

Orca Periodic Status Review and Recommendation

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Recommendation:

RETAIN ENDANGERED STATUS

Draft Periodic Status Review: Process & Timeline

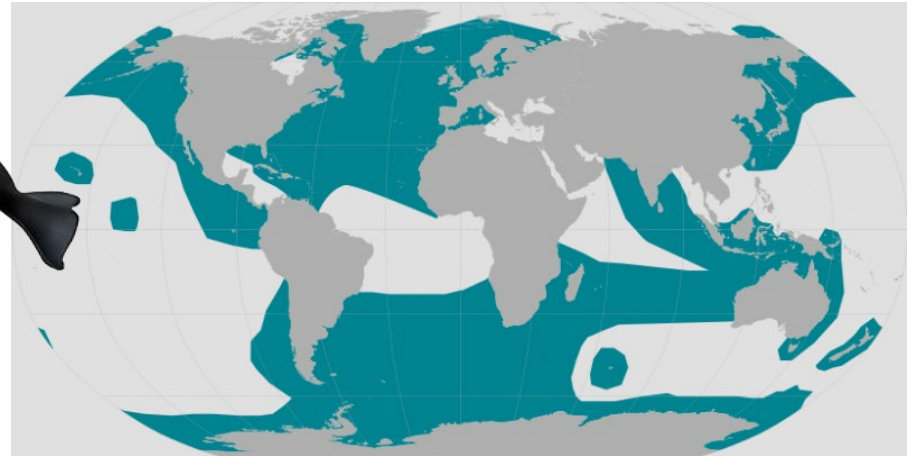
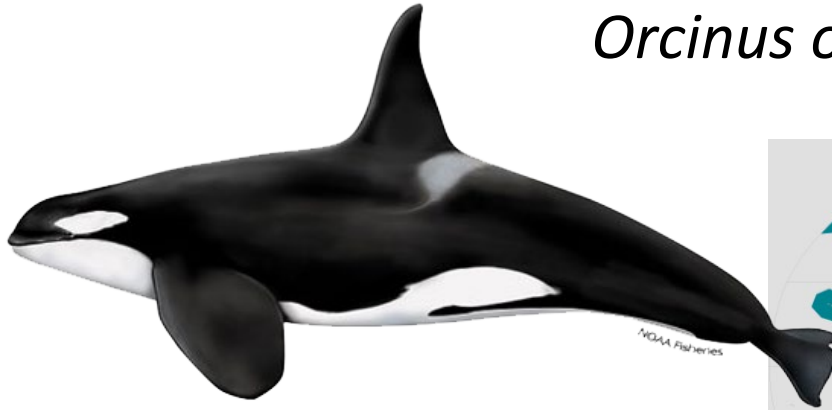
Listing Process Guided by WAC 220-610-110

- February 2020: 1 year in advance request for information.
- November 2023: 90-day public comment period on Draft.
- February 2024: Review comments and make any final changes to the Draft Periodic Status Review.
- March 2024: PSR finalized and published on the website.
- Listing "...solely on the basis of the biological status of the species being considered, based on the preponderance of scientific data available."
- Endangered species is "... seriously threatened with extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range within the state."
- Periodic Status Reviews are reviews of the status of the species for classification decisions and not intended to be management documents.



Description and legal status

Orcinus orca



Three ecotypes in NE Pacific: resident, transient, offshore

Stocks: Southern Resident (SRKW), West Coast Transient (Bigg's), and NE Pacific Offshore

WA Endangered since 2004, federally Endangered since 2005



West Coast Transient (Bigg's)

