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Slip Stream~

Newsletter for Orca Network Members

Winter 2008-09

Just as baby orcas are pulled along in their mother's slipstream,
we are drawn into the wonderful world of whales~



Photo by Dave Ellifrit
Center for Whale Research



After ripping the head off, an orca brings a fish up to be shared.
Photo courtesy of the Center for Whale Research

Sad news for Southern Resident Orcas

It's been a difficult year for the endangered Southern Resident orca population. In late September the Center for Whale Research reported that seven whales are missing this year. With one new surviving calf, the population is now believed to be at 83.

In addition to **98 year old female K7/Lummi**, the elder of K pod, also missing are: **23 year old L67/Splash** (Luna's mom), and **six year old L101/Aurora** (Luna's brother), **58 year old female L21/Ankh**, **36 year old female J11/Blossom**, and **two unnamed calves, J43** (missing last winter) and **L111** born in August 2008 to L47 (missing by the end of August). Only one calf born this year survives, **K42**, male, born in June to **K14/Lea**.

Fewer salmon mean fewer orcas

Salmon have not been abundant – all three pods have left the Salish Sea area often during summer in search of salmon, and when they were present, they often were traveling in small, widely dispersed groups, which typically means they are having to spread out to find enough salmon to feed the pod.

Our hope is for a strong chum salmon run this fall in Puget Sound, so the whales can get some nutrition before the winter season, when they leave the inland waters in search of food.

But if we don't act NOW to restore the Chinook salmon runs in the Pacific, this trend will likely continue, and the population is already so small that its survival hangs in the balance.

What can we do to help the orcas?

Support salmon restoration efforts, reduce harvests, remove unneeded dams, end unsustainable salmon farming, stop using pesticides, fertilizers or chemicals in your home and garden, and contact agency and elected officials to make sure they know how important salmon, orcas, and their habitats are to you.

Visit our News Page www.orcanetwork.org/news/news.html for recent articles on salmon restoration efforts as well as some of the human impacts that have led to the demise of our once healthy, abundant salmon runs, and see our Action Page at www.orcanetwork.org/help/help.html for more ideas to protect remaining habitat and restore what's been lost.

If we don't save the salmon, we won't save the orcas.

ORCA WORKSHOP DISCUSSES THREATS TO ORCAS, WHALE CULTURE, AND MORE

Ways of Whales workshop

Saturday, January 24, 2009, 9am - 4:30 pm

Coupeville Recreation Hall

901 NW Alexander St, Coupeville, Whidbey Island, WA

Cost: \$20/person

Join Orca Network for a day of learning about the wonders of Pacific Northwest whales – who they are, what they eat, threats to their habitat and health, and more. This annual workshop has become a favorite regional gathering of whale experts and those who want to learn more about the whales.

This year, the workshop has a strong focus on orcas, especially the endangered Southern Resident orca community which has recently lost seven members. The presentations range from scientific research to beautiful photos and stories of whales, plus updates on recent sightings and the latest from the Lolita (the captive Southern Resident orca) Retirement campaign, so there is something for everyone. Bring your questions for the experts.

"We are very fortunate to have some of the region's best researchers present at Ways of Whales" said Susan Berta of Orca Network.

Lance Barrett-Lennard of the University of British Columbia/Vancouver Aquarium and a pioneer in the study of orca vocal traditions, will discuss the always fascinating topic of "**whale culture**," focusing on **new research on the Transient orcas of False Pass, Alaska**. **Pete Schroeder** of Global Research and Rescue will share research on Southern and Northern Resident orcas, from what was learned from the successful reintroduction of **the orphaned orca "Springer,"** to studies on **bacteria and other pathogens** found in orcas. **Peggy Krahn** of NOAA's Northwest Fisheries Science Center will address the **effects of toxins and changes in prey availability** on Southern Resident orcas, and author/photographer **Monika Wieland** will **show images and share stories** of her experiences with whales. A presentation by **James Goedert** of the University of Washington/Burke Museum will take us way back to the very beginning, sharing his discovery of **fossils from the earliest known whales**, including one that is among the most primitive toothless baleen whales yet described by scientists. "This is an exciting discovery," says Goedert. "We are finding whale fossils here in Washington that are so different that they are tough to classify, and they complicate current definitions of some types of whales. Some of these new characteristics are significant enough that scientists may have to rethink the origins of some of today's whales."

The Ways of Whales workshop is cosponsored by the Russell Family Foundation and the Captain Whidbey Inn. We encourage off-islanders to book a room at the Inn (360-678-4097) and spend the weekend exploring wonderful Whidbey Island. Preregistration is strongly recommended due to limited seating. You can register on our website at: www.orcanetwork.org/news/wowform.html or by contacting us at info@orcanetwork.org or 360-678-3451.