

July Newsletter

Volume 2 Issue 2

▶ Editor: Julia Retallack

Seismic Testing In Our Local Waters – What this Means for our Wildlife

Recently, a situation of particular concern has surfaced – spelling ripples of discontent ahead within the marine science community.

The Cascadia Seismic Experiment (CASSIS), is led by the School of Earth & Ocean Sciences at University of Victoria, in partnership with the Sidney Pacific Geoscience Centre, Simon Fraser University, Japan Marine Science & Technology Centre, University of British Columbia, and Dalhousie University.

This will involve a 10-day testing period starting August 27 to gather data about seismic activity in our region.

The reason for this testing is that we live in an active subduction zone and the Canadian and Japanese scientists want to compare notes on the structure and me-

chanics of the Cascadia and Nankai subduction zones.

According to the CASSIS website, an airgun onboard the Kairei will generate seismic signals to be recorded at large offsets of probably over 300 km. 100 land based seismometers placed through out Vancouver Island that continuously record the airgun shots will be deployed as well.

These airgun blasts fire at a volume of 243dB – a level higher than the seismic tests in Baja that killed beaked whales in October 2002.

What does this mean for our marine wildlife?

For starters, this chosen time frame coincides with many whales and other mammals visiting this area. Ultimately, this spells severe trauma

and possible death for these creatures.

We, along with concerned citizens, are being asked to support the move to have CASSIS postpone this test to a winter date when there are less whales in the area.

The DFO is actively working on rescinding the initial permit (which contained erroneous information) and imposing stricter mitigation. Look for more details in our August issue.

References:

www.orcanetwork.org/news/seismo.html

www.sfu.ca/earth-sciences/CASSIS.html


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Added Incentive to our Commission Program – Lottery Style!!

At Prince of Whales, we truly value and appreciate receiving bookings via the front desk and concierge staff .

It is our firm belief that those making such bookings are an extension of our sales staff in arranging an incredible experience at the best price possible for their guests.

How it works: each time you make a booking on your guests' behalf, we include your name for each person in that party. For example, you book a party of four, your name is entered four times!

The reward: **\$ 1000 cash prize.** What a *fantastic* way to end the season : with some extra cash in hand.

The lucky name will be drawn on **September 30th.**



Fast Forward – Our Covered Cabin Cruiser!

In addition to our eight zodiacs, we have two cabin cruisers that provide a whale watching tour that is both great fun and informative!

Throughout the approximately 3-hour tour, our onboard marine biologist will give an educational narrative about the marine mammals residing and travelling through our waters.

Our naturalists, with years of scientific and anecdotal knowledge

of our local waters, will inform and enlighten passengers about the various mammals that reside and pass through our straits.

This vessel seats **twelve passengers** and meets all Transport Canada requirements for safety and comfort.

Whenever the boat is viewing wildlife, passengers may go out on to the viewing decks located at the aft deck and on top of the cabin. Passengers must remem-

ber to dress warmly, bring their camera, and even sunscreen!



Photo: Steve Schlatter, 2003

Trips Still Offered – Have A Blast!!

Summer is here! Our favourite time of the year! We might be busy but we are still offering complimentary trips to our tourism industry colleagues throughout our season until October 31st. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to send their new staff

out on one of our trips on a **standby basis**, based on availability upon departure.

Be sure to call our office at 383-4884 at least an hour in advance to find out if the seats are filling up. **Bring a friend!**



Photo: James "Radar" Rogers, 2003

Prince of Whales “Road Show” = More New Promotion Opportunities!!

Our June newsletter showcased the [Reciprocal Brochure Racking](#) and [Reciprocal Website Links](#) as means to cost effectively promote your business to potential customers planning their trip or in Victoria already. This month features more ideas to mutually benefit your business and ours.

The Prince of Whales has invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in marketing initiatives to make visitors' aware of the range of activities in our beautiful city. This translates into a longer stay, and more revenue generated within our economy. We *all*

stand to benefit.

Recently, Alan McGillivray (Owner and Fearless Leader) and Julia Retallack (Tourism Sales Development) hit the streets to get to the crux of what's shaking in our industry, and learned some valuable insights from their hospitality counterparts.

