

## August 2009 Wildlife Report Part 2



One of the most important actions to protect orcas is to promote land-based whale watching that is popular worldwide. Lifeforce's Orca Trails was created in the 90s. We report to Park Managers when the orcas will pass by marine parks. One such location is Lighthouse Marine Park in Point Roberts where orcas will pass by as close as 50 feet off the beach. Orcas are often present during some mornings, afternoons and sunsets.

Wednesday August 5<sup>th</sup> – Orcas breaching off Tsawassen Ferry Dock heading north.

Friday August 7<sup>th</sup> – Orcas headed to Fraser and later could be heard passing the park at 10:20 PM.

Friday August 14<sup>th</sup> – At 1430 orcas were off the park heading south. They came out of Active Pass and did not head up to the Fraser River. During my studies I have seen this occur when pods are travelling. Ks were most often the ones heading east.

Saturday August 15<sup>th</sup> the orcas were in Haro Strait but on Sunday August 16<sup>th</sup> they were back off the park at 4:30 PM and heading south. They were quite spread out in small groups. There were a number of pleasure boats that Lifeforce advise how to respectfully watch orcas. Later in the evening one Canadian whale watch company drove recklessly over orcas and motored within 100 feet. Photos were taken and submitted to authorities.

Monday August 17<sup>th</sup> – Orcas were off the park at sunset heading South. They later turned and headed north.

Tuesday August 18<sup>th</sup> – Orcas were off the park at 2:00 PM heading south.

Wednesday August 19<sup>th</sup> – At 5:00 PM some Ls and what looked like Raggedy K40 (I have seen her many times over the years swimming with those L males) were heading North from East Point to Point Roberts. They stopped many times along the way to play and socialize. L78 had a fresh wound about the shape of a 12 inch ruler below the two "rakes" that were previously reported. Another male had two maybe three long thin marks that went nearly right across the dorsal fin. The orcas were off the park at sunset.

Thursday August 20<sup>th</sup> – At 7:15 PM the orcas were once again off the park and headed South.

Friday August 21<sup>st</sup> – Orcas were off the park at 9:15 AM heading south. One anxious group of camp kids had unforgettable memories watching approx 25 orcas. They were packing up to go home when Lifeforce told them "Whales are coming!". Some were breaching and some just 25 feet off the beach.

On Saturday August 22 the "Resident" orcas passed Jordan River on the Southern tip of Vancouver Island heading to the Pacific Ocean.

Note:

It was sad to read the August 24<sup>th</sup> Orca Network report by a whale watch company looking for orcas in "thick fog". Since orcas can be hit there should be no such orca searches in fog and storms. In order to help people make their voices heard during the public comment period re: boat traffic Lifeforce has a new video. **"STOP THE ORCA CRUELTY". See update below.**

Aug 25 – Orcas breaching off the park at 2:35 PM.

Aug 26 – Orcas headed past in morn and returned at 5:15 PM Orcas off park. They spent a long time foraging in area probably because there were no whale watch companies present. Lifeforce wants a No Go Zone around Point Roberts shoreline to keep whale watch companies out of the orcas' critical habitat for foraging.

Aug 27 – Orcas headed out of Active Pass en route to the Fraser River and Point Grey area. In this area there is seldom any government enforcement to protect orcas from whale watch companies and others. There were many violations. One example below is the Vancouver Whale Watch boat motoring well within the 100 meter guideline.



Orca breaches approaching Fraser River.



August 28 – Orcas at Fraser River still feeding on those salmon.

### **More Wildlife at the Point**

Other wildlife of interest includes deer reports, raccoons, Ring-necked Pheasants, and Cooper's Hawk. And they weren't wolves but some hot dogs were chilling out in a convertible.

Locals have said that there has been a buck, a doe and two young deer spotted in various areas of the Point. Raccoons are also found on the Point. "Coons" are native to North America. Escapes and introductions during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century spread their range across Europe and Japan. Fortunately for Point pheasants it is not pheasant under glass but they are under shrubs, trees and storage sheds. A male flew into the new storage business on Gulf Road and a female was on Marine Drive at the campground. BC populations have declined by 90% in the last 30 thirty years. An immature Cooper's Hawk has been seen by the camp ground. They ambush prey from hidden perch and also search in flight. During the heat wave some cool dogs were seen at TJ's restaurant in a red VW convertible. The dog is descended from the wolf. They were probably the first animal to be domesticated around 15,000 years ago. Perhaps these canines trained their driver to fetch dinner?



