

OCEAN NOISE TOOLKIT

2024

A RESOURCE TO HELP GUIDE FEEDBACK
FOR THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD
OF CANADA'S OCEAN NOISE STRATEGY

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Georgia Strait Alliance



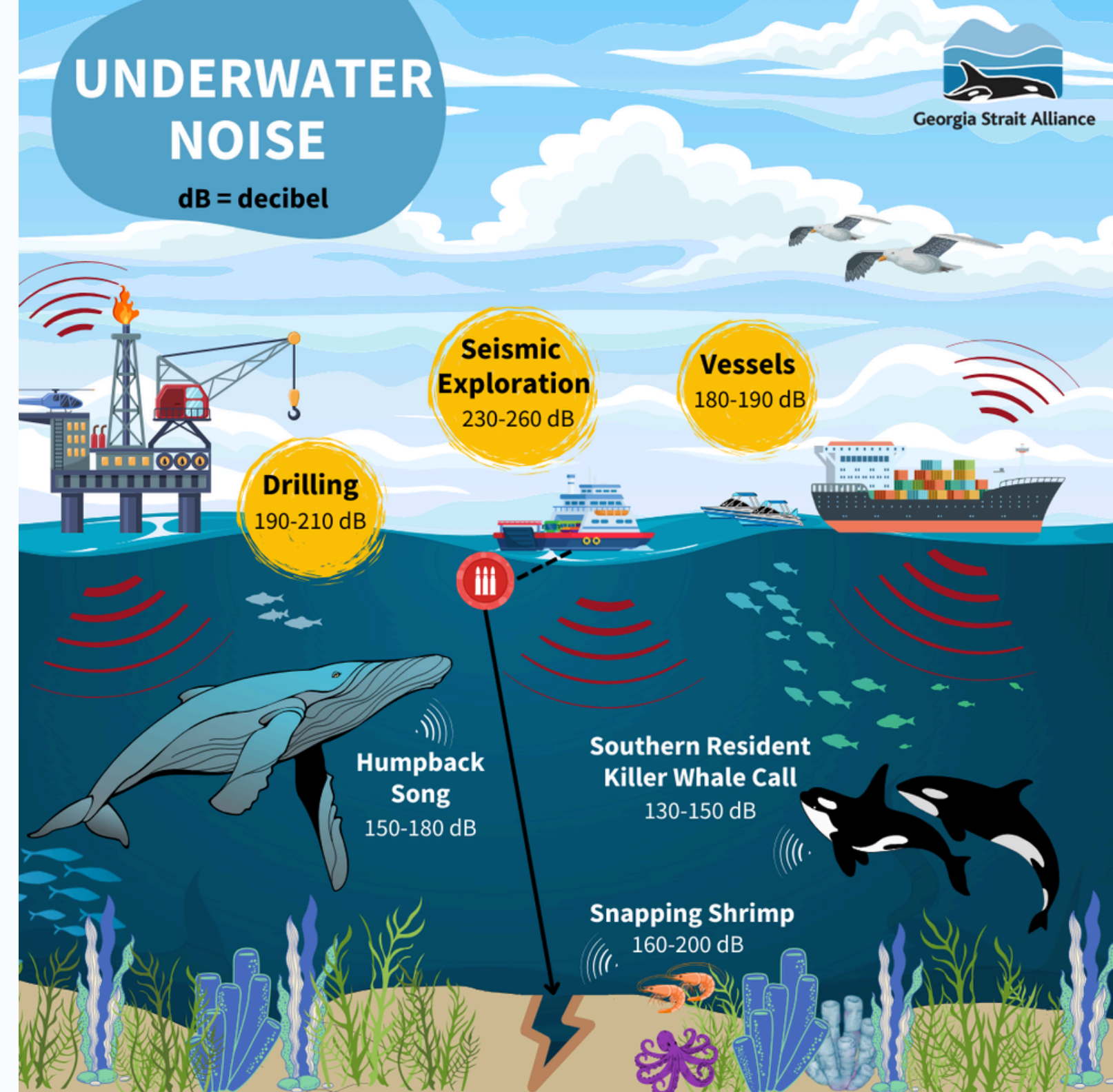


OVERVIEW

WHAT IS OCEAN NOISE & ITS IMPACTS

Ocean noise includes sounds produced by natural sources (shrimp snaps, earthquakes) and human activities (shipping, construction, drilling) also known as **anthropogenic noise**.

