

mammals are, the museum has built three full-size replicas, based on years of collected photos and, more recently, images taken by drone.

Researchers started to identify individual members of resident orca families some years ago. This approach has made the study of orcas more personal; they're not just statistics. Naming the mammals has allowed each to be followed so we can study their complex social structure and family adhesion.

Skeletal remains also form part of the exhibition—the bones of one particular orca, Rhapsody, along with those of her calf, had been stored and are now assembled. Necropsies have analyzed why specific orcas died prematurely and found that infections and toxic materials contributed. One part of the exhibition even shows some of the plastic and other debris found in a dead orcas' stomach.

Besides information on orca health

and habitat, the exhibit dives into ecological activism, popular stories about these giant dolphins and long-held connections between orcas and Indigenous beliefs. Included with the more than 100 artefacts are Richard Hunt's articulated dance mask and Bill Reid's spectacular gold killer whale box sculpture. Many other objects are part of RBCM's special collections—making this exhibition a unique experience.

—Marianne Scott

- BOATING REGULATIONS -

ATTENTION BOATERS: UPDATED ORCA REGULATIONS ARE IN EFFECT

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S protection measures for killer whales, including the critically endangered southern resident killer whales, are in effect. Many are re-introductions of the strong measures that were enacted last year, with a few new twists.

As watercraft users, we're required to be aware of these regulations and to follow them.

Unchanged measures

- Between Campbell River and south around Vancouver Island to just north of Ucluelet, all vessels are to be 400 metres from all killer whales.
- In all other BC waters, vessels are to be 200 metres from all killer whales. Vessels must also stay 200 metres away from all whales, dolphins or porpoises with calves or at rest, and 100 metres from all other whales, dolphins and porpoises.
- Three interim sanctuary zones: No vessel traffic (with a few exceptions such as emergency situations and Indigenous fishing for food, social or ceremonial purposes) off Pender Island, Saturna Island and at Swiftsure Bank through November 30, 2021.



What's new in 2021?

An expansion of the 400-metre distance rule between vessels and killer whales to include Barkley Sound and Howe Sound.

Voluntary measures

- Stop fishing and do not haul gear if within 1,000 metres of killer whales.
- Slow down to seven knots or slower if within 1,000 metres of any marine mammal.
- Turn engines to neutral idle if you accidentally get too close and if it's safe to do so.
- Turn off echo sounders and fish finders when not using them.

Boating tip: Always check fishing regulations before harvesting seafood

There are new fisheries closures in the Southern Gulf Islands, Swiftsure Bank and in the Juan de Fuca Strait. The objectives of these closures are for whales to have access to their preferred prey of chinook salmon without disturbance in their key foraging areas. Detailed maps of these closures and measures can be found on the webpage of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (dfo-mpo.gc.ca).

Mini baby boom

There are three new babies in the southern resident orca population, bumping the total to 75 individuals. Male and female calves J57 and J58 were both born last fall, while L125 is the newest member, arriving earlier this year as L-pod's first birth since 2019. While this is a hopeful sign, southern resident killer whales have a 50 percent survival rate in their first year.

—Michelle Young,

Georgia Strait Alliance's coordinator of Clean Marine BC



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