



# Orcas

(Orcinus orca)

## 5 Quick Facts

**XXL**

Orcas are the **largest member of the dolphin family**



Females aren't sexually mature until 15 (20-25 for males), resulting in **very slow population increases**



**Orcas live in matriline**s, meaning a head female, her sons and daughters, and her daughters' offspring all stay together for life



**These whales share food!** The best hunters ensure other members of their group don't go hungry



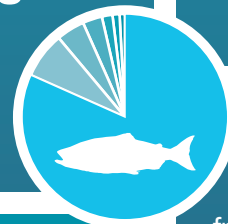
Just like dialects in humans, **each orca pod has distinct acoustic sounds**, which scientists can use to distinguish them

Southern Resident Killer Whales (SRKW) **are endangered** and in 2020 numbered

**72**



SRKW eat mostly salmon and **>80%** of those are large chinooks



Most chinook runs are now considered **at risk of collapse**



Chinook populations throughout BC suffer from a combination of over fishing, lack of food, and degraded habitats such as spawning beds and eelgrass meadows.



**49%**

**chance of extinction in the next century.**

Their critical habitat includes our Southern Gulf Islands. Immediate action is crucial to their survival.



**Critical habitat** (white) is the SRKW preferred summer feeding areas designated by Species at Risk Act (SARA) in Canada and NOAA Fisheries in the USA. The rest of the year they can range as far north as southeastern Alaska and as far south as central California.

# 6 MAJOR THREATS

## Scarcity of prey:

The SRKW population must catch roughly **1,400 salmon daily** to sustain their needs



**Environmental stresses:** pollution run-off from cities, industry, and agriculture



**Disturbance and vessel strikes** from whale watching and boating traffic

## Oil spills



**Noise pollution** from vessels, dredging, drilling, military sonar, and construction



## Entanglement



# What YOU can do

## Steer clear of orcas!

**200 m**  
Minimum



**400 m**  
in Southern BC\*



## Be informed

\*Stay up-to-date on the Marine Mammal Regulations boaters are required to know and follow



**Tell your MP what you want done** for orca welfare and environmental protection



## Join your local beach clean up



and Streamkeepers to protect and enhance wild salmon habitats

## Slow down



when you see a fin. Slowing your speed by 5 knots = 8 db less noise!

**Report boating infractions by calling 1.800.465.4336**



**Eat sustainably sourced seafood** and always follow fishing regulations



**Avoid anchoring in eelgrass meadows,** an important chinook habitat



Visit [galianoconservancy.ca/orcas/](http://galianoconservancy.ca/orcas/) to find out more, donate, or volunteer!



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