

# A Sanctuary for the Southern Residents

By Holly Fellowes

## Executive summary

The Southern Resident Killer Whales are a struggling population, native to British Columbia and Washington. They face threats of insufficient food supply, vessel presence and contaminants. Their behaviour is known to be affected by the presence of vessels. Particularly alarming is the change in their foraging behaviour with vessel presence. In order to help the recovery of this small population, protections that help them catch enough food are important. One such measure would be to form a vessel exclusion ecological reserve at Lime Kiln State Park.

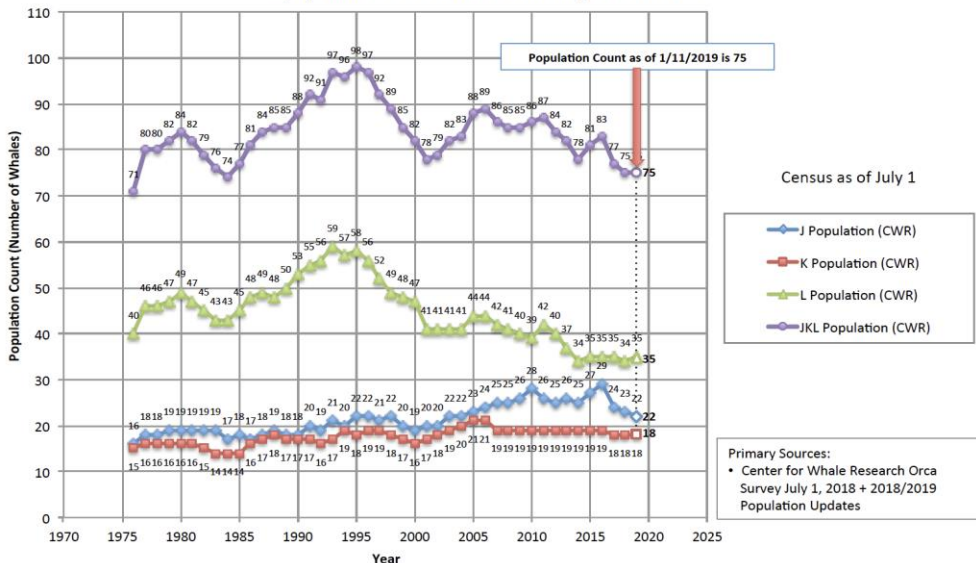
## Iconic orcas

The Southern Resident Killer Whales are a charismatic population of killer whales that lives in coastal waters of British Columbia and Washington. They spend their summers in the Salish Sea, beside Vancouver, Victoria, Seattle and many more coastal communities. Each whale is individually identifiable.



Southern Resident J26. Photo by Holly Fellowes

**Southern Resident Orca Population**  
J, K, and L Pod Census as of July 1 Each Year



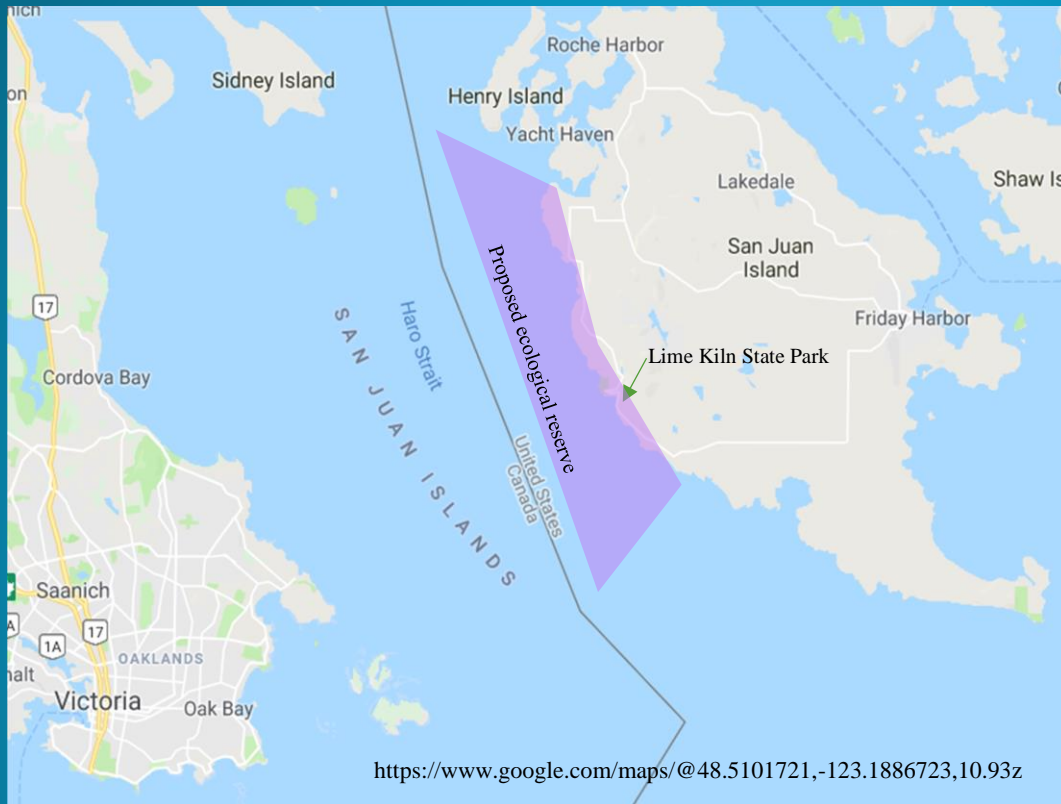
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## The last 75

There are only 75 Southern Resident Killer Whales left. This population was reduced to 73 individuals by the live-capture fishery by the early 1970s, and they have yet to recover. They have been struggling with both high mortality rates and low birth rates, leading to their overall failure to recover.

## Providing a peaceful place

Vessels affect the behaviour of killer whales, decreasing the time they spend hunting, or making it harder for them to catch fish. Providing the Southern Resident population with an ecological reserve, free from vessel presence would help mitigate this. A vessel exclusion reserve, closed to all vessels, that extended up to one nautical mile off the western shoreline of San Juan Island would protect the major foraging area, while not severely encroaching on whale watcher's access to watching whales.



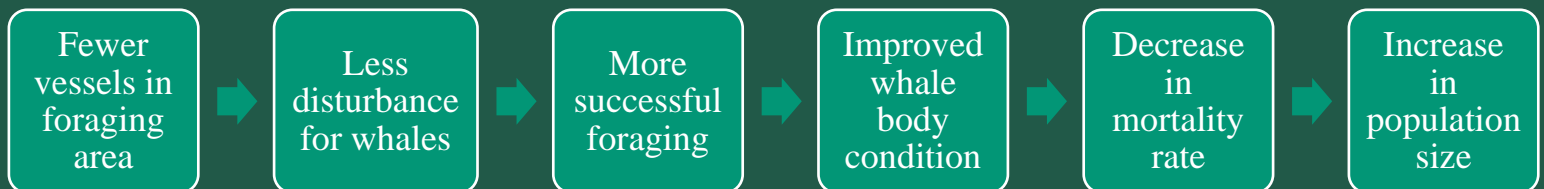
### Why Lime Kiln State Park?

- Within Southern Resident critical habitat
- Key summer feeding area
- Pre-existing Pacific Whale Watch Association voluntary exclusion zone

This area is both important for the whales and already recognized by the local whale watchers, making establishing protections both useful and practical.

See map for proposed reserve location.

## Ecological reserve goal



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