Raccoon





Female Pheasant



Immature Cooper's Hawk



Northwestern Crow



Cedar Waxwing



Great Blue Heron





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Barn Swallows at Marina has more chicks.



Male Northern Flicker (Red-shafted)



Immature Northern Harrier



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## Special Report

On August 28<sup>th</sup> whale watch companies complained about the lack of orca action. Well all they had to do to see similar behaviours such as multiple “breaches”, “spy hops”, “Tail slaps” and more was to look at the spawning salmon. The sun was setting as they headed East into the Fraser River. They will spawn and end their amazing journey from birth place to ocean to the return to their home rivers.

### The “Breaches”



### “Triple Breaches”



### The “Head View/Spy Hop”



### The “Tail Slap”



### The “Speed Swim”



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### The “Aerials”



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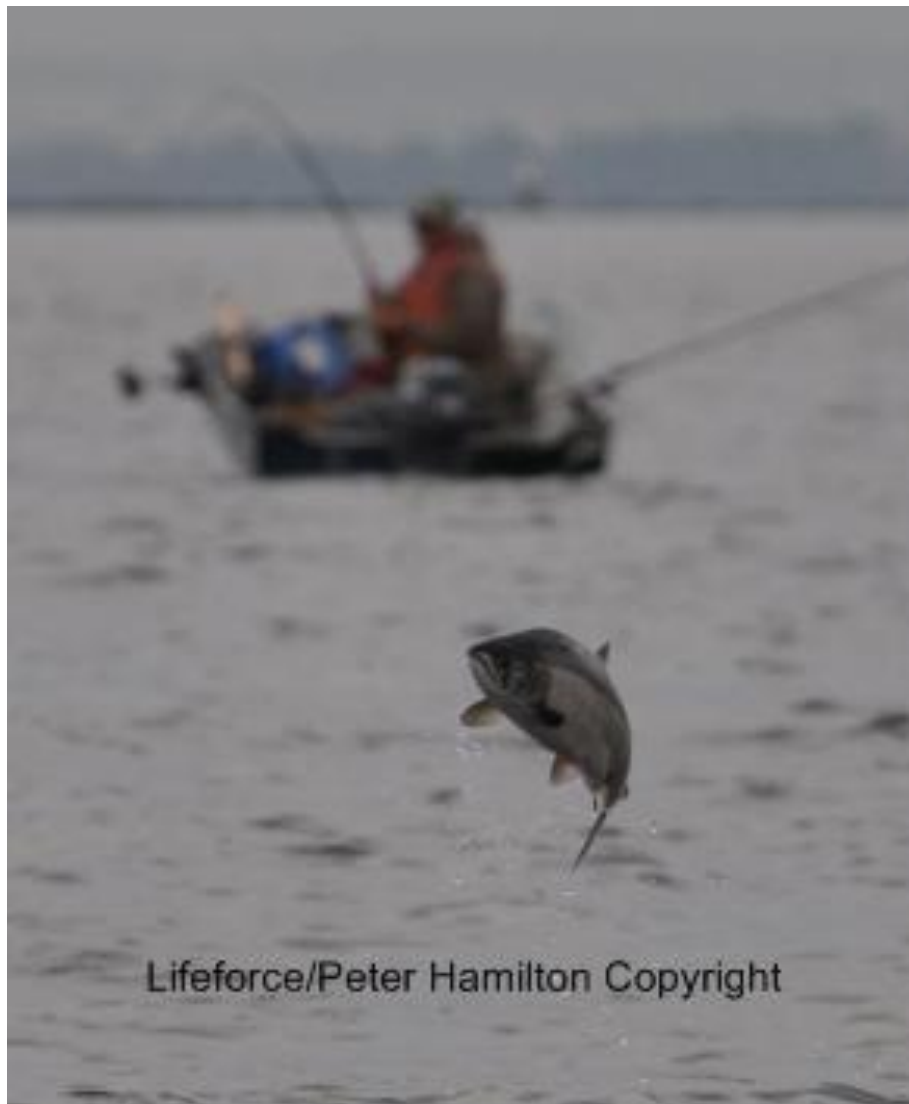




**But as with orcas who were netted for Aquarium prisons many were hooked and netted.**



The following one did get away.



This is the final August Wildlife Report. In the September Report I hope to show you the diversity of autumn birds and animals.

