

Wonders OF THE SALISH SEA

2026 webinar series

2026 Newsletter 1

In this newsletter: 1. Welcome; 2. Itinerary/schedule; 3. Zoom link; 4. Recordings; 5. 2026 poster; 6. Program Details; 7. Host and Partner, 2026; 8. Questions?; 9. Read; Watch; Listen.

1. Welcome to Wonders of the Salish Sea 2026—our 10th season!

Whether you're new to the program or are one of the many returning participants, the all-new itinerary is sure to spark a sense of wonder for this extraordinary place we're so lucky to live in (or visit). We hope it leaves you with a greater understanding of why this inland sea is so special, how it impacts every aspect of our lives, and how each of us can be part of the solution—becoming champions for the Salish Sea in these challenging times.

2. The complete itinerary

Presentation descriptions and speaker bios are attached to this email, and can also be found on the [Wonders of the Salish Sea](#) Blog page.

3. Zoom link!

You'll receive the link to the live Zoom sessions a few days before the program begins.

4. Recording link

If you're unable to attend on Monday nights, or want to watch again, the recording link will be sent to you in the following newsletter.

5. The 2026 poster!

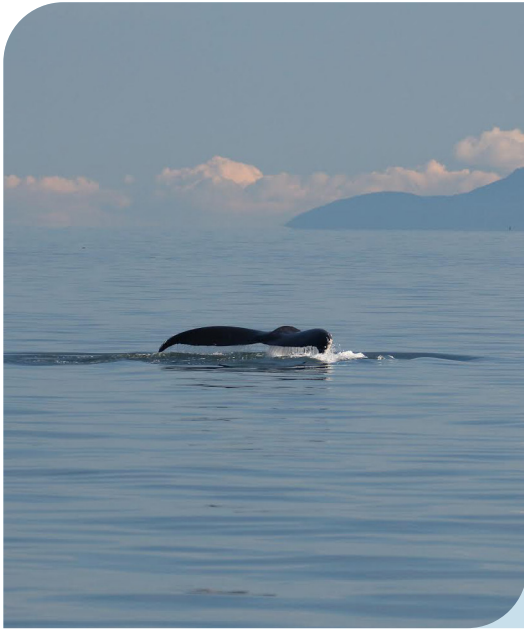
Thanks to Joan Lopez for the use of her beautiful photograph.



Here are some details about the photo:

“This photo was taken on October 7, 2021, in the Georgia Strait, with Orcas Island in the background. The whale is a female known as BCZ0410, “Anvil,” named for a marking on the underside of her fluke that resembles a hammer and an anvil. She was likely pregnant with her first known calf when the photo was taken. She later gave birth in 2022 and again in 2024. Anvil is frequently observed throughout the Salish Sea during the feeding season.”

Thank-you Joan!



6. Program Details

- ❖ **Accessibility.** We aim to make this program accessible to all, so the registration fee is low and limited full subsidies are available. Contact gsa@georgiastrait.org to request a subsidy.
- ❖ **Group registration:** For volunteers and staff of non-profit organizations, groups of 6 or more get 50% off! Contact gsa@georgiastrait.org for more information and to register as a group.
- ❖ **Donations:** GSA’s staff invest so much time making this program happen. We greatly appreciate their recognition of the importance of accessible, community-based environmental education. Donations to GSA—of any size—are most welcome.
- ❖ **Newsletters:** You will receive six newsletters over the course of the program. Please note that you will not be subscribed to an ongoing mailing list. If you’d like to stay in touch with WSS between seasons, you’re welcome to join our **Alumni list** by emailing salish.wonders@gmail.com. We send approximately four newsletters per year.
- ❖ **Chats, quizzes and prizes:** Even though the program is delivered online, it’s still nice to get to know one another! To that end, we often include social engagement activities before the program begins and during the break. We also wrap up each evening with our “famous” quiz question—famous because we typically receive more than 20 answers in a quarter of a second! The winner receives a prize, usually a book related to the evening’s theme.
- ❖ **Field trips:** More information on field trips to come. For Metro Vancouver folks, stay tuned for information about our annual intertidal walk at Stanley Park on Saturday, April 18.
- ❖ **Watch the live Zoom with others?** Last year, one group of students got together to watch the Zoom sessions, adding a social aspect to the program and the opportunity to discuss the presentation afterwards. This year, in Vancouver BC, Patagonia and the Diving Locker are offering store space for group viewing. Want to get together with others to watch the live Zoom presentations? Let us know, and we can spread the word!

