the [Fishery \(General\) Regulations](#) to fish for marine mammals for experimental, scientific, educational or public display purposes. Under the [Marine Mammal Regulations](#), disturbance to marine mammals includes: approaching, attempting to feed, swim or interact with, moving, enticing, or causing movement, separating from groups/mothers from calves, trapping between a vessel and shore or other vessels and tagging or marking. Disturbing marine mammals may cause injury or harm and interfere with natural behaviors, including feeding and socializing. Individuals who contravene the *Marine Mammal Regulations* may be found guilty of an offence and liable for penalty pursuant to section 78 of the *Fisheries Act*. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans may issue an [authorization to disturb a marine mammal in some circumstances under section 38 of the Marine Mammal Regulations](#) for activities

#### Did you know?

[WhaleALERT](#) is a free app which displays up to date information and management areas for mariners to access the safest and most current information to reduce the risk of ship and whale collisions on the east coast.

[The WhaleReport Alert System \(WRAS\)](#), available for Pacific Canadian waters, is a mobile and desktop-based program which alerts commercial mariners to the presence of whales so that they may take mitigation measures. Whale sightings are obtained from real-time observations reported to the B.C. Cetacean Sightings Network by trusted observers using the WhaleReport app. WRAS will only transmit sightings to certain vessel classes (e.g. large, commercial transport), and is not available to the general public in order to reduce vessel disturbance to at-risk whale populations.

that will disturb a marine mammal (whales, porpoises, dolphins, seals, sea lions, walrus and sea otters). Careful adherence to the general guidelines below will reduce the likelihood of disturbance.

Transport Canada is responsible for promoting safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally responsible transportation. The [Canada Shipping Act, 2001](#) gives the Minister of Transport the authority to make regulations respecting the protection of the marine environment from the impacts of navigation and shipping activities (s. 35.1(1)), as well as the authority to make an Interim Order if immediate action is required to deal with a direct or indirect risk to the marine environment (s.10.1(1)), including on a precautionary basis.

### **Laws, Regulations and General Guidelines when in the Vicinity of Marine Mammals**

The following guidance, adapted from [Be Whale Wise Guidelines](#), provides an overview of ways in which you can prevent disturbance to marine mammals as well as stay up to date on current legislation and regulations. In addition to these general guidelines, the *Marine Mammal Regulations include provisions that protect marine mammals from disturbance, while the Species at Risk Act* provides protection to species or populations listed under the Act. Be sure to stay informed about new regulations or forms of protection by carefully reviewing any information in this Notice to Mariners which applies to your location and activities, and abide by posted restrictions or contact a local authority for further information.

1. BE AWARE of critical habitat areas. To view the most current information on aquatic species at risk and their critical habitat, visit the [Species at Risk Public Registry](#) and the [Aquatic species at risk map](#). For marine protected areas, visit: the [Open Maps Data Viewer](#).
2. SLOW DOWN: Reduce speed to less than 7.0 knots when within 1000 metres (0.540 nautical miles) (unless otherwise specified) of the nearest marine mammal to reduce engine noise, and vessel wake and risk of collision. Avoid abrupt course changes.
3. DO NOT APPROACH or position your vessel closer than **100** metres (0.054 nautical miles) to any marine mammal and stay at least **200** metres (0.108 nautical miles) away from any whale, dolphin or porpoise in resting position or with its calf as per the *Marine Mammal Regulations*. Please note: some species and areas require greater minimum approach distances - please refer to individual species' needs in this Notice to Mariners and in other online sources referenced, including: [Marine Mammal Regulation's approach distances to marine mammals](#) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' [watching marine wildlife](#).

**Protecting the Southern Resident Killer Whales:  
Approach Distances, Vessel Restricted Zones and  
Speed-Restricted Zones in Southern British Columbia**

The Minister of Transport has issued the *Interim Order for the Protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whale (Orcinus orca) in the Waters of Southern British Columbia, 2026*, in effect from June 1, 2026, until May 31, 2027, to support recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales recognizing the imminent threats to their survival and recovery. The Interim Order sets out three mandatory measures for vessels operating within certain areas of the waters of southern British Columbia to reduce underwater noise and physical disturbance to Southern Resident Killer Whales.

First, the Interim Order prohibits vessels and persons operating and navigating a vessel, subject to authorized exceptions, from approaching any Southern Resident killer whales at less than **1000 metres** within Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat and British Columbia coastal waters between Campbell River (Cape Mudge) and Malaspina Peninsula (Sarah Point) including Howe Sound, to just north of Ucluelet, including Barkley Sound from June 1, 2026, until May 31, 2027.

Second, the Interim Order creates two Vessel Restricted Zones, where vessel traffic is prohibited, including fishing, whale watching and recreational boating, subject to exceptions, June 1, 2026, until November 30, 2026. These zones are located off the south-west coast of Pender Island and south-east end of Saturna Island.

Third, the Interim Order creates two Speed-Restricted Zones, located near Swiftsure Bank, in which all vessels, subject to exceptions, are restricted to a maximum speed of 10 knots over ground when safe to do so, in effect from June 1, 2026, until November 30, 2026.

The enforcement regime under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001* applies to violations of the Interim Order. Every person or vessel subject to an Interim Order shall comply with it. Any person or vessel that does not comply with the Interim Order may be subject to:

- an administrative monetary penalty of up to \$250,000, and/or
- is liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than \$1,000,000 or to imprisonment for a term of not more than 18 months, or to both.

Visit the [Interim Order for the Protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whale \(Orcinus orca\) in the Waters of Southern British Columbia](#), for more information:

Visit the [2026 suite of management measures to support the recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales, including fishing management measures](#), for more information.

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**Protecting the North Atlantic right whale:  
Speed restriction measures in the Gulf of St. Lawrence**

Due to changing migration of North Atlantic right whales and their increased presence in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Government of Canada has established seasonal vessel traffic management measures including speed restrictions of not more than **8.0 knots** or **10.0 knots** and a navigational restricted area in specific zones for all vessels above **13 metres** in length. Please refer to the [Notice to Mariners monthly editions](#) for additional details and consult Whale Insight for the latest right whale observations: [Whale Insight – An interactive map of North Atlantic right whale detections in Canada \(dfo-mpo.gc.ca\)](#).

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4. BE CAUTIOUS, COURTEOUS and QUIET around areas of known or suspected marine wildlife activity, in the water or at haul-outs and bird colonies. When safe to do so, turn off fish finders and echo sounders. LOOK in all directions before planning your approach or departure from viewing wildlife.
5. ALWAYS approach and depart from the side, moving parallel to the marine mammal's direction of travel while maintaining a distance of at least **100** metres (0.054 nautical miles) to any marine mammal, and a distance of at least **200** metres (0.108 nautical miles) away from any whale, dolphin or porpoise in resting position or with its calf as per the *Marine Mammal Regulations* (Note: greater minimum approach distances are required for some species and areas - please refer to individual species' needs in this Notice to Mariners and in other [online sources referenced](#)). DO NOT APPROACH from the front or from behind.
6. PLACE ENGINE IN NEUTRAL OR SHUTDOWN and allow animals to pass if your vessel is not in compliance with regulations. Please note: greater minimum approach distances are required for some species - please refer to individual species' needs in this Notice to Mariners and in other [online sources referenced](#).
7. PAY ATTENTION and move away, slowly, and cautiously, at the first sign of disturbance or agitation.
8. STAY on the OFFSHORE side of marine mammals when they are traveling close to shore.
9. ALWAYS AVOID going through groups of marine mammals. Hold course and reduce speed gradually to discourage bow or stern-riding.
10. LIMIT your on-water viewing time to 30 minutes or less. This will minimize the cumulative impact of many vessels and provide consideration to other viewers.
11. DO NOT feed, swim with, or interact with, tag or mark, move or entice, or cause to move marine wildlife from the immediate vicinity in which you find them.
12. DO NOT separate a marine mammal from members of its group or go between a mother and a calf.
13. DO NOT trap a marine mammal or its group between a vessel and the shore or between a vessel and one or more other vessels.
14. NEVER approach using aircraft or drones.
15. REPORT any collisions with marine mammals, or sightings of entangled, injured, stranded or dead marine mammals or sea turtles to Fisheries and Oceans Canada as well as to the to the appropriate marine animal response organization by referring to the information provided below.
  - [Report a marine mammal or sea turtle incident or sighting](#).
  - Pursuant to section 39 of the *Marine Mammal Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act*, a reporting [form](#) must be completed immediately following any incidental contact between a marine mammal and a vehicle or fishing gear. Completed reporting forms should be sent to Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

**Whale Warning Flag  
(only used in some regions)**



If a vessel is flying a Whale Warning flag (see above), the vessel is in the presence of whales. Please slow down and proceed with caution. Respect the general guidelines when in the vicinity of marine mammals.

If you see an injured, stranded, entangled or dead marine mammal or sea turtle, immediately contact the appropriate experts via the following emails or 24 hour toll-free numbers.

Region	Contact Information for Marine Mammal or Sea Turtle Incident Response
Newfoundland & Labrador	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Whale Release and Strandings Newfoundland and Labrador (Tangly Whales Inc.):</b> 1-888-895-3003 or 1-709-895-3003</li> </ul>
New Brunswick, Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Marine Animal Response Society:</b> 1-866-567-6277 <a href="mailto:mars@marineanimals.ca">mars@marineanimals.ca</a></li> <li>• VHF Channel 16</li> <li>• <b>Canadian Sea Turtle Network:</b> 1-888-729-4667 <a href="mailto:info@seaturtle.ca">info@seaturtle.ca</a> <a href="http://CanadianSeaTurtleNetwork.org">Canadian Sea Turtle Network</a></li> </ul>
Quebec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Quebec Marine Mammal Emergency Network (QMMEN):</b> 1-877-722-5346 <a href="mailto:reseau@gremm.org">reseau@gremm.org</a></li> </ul>
Arctic	<p><b>Fisheries and Oceans Canada:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Northwest Territories - Inuvik:</b> 1-867-777-7500</li> <li>• <b>Northwest Territories - Yellowknife:</b> 1-867-669-4900</li> <li>• <b>Nunavut - Iqaluit:</b> 1-867-979-8000</li> </ul>
Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fisheries and Oceans Canada's BC Marine Mammal Response Network (Observe, Record, Report):</b> 1-800-465-4336 <a href="mailto:DFO.ORR-MPO.ONS@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">DFO.ORR-MPO.ONS@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a></li> <li>• VHF Channel 16</li> </ul>

16. HELP track marine mammals and sea turtles to ensure their safety by [reporting a sighting of live and healthy animals](#).

Region	Contact Information
Pacific	<p>Report healthy and live marine mammal or sea turtle sightings for research purposes. Is the animal injured, stranded or dead? <a href="#">Report it here</a>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phone: 1-866-I SAW ONE (472-9663)</li> <li>• <a href="#">Ocean Wise Sightings Network</a></li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Download the WhaleReport app</a></p>
Central & Arctic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northwest Territories – Inuvik: 1-867-777-7500</li> <li>• Northwest Territories – Yellowknife: 1-867-669-4900</li> </ul> <p>Nunavut – Iqaluit: 1-867-979-8000</p>
Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia & Prince Edward Island	<p>Maritimes Region Whale Sightings Database <a href="mailto:XMARWhaleSightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">XMARWhaleSightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a> <a href="#">Maritimes Region Whale Sightings Database</a></p> <p>Canadian Sea Turtle Network 1-888-729-4667 (toll-free) <a href="mailto:info@seaturtle.ca">info@seaturtle.ca</a> <a href="http://CanadianSeaTurtleNetwork.org">Canadian Sea Turtle Network</a></p>
Newfoundland & Labrador	<p>Marine mammal: <a href="mailto:dfo.nlscmammalandturtlesightings-observmamifettortuesctnl.mpo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca">dfo.nlscmammalandturtlesightings-observmamifettortuesctnl.mpo@dfo-mpo.gc.ca</a></p>

## ATLANTIC REGION

### North Atlantic Right Whale

Species Status: Endangered

Threats: Vessel strikes, entanglement in fishing gear, disturbance and habitat reduction or degradation (e.g., contaminants, acoustic disturbance, vessel presence disturbance) and changes in food supply.

