



The Whale Museum's Soundwatch Boater Education Program promotes responsible boater behavior around marine wildlife.

K. E. L. P., the Kayak Education & Leadership Program, is a Soundwatch program that targets recreational and commercial kayakers on issues specific to paddlers.

K. E. L. P. informs kayakers on marine wildlife regulations and guidelines with the aim of reducing human-powered vessel disturbance. Paddlers are instructed on correct behaviors around whales, seal/sea lion haul outs and seabird rookeries, including Marine Protected Areas within the **San Juan County Marine Stewardship Area** and the National Wildlife Refuge system. Special focus is given to behaviors around endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales.

Need more information?

The Whale Museum's Soundwatch Program
www.whalemuseum.org

NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Region
<http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/Marine-Mammals/Whales-Dolphins-Porpoise/Killer-Whales/Index.cfm>

Washington's Vessel Regulation
Protecting Southern Resident Killer Whales
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/wlm/diveristy/soc/orca/index.htm>

To report marine mammal strandings/sightings:

The Whale Museum Hotline
1-800-562-8832 or hotline@whalemuseum.org

To report a marine mammal disturbance or harassment:

U.S. NOAA Fisheries, Office for Law Enforcement
1-800-853-1964 www.bewhalewise.org

Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Enforcement
1-360-902-2936

Kayaker Code of Conduct Additional Guidelines crafted collaboratively by The Whale Museum's K.E.L.P. Program and the San Juan Island Kayak Association, with input from the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and NOAA Fisheries.

KAYAKER CODE OF CONDUCT

Paddling is a quiet and low-impact way to explore the Salish Sea. Even so, kayakers and operators of other human-powered vessels still have the potential to disturb marine wildlife. Unique challenges of limited sight distance and maneuverability, and a variety of safety concerns all require special consideration to remain in compliance with laws and to reduce the overall risks of disturbing marine wildlife.

Responsible Paddlers:

- Are aware of and strive to follow all local, state, and federal laws and the *Be Whale Wise* guidelines governing behavior around killer whales and other marine wildlife, as well as special Marine Protection Areas.
- Have a trip plan before leaving the shore. This includes knowing the area boating laws, accessible public landing areas, safety issues and environmental conditions.

All marine mammals are protected from harassment or disturbance under the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Canadian Fisheries Act. In addition, Southern Resident Killer Whales are listed as an Endangered Species under the U.S. Endangered Species Act and as a Species at Risk under the Canadian Species at Risk Act. In Washington State waters, all killer whales are listed as endangered and protected under RCW 77.15.120.

The Kayaker Code of Conduct is specific to U.S. laws and guidelines for Southern Resident Killer Whales but can be equally applied to all marine mammals in the waters of the U.S. and Canada.



SJKA
San Juan Island
Kayak Association

IN WASHINGTON STATE IT IS UNLAWFUL* TO:

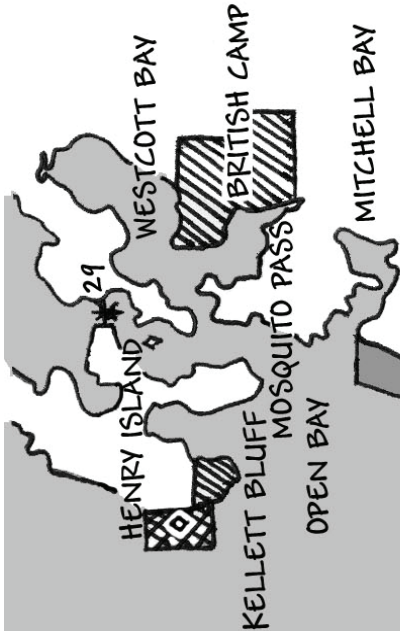
**Some exemptions (including safety, vessel limitations and weather conditions) apply. RCW 77.15.740*

- Approach within 100 yards of a killer whale.
- Intercept a killer whale by placing a vessel or allowing a vessel or other object to remain in the path and within 100 yards of a killer whale.
- Feed, or attempt to feed, a killer whale.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES TO ASSIST IN ADHERING TO THE LAWS:

1. If whales are present when launching from shore or another vessel, kayakers will assess their position relative to the whales to determine their course of action. Kayakers can launch if they can maintain at least a 100 yard distance and avoid the path of the whales. Preferably, they should view the whales from shore and/or launch after the whales have passed.
2. When whales are approaching an area, kayakers will assess their position relative to the whales and the nearest shoreline to determine their course of action. If paddling in a group, kayakers should stay close together.
3. To avoid being in the corridor in front of the whales (path), kayakers will need to start moving out of the path 100-400 yards ahead of whales. Preferably kayakers will choose to paddle on the inshore side of whales.
 - Kayakers need to determine if by moving to shore they can maintain 100 yards distance from whales and if they can make their way to shore while avoiding the potential path of whales.
 - In some cases, kayakers may need to stay where they are, or move further offshore to avoid being within 100 yards of whales and to avoid being in the whales' path.
4. If kayakers decide to remain, or move, inshore of whales, they can remain paddling as long as they can maintain at least a 100 yard distance and avoid the path of the whales. Kayakers may need to alter their course to keep out of the path.
5. If kayakers decide to remain or move, offshore of whales, they can remain paddling as long as they can maintain at least 100 yard distance and avoid the path of the whales. Kayakers may need to alter their course to keep out of the path.
6. If whales are approaching within 100 yards of shore, inshore kayakers will move in as close to shore as possible (ideally in kelp beds), secure themselves, raft up and stop paddling until the whales have passed by. Kayakers will avoid headlands when deciding where to stop in order to avoid being in the potential path of whales.
7. **If kayakers have taken all measures to maintain a 100 yards distance from whales and to avoid the path of whales, and still unexpectedly find themselves out of compliance with the laws, (i.e., within 100 yards, and/or in the path of a whale), they shall immediately stop paddling until the whales have passed.**
8. Kayakers shall avoid disturbing haul out areas for seals/sea lions and/or sea bird nesting sites by paddling in at least a 100 yard arc, whenever possible. May through October is the most sensitive time of the year for birthing and breeding seals, sea lions and nesting sea birds. During these times, kayakers will use extra caution: avoiding noise, direct eye contact, and sporadic movements.
9. Kayakers will avoid approaching within 200 yards of a National Wildlife Refuge to avoid disturbing haul out areas for seals/sea lions and/or sea bird nesting sites whenever possible. No landings are permitted except at designated areas.
10. Do not disturb, move, feed, or touch any marine wildlife, including seal pups. If you are concerned about a potentially sick or stranded animal, contact your local stranding network.

SAN JUAN COUNTY MARINE STEWARDSHIP AREA



• Marine Biological Reserves

Regulation: closed to all shellfish and bottomfish activities (except crabbing in Parks Bay). See marine area 7 rules for exact locations. Salmon Fishing Closure: no salmon fishing within 300 yards of Yellow and Low Islands to reduce rockfish mortality from unintentional harvest.

• National Wildlife Refuges

Regulation: 81 locations are closed to the public. Boaters are advised to stay 200 yards away to avoid disturbing marine mammals and birds.

SAN JUAN ISLAND

• Voluntary Bottomfish Recovery Zone

Guideline: no bottom fishing within 1/4 mile offshore to protect and restore regional fishing; 8 locations.

• Sensitive Eelgrass Habitat

Eelgrass provide critical habitat for juvenile fish. Please avoid disturbing sediments and vegetation in less than 30' of water.

• Voluntary Motor Boat Exclusion Zone

Guideline: remain 1/4 mile offshore (1/2 mile in Lime Kiln area) when whales are present.