7. WSS 2026 Host and Partner

For those new to the program, WSS is planned and delivered by a small group of dedicated volunteer Salish Sea enthusiasts. To bring the program to life, we need a host organization to manage essential behind-the-scenes work, including finances, registration, technical support, as well as being an integral part of the planning committee. In past years, Vancouver Parks and Recreation, Nature Vancouver, and Transition Salt Spring have generously fulfilled this role.

- ❖ **Our host this year** is [Georgia Strait Alliance](#) (GSA), and we are delighted that they enthusiastically stepped in to take on this responsibility. GSA has been part of WSS from the beginning, contributing to the original program design back in 2016.



Georgia Strait Alliance

From GSA Executive Director Beatrice Frank:

“For 35 years, GSA has been driven by the belief that healthy marine ecosystems support healthier communities. Founded by locals who undertook “human-powered” crossings—swimming, rowing, and windsurfing across the 29-kilometer Georgia Strait—to raise awareness of marine pollution, GSA now enters its 36th year focused on building resilient coastal communities in the face of climate change. We aim to strengthen marine governance, advocate for biodiversity protection, and deepen connections with Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities around the Salish Sea through people-powered advocacy, community engagement, and strategic action in media, policy, and the courts.”



- ❖ **Our partner organization for 2026** is the [Salish Sea Institute at Western Washington University](#), which supports WSS from planning through delivery.



**SALISH SEA
INSTITUTE**



From Dr. Cindy Ellis, Associate Director of the Salish Sea Institute:

“The Salish Sea Institute (SSI) at Western Washington University was created to raise awareness and to support the protection of the Salish Sea, with a focus on the region’s transboundary nature. SSI convenes workshops, supports research, produces reports, administers the Salish Sea Studies Minor, and shares science and management strategies. Through this work, SSI fosters meaningful connections across borders, disciplines and systems to advance a healthy and just future for the Salish Sea.”



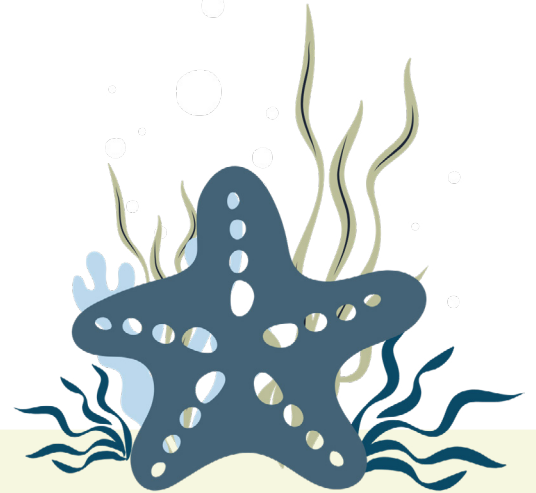
❖ **We are thrilled** to have the support of organizations on both sides of the border—in British Columbia and Washington State—reflecting the bi-national nature of this unique ecosystem.

8. Any questions?

Please ask at salish.wonders@gmail.com.

See you soon!

~ Deborah Simpson on behalf of the WSS 2026 planning committee:
Maithili Devadas, Cindy Elliser, Liz Freyman and Joan Lopez.



9. Upcoming events

Monday, February 23, 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm, online. “**Special Delivery: The hidden costs of commercial shipping on marine life.**” Dr. Cathryn Murray. Part of Nature Victoria’s Marine Night education series. More information [HERE](#).

Thursday, March 12, 7:30 to 9:00 PM, online. “**Investigating rockfish vocalizations and their implications for acoustic monitoring.**” Darienne Lancaster. Part of Nature Vancouver’s Marine Biology education series. More information [HERE](#).