Characteristics of the North Atlantic Right Whale: V-shaped blow, no dorsal fin, deeply notched flukes, callosities (white patches on the head and sometimes other parts of the body).

Minimum Approach Distance: **100** metres from a single free-swimming whale; 200 metres from resting whales or a mother with a calf in all Canadian fisheries waters, as per the Marine Mammal Regulations.

Immediately report any collisions with whales, or entangled or dead whales to Fisheries and Oceans Canada ([Report a marine mammal or sea turtle incident or sighting](#)) and the Marine Animal Response Society hotline (1-866-567-6277), VHF channel 16, or Fundy Traffic VHF channel 14.

Report sightings of live, free-swimming North Atlantic right whales, including number observed, location (lat/long), date and photos to [DFO.GLFWhales-BaleinesGLF.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.GLFWhales-BaleinesGLF.MPO@dfo-mpo.gc.ca). Please consult [Whale Insight](#) for the latest Right Whale observations.

### North Atlantic Right Whale Critical Habitats

#### Grand Manan Basin Critical Habitat

See also the mandatory Bay of Fundy Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS), which largely avoids the Grand Manan Basin Critical Habitat. This can be found in Section A5 - Navigation Safety.

Guidelines (April - December):

- Vessels should avoid passage through this area if possible. Avoidance is the most effective means to eliminate or reduce acoustic disturbances and vessel collisions.
- If passage through this area is required, decrease vessel speed to 10.0 knots or less and post a look-out to increase the likelihood of sighting and avoiding marine mammals. Increased caution must be exercised in conditions of reduced visibility, such as rain, fog, rough sea state, or at night. Be aware that marine mammals often travel in small groups dispersed over an area of several miles. Maneuver around marine mammals with caution (see general guidelines). Do not assume the marine mammals will move out of the way.

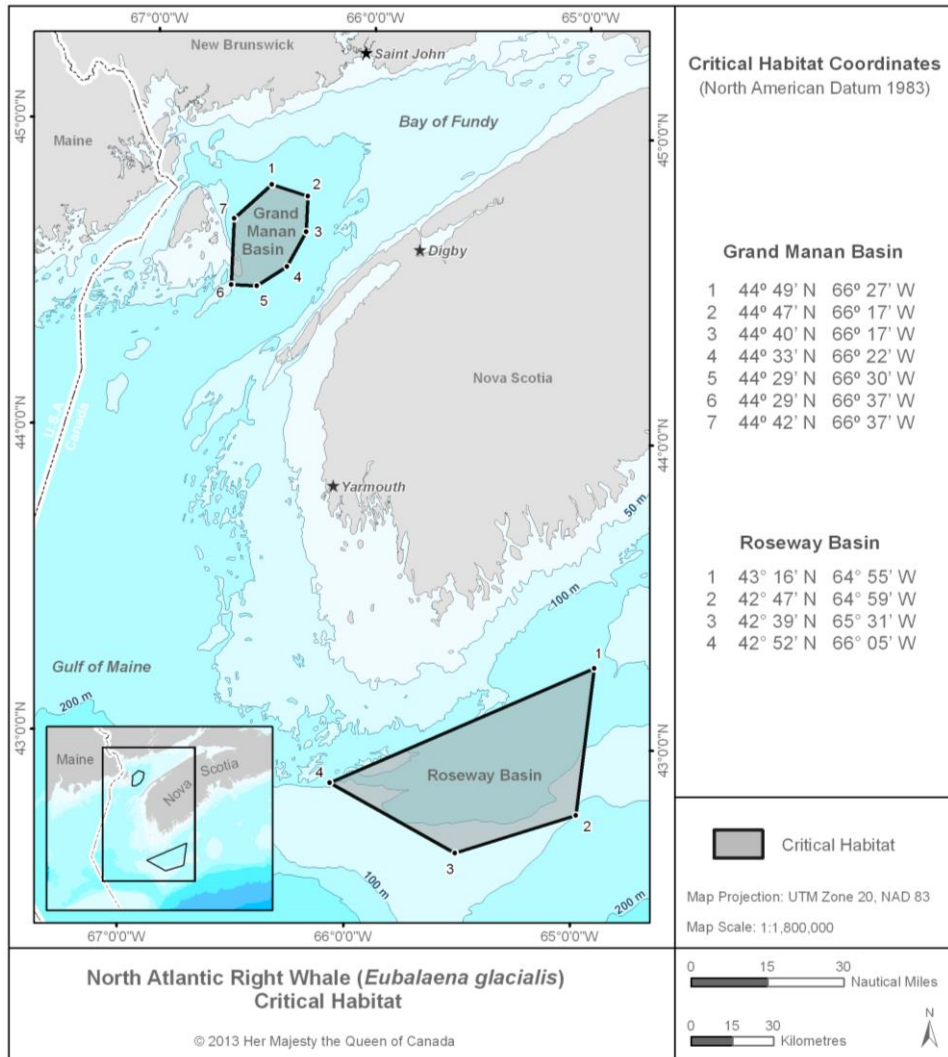
#### Roseway Basin Critical Habitat and International Maritime Organization-Adopted Area to Be Avoided

Guidelines (June - December):

- To significantly reduce the risk of vessel strikes on North Atlantic Right Whales, it is recommended that ships of 300 gross tonnages and greater, solely in transit during the period of June 1<sup>st</sup> through December 31<sup>st</sup>, avoid the area. This routing measure has been adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) as a seasonal Area to be Avoided described in IMO. SN.1/Circ.263. October 2007.
- Smaller vessels are also asked to avoid passage through the area.
- If passage through this area is required, decrease vessel speed to 10.0 knots or less and post a look-out to increase the likelihood of sighting and avoiding marine mammals. Increased caution must be exercised in conditions of reduced visibility, such as rain, fog, rough sea state, or at night. Be aware that marine mammals often travel in small groups dispersed over an area of several miles. Maneuver around marine mammals with caution (see general guidelines). Do not assume the marine mammals will move out of the way.

Learn more about the recovery process for the North Atlantic Right Whale at the [Species at Risk Public Registry](#)

Critical Habitat for the North Atlantic Right Whale is shown in the map below:



**Northern Bottlenose Whale (Scotian Shelf population)**

Species Status: Endangered

Threats: Acoustic disturbance, fisheries interactions, vessel strikes, pollution and chemical contaminants, and climate change.

Characteristics of the Northern Bottlenose Whale: Low bushy blow, bulbous forehead (mature males develop a flattened, often white, forehead), prominent mouth or beak, sickle-shaped dorsal fin located approximately two-thirds of the way down the body, light grey to brown in colour, maximum length approximately 9 metres.

Minimum Approach Distance: **100** metres from a single free-swimming whale; **200** metres from resting whales or a mother with a calf in all Canadian waters, as per the *Marine Mammal Regulations*.

Immediately report any collisions with whales, or entangled or dead whales to Fisheries and Oceans Canada ([Report a marine mammal or sea turtle incident or sighting](#)) and to the Marine Animal Response Society hotline at 1-866-567-6277, or via VHF channel 16.

Report any sightings of Northern Bottlenose Whales, including location, date, and photos to [XMARwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:XMARwhalesightings@dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

**Northern Bottlenose Whale (Scotian Shelf population) Critical Habitat**  
**Zone 1 of the Gully Marine Protected Area**

Guidelines (year-round):

- The Gully is a designated Marine Protected Area under the Oceans Act (see Notice 5A). Zone 1 of the Gully Marine Protected Area (i.e., the innermost of the three management zones) is also critical habitat for Northern Bottlenose Whales (critical habitat coordinates are provided in the map below).
- Vessels should avoid passage through this area if possible. Avoidance is the most effective means to eliminate or reduce acoustic disturbances, vessel strikes, and other threats.
- If passage through this area is required, decrease vessel speed to 10.0 knots or less and post a look-out to increase the likelihood of sighting and avoiding marine mammals. Increased caution must be exercised in conditions of reduced visibility, such as rain, fog, rough sea state, or at night. Be aware that marine mammals often travel in small groups dispersed over an area of several miles. Maneuver around marine mammals with caution (see general guidelines in this notice). Do not assume the marine mammals will move out of the way.

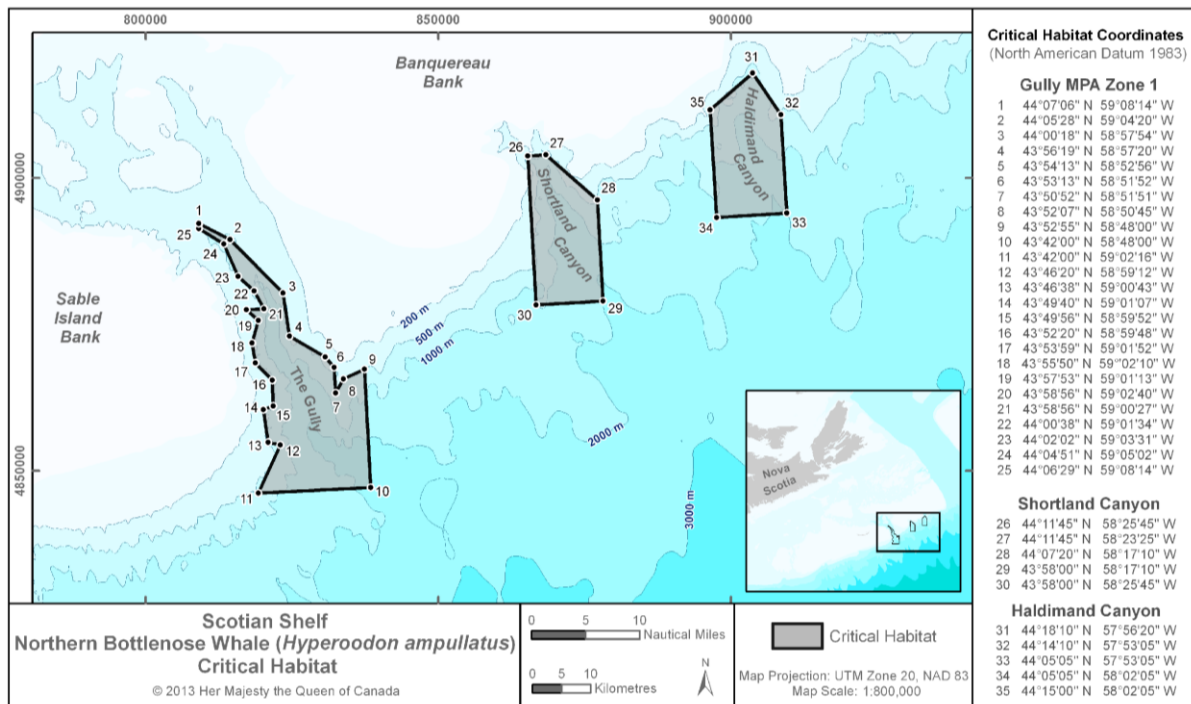
**Shortland and Haldimand Canyons**

Guidelines (year-round):

- Vessels should avoid passage through these areas if possible. Avoidance is the most effective means to eliminate or reduce acoustic disturbances and vessel collisions.
- If passage through these areas is required, decrease vessel speed to 10.0 knots or less and post a look-out to increase the likelihood of sighting and avoiding marine mammals. Increased caution must be exercised in conditions of reduced visibility, such as rain, fog, rough sea state, or at night. Be aware that marine mammals often travel in small groups dispersed over an area of several miles. Maneuver around marine mammals with caution (see general guidelines in this notice). Do not assume the marine mammals will move out of the way.

