



Marine Mammal Monitoring

Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

.....moving from perception.....

..... towards reality.....



Threats to marine mammals

- Historical
 - whaling and hunting
 - live captures
- Habitat loss
 - global warming and climate change
 - overfishing
 - urbanization
- Pollution
 - noise (vessel traffic)
 - toxins (PCBs, dioxins, furans)
- Disturbance
 - human/marine mammal interaction



Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

What is perception?

- viewer dependent
 - ecotourists
 - media
 - public
 - ecotourism industry
 - regulators
 - scientists
- views range from “no impact” to “very harmful”
- anecdotal
- mixed messages
- reality



Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area media perspectives.....

Sunday, June 24, 2001

Deaths of seven orcas alarm whale experts

CORRESPONDENT'S REPORT

Whale Watching Grows Into a \$1 Billion Industry

Aviation firm seeks whale-watching advice

T.C. 5 Sept '01

MONITOR

TEXAS COLONIST • SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2001 • D5

The urban whale struggles to survive

THE VANCOUVER SUN, MONDAY, MAY 28, 2001 A5

Whale watching harms orcas, expert says

Mobs of tourists
mean whales never rest,
UBC scientist says

Our whales are dying



Marine Mammal Monitoring

Marine Mammal Monitoring (M3) Mission

"to promote stewardship of marine mammals, birds and critical habitat by providing a comprehensive monitoring ,outreach and education program for recreational and commercial ecotourists in the Trans-Boundary area."