Now until July 6, 2026. [Critical Distance](#). A powerful immersive augmented reality experience that allows you to journey alongside holographic Southern Resident Orcas’ J-Pod, a group of 25 endangered whales living in the Salish Sea. Designed for visitors ages 10 and up. **Royal BC Museum, Victoria, BC.**

Do you have an upcoming education event to share? Send the information to salish.wonders@gmail.com and we can add it to the next newsletter.

READ

❖ [Steps being taken to reduce orca-disorienting underwater clatter in Puget Sound.](#) The Port of Seattle is taking significant steps to address the impact of underwater noise on marine life. Theron Zahn, KOMO News Reporter. February 8, 2026.

❖ [December floods test salmon habitats, restoration efforts.](#) As experts are unsure of how impacted salmon populations are from the recent December flooding, salmon restoration projects are proving their importance. Margaret Baumgartner. Salish Current. February 4, 2026.

- ❖ **!!GREAT NEWS!! [Federal Court of Appeal upholds decision to keep fish farms out of Discovery Islands](#)**. Major win for wild salmon and ocean health after years of legal battles. Georgia Strait Alliance. January 29, 2026.
- ❖ **“[Breaking down research silos to understand a shifting Salish Sea](#)”**. The Sentinels of Change Alliance shows what’s possible when collaboration is a foundation, not an add-on.” UBC News, Alpha Lam, Jan 12, 2026.
- ❖ **‘[Very unique](#)’: Pod of killer whales seen rubbing bellies on rocks off B.C.’s Sunshine Coast**. Whale expert says the phenomena is a specialized behaviour specific to northern resident killer whales. Alanna Kelly, CBC News, Jan 06, 2026.
- ❖ **[2025: The year of the starfish \(and the Pacific Northwest scientists trying to save them\)](#)**. Jes Burns, OPB. Dec. 29, 2025. (Pls note! WSS presentation, April 13th at 7:00 pm, is devoted entirely to sea stars.)
- ❖ **[Those Orcas Wearing Salmon Hats? It Might Not Be as Cute as You Think](#)**. Learn why killer whales sometimes wear dead salmon on their heads, and what that might mean. Avery Hurt, Discover – Planet Earth. Dec 24, 2025.
- ❖ **[Thousands of baby bull kelp planted on new rock reef in North Vancouver](#)**. Bull kelp are the base of the food web for much of the local marine ecosystem. Lauren Vanderdeen, CBC News, Dec 21, 2025.

WATCH

- ❖ **[The Extraordinary Salish Sea](#)**. A short, inspiring introduction to Salish Sea by filmmaker Bob Turner. See Bob’s other fascinating Salish Sea videos [here](#).
- ❖ **[Basking Sharks in the Salish Sea. A Multidisciplinary Story](#)**. “Did you know that basking sharks used to be a common sighting in the Salish Sea?” Watch Dr. Kelly Bushnell’s talk on these gentle giants, part of the Salish Sea Institute’s (WWU) Environmental Speaker Series.
- ❖ **[The Salish Sea’s Grizzly Connection](#)**. “Team Grizzly journeys to the wildest, northernmost edge of the Salish Sea to get close to THE great bear of the Great Bear Rainforest.” What trouble will Joe Gaydos get up to this time?? Another awe-inspiring video from the [SeaDoc Society, Salish Sea Wild video series](#).

LISTEN

- ❖ **A must for whale lovers! [January Whales in the Salish Sea podcast](#)**. Monika Wieland Shields from the Orca Behavior Institute and April Ryan, marine naturalist and captain with Maya’s Legacy Whale Watching. February 3, 2026. This is episode 49 of the podcast series “[After the Breach, a whale podcast by whale enthusiasts](#)”
- ❖ **[Pod of Orcas podcast series. SeaDoc Society](#)**. **Season One** is a seven-episode podcast series about Southern Resident Killer Whales. **Season Two** covers a wide range of issues and stories related to the Salish Sea ecosystem.