Learn more about the recovery process for the Northern Bottlenose Whale at the [Species at Risk Public Registry](#).

Critical habitat for the Northern Bottlenose Whale (Scotian Shelf population) is shown in the map below:



## QUEBEC REGION

### Beluga (St. Lawrence Estuary population)

Species status: Endangered

Threats: Contaminants, noise, anthropogenic disturbance, reduction in prey abundance, quality and availability, habitat degradation, ship strikes, and entanglement in fishing gear.

Characteristics of the St. Lawrence Beluga: adults are white; young are grey; rounded bump on the head (melon), no dorsal fin, adults between 2.5 and 4.5 metres.

Minimum Approach Distance: **100** metres in all Canadian waters, **400** metres in the St. Lawrence Estuary (the Beluga critical habitat is within the range for the minimum approach distance of **400** metres), as per the *Marine Mammal Regulations*.

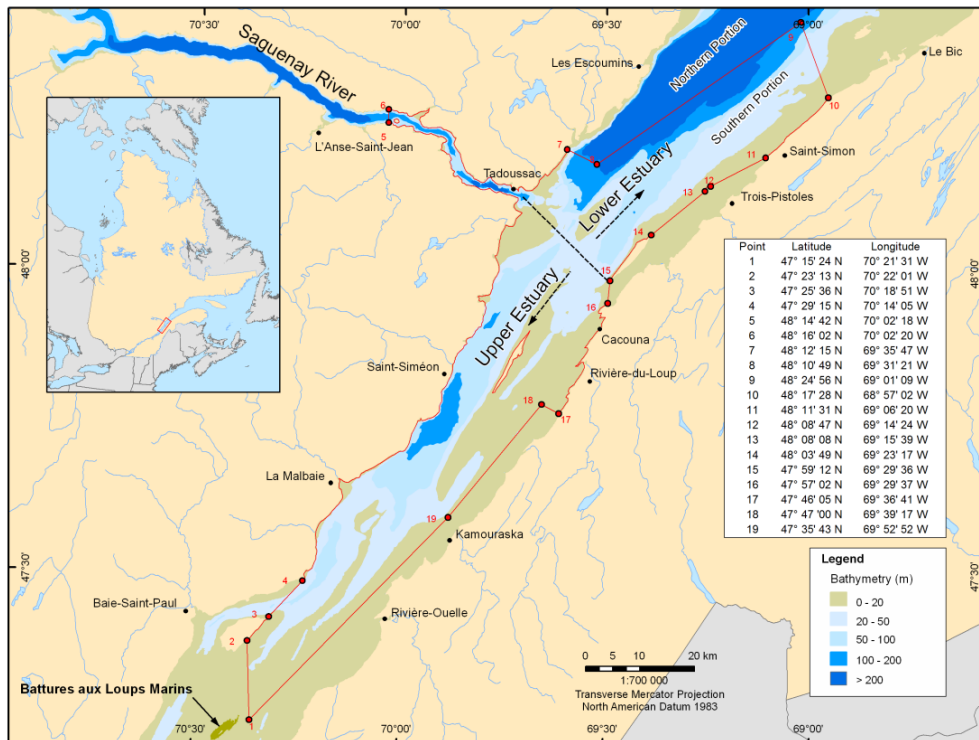
Immediately report any collisions or entanglements with a Beluga Whale, dead or alive, to Fisheries and Oceans Canada ([Report a marine mammal or sea turtle incident or sighting](#)) and by calling Quebec's Emergency Network for Marine Mammals at 1-877-722-5346.

Guidelines: Adhere to the *General Guidelines when in the Vicinity of Marine Mammals* as listed in Notice 5 of this Notice to Mariners and follow the specific protection measures for the Saguenay-St. Lawrence Marine Park and Surrounding waters, below.

Learn more about the Beluga Whale recovery process at the [Species at Risk Public Registry](#).

### St. Lawrence Beluga Whale Critical Habitat

Critical habitat of the St. Lawrence beluga extends from the Battures aux Loups Marins to the southern portion of the Estuary, off Saint-Simon. It includes the lower reaches of the Saguenay River. It is shown in the map below:



**SAGUENAY–ST. LAWRENCE MARINE PARK AND SURROUNDING WATERS – WHALE PROTECTION**

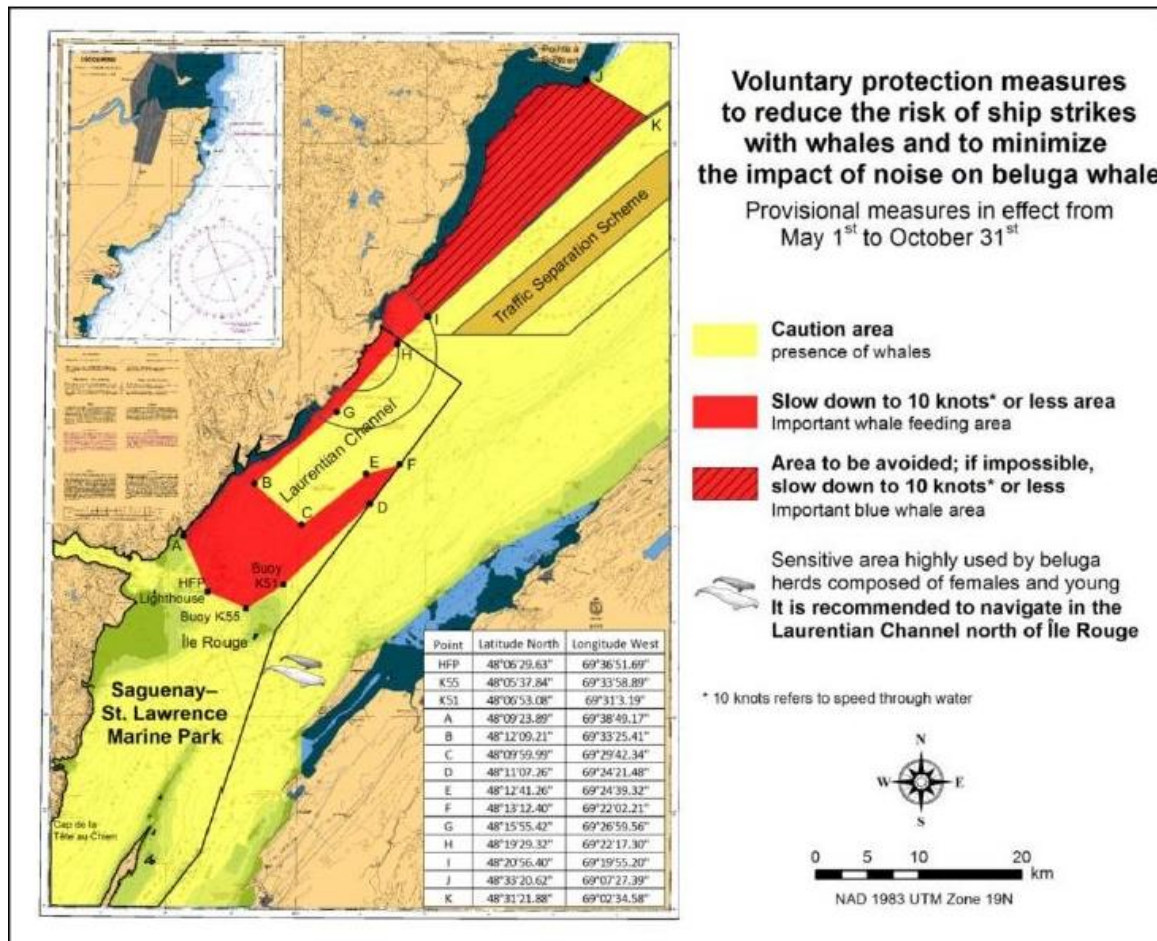
The waters in and around the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park are well known for the resident endangered beluga population and the wide diversity of whales that migrate there to feed, particularly between April and November.

**Regulatory Protection Measures**

All whale species that are found in the St. Lawrence are protected under the *Marine Mammal Regulations*, pursuant to the *Fisheries Act*. Within the boundaries of the Marine Park, specific measures are set out in the *Marine Activities in the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park Regulations*, pursuant to the *Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park Act*. Any collision with a marine mammal within the Marine Park must immediately be reported to a park warden at 1-866-508-9888. For collisions that occur outside the Marine Park or for any situation involving a marine mammal that is dead or in trouble, contact the emergency network at 1-877-722-5346. For more information on the Saguenay–St. Lawrence Marine Park, see notice 5C of this Notice to Mariners.

**Voluntary Protection Measures**

Provisional measures in effect from May 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>. See map below. These measures apply to merchant vessels and cruise ships between Pointe à Boisvert and Cap de la Tête au Chien to prevent collisions with whales. These measures should only be taken when they will not jeopardize navigational safety.



**Caution area (yellow area):** To reduce the risk of collisions with whales that can be present anywhere in this area, heightened vigilance of navigators is critical. Posting a lookout is recommended to increase the chances of seeing the whales and thus taking necessary measures to avoid them. If bypassing the whales is not possible, slow down and wait for the animals to move away to a distance greater than **400** metres (0.215 nautical miles) before resuming original speed. It is more difficult to see the animals at night, therefore increased caution is recommended.

**Slow down to 10.0 knots or less area (red area):** To reduce the risk of collisions with whales in this feeding area, it is recommended that vessels slow down to a maximum speed through the water of 10.0 knots and post a lookout. It is further recommended to remain in the Laurentian Channel to the north of Île Rouge to minimize the impact of noise in a sensitive area south of this island, which is highly frequented by herds of beluga whales composed of females and young.

**Area to be avoided (hatched red area):** To reduce noise and the risk of collisions with whales, vessels should avoid transiting through this area, which is highly frequented by blue whales, an endangered species. If the area cannot be avoided, slow down to a speed through the water of 10.0 knots or less.

## WESTERN REGION

### Southern and Northern Resident Killer Whales

**Species Status:** Endangered and Threatened, respectively, under the *Species at Risk Act*.

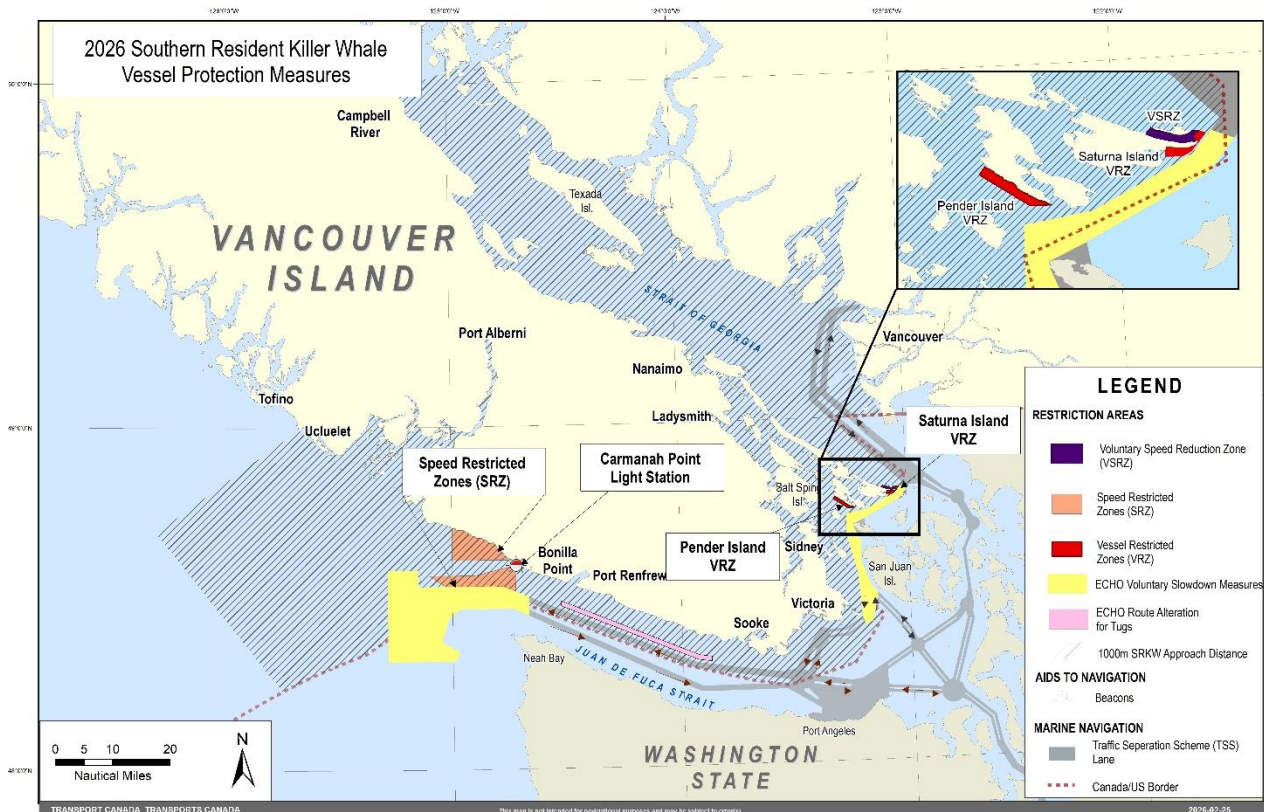
**Threats:** Principal threats are environmental contamination, reductions in the availability or quality of prey, and both physical and acoustic disturbance.

