

# Save Our Southern Resident Orca Whales From Extinction!

## The Process

Orca Relief Citizens' Alliance and its partners, the Center for Biological Diversity, and Project SeaWolf, submitted a petition to NOAA calling for a protection zone on behalf of the Southern Residents. In January, NOAA took the petition under consideration. We are now in the public response phase which will end on April 13<sup>th</sup>. With your support, it will be followed by a public participation phase to explore the best possible ways to save our local orca whales from extinction—which is imminent if we do not find ways to help them through these times of scarce fish, pollution, and increasing noise and disturbance in their waters.

This needs to be an ongoing process involving all of us— Islanders and mainlanders, elected county officials, the scientific community, the business community, environmental and stewardship groups, and the Southern Resident orca whales themselves. Can we all come together on behalf of saving these very special inhabitants of our Salish Sea? There are many elements to discuss and decisions to be made.

Please help to ensure that the process continues by submitting a comment before April 13.

In their request for public response, NOAA invites feedback re: six areas of concern: (1) The advisability of, and need for, regulations to establish a whale protection zone. (2) The geographic scope of the regulations. (3) Alternative management options for regulating vessel interactions with killer whales, including but not limited to the option in the petition. (4) Scientific and commercial information regarding the effects of vessels on killer whales and their habitat. (5) Information regarding potential economic effects of regulating vessel interactions. (6) Any additional relevant information that NMFS should consider should it accept the petition for a protection zone.

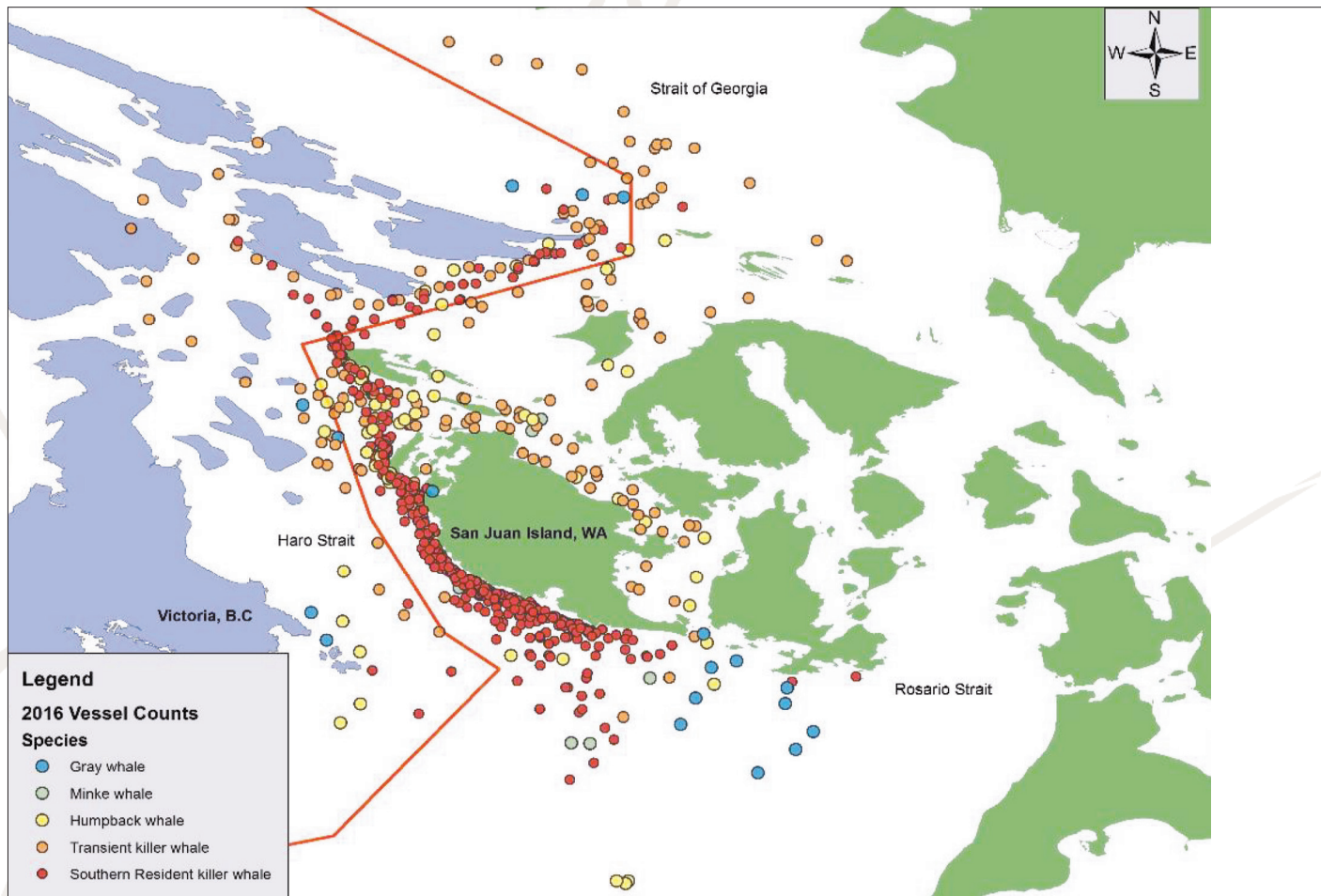
Your thoughtful response to these issues will be greatly appreciated when leaving a comment at:

<https://www.regulations.gov/document?D=NOAA-NMFS-2016-0152-0001>

We should not underestimate the importance of county and state participation and decision-making in this process. When it comes to waters and international boundaries, the jurisdiction is complex and has to begin with NOAA. But this process will not continue without the support and participation of everyone who cares about the future of our Southern Residents.

## Let's Be Clear

Yes, the dams need to come down to Yes, the dams need to come down to help restore salmon. Yes, pollutants in our waters need to be reduced. Yes, freighter traffic must be controlled and Kinder Morgan must be stopped. But all these actions take time. What we can do right



**Above:** Soundwatch 2016, 695 Vessel Counts & Whale Surveys by Location and Species. The proposed WPZ is along the western and southern shores of SJI where most of the red dots are located.

away is give the Southern Residents a sanctuary in their core critical habitat area.

This proposal is not a call for a “no-go” zone. Nothing in the proposal is intended to exclude non-motorized vessels, transiting vessels, Tribal activity, or fishing activity within the zone. The only restriction on these types of vessel activity would be to honor the existing stand-off distances and to adhere to a no-wake speed limit. The only activity our proposal excludes is motorized whale watching.

## Why Noise Matters

For the orca whales, echo-location is an all-encompassing sense; it is how they find food, communicate with one another, protect their young, stay safe together, and understand their own sensory experience of existence.

The intent and purpose of the proposed Whale Protection Zone is to reduce exposure to human-caused noise and disturbance and to ensure that the Southern Residents have unimpeded access to their primary foraging and resting habitat during spring, summer, and autumn months area. Chinook Salmon are themselves endangered and in short supply. A Whale Protection Zone would increase the SRKW's ability to find the salmon that are here.

Some of the Organizations Supporting the Whale Protection Zone:

Center for Biological Diversity, The Coalition to Protect Puget Sound, Marine Conservation Institute, Ocean Alliance, The Ocean Foundation, Oceanic Preservation Society, Orca Relief Citizens' Alliance, Patagonia, Project SeaWolf, Resources for Sustainable Communities, Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, Sonar, Stand.Earth, Whale and Dolphin Conservation.

## Upcoming Event:

“See” and discuss how noise impacts our Southern Residents

Over the last 10 years, working with his colleague Dimitri Ponirakis, Dr. Chris Clark has developed novel ways to demonstrate, through animation, how human noises in the ocean impact the acoustic environments for a variety of marine mammals. Dr. Clark's presentation will show animations of changes in the acoustic habitat of foraging SRKW under a variety of whale watching conditions.

## Public presentations with Dr. Chris Clark:

**Seattle:** Thursday March 30, 7-9 pm, Patagonia, 2100 First Avenue

**San Juan Island:** Friday, March 31, 7-9 PM, Brickworks, 150 Nichols St., Friday Harbor

**Orcas Island:** Saturday April 1, 2-4 PM, Emmanuel Episcopal Church meeting hall, 242 Main St.

Dr. Christopher W. Clark, is an engineer and

## The best view of our whales is...



Photo by Kelley Balcomb-Bartok

...from shore.

Experience more by impacting less.



Land based whale watching protects whales from noise pollution.

biologist. His research concentrates on animal acoustic communication with a particular interest in the application of advanced acoustic technologies for scientific conservation of endangered species. Most recently he devoted considerable effort to scientific advocacy through documentary films such as *Racing Extinction* and *Sonic Sea*. Dr. Clark recently joined the Orca Relief Advisory Board.

Thank you for your help in saving our Southern Residents!

Orca Relief Citizens' Alliance  
[www.orcarelief.org](http://www.orcarelief.org)