

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND
CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY
BULLETS**

August 16, 2018

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PREPARED FOR: Honourable George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

SUBJECT: Meeting with Minister Lana Popham and MP Jonathan Wilkinson on August 24, 1pm, regarding a potential limited entry permit system for whale watchers in the Salish Sea.

BULLET RESPONSE:

- The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (ENV) recognizes that the Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) is the lead agency for Northern and Southern resident killer whales (RKW).
- Killer Whales are an iconic species and B.C. is generally supportive of actions to protect and recover the population.
 - British Columbian's are concerned for this species and conserving wild salmon, and are prepared to make sacrifices.
- Consistent with our bilateral conversations through the Oceans Coordinating Committee (OCC) and the Regional Committee on Oceans Management (RCOM), B.C. requests that the federal government continue to engage with us on initiatives related to southern resident killer whales and give us the opportunity to provide feedback in a meaningful way.

Background:

- In 2003, Northern RKW were listed as Threatened and Southern RKW were listed as Endangered, under the federal Species at Risk Act.
- The Recovery Strategy (RS) for RKWs was drafted by DFO and Parks Canada Agency and was finalized in 2008 and amended in 2011. Partial Critical Habitat was defined as part of this Recovery Strategy.
- In 2017 the Action Plan for RKWs was published to the Species at Risk Public Registry and one of the actions identified was to – identify and protect additional areas of critical habitat.
- In 2018, DFO initiated the update for an Amended Recovery Strategy identifying 2 additional areas as Critical Habitat
 - Waters on the continental shelf off southwestern Vancouver Island, including Swiftsure and La Perouse Banks (important for both Northern and Southern Resident Killer Whales); and
 - Waters off Dixon Entrance, along the north coast of Graham Island from Langara to Rose Spit (important for Northern Resident Killer Whales).
- In June 2018, DFO imposed fishery management measures to reduce the total harvest for Chinook salmon by 25-35 per cent. Closures are intended to help increase the availability of this critical food source for Southern Resident killer whales. The closures are in three key foraging (feeding) areas: Strait of Juan de Fuca, Gulf Islands and the mouth of the Fraser River.
- In 2018, ENV (along with other Ministries, e.g., AGRI, FLNR) reviewed the amended Recovery Strategy and provided comment – key comments included:

- In July, 2018 Premier John Horgan was planning to send a letter to Hon. Dominic LeBlanc regarding recent decisions regarding Northern and Southern RKW and related Chinook salmon fisheries management
s.13,s.16

- AGRI sits on a committee w/ DFO with a specific focus on prey availability of chinook salmon.

Recent federal funding announcement:

- There have been numerous funding announcements from the federal government related to the protection of southern resident killer whales since the announcement of the Oceans Protection Plan.
 - On June 22 the federal Transport Minister Marc Garneau announced \$167.4 million to support the recovery of Canada's three iconic and endangered whales: the southern resident killer whales; the North Atlantic Right whales; and, the St. Lawrence-Estuary beluga whales.
 - Most of the initiatives from this funding announcement have already been announced, including \$12 million in new funding for research (announced March 15) and reductions in allowable catch of Chinook salmon by 25-35% (announced May 25)

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