**Characteristics:** The killer whale is the largest member of the dolphin family. Its size, striking black and white colouring and tall dorsal fin are the main identifying characteristics. Killer whales are mainly black above and white below, with a white oval eye patch, and a grey saddle patch below the dorsal fin.

**Minimum Approach Distance:** **1000** metres for all Southern Resident killer whales within Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat and southern BC coastal waters between Campbell River (Cape Mudge) and Malaspina Peninsula (Sarah Point) including Howe Sound, to just north of Ucluelet, including Barkley Sound from June 1, 2026 until May 31, 2027, as per the Interim Order under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*. Vessels must remain 200 metres away from all killer whales elsewhere in BC coastal waters as per the *Marine Mammal Regulations*.

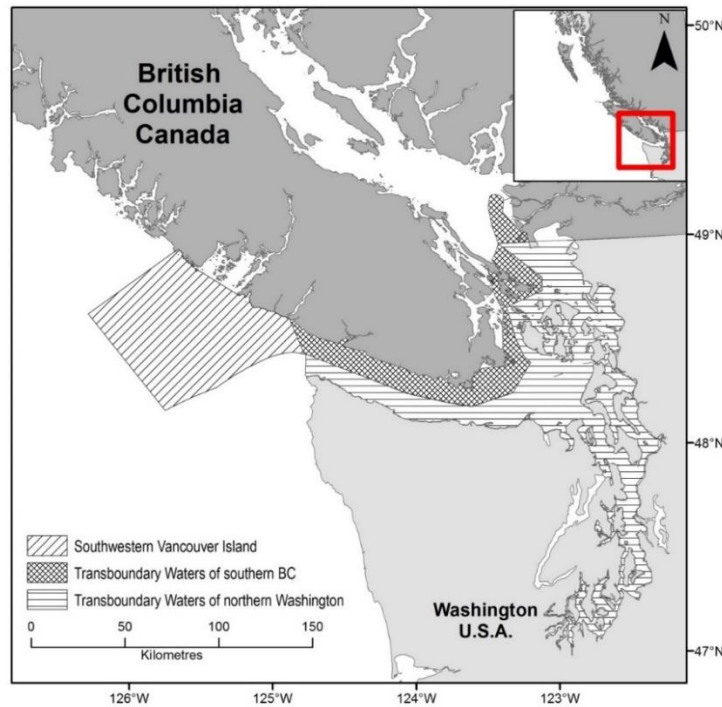
In case of any accidental contact between a vessel or gear and a killer whale (or other marine mammals or sea turtles), or if you observe an entangled, sick, injured, distressed, or dead killer whale (or other marine mammals or sea turtles) in B.C. waters, please contact the Observe, Record, Report line operated by Fisheries and Oceans Canada's British Columbia Marine Mammal Response Network (BCMMRN) immediately at 1-800-465-4336 or [DFO.ORR-MPO.ONS@dfo-mpo.gc.ca](mailto:DFO.ORR-MPO.ONS@dfo-mpo.gc.ca), or to VHF channel 16. Sightings of whales, including location, date and photos, may be reported to BC Cetacean Sightings Network through the WhaleReport App, [sightings@ocean.org](mailto:sightings@ocean.org), the online form at [Sightings Network](https://www.sightingsnetwork.org), or by calling 1-866-I SAW ONE.

The **1000** metre minimum approach distance zone is shown in the map below:



## Southern Resident Killer Whale Critical Habitat

Critical Habitat for the Southern Resident Killer Whale is shown in the map below:



### Critical habitat areas identified for Southern Resident Killer Whales

Critical habitat is identified as the areas within the identified geographic boundaries, given that they contain the described biophysical attributes and features and the functions they support, as described in Table 4 of the [Recovery Strategy for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales \(\*Orcinus orca\*\) in Canada](#) (2018). The hatched areas in the transboundary waters of southern BC and off southwestern Vancouver Island are the critical habitat areas in Canadian waters for Southern Resident Killer Whales, as designated under the *Species at Risk Act*. The horizontal hatched area in the transboundary waters of northern Washington State is designated as Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat under the U.S. *Endangered Species Act* (ESA).

The movement patterns of Resident Killer Whales are largely influenced by the availability of their preferred prey (Chinook Salmon). The critical habitat for Southern Resident Killer Whales within Canadian Pacific waters has been partially identified, and includes:

- 1) transboundary areas of southern British Columbia, including the Southern Strait of Georgia, Haro Strait, and Juan de Fuca Strait; and
- 2) waters on the continental shelf off southwestern Vancouver Island, including Swiftsure and La Pérouse Banks (critical habitat for both Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales). Human activities themselves are not automatically prohibited within an area identified as critical habitat; rather, it is the destruction of this critical habitat that is prohibited.

Learn more about the recovery process, including the recovery strategy and action plan for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whale, at the [Species at Risk Public Registry](#).

Guidelines: Adhere to the *General Guidelines when in the Vicinity of Marine Mammals* as listed on Page 3 in Notice 5 of this Notice to Mariners.

**Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat boundaries off Southwestern Vancouver Island.**

*(Described clockwise from the western boundary - all Latitudes are Degrees-Minutes North; all Longitudes are Degrees-Minutes West.)*

Point Description		Start and End Coordinates			
		Latitude Deg	Latitude Min	Longitude Deg	Longitude Min
1	Northern Boundary (Vancouver Island running southwest offshore)	48	59.7	125	40.15
2		48	41.72	126	17.88
3	Offshore Boundary	48	13.95	125	44.61
4	Waters adjacent the U.S.A. Border	48	29.72	124	44.32
5	Waters adjacent Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat in transboundary waters of southern Georgia, Haro, and Juan de Fuca Straits	48	40.04	124	50.66
6	And bounded by Vancouver Island to the Northwest boundary				
7	Excluding waters north of the line joining (Nitinat Inlet)	48	40.05	124	50.99
8		48	40.13	124	51.3
9	Excluding waters northeast of the line joining Cape Beale and Amphitrite Point (Barkley Sound)	48	55.22	125	32.391
10		48	47.174	125	13.039

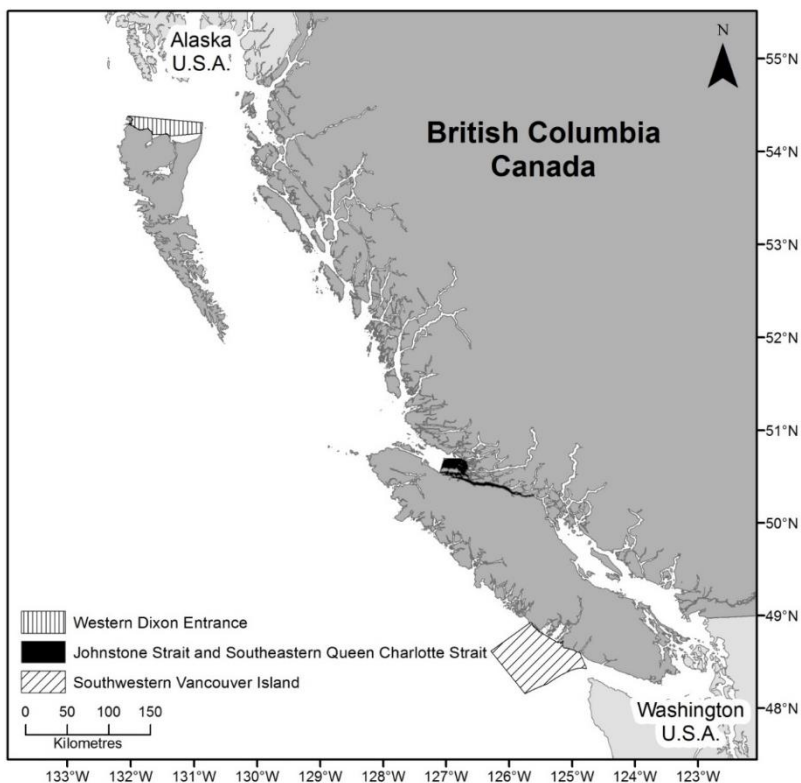
**Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat boundaries for transboundary waters of southern Georgia, Haro, and Juan de Fuca Straits.**

*(Described clockwise from the western boundary - all Latitudes are Degrees-Minutes North; all Longitudes are Degrees-Minutes West.)*

Point Description		Start and End Coordinates			
		Latitude Deg	Latitude Min	Longitude Deg	Longitude Min
1	Western boundary	48	29.68	124	44.31
2		48	40.02	124	50.68
3	Excluding waters north of the line joining (Sooke Inlet)	48	21.30	123	44.32
4		48	20.33	123	42.90
5	Excluding waters north of the line joining (Royal Roads, Esquimalt Harbour, Victoria Harbour)	48	24.25	123	28.97
6		48	24.57	123	22.61
7	Excluding waters west of the line joining (Cordova Channel and Sidney Channel)	48	29.69	123	18.61
8		48	36.12	123	18.51
9	Excluding waters west of the line joining (western half of Miners Channel and the waters west of Gooch Island)	48	37.04	123	18.49
10		48	39.70	123	17.72
11	Excluding waters west of the line joining (western half of Prevost Channel and Moresby Passage)	48	39.88	123	17.68
12		48	42.96	123	19.63
13	Excluding waters west of the line joining (western portion of Swanson Channel between Moresby Island and Prevost Island)	48	43.34	123	19.88
14		48	48.86	123	22.70
15	Excluding waters west of the line joining (western portion of Trincomali Channel between Prevost Island and Parker Island)	48	50.66	123	23.33
16		48	52.61	123	23.92
17	Excluding waters west of the line joining (western portion of Trincomali Channel between Parker Island and Galiano Island)	48	52.85	123	23.92
18		48	53.08	123	23.76
19	Excluding waters west of the line joining (western portion of southern Strait of Georgia)	48	54.28	123	20.67
20		48	55.39	123	21.98
21		49	0.00	123	18.88
22		49	10.39	123	22.82
23		49	13.58	123	21.97
24	Excluding waters north of the line joining (portion of southern Strait of Georgia)	49	13.58	123	21.97
25		49	14.00	123	21.09
26		49	14.18	123	19.22
27		49	13.79	123	17.21
28	Excluding waters north and east of the line joining (portion of southern Strait of Georgia)	49	13.79	123	17.21
29		49	12.87	123	15.75
30		49	9.01	123	16.48
31		49	3.39	123	9.24
32		49	3.47	123	8.48
	And bounded on the east and south by Point Roberts and the United States Border				

## Northern Resident Killer Whale Critical Habitat

Critical Habitat for the Northern Resident Killer Whale is shown in the map below:



### Critical habitat areas identified for Northern Resident Killer Whales

Critical habitat is identified as the areas within the identified geographic boundaries, given that they contain the described biophysical attributes and features and the functions they support, as described in Table 4 of the [Recovery Strategy for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales \(\*Orcinus orca\*\) in Canada](#) (2018). The lined areas in western Dixon Entrance, which includes most of the coastal waters off the north side of Graham Island and the hatched area in the waters off southwestern Vancouver Island are the critical habitat areas in Canadian waters for Northern Resident Killer Whales, as designated under the *Species at Risk Act*.

