

## Southern Resident Whales of the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America

You are one of two communities of resident orcas that have a distinct home range along the Pacific Northwest coast. Your range is from the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia to Monterey Bay in California. During spring, summer and fall, you are regularly found in the inland marine waters around Washington State.

Your population numbers below 90, with recent counts ranging from 83 to 88 individuals. In the 1960s and 1970s, your population decreased dramatically as members of your community were captured to be sent to marine parks. Sadly, most of these animals died. Only one individual remains in captivity from those captured. Her name is Lolita.

Your whole community is an extended, close-knit family. The community is divided into three pods (J, K and L), all using similar calls and forming a single clan. The L pod is the largest, at twice the size of the smallest pod, K. Your community is matriarchal, meaning each pod is led by the eldest female.

Your community feeds primarily on fish, with salmon comprising upwards of 90 percent of your diet. You derive a small part of your diet from squid. You have been known to work together to locate and catch fish and also to share your catch between members of your pod. You use echolocation to find your food and frequently use calls and whistles during hunting.

You spend much of your time mingling with your pod and clan members. During this time, you are known for your playful activity at the surface of the water. These leisure and bonding activities include breaching (jumping completely out of the water and into the air), spouting (blowing air and mist from the blowhole) and tail lobbing (raising your large tail, called a fluke, out of the water).

Your population is threatened by a host of forces, including chemical pollutants, dwindling salmon stocks, and underwater noise pollution due to human interactions with the environment.

## Northern Resident Whales of the Pacific Northwest Coast of North America

You are the larger of the two resident populations living along the Pacific Northwest coast. Your population numbers more than 200 individuals, broken into 16 pods. These 16 pods form three clans, each with its own dialect, indicating that the pods in each clan are more closely related to one another than to those in other clans.

Your range intersects with the southern resident population, but your calls and behaviors are distinctly different and members of your two groups do not mix. During the summer months, you congregate in the western area of Johnstone Strait and Queen Charlotte Strait, in the northern part of Vancouver Island, British Columbia. You gather here to take advantage of the migration of the salmon into and out of their birth rivers. During the winter, you travel up to southern Alaska.

You are very vocal when you gather as a group, sometimes even sending out welcoming committees to greet pods as they enter Johnstone Strait. During this time, you are active at the surface of the water, breaching (jumping completely out of the water and into the air), spouting (blowing air and mist from the blowhole) and tail lobbing (raising your large tail, called a fluke, out of the water). You have also been known to spyhop, popping your head out of the water to look around.

You enjoy beach rubbing, a behavior common in your community. You travel to beaches filled with tiny rocks and spend hours rubbing your body against the smooth surfaces of these pebbles.

Just like your neighbors, the southern residents, you are almost exclusively fish feeders. The five native salmon species comprise upwards of 90 percent of your diet, with your favorite being Chinook salmon. You derive a small part of your diet from squid.

Your foraging methods vary according to the fish you hunt. You spread out over an area and close in on the fish. Using echolocation to find your food, you also frequently use calls and whistles during hunting.

Your population is threatened by a host of forces, including chemical pollutants, dwindling salmon stocks, and underwater noise pollution due to human interactions with the environment.

## Transient Orcas from the Pacific Northwest coast of North America

Your population numbers around 320 individuals and inhabits the waters along the northwest coast of North America. As your name implies, you move from one location to another, spanning an area from southeast Alaska to southern points along the California coast. Though you may encounter members of the two resident groups living in the same area, you don't interact or interbreed with these populations.

There is no competition between your population and the resident communities, as you have a completely different diet. Your prey consists of other marine mammals, such as harbor seals, sea lions, dolphins, porpoises and even various types of whales. You hunt in packs and cooperate to corral or ambush your prey. You parole the coves and coastal rocks where seal pups are weaned in search of your next meal. Hunting methods include repeated tail slapping to immobilize your prey, striking it with your head or snout, or even drowning your prey by pushing it beneath the surface.

The marine mammals you stalk are ever-vigilant of your attacks, listening carefully for your calls and whistles. As stealthlike hunters, you even refrain from using echolocation as your prey might sense those sound waves. All calls and whistles are used discriminately, though you are known to vocalize loudly after a kill.

In general, your vocalizations are simpler in pattern than the resident whales. All members of your population have the same dialect. There are other differences, though subtle, that distinguish you from your neighboring populations. Your dorsal fin is usually pointier than the rounded edges of the resident communities', and your saddle patch is large and solid gray.

Your community is divided into smaller pods. These pods are more loosely formed than those of resident communities, meaning your offspring sometimes leave their mother's pod and join another. This flexible social structure differs greatly from the tightly knit matriarchal groups of your neighboring resident communities.

## New Zealand Orcas

Your population is divided into three resident communities with an overall population numbering below 200. Census counts have recorded numbers as low as 67 and as high as 167 individuals. Together, you call the waters around New Zealand, a collection of islands in the southern Pacific Ocean, your home.

Two of your resident communities have geographically separate ranges, one living near North Island and the other around South Island; the range of the third community overlaps these two areas. Regardless, it is hard to pinpoint your location, as each group enjoys traveling and moves throughout the seasons to different favorite locations. Some individuals swim 170 kilometers a day, with the largest recorded range spanning an area 4,200 kilometers wide!

Each of your resident groups is composed of pods that are family units, though your social structure is far less rigid than groups found in the Pacific Northwest. Your pods tend to be small, averaging below five individuals. A good percentage of your pods include one or more juveniles and/or a baby, called a calf.

Physically, you differ slightly from orcas found in the Antarctic. Grayish skin pigment distinguishes the Antarctic orcas, which is in stark contrast to your deep black color. Interestingly, your population has a higher frequency of abnormal dorsal fins, a defect seen in low percentages in other places, but appearing in almost one-fourth of your population.

As top predators, you enjoy a wide variety of food sources. Your favorite prey are eagle rays, long and short-tailed stingrays, and torpedo rays. Often, you collaborate with other members of your pod when hunting rays and follow the hunt with food sharing.

Other favorite catches include different types of sharks and a variety of finfish, including yellow-fin tuna, grouper and sunfish. Unlike other groups that are exclusively fish-feeders, you have a varied diet that includes other marine mammals. Dolphins, humpback whales, right whales, sperm whales and pilot whales are all prey.

You use echolocation and communicate using calls and whistles like other orcas, though the calls you make are unique to your population.