From these discussions came such ideas as the nightly whale sighting report – a full-colour email version is currently in the works. We feel this will be especially useful for all front line staff.

Finally, as many properties around

our lovely city remember, we conducted a brief survey from June 7th to 13th, asking front desk and concierge staff for their input on the level of need for a van shuttle service. The results are in, and logistics to offer a shuttle service for the remaining season is still being worked out.

Right now we offer over 20 trips per day, so the biggest challenge is how to best use the van and coordinate pick-

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

This summer has begun on a very positive note: more births than deaths within the southern resident community of killer whales. We are fortunate enough to be able to view families from J, K and L pods on a very regular basis this time of year. All three pods have returned to the waters near Victoria with newborns as they visit their traditional foraging grounds in search of energy-rich salmon.

These young whales appear tiny in the big ocean, swimming next to their protective mothers, and have got a lot of growing and learning to do before the onset of winter. We do not understand the winter distribution or prey species of southern resident killer

whales, however we do know that the waters off Victoria form an important component of the summer distribution. For this reason, we have developed several "no-boat" zones along primary foraging routes, where the whales can feed and where we can sit off to one side and patiently watch.

There is much debate regarding what the ecological needs of the southern resident killer whales are.

However, these little orange* and black whales remind us of the need to keep our environment clean and healthy as they may be returning to the waters

of southern Vancouver Island for another 50-90 years.

* Killer whales are slightly jaundiced-looking when born, making their white pigment appear orange-pink due to the build up of red blood cells in the circulatory system)



Anna Hall, 2003

Update on the US Navy Sonar Testing Situation

There appears to be some rough seas ahead for spokespeople with the US Navy, in answering for its sonar testing actions which occurred in May.

Tough questions are being asked of the Navy by many concerned citizens and members of the scientific community who are looking for answers as to whether or not the Navy's sonar testing played a role in causing several porpoises stranded themselves on the shores of Whidbey Island.

According to the Orca Network, The Navy declined an invitation from the federally initiated Island County Marine Resources Committee on Wednesday to discuss alternatives to making the military exercises more compatible

with marine mammals.

Rich Melaas, community planning liaison for Whidbey Island Naval Air Station, was sent to the meeting but was instructed to say only that the Navy is investigating the incident and the National Marine Fisheries Service is handling the post-mortem examinations of the porpoises.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, has been working closely with the Orca Network. According to Susan Berta of the Orca Network, NOAA opened up the necropsies of the porpoises to a wide audience of experts, the goal being to complete the necropsies by the end of June. With that in mind, the hope is that

these results will be made public in a timely fashion.

Because the US Navy has such a significant presence in the Puget Sound, environmental advocates are calling on it to engage in protective measures for marine mammals, suggesting that the Navy refrain from sonar testing altogether.

Thanks to: Orca Network (www.orcanetwork.org)



Photo: James "Radar" Rogers

More Good News and Updates!



More great news for orca supporters!

In the June issue we announced the arrival of J-38 (birth month December) and J-39 (birth month March). They are reportedly doing well, and getting the hang of life in our waters.

These babies, once they've survived to their first year, will be eligible to be named by the Whale Museum, with the name ideas submitted by the public. We'll keep you posted on the names chosen.

The news has been buzzing

recently about Springer (A-73) being spotted July 9th with her pod – a huge boost to those who were part of her reunion with the A pod in 2002. Whale experts said Springer's health and family connection shows the massive effort to move her from the Puget Sound area to our northern waters was a great success.

The Whale Museum, based in Friday Harbor, WA has a unique opportunity for people to lend their support for the orcas. The Orca Naming Campaign and Orca Adoption Program (O.A.P) are the museum's prime means of generating public support in

terms of publicity and finances.

Back in the 1960's and '70s members of the J, K, and L pods were repeatedly captured for public aquariums. Subsequently, a group of whale watchers and scientists implemented photo identification of the pod members, putting a large dent in whale capture out of fear of public outcry. And it worked!

For more information, check out www.whalemuseum.org and click on the O.A.P. link.