The movement patterns of Resident Killer Whales are largely influenced by the availability of their preferred prey (Chinook Salmon). The critical habitat for Northern Resident Killer Whales in Canadian Pacific waters as designated under the *Species at Risk Act*, and includes:

- 1) the waters of Johnstone Strait and southeastern Queen Charlotte Strait, and the channels connecting these straits;
- 2) waters on the continental shelf off southwestern Vancouver Island, including Swiftsure and La Pérouse Banks (critical habitat for both Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales); and
- 3) waters of western Dixon Entrance, along the north coast of Graham Island from Langara to Rose Spit.

A Critical Habitat Order prohibits the destruction of critical habitat caused by human activities, but does not automatically prohibit the activities themselves.

Learn more about the recovery process, including the recovery strategy and action plan, for the Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whale at the [Species at Risk Public Registry](#).

**Guidelines:** Adhere to the *General Guidelines when in the Vicinity of Marine Mammals* as listed in Notice 5 of this Notice to Mariners.

### Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve

Ecological Reserves are areas in British Columbia selected to preserve representative and special natural ecosystems, plant and animal species, features, and phenomena. Ecological Reserves provide the highest level of protection for the maintenance of physical and biological diversity while allowing for research and educational activities. Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve was established to provide support for killer whale recovery by reducing physical and acoustic disturbance while they feed, socialize and use rubbing beaches. Beach rubbing appears to be an important activity for Northern Resident Killer Whales and during this time, they are very sensitive to disturbance.

#### **Guidelines**

Contained within the larger critical habitat area found in the waters of Johnstone Strait and southeastern Queen Charlotte Strait, Robson Bight Ecological Reserve provides an additional protected area for Northern Resident Killer Whales to rest, feed, socialize and engage in beach rubbing behaviour.

- Northern Resident Killer Whales are listed as Threatened under the *Species at Risk Act*, and areas identified as critical habitat are protected from destruction.
- Robson Bight (Michael Bigg) Ecological Reserve is a provincially designated Ecological Reserve that falls within the boundaries of the legally protected critical habitat for Northern Resident Killer Whales.
- All vessels should avoid passage through the Ecological Reserve. Avoidance is the most effective means to eliminate or reduce physical and acoustic disturbance and vessel collisions with whales.
- Fish harvesters are requested not to moor in the Robson Bight area.
- Should boaters accidentally stray into the Reserve, leave immediately while maintaining at least a **300** metres distance from any whale present.
- If passage through this area is required for navigational safety, decrease vessel speed to 7.0 knots or less and post a look-out to increase the likelihood of sighting and avoiding marine mammals by at least **300** metres. Increased caution must be exercised in conditions of reduced visibility, such as rain, fog, rough sea state, or at night. Be aware that marine mammals often travel in small groups dispersed over an area of several kilometres. Maneuver around marine mammals with caution (refer to the Laws, Regulations and General Guidelines when in the Vicinity of Marine Mammals in section 5 above). Do not assume the whales will move out of the way.

#### **Northern Resident Killer Whale Critical Habitat – Boundaries for Johnstone and southeastern Queen Charlotte Straits.**

*(Described clockwise from the western boundary - all Latitudes are Degrees-Minutes North; all Longitudes are Degrees-Minutes West.)*

Point Description		Start and End Coordinates			
		Latitude Deg	Latitude Min	Longitude Deg	Longitude Min
1	Western boundary (Vancouver Island to Numas Island)	50	36.98	127	11.00
2		50	46.24	127	6.76
3	Northern boundary (Numas Island to Broughton Island)	50	46.27	127	5.26
4		50	46.41	126	48.27
5	Northern boundary (Broughton Island to Screen Island / Eden Island)	50	46.13	126	47.30
6		50	44.95	126	43.55
7	boundary line running from Eden Island to Crib Island (including waters of Queen Charlotte Strait and excluding waters of Trainer Passage)	50	44.79	126	43.22
8		50	43.67	126	42.73
9		50	43.33	126	42.58

Point Description		Start and End Coordinates			
		Latitude Deg	Latitude Min	Longitude Deg	Longitude Min
10	boundary line running from Crib Island to House Ilet (including waters of Queen Charlotte Strait and excluding waters of Arrow and Spring Passages)	50	40.16	126	41.21
11	boundary line running from House Ilet to Swanson Island (including waters of Queen Charlotte Strait and excluding waters of Knight Inlet)	50	40.16	126	41.21
12		50	37.75	126	43.86
13	boundary line running from Swanson Island to Compton Island (including waters of Blackfish Sound excluding waters of West Passage)	50	36.06	126	41.77
14		50	35.84	126	41.42
15	boundary line running from Compton Island to Harbledown Island (including waters of Blackfish Sound excluding waters of Whitebeach Passage)	50	35.50	126	40.86
16		50	35.38	126	40.68
17	boundary line running from Harbledown Island to Parson Island (including waters of Blackfish Sound excluding waters of Parson Bay)	50	35.19	126	40.93
18		50	34.43	126	40.73
19	boundary line running from Parson Island to West Cracroft Island (including waters of Blackfish Sound excluding waters of Baronet Passage)	50	33.65	126	39.95
20		50	32.98	126	39.73
	Waters of western Johnstone Strait bounded on the north by West Cracroft Island, the mainland, Hardwicke Island and West Thurlow Island with no exclusions except:				
24	boundary line running from West Cracroft Island to the mainland (including waters of western Johnstone Strait excluding waters of Havannah Channel)	50	31.32	126	20.35
25		50	31.09	126	17.05
26	boundary line running from the mainland to Hardwicke Island (including waters of western Johnstone Strait excluding waters of Sunderland Channel)	50	28.46	126	2.54
27		50	26.57	125	57.94
28	boundary line running from Hardwicke Island to Eden Point on West Thurlow Island (including waters of western Johnstone Strait excluding waters of Chancellor Channel)	50	24.58	125	48.29
29		50	23.91	125	47.38
30	boundary line running from Eden Point to Tyee Point on West Thurlow Island (including waters of western Johnstone Strait excluding waters of Vere Cove)	50	23.91	125	47.38
31		50	23.26	125	47.06
32	Eastern boundary line running from West Thurlow Island (including waters of western Johnstone Strait excluding waters of eastern Johnstone Strait and Mayne Passage)	50	23.42	125	34.39
33		50	21.88	125	34.23
	Waters of western Johnstone Strait bounded on the south by Vancouver Island - no exclusions except:				
35	boundary line running from Graveyard Point to Kelsey Bay Harbour on Vancouver Island (including waters of western Johnstone Strait excluding waters of Salmon Bay)	50	23.45	125	56.71
36		50	23.80	125	57.62

**Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat boundaries off Southwestern Vancouver Island.**

*(Described clockwise from the western boundary - all Latitudes are Degrees-Minutes North; all Longitudes are Degrees-Minutes West.)*

Point Description		Start and End Coordinates			
		Latitude Deg	Latitude Min	Longitude Deg	Longitude Min
1	Northern Boundary (Vancouver Island running southwest offshore)	48	59.7	125	40.15
2		48	41.72	126	17.88
3	Offshore Boundary	48	13.95	125	44.61
4	Waters adjacent the U.S.A. Border	48	29.72	124	44.32
5	Waters adjacent Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat in transboundary waters of southern Georgia, Haro, and Juan de Fuca Straits	48	40.04	124	50.66
6	And bounded by Vancouver Island to the Northwest boundary				
7	Excluding waters north of the line joining (Nitinat Inlet)	48	40.05	124	50.99
8		48	40.13	124	51.3
9	Excluding waters northeast of the line joining Cape Beale and Amphitrite Point (Barkley Sound)	48	55.22	125	32.391
10		48	47.174	125	13.039

**Northern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat boundaries in western Dixon Entrance.**

*(Described clockwise from the western boundary - all Latitudes are Degrees-Minutes North; all Longitudes are Degrees-Minutes West.)*

Point Description		Start and End Coordinates			
		Latitude Deg	Latitude Min	Longitude Deg	Longitude Min
1	Western Boundary (Langara Island Northward)	54	15.38	133	3.5
2		54	15.99	133	3.5
3	Northern Boundary	54	16.05	131	40.45
4	Eastern Boundary	54	9.13	131	40.43
5	Excluding waters south of line (McIntyre Bay)	54	5.491	132	15.97
6	Bounded by Graham Island on the Southern Boundary	54	11.07	133	1.55
7	Northward to Langara Island, excluding waters west of the line	54	11.43	133	0.75
8	Bounded on the western Boundary by the eastern side of Langara Island up to Langara Light				
9	Excluding waters south of line (Virago Sound, Naden Harbour)	54	5.86	132	26.26
10		54	5.57	132	34.3

### **Southern Resident Killer Whale Interim Order**

The Southern Resident Killer Whale is listed as Endangered under the *Species at Risk Act*. Due to the threat posed from vessel traffic in southern British Columbia, the Minister of Transport has issued an [Interim Order](#) under the *Canada Shipping Act, 2001*, in effect starting June 1, 2026, to support their protection and recovery.

The measures in the Interim Order are in addition to already existing requirements under the *Marine Mammal Regulations*. The measures are intended to reduce underwater noise and physical disturbance. These measures are in place on an interim basis pending further feasibility assessment work on longer term measures to reduce physical and acoustic disturbances.

The Interim Order applies to all vessels, which includes vessels that navigate in, on, through or immediately above water, regardless of the method of propulsion. This means large commercial vessels, cruise ships, submarines, sea planes, sailboats, motorboats, and any other mode of transportation for use in a marine environment. This also includes paddling and other non-motorized activities such as paddle boards, kayaks and canoes. Although non-motorized vessels pose little threat from an acoustic perspective, their physical presence can still disturb the foraging habits and movement of killer whales.