- **Impact of anthropogenic noise:** Disrupts marine life, decreases biodiversity, and alters ecosystem dynamics, threatening long-term marine health.
- **Anthropogenic noise sources in BC:** Increased ship traffic, infrastructure development, fishing activities, and oil & gas exploration.
- **Effect on cetaceans:** Noise is particularly harmful to orcas and humpback whales, impairing their communication, navigation, and foraging abilities.



Click on image to enlarge!



TO LEARN MORE CLICK HERE

DEFEND THE SOUTHERN RESIDENTS

Southern resident killer whales (SRKWs) are quite chatty and have dialects unique to each pod! But with increased vessel traffic and prolonged exposure to noise, SRKWs are experiencing many challenges:

- Communication within and between pods is **severely impaired** with overlapping frequencies emitted by vessels.
- Experiencing **chronic stress** and disruption in fundamental processes like mating, feeding, and foraging.
- Rapid diving behaviour changes can lead to **decompression sickness** (i.e. bubbles in their blood, joints and vital organs).
- Displaying **avoidance behaviors** and losing access to key foraging habitat, resulting in increased energy expenditures. One [study](#) showed that SRKWs potentially **lose 20% to 23% of each day**, or up to **5.5 hours of foraging time** due to increased vessel traffic.



SOUTHERN RESIDENTS

Projects like Roberts Bank Terminal 2 and the Transmountain Expansion Pipeline (TMX) are exacerbating the threats manifold. The TMX has been said to increase vessel traffic by **900%** within the critical habitat of the Southern Residents – **their primary foraging grounds.**

IT'S GETTING NOISIER, BUT YOUR VOICE COUNTS.



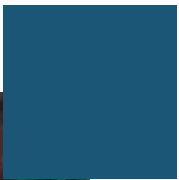
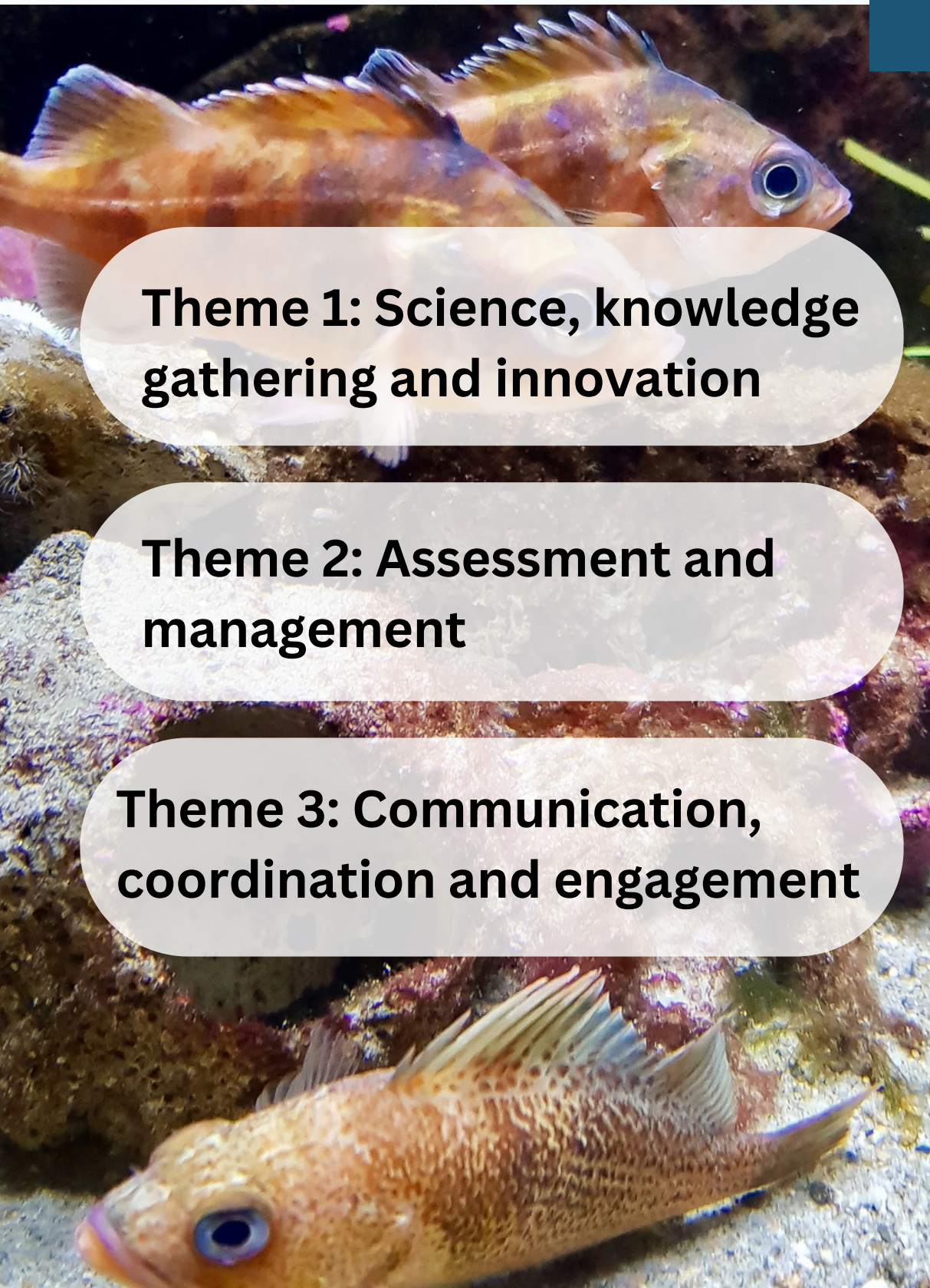
[Tell your MP that the SRKWs need better and more protection measures here](#)