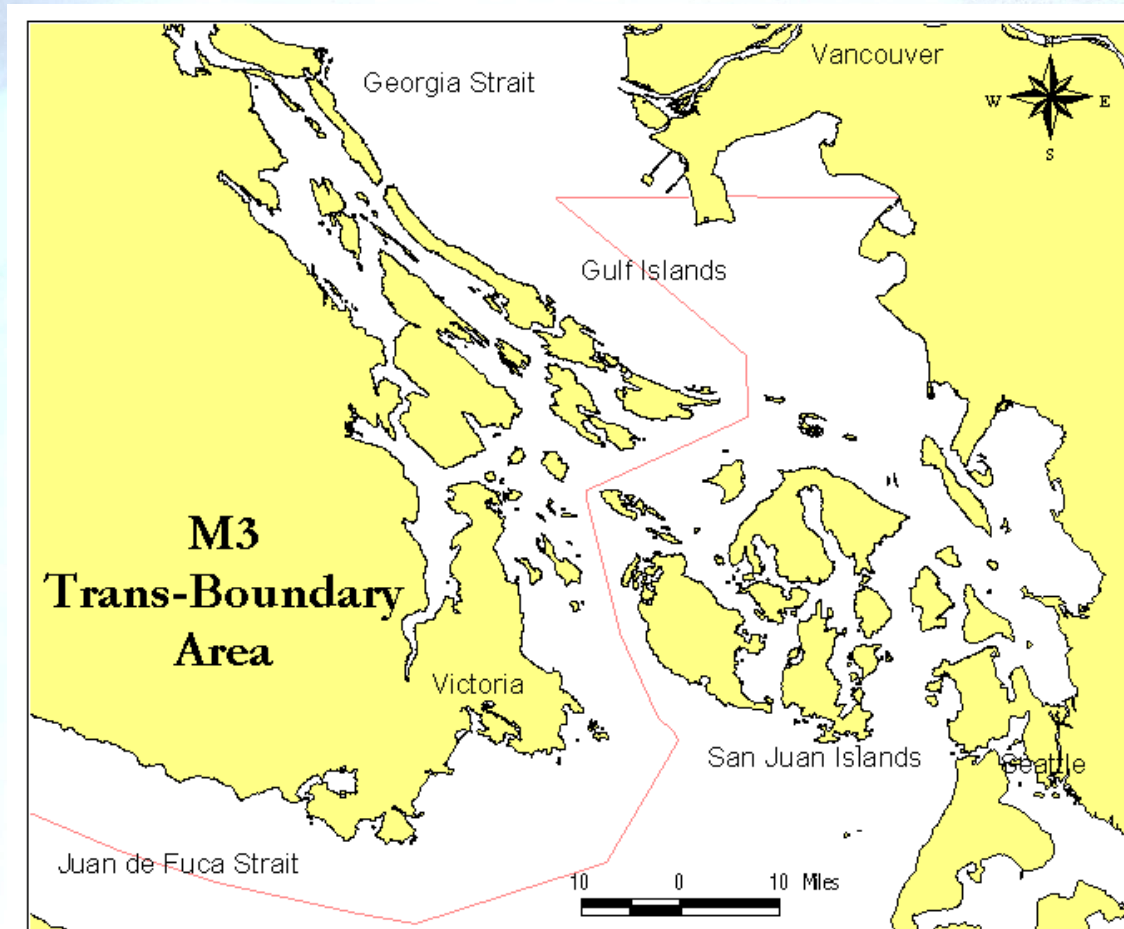


Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

- monitoring
- outreach/education
- stewardship initiative



Trans-Boundary Area



Southern Vancouver Island and Northwestern Washington state
(Haro Strait, Georgia Strait, Juan de Fuca Strait, Gulf Islands, San Juan Islands)



Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

Precautionary principle:

" the absence of scientific information shall not be used as a reason for not applying a precautionary approach with conservation and stewardship" - U.N. resolution



Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

What is monitoring?

“ to accurately characterise marine mammal viewing activities against existing guidelines, protocols and regulations ”





Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

Who is involved?

- recreational boating
- commercial marine traffic
- aviation
- commercial whalewatching
- shore-based viewing





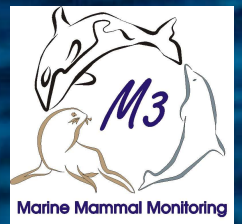
Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

How is it monitored?

- observational analysis
- incident reporting to those involved
- friendly intervention in some cases
- data collection and interpretation







Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

Recreational boating

- limited environmental awareness
- 70% of BC population involved in a recreational boating activity each year (Statistics Canada)
- wide range of boating skill/knowledge levels
- 350,000 recreational vessels in BC (sailing vessels, power boats, personal water craft, kayaks and canoes)





Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

Commercial marine traffic

- limited environmental awareness
- busy traffic lanes
- limited maneuverability
- restricted visibility
- revised traffic management scheme
- opportunistic viewing
- government, research, military and ferries



SEAPLANE ADVENTURE TOURS

COOPER AIR



IN THE EVENT OF
AN AIRCRAFT
EMERGENCY

- 1. Remain Seated
- 2. Do Not Move
- 3. Do Not Open Over Board
- 4. Do Not Use Restrooms

NO
UNAUTHORIZED
PERSONS
ALLOWED



Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

Aircraft

- growth in aircraft-based ecotourism
- opportunistic viewing by commercial aviation
- considerable noise and disturbance impacts
- limited recognition of aviation guidelines (1000' minimum altitude)





Marine Mammal Viewing in Trans-Boundary Area

Commercial whalewatching in BC/Wa

- persistent and repetitive activity
- concentrates in important habitats
- industrialization over the past ten years
- increase in trip frequency, duration, vessel size and horsepower of vessels
- increased stresses on marine mammals
- significant contribution to coastal communities
 - socio-economic
 - cultural
 - educational





IT'S ALARMING.
A FEW WEEKS AGO
THERE WERE DOZENS
OF THEM, BUT FOR
SOME REASON, THEIR
NUMBERS ARE DRASTICALLY
REDUCED.

Whale Watch Operators Association Northwest (WWOANW)

- established in 1993
- US and Canadian membership
- 38 companies
- representing 71 vessels
- not all whalewatch operators in Trans-Boundary area are members
- voluntary viewing guidelines, internally regulated



Marine mammal regulations in USA and Canada

- Canadian and the U.S. regulations prohibit harassment and disturbance of marine mammals
- broad regulations, loosely defined
- few successful prosecutions in Canada
- Fisheries Act - Marine Mammal Regulations currently under review
- marine mammal viewing is not addressed at this time
- new regulations are actively under consideration
- potential impacts of Endangered Species Act and Species at Risk Act





What is disturbance?

“interference with an animal's ability to hunt, feed, communicate, socialize, rest, breed and care for its young.”

