



GOVERNOR'S

SOUTHERN RESIDENT

**ORCA**

TASK FORCE

## Governor's Southern Resident Orca Task Force

### *Summary of Recommendations, Year 1*

#### INCREASE PREY ABUNDANCE

**Recommendation 1:** Significantly increase investment in restoration and acquisition of habitat in areas where Chinook stocks most benefit Southern Resident orcas.

**Recommendation 2:** Immediately fund acquisition and restoration of nearshore habitat to increase the abundance of forage fish for salmon sustenance.

**Recommendation 3:** Apply and enforce laws that protect habitat.

**Recommendation 4:** Immediately strengthen protection of Chinook and forage fish habitat through legislation that amends existing statutes, agency rule making and/or agency policy.

**Recommendation 5:** Develop incentives to encourage voluntary actions to protect habitat.

**Recommendation 6:** Significantly increase hatchery production and programs to benefit Southern Resident orcas consistent with sustainable fisheries and stock management, available habitat, recovery plans and the Endangered Species Act. Hatchery increases need to be done in concert with significantly increased habitat protection and restoration measures.

**Recommendation 7:** Prepare an implementation strategy to reestablish salmon runs above existing dams, increasing prey availability for Southern Resident orcas.

**Recommendation 8:** Increase spill to benefit Chinook for Southern Residents by adjusting Total Dissolved Gas allowances at the Snake and Columbia River dams.

**Recommendation 9:** Establish a stakeholder process to discuss potential breaching or removal of the Lower Snake River Dams for the benefit of Southern Resident orcas.

**Recommendation 10:** Support full implementation and funding of the 2019-28 Pacific Salmon Treaty.

**Recommendation 11:** Reduce Chinook bycatch in west coast commercial fisheries.

**Recommendation 12:** Direct the appropriate agencies to work with tribes and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to determine if pinniped (harbor seal and sea lion) predation is a limiting factor for Chinook in Puget Sound and along Washington's outer coast and evaluate potential management actions.

**Recommendation 13:** Support authorization and other actions to more effectively manage pinniped predation of salmon in the Columbia River.

**Recommendation 14:** Reduce populations of nonnative predatory fish species that prey upon or compete with Chinook.

**Recommendation 15:** Monitor forage fish populations to inform decisions on harvest and management actions that provide for sufficient feedstocks to support increased abundance of Chinook.

**Recommendation 16:** Support the Puget Sound zooplankton sampling program as a Chinook and forage fish management tool.

## REDUCE VESSEL NOISE AND DISTURBANCE

**Recommendation 17:** Establish a statewide “go-slow” bubble for small vessels and commercial whale watching vessels within half a nautical mile of Southern Resident orcas.

**Recommendation 18:** Establish a limited-entry whalewatching permit system for commercial whalewatching vessels and commercial kayak groups in the inland waters of Washington state to increase acoustic and physical refuge opportunities for the orcas.

**Recommendation 19:** Create an annual Orca Protection endorsement for all recreational boaters to ensure all boaters are educated on how to limit boating impacts to orcas.

**Recommendation 20:** Increase enforcement capacity and fully enforce regulations on small vessels to provide protection to Southern Residents.

**Recommendation 21:** Discourage the use of echo sounders and underwater transducers within one kilometer of orcas.

**Recommendation 22:** Implement shipping noise-reduction initiatives and monitoring programs, coordinating with Canadian and U.S. authorities.

**Recommendation 23:** Reduce noise from the Washington state ferries by accelerating the transition to quieter and more fuel-efficient vessels and implementing other strategies to reduce ferry noise when Southern Residents are present.

**Recommendation 24:** Reduce the threat of oil spills in Puget Sound to the survival of Southern Residents.

**Recommendation 25:** Coordinate with the Navy in 2019 to discuss reduction of noise and disturbance affecting Southern Resident orcas from military exercises and Navy aircraft.

**Recommendation 26:** Revise chapter 77.15.740 RCW to increase the buffer to 400 yards behind the orcas.

**Recommendation 27:** Determine how permit applications in Washington state that could increase traffic and vessel impacts could be required to explicitly address potential impacts to orcas.

**Recommendation 28:** Suspend viewing of Southern Resident orcas.

**Recommendation 29:** Accelerate the implementation of the ban on polychlorinated biphenyls in state purchased products and make information available online for other purchasers.

## REDUCE TOXICS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

**Recommendation 30:** Identify, prioritize and take action on chemicals that impact orcas and their prey.

**Recommendation 31:** Reduce stormwater threats and accelerate clean-up of toxics that are harmful to orcas.

**Recommendation 32:** Improve effectiveness, implementation and enforcement of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits to address direct threats to Southern Resident orcas and their prey.

**Recommendation 33:** Increase monitoring of toxic substances in marine waters; create and deploy adaptive management strategies to reduce threats to orcas and their prey.

**Recommendation 34:** Provide sustainable funding for implementation of all recommendations.

**Recommendation 35:** Conduct research, science and monitoring to inform decision making, adaptive management and implementation of actions to recover Southern Residents.

**Recommendation 36:** Monitor progress of implementation and identify needed enhancements.