Southern Resident Killer Whales 'see' with sound



[YouTube video](#) credit: Marine Education & Research Society.

A [study](#) published in 2009 concluded that with an increase in one decibel noise, the Southern Residents also increased their call amplitude by one decibel to avoid **auditory masking** (one sound obscuring another sound). This would be like raising your voice as you try to explain a story to a friend in a busy café with loud music – which can be exhausting after a prolonged time!



OCEAN NOISE STRATEGY

WHAT IS THE OCEAN NOISE STRATEGY?

The Government of Canada released their Ocean Noise Strategy draft on August 23, 2024. The Strategy has three themes (listed on the left) through which the Strategy intends to:

- Identify gaps and opportunities in issues surrounding ocean noise to minimize impacts to marine life.
- Explores the ability of the Government to work with multiple stakeholders and Indigenous Nations for innovative solutions.

However, the Strategy **lacks** clear and actionable plans, timelines, and measurable outcomes, leaving noise mitigation uncertain and pushing marine animals, like the Southern Resident killer whales, closer to extinction.

Theme 1: Science, knowledge gathering and innovation

Theme 2: Assessment and management

Theme 3: Communication, coordination and engagement



TO ACCESS THE STRATEGY CLICK HERE

PUBLIC CONSULTATION PERIOD

Fisheries and Oceans Canada have a public consultation that began August 23 and will close on **Oct 22, 2024.**

- This is an opportunity for **everyone**, particularly Indigenous Peoples, marine industry stakeholders, non-government and environmental organizations, academics, and the general public to ask questions, provide feedback, recommendations, and suggestions on inclusions or exclusions from the document.



TO ACCESS THE
CONSULTATION CLICK HERE



QUESTIONS TO HELP FORMULATE FEEDBACK

- How do you perceive ocean noise affecting marine life in your area?
- **What measures do you think could be implemented to reduce ocean noise in BC?**
- Are there best practices from regions or communities that should be considered in the Strategy that would reduce or help monitor noise levels?
- **How can compliance with noise reduction measures be effectively enforced?**
- How can the Strategy better engage stakeholders, especially local communities, small businesses, and Indigenous groups, once implemented?
- **Are the long-term goals of the Strategy realistic?**
- What do you think of the Strategy overall? How can it be improved?