Minimum population estimate = 349

Large spatial overlap with Residents

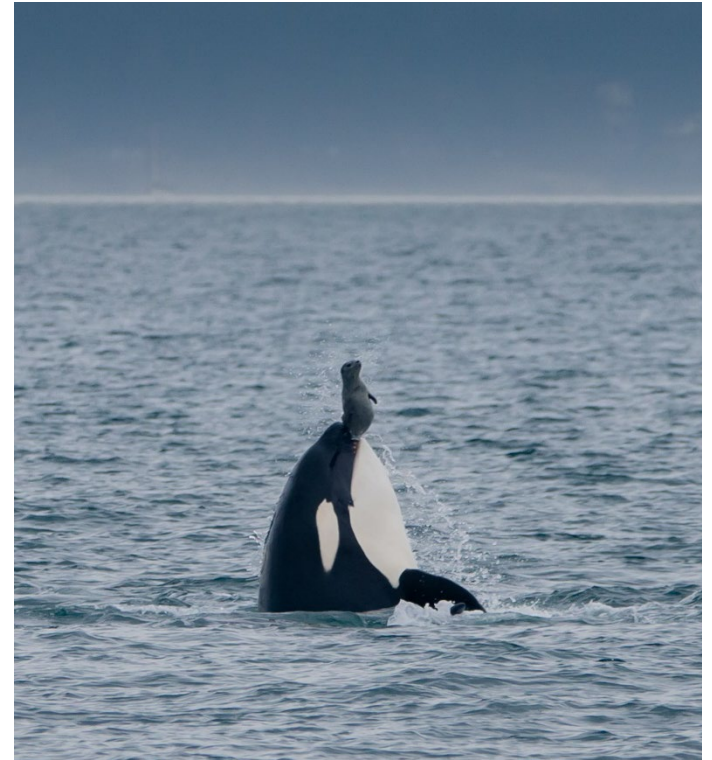
Marine mammal specialists

Northeast Pacific Offshore

Minimum population estimate = 300

Large range, rarely use inland waters

Shark specialists



Nicholas Mullett



Southern Residents (SRKW)