Potential issues:

- too many boats
- proximity to the animal
- speed of approach
- pursuit of the animal
- obstructing the path of the animal
- engine noise
- engine exhaust



International viewing guidelines

- consolidation of some pre-existing guidelines
- harmonization of concise, international guidelines by partner organizations, industry, researchers, and government
- created "Be Whale Wise" brochure
- cooperative international distribution of the brochure underway
- not entirely compatible with industry guidelines
- ongoing consultations with wide range of organizations





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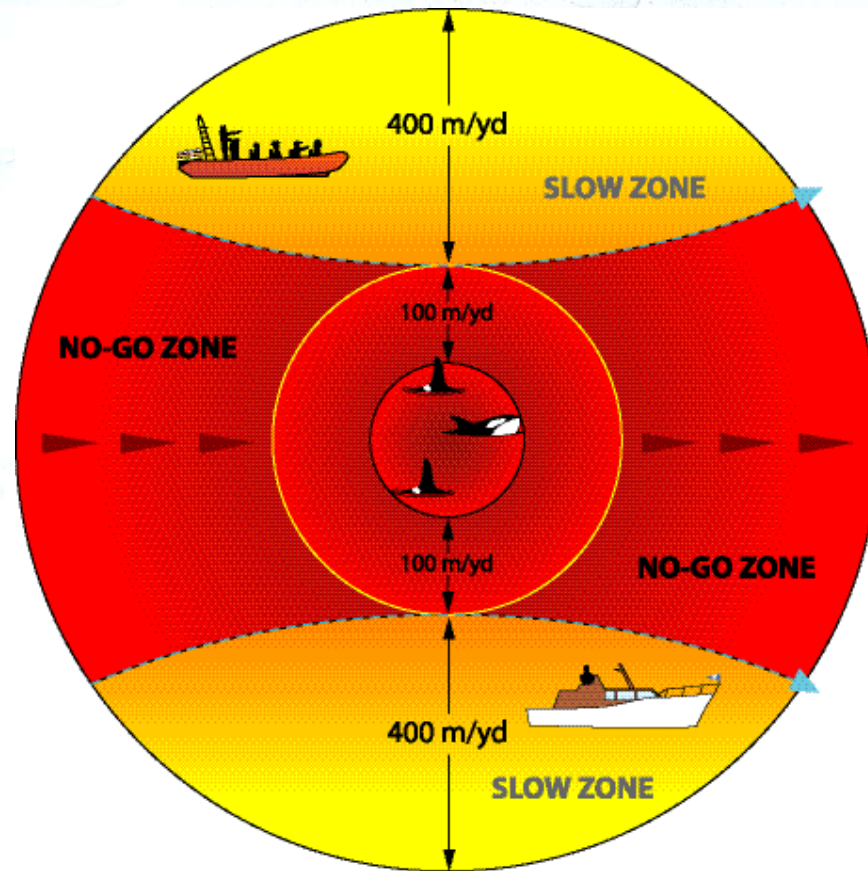


“Be Whale Wise” pamphlet

- promote a conservation ethic and stewardship message
- significant achievement in international cooperation
- clear and concise articulation of marine mammal viewing guidelines
- issues facing marine mammals
- recognition of partners
- circulation in 2001 of 30,000 brochures in U.S. and Canada
- application and adaptability in other areas (i.e. coastal B.C. and Mexico)



Marine mammal viewing diagram





THE GULF OF MEXICO

Marine Mammal Monitoring

CHOOSE WHICH... It Shows What You

CHOOSE WHICH... It Shows What You

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ETY

MARINE MAMMAL MONITORING



Outreach / Education

- based on guidelines and regulations
- on-water component
- community events, boat shows etc.
- teaching the teachers
- presentations tailored to various groups/agencies
- future educational program in schools
- media promotions
- initiatives with government, transportation and military sectors
- developing volunteers and partners



Preliminary indications

- M3/Soundwatch presence evokes positive changes in human behaviour around marine mammals
- positive public and media response
- need adaptive monitoring methodology
- applying emerging science regarding viewing impacts
- aviation and marine traffic increasingly involved
- challenges in achieving significant changes in marine mammal viewing behaviour
- cooperation with industry paramount
- extensive partnership potential



M3 Partners and Sponsors

Veins of Life Watershed Society
Friday Harbor Whale Museum (Soundwatch)
National Oceans and Atmospheric Administration
Pearson College of the Pacific
Vancouver Aquarium Marine Science Centre
Saanich Peninsula Chamber of Commerce



Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk:

a Government of Canada program managed cooperatively by Environment Canada, Fisheries



Environment Canada.



How to contact us

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