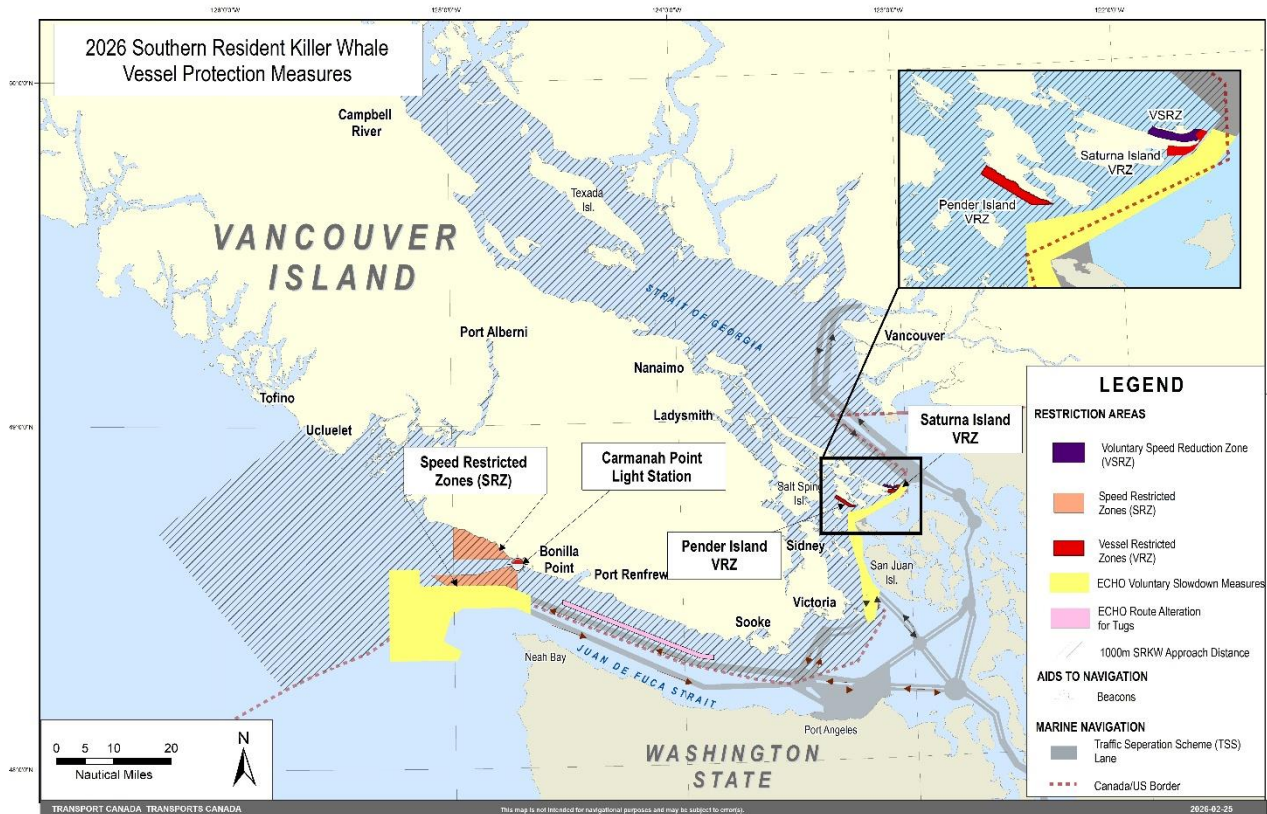
The Interim Order sets out three mandatory measures for vessels operating in certain areas of the waters of southern British Columbia to reduce underwater vessel noise and physical disturbance to killer whales, specifically:

- 1) Minimum approach distance of **1000** metres for all Southern Resident killer whales within Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat and southern BC coastal waters between Campbell River (Cape Mudge) and Malaspina Peninsula (Sarah Point), including Howe Sound, to just north of Ucluelet, including Barkley Sound.
- 2) Two Vessel Restricted Zones where vessel traffic is prohibited, including fishing, whale watching and recreational boating, subject to exceptions. These zones are located off the south-west coast of Pender Island, another at the south-east end of Saturna Island.
- 3) Two Speed Restricted Zones located near Swiftsure Bank in which all vessels, subject to exceptions, are restricted to a maximum speed of 10 knots speed over ground when safe to do so.

Visit [the Interim Order for the Protection of the Southern Resident Killer Whale \(\*Orcinus orca\*\) in Waters of Southern British Columbia, 2026](#), for more information.

### Southern Resident Killer Whale 2026 General Vessel Measures

The General Vessel Measures (2026) for the Southern Resident Killer Whale is shown in the map below:



### 1000 metre Minimum Approach Distance for Southern Resident Killer Whales

Under the Interim Order, from June 1, 2026 until May 31, 2027 all vessels, subject to exceptions, must stay a minimum of **1000** metres away from all Southern Resident killer whales within Southern Resident Killer Whale critical habitat and southern BC coastal waters between Campbell River (Cape Mudge) and Malaspina Peninsula (Sarah Point) including Howe Sound, to just North of Ucluelet, including Barkley Sound. (see map illustrating measures above). This builds on existing prohibitions in place through the *Marine Mammal Regulations* under the *Fisheries Act*, and is being put in place to support the protection and recovery of the species, as acoustic and physical disturbance has been identified as a primary threat.

### Exceptions

The following vessels and persons are excepted from the **1000** metre approach distance within the relevant range:

- vessels in transit;
- vessels in distress or providing assistance to a been vessel or person in distress;
- vessels involved in pollution response operations;
- vessels avoiding immediate or unforeseen danger<sup>1 2</sup>;

<sup>1</sup> An immediate or unforeseen danger includes any situation in which weather, mechanical issues or collision risks require the vessel to go through the Interim sanctuary zone because that is the safest route or the quickest path to safety

<sup>2</sup> The 400 m approach distance does not apply to vessels carrying any person referred to in (a) to (e) or to persons operating or navigating a vessel referred to in (a) to (e)

- vessel carrying an excepted person
- employees of the government of Canada and peace officers who are performing their duties or functions, or persons who are assisting them or who are otherwise present at the request of the government of Canada;
- a person acting in a manner authorized under the *Species at Risk Act*;
- a person authorized under the *Marine Mammal Regulations* to disturb a killer whale;
- persons fishing for marine mammals for experimental, scientific, educational or public display purposes in the manner set out in a licence issued under the Fishery (General) Regulations.
- a person operating an excepted vessel

***Coordinates for 1000 metre Approach Distance:***

Commencing at	50° 3.807 N	124° 50.61 W	[Sarah Point]
Then to	49° 52.486 N	124° 33.903 W	[north Powell River]
Then to	49° 52.426 N	124° 33.912 W	[south Powell River]
Then to	49° 46.436 N	124° 16.815 W	[north Jervis Inlet/Thunder Bay]
Then to	49° 44.262 N	124° 13.26 W	[south Jervis Inlet]
Then to	49° 43.838 N	124° 12.572 W	[north Blind Bay]
Then to	49° 43.018 N	124° 11.228 W	[south Ballet Bay]
Then to	49° 39.45 N	124° 5.148 W	[west Agamemnon Channel]
Then to	49° 39.313 N	124° 4.355 W	[east Agamemnon Channel]
Then to	49° 23.063 N	123° 31.823 W	[Gower Point]
Then to	49° 22.227 N	123° 25.63 W	[King Edward Bay]
Then to	49° 21.475 N	123° 20.083 W	[Apodaca Cove]
Then to	49° 20.933 N	123° 16.172 W	[south Eagle Harbour]
Then to	49° 18.82 N	123° 7.712 W	[north First Narrows]
Then to	49° 18.323 N	123° 7.928 W	[south First Narrows]
Then to	49° 16.93 N	123° 8.525 W	[Sunset Beach]
Then to	49° 16.725 N	123° 8.61 W	[Kitsilano Beach]
Then to	49° 13.86 N	123° 12.583 W	[north North Arm]
Then to	49° 13.526 N	123° 13.303 W	[south North Arm]
Then to	49° 13.44 N	123° 13.468 W	[south Iona Island]
Then to	49° 5.06 N	123° 10.77 W	[west Westham Island]
Then to	49° 4.062 N	123° 9.41 W	[south Canoe Passage]
Then to	49° 3.487 N	123° 8.493 W	[Roberts Bank]
Then to	49° 0.132 N	123° 5.46 W	[Boundary Bluff]
Then adjacent to the United States border until	48° 14.2 N	125° 44.5 W	[southern boundary of critical habitat]
Then to	48° 41.7 N	126° 17.783 W	[northwest boundary of critical habitat]
Then to	48° 59.685 N	125° 40.152 W	[Quisitis Point]
Then to	48° 55.253 N	125° 32.517 W	[Amphitrite Point]
Then to	48° 46.985 N	125° 12.587 W	[Cape Beale]
Then to	48° 45.433 N	125° 7.733 W	[Mabers Beach]

Then to	48° 40.605 N	124° 52.768 W	
Then to	48° 40.048 N	124° 50.997 W	
Then to	48° 39.645 N	124° 49.205 W	[west Clo-oose Bay]
Then to	48° 39.485 N	124° 48.648 W	[east Clo-oose Bay]
Then to	48° 33.703 N	124° 27.812 W	[west Port San Juan]
Then to	48° 33.11 N	124° 25.742 W	[east Port San Juan]
Then to	49° 59.092 N	125° 13.39 W	[Campbell River]

**Vessel Restricted Zones**

To provide for greater refuge for Southern Resident Killer Whales in key areas within critical habitat, two Vessel Restricted Zones have been created within which all vessel traffic is prohibited, including fishing, whale watching and recreational boating, from June 1, 2026, until November 30, 2026. These zones are located: off the south-west coast of Pender Island and southeast end of Saturna Island.

**Exceptions**

The following vessels and persons are excepted from the prohibition on vessel traffic within the Vessel Restricted Zones:

- local traffic that needs to access a residence, commercial establishment or any other establishment providing a service on North Pender or southeast Saturna Islands, or a mooring buoy within the zone, if travel by water within a Vessel Restricted Zone is the only practical means of doing so. For example, if you need to access a residence, business or service that is not accessible by road, you would generally be permitted to travel through the area to reach it;
- vessels in distress or providing assistance to a vessel or person in distress;
- vessels involved in pollution response operations;
- vessels avoiding immediate or unforeseen danger<sup>3</sup>;
- employees of the Government of Canada and peace officers performing their duties or functions, persons assisting them, or persons that are present at the request of the Government of Canada;
- persons undertaking certain activities, including scientific research, as authorized under either the *Species at Risk Act*, *Marine Mammal Regulations*, or *Fishery (General) Regulations*;
- persons fishing for food, social or ceremonial purposes or for domestic purposes pursuant to a treaty within the meaning of section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*, in accordance with a licence issued under the *Aboriginal Communal Fishing Licences Regulations*; and
- Indigenous persons exercising an existing right for non-commercial purposes, other than fishing, under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

In recognition that the size of the Vessel Restricted Zones can result in unsafe conditions for human powered vessels, a 20-metre transit corridor along the shores of the Pender and Saturna Island Vessel Restricted Zones allows paddlers to bypass the prohibited zone. If a Southern Resident killer whale is in a zone while a paddler is transiting through, paddlers are required to remain **1000** metres away from the whale.