Click on image to enlarge!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

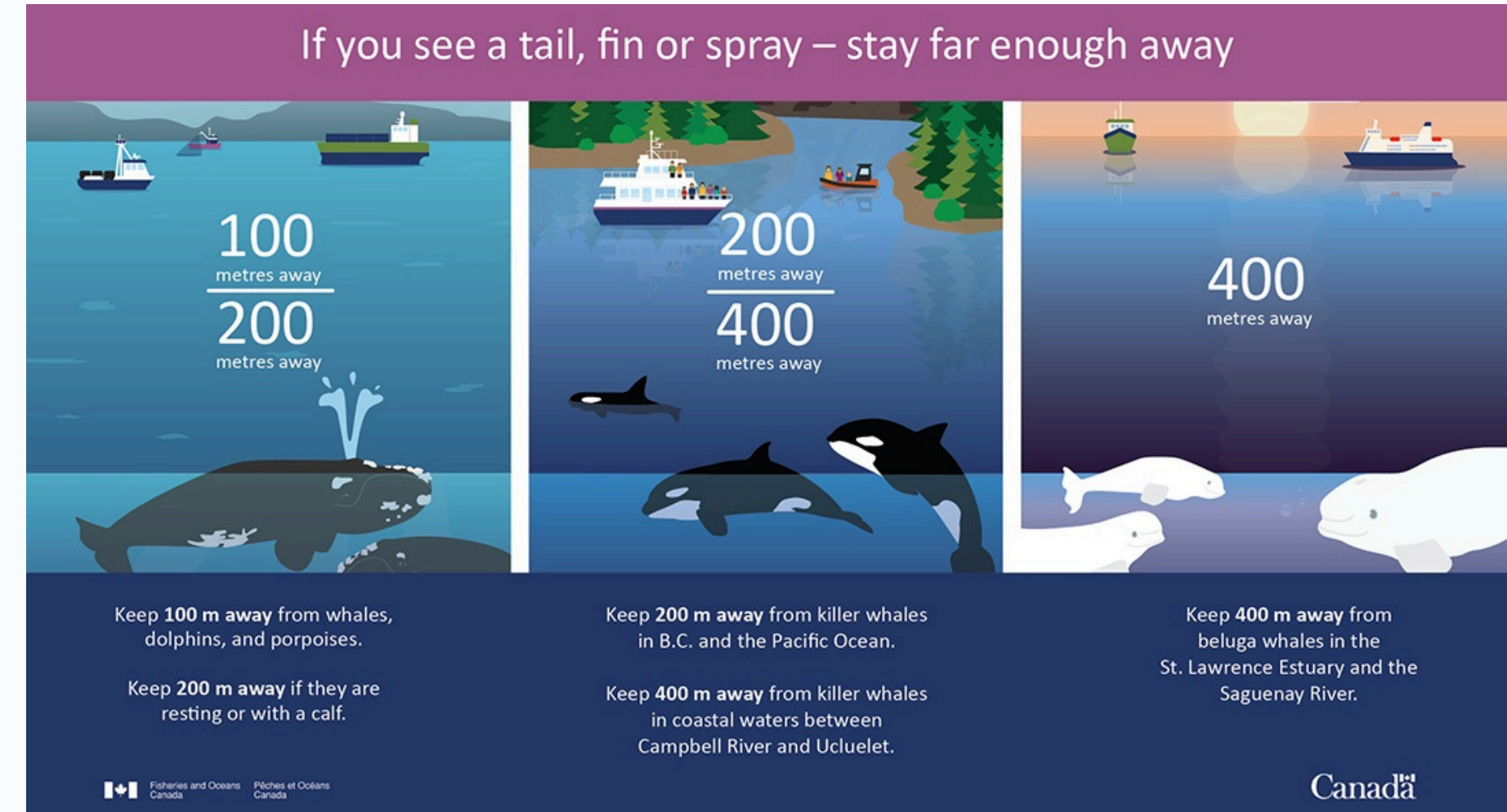
WANT MORE INFORMATION?

These are some organizations in BC and across Canada that focus on ocean noise pollution:

- World Wildlife Fund Canada (WWF-Canada)
- Marine Education and Research Society (MERS)
- Ocean Wise
- BC Whales
- Clear Seas

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO REDUCE NOISE POLLUTION?

- Slow down when operating boat vessels
- Use the [Whale Warning Flag](#) to warn others about whales nearby
- Be mindful of online purchases, as more stuff = more ship traffic!
- Educating one another about underwater noise pollution impacts
- Make your voice heard in the public consultation survey
- Choose land-based whale watching over boat tours



The current distances are not **good enough**. Washington State is implementing a 1000 yard distance for orcas while in BC, the law calls for only a 400 metre distance by boat - sign our petition below:



[ASK THE GOVERNMENT FOR A 1000 METRE BUFFER ZONE](#)



[CLICK HERE FOR A GUIDE TO LAND-BASED WHALE WATCHING](#)

KEEP UP TO DATE ON GSA'S WORK

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Future GSA Event:

[October 16] Ocean Noise in the Salish Sea Webinar-
Get tickets [here](#)

**Please consider donating so that GSA
can continue protecting the Salish Sea.**

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