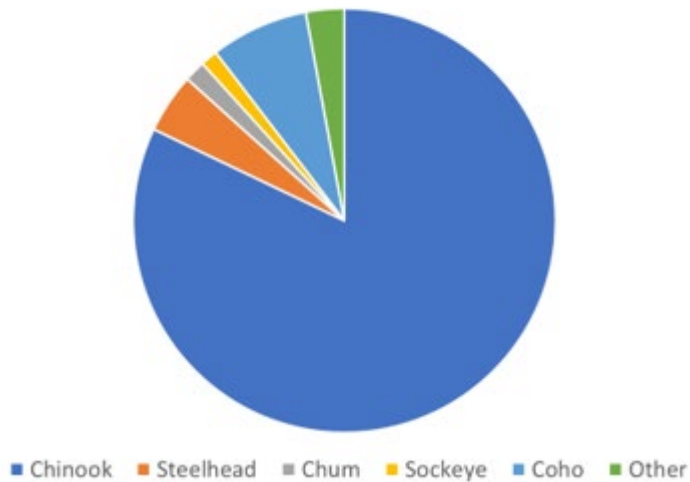


NOAA

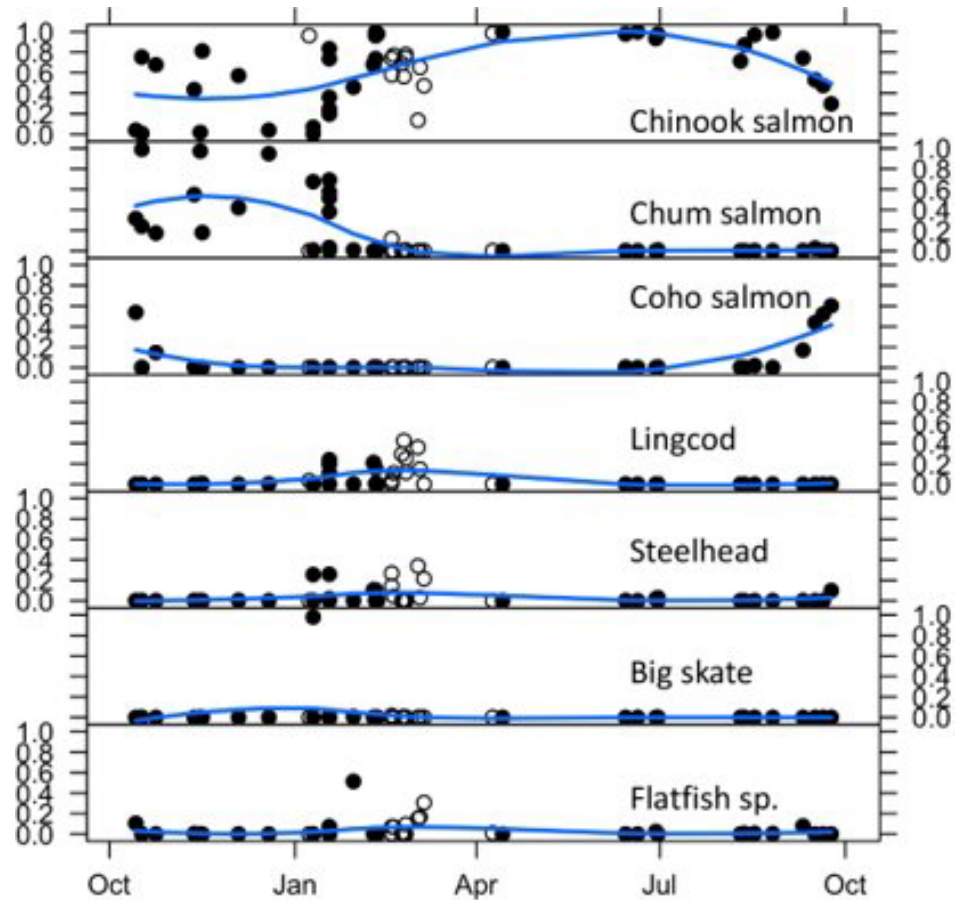


Diet

Species Consumed (May-Sept), n = 307



Hanson et al., 2010

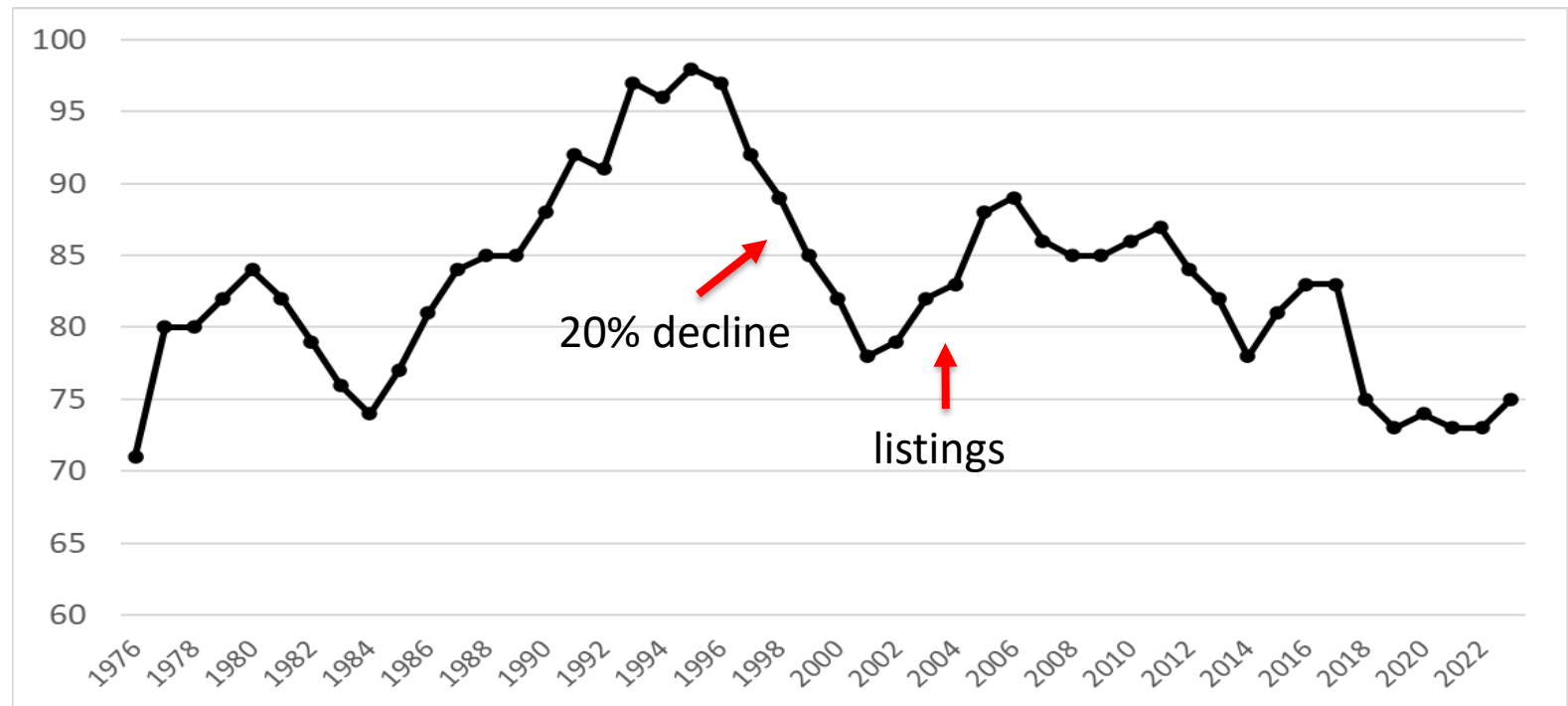


Hanson et al., 2021



Population and habitat status

- Live captures in 1960s and 1970s.
- Peak population at 98 individuals.
- Early 2020s at lowest population since mid-1980s.



Data from NOAA Fisheries



Factors affecting continued existence

Prey availability and quality
Environmental contaminants
Vessel noise and disturbance



NOAA

Increasing human population
Climate change
Inbreeding depression

	SRKW 1979	SRKW 2021
Juveniles (< 10)	37 %	15 %
Adult males (10+)	18 %	36 %
Adult females (10-42)	27 %	38 %
Post-reproductive females (42+)	19 %	11 %



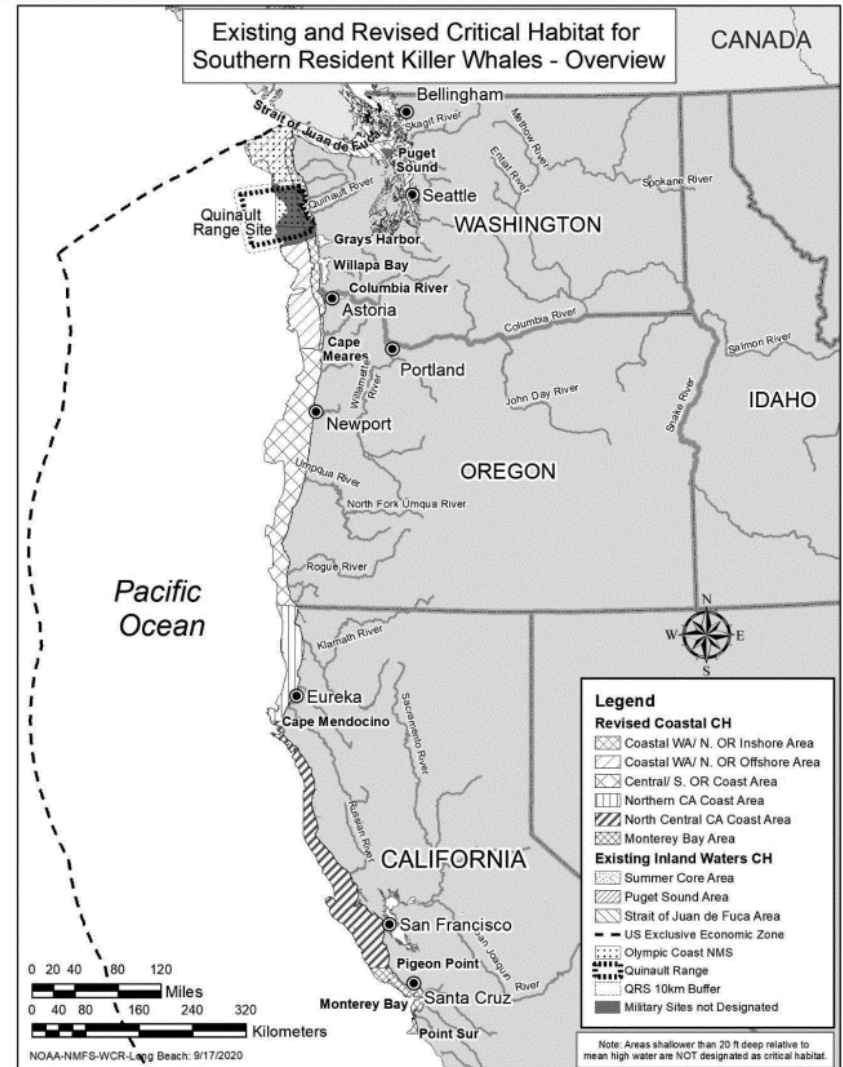
Regulatory mechanisms

Marine Mammal Protection Act

Endangered Species Act

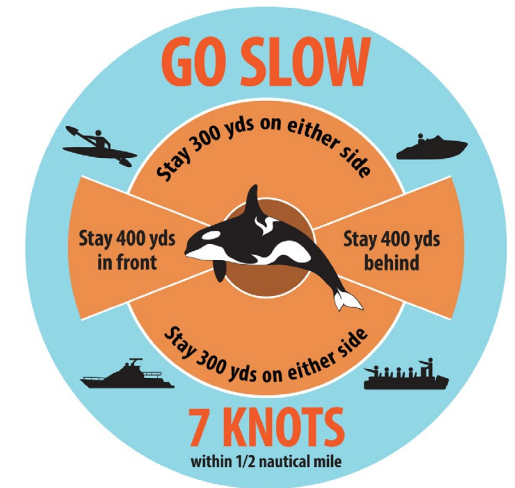
Washington state law (RCW 77.15.120)

Species at Risk Act



Management activities

Southern Resident Orca Task Force
GSRO State Orca Recovery Coordinator



Prey

- Priority stocks
- Hatchery production
- Pacific Fisheries Management Council Amendment 21
- Habitat restoration
- Forage fish
- Other salmonid predators

Contaminants

- Pollution Prevention Act
- Contaminants of Emerging Concern
- Spill prevention and response
- Derelict vessels

Vessels

- State regulations
- Commercial whale watching licensing
- Sightings networks
- ECHO/Quiet Sound
- Be Whale Wise
- SEPA checklist





Recommendation:

RETAIN ENDANGERED STATUS

Public comment – 130 comments

November 21, 2023 – February 19, 2024

119 - comments in support

1 - support for selectively retaining listing for
Southern Residents

10 - other



Questions?



NOAA

