

# September Newsletter

▶ Editor: Julia Retallack

## US Federal Court Restricts Navy Sonar Deployment

A story we've followed over the past few issues has been resolved – the outcome is great news for supporters of the well-being of marine mammals.

On August 26, US Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Laporte barred the US Navy's planned worldwide deployment of its new high-intensity sonar system.

Judge Laporte also ordered the Navy to reduce the system's possible harm to marine mammals and fish by negotiating limits on its use with conservation groups who had sued over its deployment.

The sonar system, known as Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System Low Frequency Active sonar (or LFA), relies on extremely loud, low-frequency sound to detect submarines at great distances.

The Navy's own studies assert the LFA generates sounds up to 140

decibels even more than 300 miles from the sonar's source. It is obvious that such a distance means marine wildlife of all species will be caught in the sonar's path.

Judge Laporte went on to say in a 73-page opinion that "[t]here is little margin for error without threatening their survival...Absent an injunction, the marine environment that supports the existence of these species will be irreparably harmed".

Recent tests on one of the harbour porpoises found in the Puget Sound area revealed injuries consistent with acoustic trauma.

According to Joel Reynolds, senior attorney and director of the Marine Mammal Protection Project at Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), "[t]he decision recognizes that both national security and environmental protection are essential. It [acknowledges] that during peacetime, even the military must

comply with our environmental laws, and it rejects the blank-check permit that would have allowed the Navy to operate LFA sonar virtually anywhere in the world".

Rhonda Reidy, one of our naturalists, commented that "[activity caused by humans] threatens animal life everywhere. This court ruling is one more example of positive change for environmental protection on a global scale".

Prince of Whales has a continued concern about the well-being of these animals - from a tourism perspective and respecting the courtesy and dignity these creatures deserve.

Sources:

Edited from: MARMAM.University of Victoria.

Ruling: [www.cand.uscourts.gov/](http://www.cand.uscourts.gov/)

**Victoria's Largest Whale Watching Company, Victoria Inner Harbour**

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## Skipper Spotlight Page

Last month we highlighted Phil Rouget, one of our skippers who went to Antarctica as part of his research project for his Master's of Science at the University of New Brunswick. This issue we will focus on our senior skippers – Chris Hall and Mark Malleson. Read on!

### Chris "Control" Hall

Chris has spent most of his life on boats in the Pacific Northwest. At the age of eight he had his first boat and by the age of 12, he was crossing sections of Georgia Strait alone to get to his summer jobs along the Sunshine Coast of central British Columbia.

Since then, he has piloted both commercial cargo and passenger vessels. Chris has worked with Prince of Whales since the company's inception in 1994 and he not only skippers for wildlife tours; he also oversees all of the com-

pany's marine operations.

Chris also contributes his skills in a volunteer capacity, as his interest in wildlife extends beyond the boundaries of killer whales and his professional life. Most recently, he piloted a research vessel during a yearlong porpoise survey in BC waters.

Chris' interests have also taken him offshore, as he piloted a 100' ex-Coast Guard Cutter to the Galapagos Islands for the Ecuadorian government where it still patrols

the parks' waters for illegal fishing.

Chris has also been a guest of the French government where he helped organize an international oil spill recovery team in an effort to save the sea birds devastated by the spill of the tanker *Erika*.



Chris Hall, 2003

### Mark "Mallard" Malleson

Working his seventh season with the Prince of Whales, Mallard is a true-blue local, who grew up sailing our local waters, and can easily be lured out for a sail – especially to watch whales.

Not only does Mark sail for fun and work for a fun company, but he has been involved with competitive sailing, on an international level.

Those who've spent hours at sea can attest to its allure, and Mark, with thousands of hours at sea under his belt, has also become an avid photographer (see our photo gallery).

When asked about memorable and amazing experiences, Mark had this to say: *"It was during my first season (1996). We were watching a pair of transients successfully chase down a Dall's porpoise for 45 minutes, off Mandarte Island (near Sidney). We were all blown away!". My most amazing experience was [in 1997] off Kellett Bluff (Henry Island – in the San Juans), watching a superpod of 92 whales breaching for about 2 hours and having to leave [to bring passengers home]. There must have been about 500 – 700 breaches and to this day it's unclear what really happened, because there's usually a lot of vocaliz-*

*ing with this [type of]behaviour!".*

A journeyman carpenter by trade, Mark's future travels will include searching for orca in Patagonia, Norway, or other exotic locales.