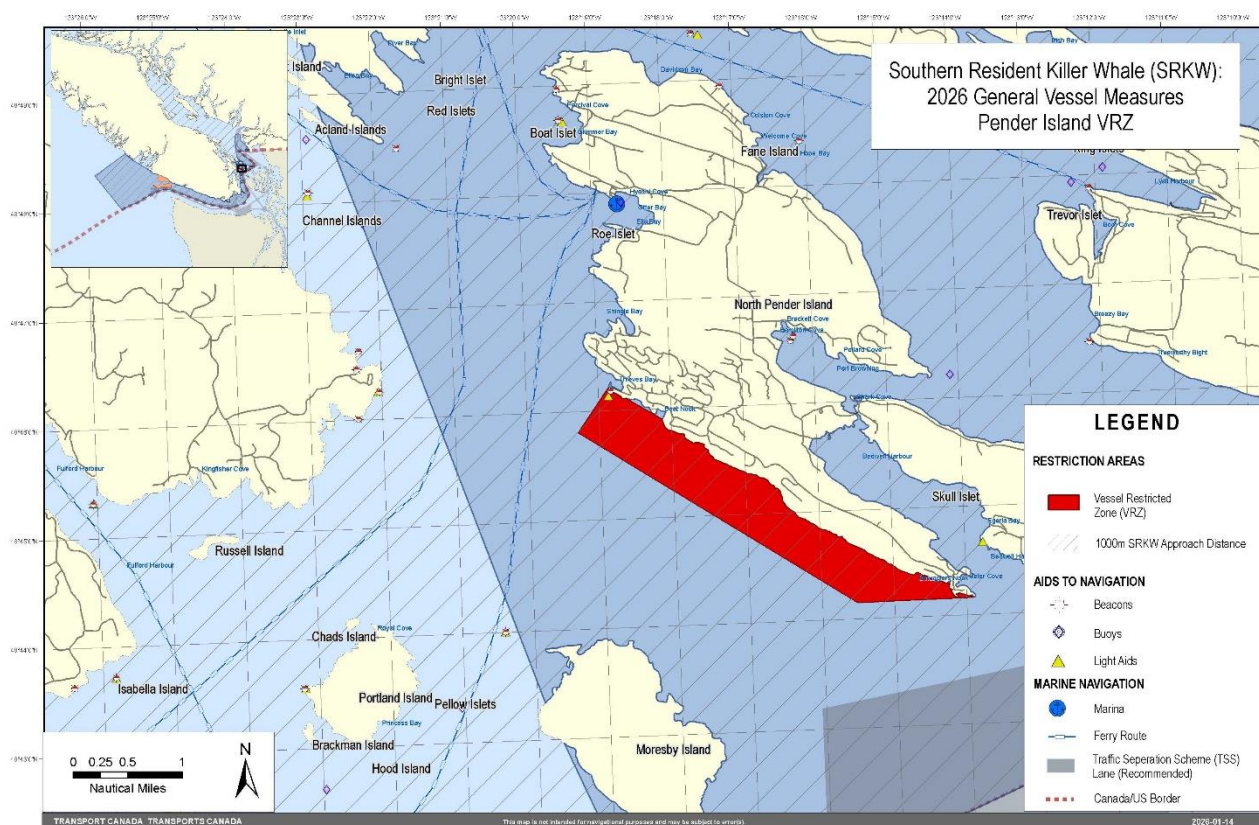
***Coordinates for the Pender Island VRZ***

The waters off Pender Island bounded by a line:

commencing at	48°46.217'N	123°18.867'W	[Northeast corner];
then to	48°45.817'N	123°19.3'W	[Northwest corner];
then to	48°44.153'N	123°15.517'W	[Southwest corner];
then to	48°44.167'N	123°13.917'W	[Southeast Corner].

<sup>3</sup> An immediate or unforeseen danger includes any situation in which weather, mechanical issues or collision risks require the vessel to go through the Interim sanctuary zone because that is the safest route or the quickest path to safety

The Pender Island VRZ (2026) for the Southern Resident Killer Whale is shown in the map below:

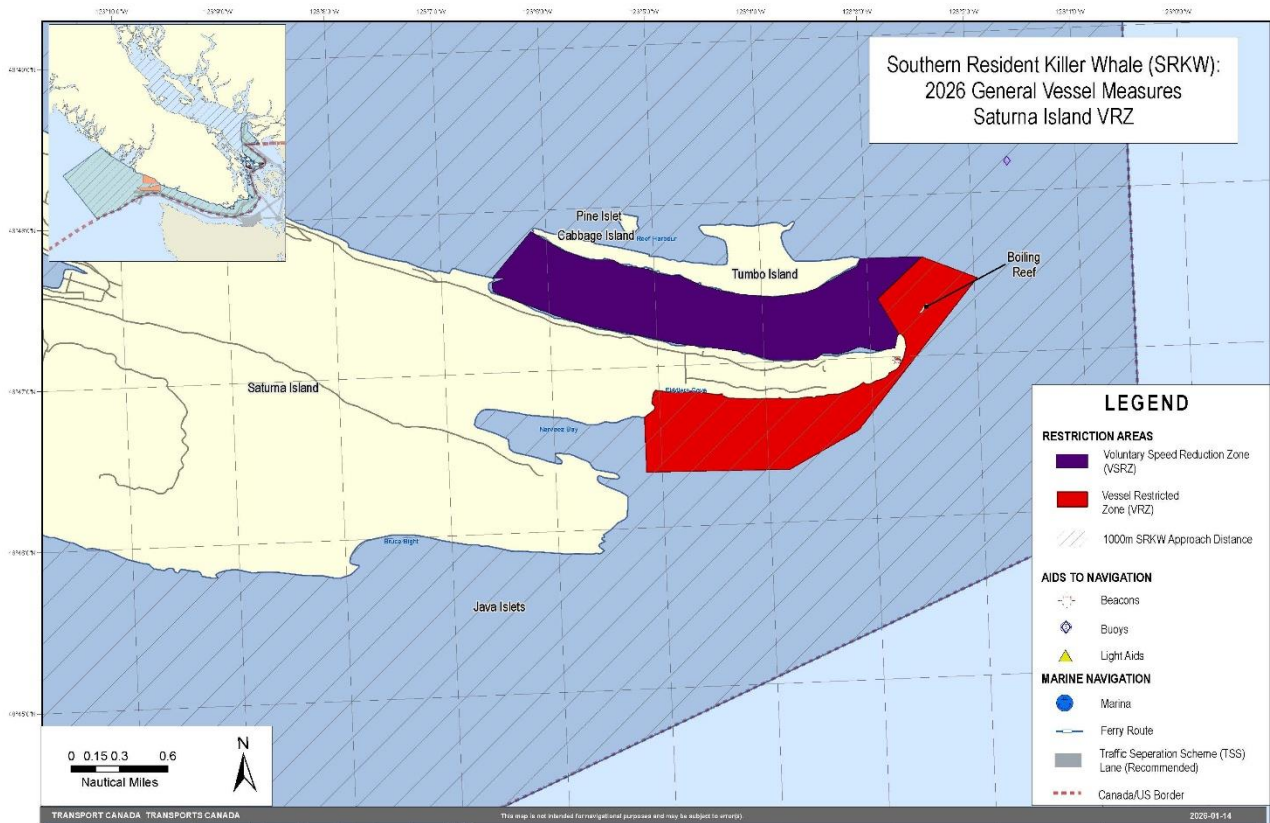


**Coordinates for the Saturna Island VRZ**

The waters off Saturna Island bounded by a line:

commencing at	48°47.15'N	123°02.733'W	[North Boundary of East Point (shoreline)];
then to	48°47.367'N	123°02.915'W	[Tumbo Channel];
then to	48°47.617'N	123°02.483'W	[Northwest Corner (East of Tumbo Point)];
then to	48°47.473'N	123°01.975'W	[Northeast Corner (Boiling Reef)];
then to	48°46.558'N	123°03.147'W	[Boundary Pass];
then to	48°46.333'N	123°03.805'W	[Southeast Corner]
then to	48°46.35'N	123°05.15'W	[Southwest Corner (Narvaez Bay)];
then to	48°46.683'N	123°05.15'W	[Fiddler's Cove].

The Saturna Island VRZ (2026) for the Southern Resident Killer Whale is shown in the map below:



### Speed Restricted Zones

Two Speed-Restricted Zones are in place near Swiftsure Bank from June 1, 2026, until November 30, 2026. All vessels are restricted to a maximum speed of 10 knots speed over ground while in the areas with limited exceptions. The first area is in the Protected Fisheries Management Area 121-1 and the second Speed-Restricted Zone is located near the mouth of the Nitinat River from Carmanah Point to Longitude 125 degrees west. This measure is separate from the voluntary slowdowns coordinated by the ECHO Program. This measure was co-developed with Pacheedaht First Nation and incorporates new scientific information about habitat use.

### Exceptions

The following vessels and persons are exempted from the Speed Restricted Zones speed limit :

- vessels in distress or providing assistance to a vessel or person in distress;
- vessels involved in pollution response operations;
- vessels avoiding immediate or unforeseen danger<sup>4</sup>;
- employees of the Government of Canada and peace officers performing their duties or functions, persons assisting them, or persons that are present at the request of the Government of Canada;
- vessels not utilizing a motor.

<sup>4</sup> An immediate or unforeseen danger includes any situation in which weather, mechanical issues or collision risks require the vessel to go through the Interim sanctuary zone because that is the safest route or the quickest path to safety

**Coordinates for the Swiftsure Bank Speed Restricted Zones**

**1. Mouth of the Nitinat River**

The waters subject to the speed restriction zones are bounded by a line

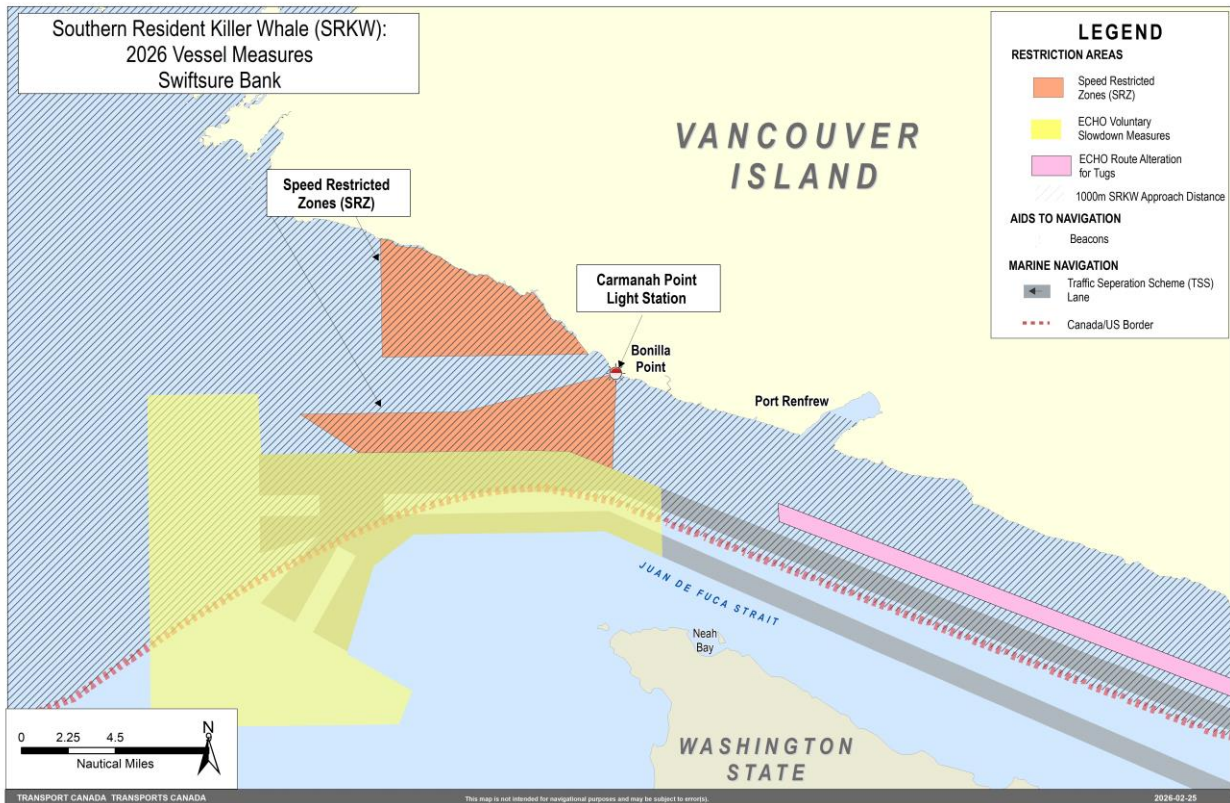
beginning at	48°42.377'N	125°00.000'W	[northwest boundary];
then to	48°36.683'N	125°00.000'W	[northwest boundary – Swiftsure Bank];
then to	48°36.683'N	124°45.083'W	[southeast boundary – Carmanah Point];
Then along the coastline to	48°42.377'N	125°00.000'W	[northwest boundary];

