

## A Message to boaters and kayakers planning to launch from San Juan County Park ~

You are about to enter an extraordinarily special place. Seeing killer whales and other marine wildlife in their natural environment can be a thrilling experience.

In our excitement, we sometimes forget that our presence has an effect on wildlife and their habitat. Just like us, marine animals need space to find food, choose mates, raise young, socialize and rest. These are critical life processes necessary for healthy marine wildlife populations.

**What are the consequences to the whales?** When we get too close, approach too fast, or make too much noise, we may be disrupting these activities and causing the animals unnecessary stress. In some cases, we may be threatening their lives.

Vessel traffic in our waters is steadily increasing, placing added pressures on marine animals and their habitats. Vessel activity may increase sound levels above and below the water, physically harm the whales, or pollute the air they breathe.

**Are there laws that govern my activities on the water?** Yes, regulations in Canada and the U.S. prohibit the harassment and disturbance of marine animals. Many species are threatened or endangered and subject to additional protections under the Endangered Species Act (U.S.) and the Species at Risk Act (Canada).

The Department of Fish and Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries Office for Law Enforcement are dedicated to the enforcement of state and federal laws that protect and conserve our nation's living marine resources and their natural habitat.

All killer whales are protected in Washington State Waters. Specific Washington State vessel laws for killer whales apply.



### What can I do?

- ◆ Abide by all laws and guidelines intended to protect marine mammals.
- ◆ Follow the Kayaker Code of Conduct. Kayaks and other small rowing craft are virtually silent above and below the water. They can startle marine wildlife close to shore and may actually cause the whales to change course.
- ◆ Set an example for others, and help protect our spectacular marine resources.
- ◆ Report all observations of possible wildlife harassment. Online at [www.bewhalewise.org](http://www.bewhalewise.org) or call 1-800-853-1964 (1-800-465-4336 in Canada).

**What else is required?** Between May 1 and September 30, all vessel operators, including paddlers, launching from San Juan County Park must obtain a county parks-issued vessel launch permit. To receive a permit, boaters and kayakers must attend a vessel code of conduct training presentation (led by KERP educators from The Whale Museum), sign a pledge, and pay the permit fee to the park. Permits include a tag that must be visibly attached to their vessel. Commercial operations are covered under separate policy.

**What does a Parks-issued permit cost?** Permit fee is per vessel launched. If you're camping at San Juan County Park, you get unlimited launches for \$7 per stay. If you're a visitor not camping at the park, you'll pay \$7/day, or you can purchase a Season Permit with unlimited launches for \$35. San Juan County residents can enjoy unlimited launches at no charge (proof of residency is required).

### Where can I get more information about Southern Resident Killer Whales?

<http://www.whalemuseum.org/programs/soundwatch/soundwatch.html>

<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Whales-Dolphins-Porpoise/Killer-Whales/Recovery-Implement/Orca-Vessel-Regs.cfm>