Mark Malleson, 2003.

## Names of Two Orca Calves – Announcement!

A recent naming campaign, run by The Whale Museum and the Seattle Aquarium, recently tallied the ballots cast by over 4,000 orca supporters to come up with the names for two orca calves.

Drum roll please....! The names that received the most votes were, for orca K-33, Tika, and for orca K-34, Cali (Kah-lee). The name Tika has Chinook origins and means "swift." Cali means "heart" in the Coast Salish language. Tika is the offspring of Sekiu (K-22), and Cali is the calf of Skagit (K-13).

Eliza Buck, Adoption Manager for the Whale Museum was quite pleased about the response – some casting their vote from as far away as Europe and Argentina!

"We're really pleased at the number of people in Friday Harbor and Seattle who participated in this vote, and now that these calves have been named, they are included in our list of orca in the Orca Adoption Program".

Interested in adopting an orca?

Please check out [www.whalemuseum.org/programs/orcadoptio/orcadoptio.html](http://www.whalemuseum.org/programs/orcadoptio/orcadoptio.html).

Source: The Whale Museum  
[www.whalemuseum.org](http://www.whalemuseum.org).



Cali (K-34).

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Courtesy: The Whale Museum

## Words from Anna Hall, Biologist & M.Sc. Candidate

Wildlife abounds in local waters with the approach of autumn. We experience the return of migrant whales, sea lions and fish; and our waters, calm as the prevailing westerly winds of the summer ease, leaving us with these waters full of life. The most well known autumnal biological phenomenon is the salmon migration.

The southern resident killer whales take full advantage of this rich food source following the salmon, which are en route to their natal rivers and streams to spawn. Less well known is the herring migration. These small fish move into the shallow

protected inland waters of British Columbia, providing a nutritional base for the migratory California and Steller's sea lions who overwinter here.

The herring are also an important dietary component for the harbour and Dall's porpoise, Minke whales, harbour seals, and the always impressive northern elephant seal. All of which are regularly sighted throughout the fall months in the waters off Victoria. As if that diversity was not enough, we are also fortunate that our waters provide refuge for two species of the great whales on their way to the tropics for the winter.

Both humpback and grey whales are occasional visitors to our area. This abundance of life as the migrant visitors return is yet another reminder of the importance of maintaining and ensuring the health of our local marine ecosystems.



Anna Hall, 2003

## Luna (L98) the Orca: Options Under Review

Pressure is mounting on Canada's fisheries department to decide what is to be done about this young male orca, isolated from his pod and now spending his days being friendly with boats, humans, and most recently – seaplanes (pushing on their rudders).

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) is weighing options as to what is to be done about Luna, and none of them seem to have an easy conclusion.

Christiane Cote, spokeswoman for Fisheries and Oceans Canada Pacific Region, states that "[o]ne is to leave the animal where it is, keeping an eye on it. The other is to move it to a facility like an aquarium. And the other one is to try to reunite it with its family."

Whale advocacy groups in Washington State are lobbying to relocate Luna with his pod, citing the

successful move of Springer, (A73), and offering to cover the costs.

Rubbing up against boats and being used to humans, is a dangerous mix for a young orca who doesn't have his family to teach him orca right from wrong.

So far, Luna has defied the odds, surviving on his own for nearly two years. According to the DFO, scientists report that he is more assertive and energetic in his interactions with boats.

Marilyn Joyce, Marine Mammal Coordinator for DFO, and the L98 Scientific Panel is considering public safety and the likelihood of a successful re-introduction. A September 10th meeting was to discuss what an intervention plan might look like, and to account for all possible risks and obstacles so the whale and the public would not be put at risk should an inter-

vention be attempted.

A coalition of orca advocates estimates it has until September to get the rescue under way. The plan is to reunite Luna with his orca family, "L" pod. The coalition figures if they can get Luna here by September or October, that will give the whales a couple of months to get used to each other before they return to open ocean for winter.

Sources:

[www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/MarineMammals/198\\_e.htm](http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/MarineMammals/198_e.htm)

<http://komo1000news.com/stories/26124.htm>

[www.whalemuseum.org/museum/press/latest/luna-stories.html](http://www.whalemuseum.org/museum/press/latest/luna-stories.html)

Also see: [www.reuniteluna.com](http://www.reuniteluna.com)



Photo: James "Radar" Rogers      Orca "porpoising" off San Juan Island