**2. Swiftsure Bank**

The waters subject to the speed restriction zones are bounded by a line

beginning at	48°34.000'N	125°06.000'W	[northwest boundary];
then to	48°32.100'N	125°01.760'W	[southwest boundary];
then to	48°32.100'N	124°49.545'W	[southern border to Traffic Separation Scheme]
then to	48°32.017'N	124°46.593'W	[southern border to Traffic Separation Scheme]
then to	48°31.150'N	124°43.483'W	[southeastern boundary]
then to	48°35.717'N	124°43.067'W	[northeastern boundary]
then to	48°34.000'N	124°54.190'W	[northern border]
then to	48°34.000'N	125°06.000'W	[northwest boundary];

The Speed-Restricted Zones (2026) for the Southern Resident Killer Whale are shown in the map below:

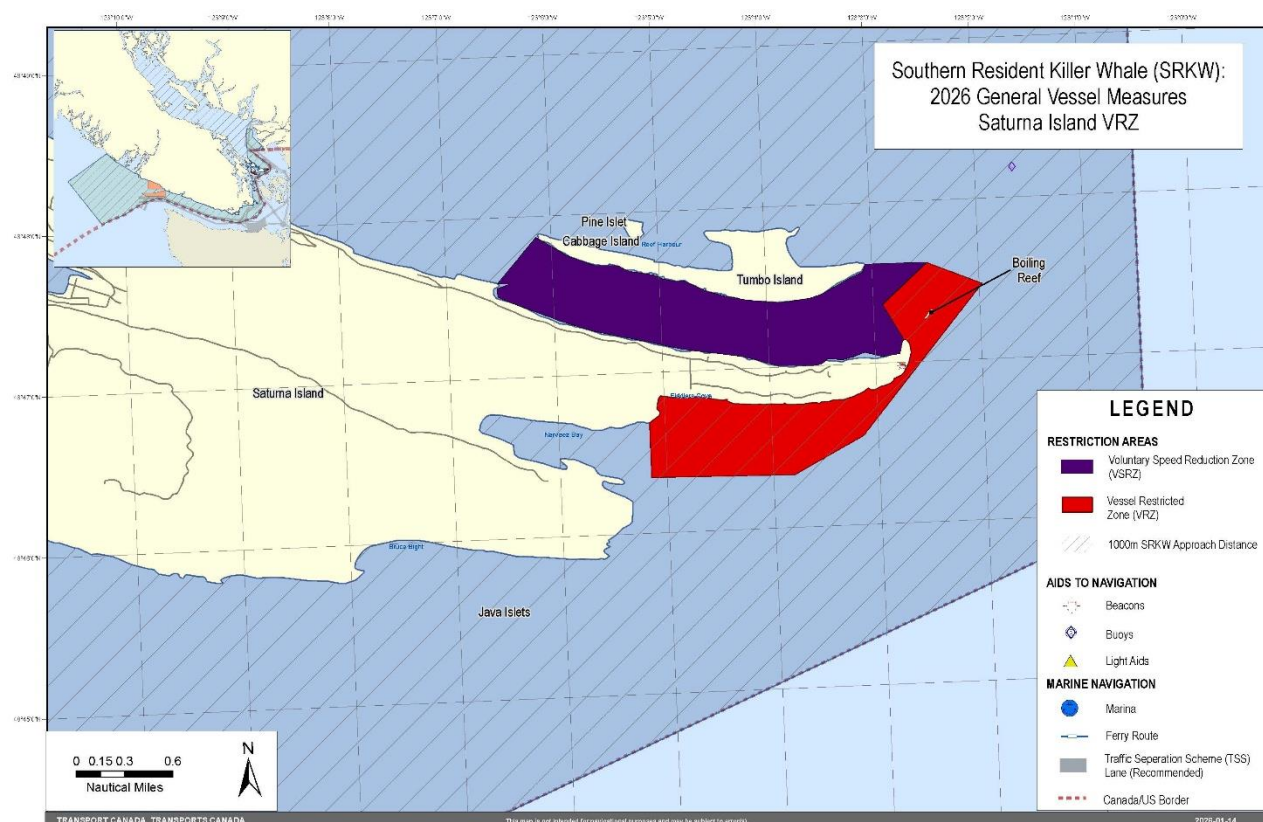


## Voluntary Measures

### Voluntary speed reduction zone

In addition to the above Interim Order measures, Transport Canada is implementing a voluntary speed reduction zone in Tumbo Channel, in effect from June 1 to November 30, 2026. When traveling through this area, it is recommended that vessels reduce their speed to 10 knots, when safe to do so.

The voluntary speed reduction zone in Tumbo Channel (2026) for the Southern Resident Killer Whale is shown in the map below:



Transport Canada also recommends boaters

- Reduce speed to less than 7 knots when within **1000** metres of a killer whale;
- Turn off echo sounders and fish finders, when safe to do so; and
- Place their engine in neutral idle, when safe to do so, if inadvertently within the approach distance to a killer whale.

Transport Canada also encourages large commercial vessels to participate in the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority led Enhanced Cetacean Habitat and Observation (ECHO) Program 2026 voluntary slowdown measures:

1. Haro Strait and Boundary Pass Voluntary Ship Slowdown
  - The Haro Strait and Boundary Pass voluntary slowdown is in effect 24 hours per day as of June 1, 2026 until 2359 PDT on November 30, 2026, for all commercial and government vessels.
  - If it is safe and operationally feasible to do so, commercial and government vessels are requested to not exceed the following speeds through the water:
    - 11 knots – Bulklers, tankers, general cargo vessels and government vessels;
    - 14.5 knots – Vehicle carriers, cruise ships, and container vessels.

- This voluntary slowdown takes place between the vessel traffic separation scheme at the south end of Haro Strait at  $48^{\circ} 24' 22.78''$  N,  $123^{\circ} 12' 15.26''$  W, and the vessel traffic separation scheme at the north end of Boundary Pass at  $48^{\circ} 46' 39.28''$  N,  $123^{\circ} 01' 36.84''$  W. There are also two optional slowdown areas, one rounding turn point and the other between Turn point, Saturna Island and Alden Point, Patos Island.

The Haro Strait and Boundary Pass voluntary ship slowdown zone is shown in the map below:



## 2. Strait of Juan de Fuca voluntary route alteration for tugs

- The Strait of Juan de Fuca voluntary route alteration for tugs is in effect 24 hours per day as of June 1, 2026 until 2359 PDT on October 31, 2026 for all tug and barge vessels transiting the Canadian inshore area.
- If it is safe and operationally feasible to do so, tugs are requested to move south of the known killer whale feeding area and navigate either through the outbound shipping lane or the inshore lateral displacement zone, while maintaining a buffer distance of 1,000 metres from the traffic separation scheme (TSS).
- The inshore lateral displacement zone is 1,500 m wide and occurs in the area between longitudes  $123^{\circ} 52.3532' W$   $48^{\circ} 18.6222' N$  and  $124^{\circ} 31.5563' W$   $48^{\circ} 28.8886' N$ , covering a distance of approximately 28 nm.

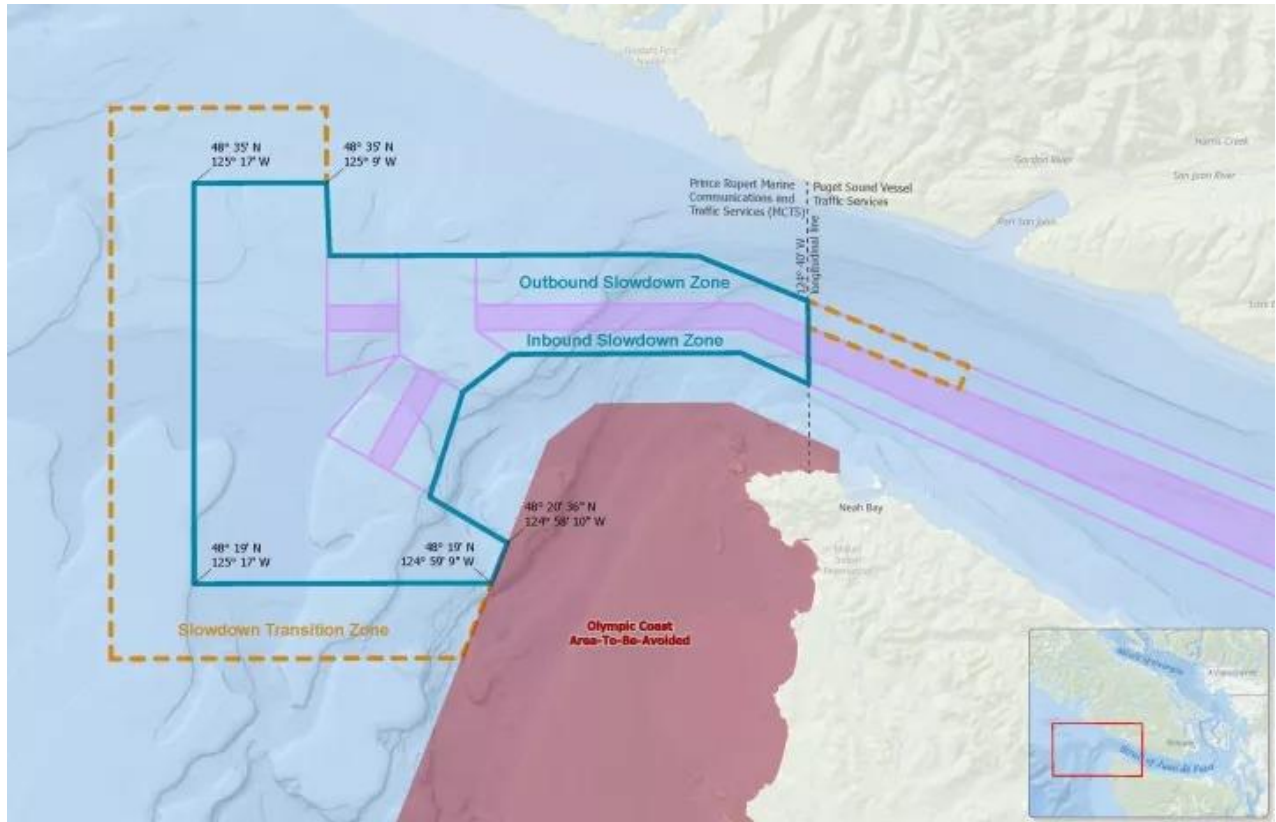
The Strait of Juan de Fuca voluntary route alteration for tugs is shown in the map below:



### 3. Swiftsure Bank Voluntary Ship Slowdown

- The voluntary slowdown trial in Swiftsure Bank is in effect 24 hours per day as of June 1, 2026, until 2359 PDT on October 31, 2026, for all inbound and outbound commercial and government vessels.
- If it is safe and operationally feasible to do so, commercial and government vessels are requested to not exceed the following speeds through the water:
  - 11 knots – Bulkers, tankers, general cargo vessels, and government vessels;
  - 14.5 knots – Vehicle carriers, cruise ships, and container vessels.
- The voluntary vessel slowdown takes place in the inbound and outbound lanes of the vessel traffic separation scheme between the start or end of the traffic separation scheme on the western or southern side, and the 124° 40' W longitudinal line (radio call in point 1) on the eastern side. Speed transition zones are in place about 5 nautical miles prior to entering the slowdown area. The voluntary ship slowdown takes place at Swiftsure Bank between 125° 17' W or 48° 19' N on the western or southern sides, and 124° 40' W on the eastern side. All vessels transiting inbound or outbound are asked to slowdown when it is safe and operationally feasible to do so. Speed transition zones are in place about 2 nautical miles prior to entering the slowdown area.

The Swiftsure Bank voluntary slowdown trial zone is shown in the map below:



The ECHO Program voluntary slowdown and lateral displacement initiatives aim to reduce underwater noise in known Southern Resident Killer Whale feeding areas and is led by the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's ECHO Program, in cooperation with government agencies, Indigenous communities, industry partners, and environmental groups. Refer to the [Port of Vancouver website](#) for more detailed information related to this and other slowdowns and the ECHO program.

Authority: Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO)