

Sound News

OrcaSing 2001

On June 23rd at Lime Kiln Point State Park, the City Cantabile Choir will dedicate this year's OrcaSing to "Granny." Details on page 4.

Pigs (Whales?) on Parade

Porcas last seen on 4th between Pike and Pine—check it out!

Clarification

In the article "Orcas and Underwater Sound: Motors, Measurement, & Music" that appeared on page four of the February 2001 issue of Whulj, the explanation of the terms relating to "threshold shifts" may have been confusing. A temporary threshold shift (TTS) refers to the temporary increase in the volume of the minimum sound level that an animal can detect. TTS can occur after exposure to loud sounds for short periods of time, or not-so-loud sounds for longer periods of time. You may recognize the effects of a TTS after you attend a rock concert. Eventually your hearing returns to normal, and you can again detect quieter sounds.

The Whulj article implies that TTSs are benign; however, repeated TTSs in the same individual can result in a permanent threshold shift (PTS). PTS refers to a permanent change in the ability to hear the quietest sounds. In addition to resulting from multiple TTSs, a PTS can result from exposure to extremely loud sounds for a short period of time, or very loud sounds for longer periods of time. Extreme cases of PTS can result in complete hearing loss.

Killer Whale Petition Filed

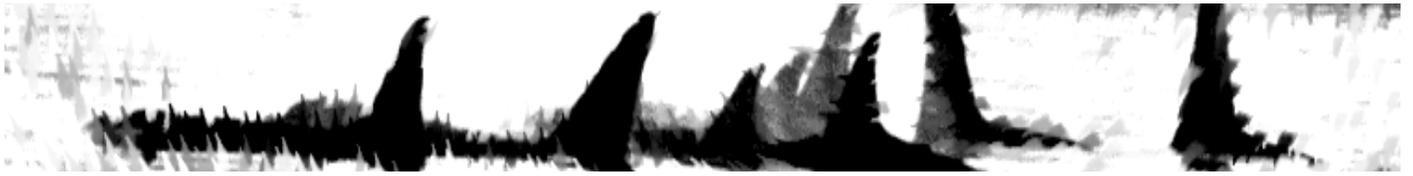
By Elizabeth Petras

On May 1st, 2001, the Center for Biological Diversity filed a petition with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to list the southern resident population of killer whales as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The American Cetacean Society is one of nine sponsors of this petition. The southern resident population has been steadily declining—from 98 whales in 1995 to only 82 in 2000. The petition listed diminished fish stocks (the endangered Puget Sound chinook salmon are believed to be the orca's primary food), high contamination levels, and stress from boat traffic as possible factors contributing to the decline in this relatively small, genetically isolated population of whales. Board members of the Puget Sound Chapter of ACS provided comments on the initial draft of the petition and ACS recently adopted policy supporting the listing of the orcas on the ESA.

At this point, NMFS must decide if the petition contains sufficient scientific information and meets their petition criteria by July 31st, 2001 (90 days after the filing). If NMFS accepts the petition, they will then have one year to determine if the listing of the whales is warranted. ACS/PS will provide an update this summer on NMFS's decision. To learn more about and read a copy of the petition, check out the Center for Biological Diversity web site at www.biologicaldiversity.org.

Several ACS/PS board members recently participated in a killer whale revitalization workshop held in Bellingham, WA. (See this issue of *Whulj* for a summary of the meeting.) The workshop was designed to allow people from a variety of backgrounds to discuss the status of the killer whales and what can and should be done to protect them. A follow-up meeting is planned for this fall.

A quick update on the killer whales: J-pod had been seen in the San Juan Islands since April; this is typically the time that they return to the area to feed on spring runs of spawning salmon. On May 20th, K-pod and parts of L-pod were seen for the first time this year off the west side of San Juan Island. The Center for Whale Research reports that J14 has a third calf, J37, and it appears that K22 had her first calf, K33. For more information about the southern resident killer whales, check out the Center for Whale Research web site at www.whaleresearch.com and the Whale Museum web site at www.whale-museum.org.



ORCAS and INDIGENOUS WISDOM

By Ann Stateler

The following is adapted from *Keet Shu-ka: An Indigenous Tribute to Killer Whales*, the presentation by Ann Stateler and Odin Lonning to ACS/PS at the March 7 program in our *Speaker Series 2001*.

Killer whales and Native people have shared the Northwest coast for at least 10,000 years. The indigenous wisdom, stories, and art of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian of Alaska and British Columbia reflect an understanding of orca nature that Western science has only recently begun to appreciate. Northwest coast killer whale societies bear a striking resemblance to traditional Tlingit society. Both are matriarchal with strong family ties, ceremonies, rituals, and language. Many generations live together, in pods or clans respectively, and culture is transmitted through maternal relatives. The Tlingit have two moieties or social divisions, Eagle and Raven. To prevent inbreeding within a matriline, Eagles always paired with Ravens and vice versa. It appears our orca pods follow similar guidelines.

The Tlingit did not hunt or intentionally harm orcas. When Tlingits encountered killer whales, they would sing to them and praise them, entreating the orcas to drive seals toward shore. The Tlingit saw that orcas would aid wounded pod members. The Raven-Finned Blackfish story told during our presentation elegantly addresses this observation. *Natsiclane*, or “The Origin of the Killer Whale,” is another essential Tlingit story in which the first killer whales, *keet*, are created from yellow cedar. After fulfilling a mission of revenge, Natsiclane instructs the killer whales to befriend humans. The killer whale is a perfect creature in Tlingit culture, worthy of prayers and admiration, a shaman’s ally, and Eagle moiety crest.

Native science is a paradigm that embraces spiritual and aesthetic dimensions of orcas. It is based on direct participation with nature. Native science integrates spirituality, ceremony, dreams, art, dance, music, and oral tradition *with* rational thought, practical and sustainable technology, and systematic learning. Traditional Ecological Knowledge, TEK, is a component of Native science. TEK comprises detailed observation and experience built over generations, elders’ expertise about culture and survival, and interdependence among all living beings and the environment. Orcas, like coastal First Nations, display their own indigenous wisdom or TEK.

The key principles in Native science embody traditional spirituality, origins and history, personal identity, community, place and living with that place through TEK and practical technology, traditional education, and other cultural anchors. Northwest coast orca societies manifest links or parallels to these principles. Some are illustrated below.

Traditional Spirituality: Permeates all aspects of indigenous culture. It dictates proper relationships with the natural and divine worlds through prayers, songs, rituals, and protocol for all human activities. Shamans mediate the realms of humans, spirits, and nature. Killer whales were often spirit allies to Tlingit shamans and many amulets were carved on orca teeth or with orca images. Orcas evoke reverence and awe in many people. Being in their presence nurtures our union with the sacred.

Personal Identity: In Tlingit society, consists of one’s name, maternal lineage (moiety, clan, crests), father’s people, house group, village of birth, and ancestors’ house groups. We distinguish orcas by how they look and sound; e.g., saddle patches, dorsal fins, dialects. The orcas undoubtedly have their own methods of identifying individuals, perhaps by an acoustic signature.

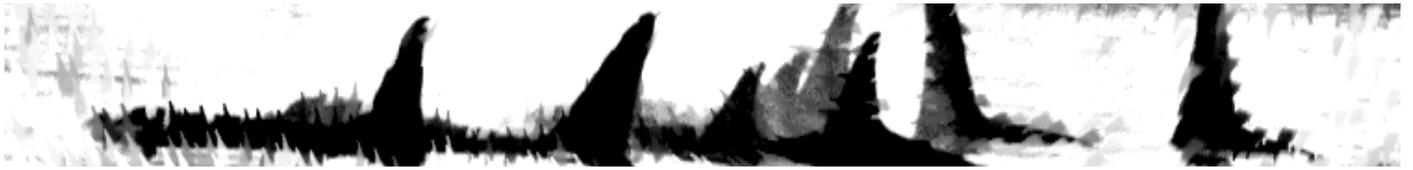
Community: Pre-contact, the Tlingit had a highly refined clan system. Despite devastating losses, today’s Tlingit maintain a strong ancestral connection to clan and crest items. Clans historically owned specific territories for hunting, fishing, and other activities. Other clans compensated the owners when using these areas. We share the Northwest coast with several communities of killer whales in distinct home ranges. Though orcas might be more liberal about sharing territories, pods are similar to clans. The family unity and social bonds of Resident orca communities echo the cohesiveness of traditional indigenous communities.

Place: Worldwide among traditional peoples, place is a vital presence: the place is the people and the people are the place. Traditional people live *with* their land in a reciprocal, not merely extractive, relationship. A universal tenet is that you *must* care for the place you depend on for your life and livelihood, or suffer dire consequences. Orcas employ indigenous wisdom or TEK for hunting strategies and to guide them to good feeding areas, travel routes, rubbing beaches, and other significant locations.

Traditional Education: In indigenous cultures, one learns from family and elders, through stages of initiation, and via spiritual paths. Ancestral stories teach history and values. Young orcas learn their pod dialect, how to catch food, and other adaptive behavior from their mothers, siblings, and pod elders. In Johnstone Strait, I once saw a tail slap “lesson”; one large tail slapping, then five little tails poking up around it slapping in unison.

Cultural Anchors: Include language, art, song, dance, oratory, regalia, social etiquette and diplomacy, and potlatch and other

(continued on next page)



ceremonies. Coastal tribes still ceremonially greet and welcome each other. Orcas also have a dynamic, complex culture with greeting ceremonies, language, and beach rubbing and other rituals.

Many people assume Western science is the only science, unbiased and culturally neutral. Nothing created by humans, however, can be isolated from its cultural framework and the worldview of its creators. Native science can complement and expand the vision of Western science. All our ancestors practiced Indigenous science or TEK. Everyone is descended from tribal cultures with oral traditions. Everyone has ancestors who showed reverence for nature, evident in cave paintings and petroglyphs. In Native science, art and science are inseparable; it is science with a soul, sacred ecology.

As Native people, we see profound connections between Tlingit culture, Native science, and Northwest coast orca societies. Substitute *sea* for *earth* or *land*, and I believe this eloquent quote, attributed to an American Indian Movement leader, characterizes the bond between our

orcas and the Salish Sea (or Johnstone Strait or Prince William Sound): “Our immortality comes from our relationship with Mother Earth. We are a part of the land in every real sense. Our ancestors were buried in the land and became part of the earth. We grew up among the dust of our ancestors.” These waters are the sacred space for our salmon and killer whales. The Northwest coast is unimaginable without these two icons. Reciprocity and restitution are timeless fundamentals of indigenous law. For all their sacrifices for us, we owe it to the orcas to summon *all* of our intellectual, spiritual, and creative resources to save them.

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REFERENCES

- Berkes, Fikret. *Sacred Ecology: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Resource Management*. Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis, 1999.
- Cajete, Gregory. *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 2000.
- Dauenhauer, Nora Marks, and Richard Dauenhauer. *Beginning Tlingit*. Sealaska Heritage Foundation Press: Juneau, 1991.

Southern Resident Killer Whale Revitalization Workshop

By Kim Koon

Johanna Santer, President of Orcafree, made her innovative idea turn into reality on May 19th and 20th, 2001. Working with ACS/Puget Sound Chapter President Joe Olson and chapter member Kim Koon, who served as workshop coordinator, Johanna was able to create a unique opportunity to develop solutions for the problems faced by the southern resident orcas.

The three came together with a lot of passion and a little guts to put together this first-of-its-kind workshop. The workshop brought together 22 individuals from many different points of view—scientific researchers, conservationists, and environmental educators—to construct a strategic plan to help the southern resident killer whale pods J, K, and L.

The workshop took place in Bellingham, Washington, and lasted two full days. Each attendee, with his or her own expertise, made this an extremely productive and well-rounded group. Having different knowledge, perspectives, and backgrounds was very powerful and effective in attacking the problems at hand from every angle. It was an excellent display of the benefits of cooperation.



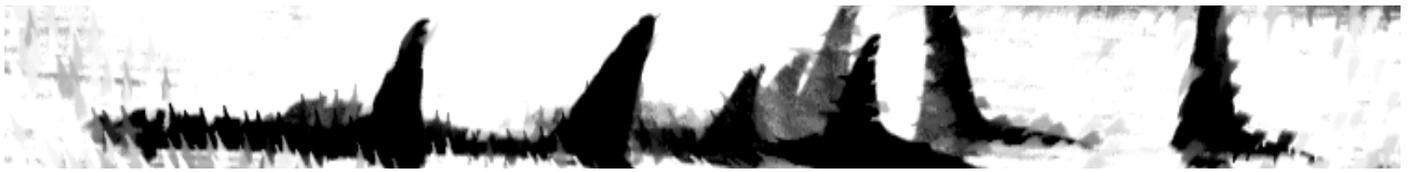
Kim Koon and Joe Olson

This workshop was only the beginning of the positive force we can produce when we all work together. We will continue to work toward the goals established at the workshop. Special thanks to Steve Olson, ACS/Puget Sound Chapter Membership Chair, who did an excellent job keeping the workshop minutes. The minutes are very important, as they will provide the outline of the work to be done at the next workshop, planned for this fall.

With cooperation from each of us, we can all make daily decisions that will help the whales survive in the Salish Sea.

ACS/PS Scientific Advisors

Dr. David Bain, Dr. Robin Baird, Dr. John Ford, Dr. Richard Osborne, Dr. Adam Pack, and Dr. Peter Ross



OrcaSing 2001

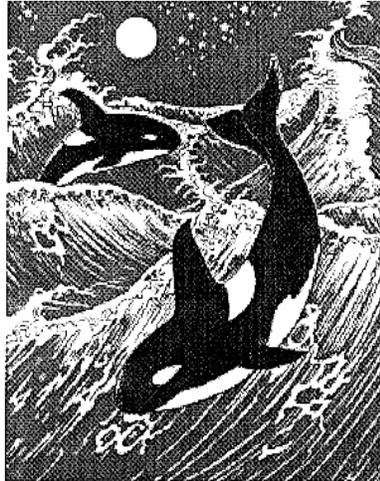
Saturday evening
June 23

Gathering at 7:30 pm
Program at 8 pm

Lime Kiln Point State Park,
San Juan Island

City Cantabile Choir, directed by Fred West, will sing to the Orca whales, sharing beautiful music with them and with us.

OrcaSing 2001 is dedicated to "Granny" (J-2), matriarch of the Southern resident Orca community, and to the actions we can take to make sure that her family enjoys a home in Puget Sound and the Northwest Straits for generations to come.



Sara Porter

THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON,
LEARN MORE ABOUT ORCA
WHALES AND HOW WE CAN
HELP

Sunday afternoon
June 24

2 - 4 pm

The Whale Museum,
Friday Harbor

Featuring

Keet Shu-Ka, an indigenous tribute to killer whales by Odin Lonning and Ann Stateler

and

A special showing of People For Puget Sound's documentary film *The Inland Sea: Where Have All the Orcas Gone?* Narrated by Jean-Michel Cousteau and produced by Michael Harris.

There is no charge for either event
(donations are welcome!)

For planning purposes, please RSVP to People For Puget Sound (206-382-7007 or 360-336-1931) or Friends of the San Juans (360-378-2319) for both the Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon events.

◆
*Co-sponsored by City Cantabile Choir,
People For Puget Sound,
Friends of the San Juans
and the American Cetacean Society.*

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and Friends of the San Juans.*

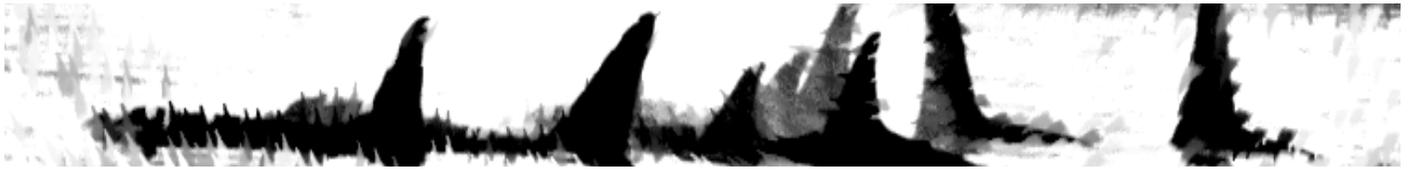
Yahoo! Discussion List for ACS Members

ACS members now have the opportunity to join a members-only, unmoderated discussion group. To join the group, follow the steps below. After your subscription has been approved, you will receive introductory e-mails.

Note: If you do not have a Yahoo! account, you must create one before you will be able to join the discussion list.

To join the ACS_discussion group:

1. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com>.
2. Under **Join a Group**, type **ACS_discussion** and then click **Search**.
3. A link for **ACS_discussion** should appear on the next page. Click that link.
4. On the **ACS_discussion** page, on the far-right side of the page, click **Join**.
5. Type your Yahoo! ID and password, and then click **Sign In**.
6. Choose your options for **Message Delivery** and **HTML Email Conversion**, verify the remaining data, and then click **Join** to request a subscription.



Whale-Watch Tours for School Groups

By Beth Phillips

In an effort to educate the public about the important issues facing Puget Sound's marine mammals, ACS/PS has joined forces with a local whale-watch tour company to organize whale-watch tours for school groups. Our first trip takes place on June 18th, 2001, with the students from Wendy Ewbank's class at Madrona Middle School in Edmonds. Details about the available tours and contact information is below; if you are a teacher or know someone who is, please read on.

Whale-Watch Tours:

ACS/PS has contacted Mosquito Fleet, a local whale-watch company operating out of Everett, WA. Mosquito Fleet has three different trips available throughout the spring and summer, and each trip includes narration about the marine ecosystem provided by a trained naturalist. In addition to Mosquito Fleet's naturalists, ACS will have at least one representative on board to provide the students with supplemental information pertaining to specific marine mammal issues and research ongoing in the Puget Sound, as well as what the students can do to help.

The three Mosquito Fleet trips are:

Orca Quest

Offered May through October
Eight-hour trip from Everett through Deception Pass and

into the San Juan Islands looking for orcas as well as other marine mammals and local wildlife. The trip is fully narrated by a professional naturalist who is trained to identify the local orcas, as well as talk about the local history of the area.

Gray Whale Tour

Offered late March through June (Saturday and Sunday only)
Approximately two-hour tour out of Everett into the Saratoga Passage (near Whidbey Island) looking for resident gray whales that return each spring to feed on ghost shrimp and other bottom dwelling creatures. Keep your eyes out for seals, sea lions, and eagles as well. Also fully narrated by a trained naturalist.

Everett Everglades Tour

Offered year-round
Three-hour tour on the Snohomish River exploring 1400 acres of flora and fauna, looking for bald eagles, great blue herons, and falcons, in addition to river otters, coyotes, and other mammals inhabiting the wetlands. Explore one of the richest and largest wetland areas in Puget Sound! A trained naturalist is on board to spot local wildlife and discuss the natural history of the area.

If you have any questions or concerns, or would like to schedule a trip, please contact Beth Phillips at:
bethphilli@hotmail.com or 253-565-5837.

YOU CAN HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Would you like to become more actively involved in the Puget Sound Chapter of ACS? We would love to have your help. Our board members chair various committees and we need volunteers from the general membership to assist with committee activities. Any amount of time you can donate will help to protect marine mammals and is greatly appreciated.

There are a number of ways in which you can help. The **Newsletter** committee can use assistance with folding, posting, etc. We need help preparing informational literature and setting up for our **General Meetings**. There are numerous pressures affecting the marine mammals of *Whulj* and your input to the **Conservation** committee can be quite valuable. We need help developing and disseminating our **Educational** information for both children and adults. Finally, **Membership** is critical to the success of our organization, so we always need assistance in recruiting energized members.

Puget Sound Chapter Board

Officers:

President – Joe Olson, acs@cetaceanresearch.com
Vice President, Conservation Chair, & General Meetings Chair – Elizabeth Petras, elizabethpetras@hotmail.com
Secretary – Susan Alter, susan.alter@pss.boeing.com
Treasurer – Julie Anderson-Moore, deca7743@aol.com

Board Members:

Chapter Delegate & Research Fund Chair – Stephanie Norman, whaledoc@flash.net
Education Chairs – Erin O'Connell, freewhales@hotmail.com, and Beth Phillips, bethphilli@hotmail.com
Media Chair – Bob Wood, clwar84@aol.com
Membership Chairs – Steve Olson, pnwsteveo@hotmail.com, and Beth Phillips, bethphilli@hotmail.com
Newsletter Chair – Kristin Elko, kelko88@hotmail.com
Special Events Chair – Fred West

Chapter Office: 206-297-1310

AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY



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Seattle, WA 98107

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Phone: 206-297-1310

LABEL

14th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals

The 14th Biennial Conference on the Biology of Marine Mammals, sponsored by the Society for Marine Mammalogy, will be held from 28 November to 3 December 2001, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. The Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre is hosting this international event. Current research on whales, dolphins, seals, sea lions, and other marine mammals will be showcased through spoken and poster presentations. Special events, video evenings, and vendor exhibits are planned as well.

The conference Web site <http://www.smmconference.org/> is designed to be the primary resource for all information related to the meeting. It will be updated frequently, so please check back often.

For general inquiries: e-mail mmconf@vanaqua.org

For questions about the scientific program: e-mail sciprogram@vanaqua.org

YES! ENROLL ME AS A MEMBER OF THE PUGET SOUND CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN CETACEAN SOCIETY!

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES: (check one)

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: (____) _____
E-mail: _____

- \$500 Patron
- \$250 Contributing
- \$75 Supporting
- \$45 Family
- \$35 Active
- \$25 Student/Teacher/Senior

Make check payable to ACS and mail to: ACS/Puget Sound Chapter, P.O. Box 17136, Seattle, WA 98107-0836