For Freedom,  
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#### **Help Protect People, Animals and Habitats**

Lifeforce is a registered Non-Profit Society Registered under the Society Act of BC since 1981 and Lifeforce Ocean Friends is incorporated in WA since 1997. ***Your important donations and memberships fund these important programs. Bequeaths can be made to Lifeforce Foundation. So please Help Lifeforce Help Wildlife.***

## UPDATE - Help Stop Orca Cruelty!



**Orcas will slap their tail flukes and/or breach when agitated by boats.**

As stated in the first August Wildlife Report the US NOAA Fisheries has started a Public Comment period to implement new laws to restrict boat traffic in the vicinity of orcas. Their recommendations include increasing boat distances from 100 yards to 200 yards and creating a “No Go” zone along the west side of San Juan Island.

Whale watch companies claim that they must get close with orcas or else they will go broke. However, financial profits must not take priority over stopping orca cruelty. For years the innocent orcas tried to cope with all the boats all day long. The whale watch business is not about education to protect endangered species. It's all about making money at the expense of these endangered orcas.

I have studied the behaviour and travel patterns of orcas for 15 years. Some of that work was done under a Canadian research permit. It is a fact that boat traffic has a negative impact on the lifestyles of orcas. Industry people want to hide behind any gap in “science” when it just makes common sense to respect orcas and Let Them Be!

The continuous boat pressure interrupts their lives and feeding. This ongoing stress can make them sick and more susceptible to illnesses. Starved orcas rely on their fat reserves that contains toxic pollutants.

To help protect orcas please send your comments to [orca.plan@noaa.gov](mailto:orca.plan@noaa.gov) up until October 27, 2009. Their web site is [www.noaa.gov](http://www.noaa.gov) . You can help support the Lifeforce recommendations as follows:

1. Both Canada and the US must implement the same stricter laws to protect transboundary orcas.
2. The 200 yards should be 400 yards as recommended when companies are watching nursing orcas.
3. There must be No Whale Watch Zones, such as Active Pass, in high boat traffic locations.
4. There can be Whale Watch Zones where designated locations are defined to stop companies from continuously following them all day long.
5. In addition to the San Juan Islands, No Go Zones should include the Point Roberts, WA shoreline where orcas forage.
6. Time limits of maximum 30 minutes must be implemented. Presently companies can be on the orcas for two hours or longer.



7. Weather restrictions must include no whale watching during fog and stormy conditions. Commercial boats can't see the orcas and could hit them!
8. There should be government licensing of whale watch companies. This would include a restriction on the number of licenses issued.
9. There should be training of whale watch operators and ECO Certification of those in good standing.
10. Governments should promote land-based whale watching such as Lifeforce's Orca Trails.

Lifeforce's 2008 report "Contact: In Pursuit of Orcas" provides many, many examples of whale watch companies' non-compliance with rules and legislation (see [http://www.lifeforcefoundation.org/files/INPURSUITORCASJAN2009\\_sm.pdf](http://www.lifeforcefoundation.org/files/INPURSUITORCASJAN2009_sm.pdf))

For 15 years the Lifeforce's Boater Awareness Program has advised boaters of the rules and, most importantly, respect when operating in the vicinity of endangered orcas. We found that the pleasure boaters usually say they are just doing what the companies are doing because they thought at they knew what to do. When not watched by government enforcement agencies whale watch companies get far to close and repeatedly block the path ways.

More enforcement is needed so existing and any improved laws are adhered to. Lifeforce urges all to also email US Commerce Gary Locke to increase orca protection by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (Email [TheSec@doc.gov](mailto:TheSec@doc.gov)). In Canada contact Minister Shea (Email [Shea.G@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Shea.G@parl.gc.ca)).

One of the most important actions to protect orcas is to promote land-based whale watching that is popular worldwide. Lifeforce's Orca Trails was created in the 90s. We would report to Park Managers when the orcas will pass by marine parks. One such location is Lighthouse Marine Park in Point Roberts where orcas will pass by as close as 50 feet off the beach. From August 16<sup>th</sup> to August 21<sup>st</sup> orcas were present seven out of the eight days during some mornings, afternoons and sunsets. One anxious group of kids had unforgettable memories watching approx 25 orcas. Some were breaching and some just 25 feet off the beach.

Orcas stay longer when they are not chased by boats. If it is quiet they will socialize and if there is salmon they will also feed. More orca time brings both nonintrusive public enjoyment of these magnificent creatures and also could bring more tourism to Point Roberts.

Over the past decade the whale watch industry has drastically grown. The lack of proper government actions has led to the chaos on the water. The victims are the endangered orcas. It is time that government provide the orcas with more peaceful and natural lives.

**SEE THE NEW LIFEFORCE VIDEO ABOUT THE WHALE WATCH INDUSTRY – "STOP THE ORCA CRUELTY!"**

Go to: <http://www.lifeforcefoundation.org/newsitem.php?id=111>



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