



Exploration Guide to the Exhibit Hall

Welcome to The Whale Museum. We hope you enjoy your visit today. As you explore the Museum, please look for the numbered icons upstairs and the lettered icons downstairs. Refer to this guide for more information about each exhibit.

To begin, please go up the stairs and straight into the alcove where you will find Exhibit #1.

Upstairs Exhibit Hall



Welcome to the Salish Sea

In this alcove, you will find a map of the Salish Sea as well as some more information about this region and the incredible marine life found here. Using the computer you can learn more about the sounds of the Salish Sea including the Lime Kiln hydrophones, which you can listen to streaming in real-time.



What is a Whale?

Going through the alcove look directly to your left. On these panels you will learn about the two main groups of cetaceans, mysticetes and odontocetes, preparing you for further exploration of the Museum.



Pinnipeds

Here you will see some skulls from Pinnipeds (seals, sea lions and walruses) in the region. Notice the similarities and differences between our skulls and theirs. You can also learn more about each of the local Pinnipeds: Harbor Seals, California Sea Lions, Elephant Seals, and Steller Sea Lions.



Brains and Fetuses

View a comparison of the brains of a human and two cetacean species. Look at the differences in size as well as structure. What do you think that means in terms of intelligence? Here you can also see the preserved fetuses of a harbor porpoise and a harbor seal as well as learn about delayed implantation in Pinnipeds.



Skeleton Comparison

Compare the skeletons of three mammals: a terrestrial (human), marine (dolphin) and one that uses both worlds (river otter). Look at the similarities and differences between them.



Gray Whale Exhibit and Skeleton

Learn about gray whales and their incredible migrations, social structure, feeding habits

and more while standing underneath the massive skeleton of a one-year-old gray whale.



Baleen and Toothed Whale Comparison

Walk toward the suspended humpback whale model and look at the case beneath it. Baleen whales (Mysticetes) and toothed whales (Odontocetes) have many differences including ranges and migrations, social structure, and use of echolocation. One of the greatest differences is in how they eat. Inside the case you will see examples of different types of teeth and baleen as well as learn about how whales use them to consume their specific prey items.



Baleen Whales

Along this wall, learn about two of the species of baleen whales in the Salish Sea region: the Humpback and the Minke. They both belong to a particular group of baleen whales called Rorquals.



Toothed Whales

Along this wall, learn about two porpoise species in the Salish Sea: the Dall's and Harbor porpoise. In the Salish Sea they have been mating with one another and producing hybrids.



Differences Between Porpoises and Dolphins

These panels will explain some of the differences between dolphins and porpoises. In the case, you will see examples of the differences in teeth between the two groups.



Orca Skeletons

Now you will learn more about the world's largest dolphin: the orca or killer whale. Next to you is the skeleton of Moclips (L-8) an adult male from the Southern Resident Community of orcas. Compare his size to the one-year-old gray whale hanging next to him. In the case is the skeleton of a young orca calf for comparison.



Historical Research - Taku

Next to the hanging orca model is the fascinating story of Taku (K-1) who was captured and fitted with a radio transmitter to track his movements.



Orca Capture Commemoration

Behind the orca model you will find a tribute to Southern Resident orcas who were captured from 1964-1973. This practice decimated the population and was one of the original factors that led to their endangered status. Lolita is the only survivor of all of the captured Southern Resident orcas. She is currently living and performing at the Miami Seaquarium.



Genealogy Board

The Southern Resident Community of orcas contains three individual pods, or extended family groups, called J, K, and L Pod. Each individual orca is identified and named. Scientists from the Center for Whale Research have created a genealogy chart for each of the pods based on these identifications and associations between whales. The chart you see in front of you is based on their work. The photos represent living whales in the population while the nameplates are for whales who have died during the course of this four decade study.



Orcas and Salmon

Go through the kids' room. On your left you will see a display on the importance of salmon to the Salish Sea ecosystem and especially to the endangered Southern Resident orcas. Continue toward the stairs to learn about our endangered orcas.



Endangered Orcas

Southern Resident orcas are listed as endangered by both the U.S. Endangered Species Act and Canada's Species at Risk Act. Learn more about the threats, recovery efforts and research that is taking place to help them recover. On the wall behind the Endangered Orcas display, read the stories of some of the amazing individual whales from the Southern Resident Community who are gone but not forgotten. More of these stories are available through The Whale Museum's Story Keepers Series.

For Further Exploration Upstairs



Whale Watching From Shore

In the far corner next to the lighthouse replica, watch a video of Southern Resident orcas taken from shore at Lime Kiln Point State Park on San Juan Island.



Whale Acoustics

Inside the lighthouse replica hear and learn about some of the ways sound is important to orcas. In the back 'historical research room' hear some of the calls the orcas make and learn how scientists study the calls by seeing them on a 'spectrogram.' On the computer screen, listen in on a conversation between a mother orca Oreo (J-22) and her son Cookie (J-38). This is thought to be the first recorded whale conversation in the world. Inside the telephone booth hear calls from some of the other whale species from around the world.



Kids' Room

For kids of all ages! Have fun trying on whale and salmon costumes, coloring some pictures, reading some books or watching a marine mammal video.



Theater

Pull up a chair, relax and watch a documentary about orcas. “Orca: Killer Whale or Gentle Giant” shows footage of Northern Resident orcas in Johnstone Strait, Canada. The DVD runs on a continuous loop.



Humans and Marine Mammals

Enter the room across from the theater to get a sense of how marine mammals have been used by people over time—both traditionally and commercially.



Storm Boy

The exhibit next to the staircase pays tribute to the children’s book *Storm Boy* by Paul Owen Lewis.

Downstairs Exhibit Hall



Marine Debris and Pollution

Inside this case is a replica of the stomach contents from a gray whale that died in 2010. This is a reminder to us that the Salish Sea is not as pristine as it may appear on the surface and that everything we do affects the marine environment.



Sooke (L-112)

Sooke was a three-year-old orca from L Pod who tragically died in 2012. Her cause of death was blunt trauma from unknown sources. The Whale Museum was honored to receive her skeleton for this exhibit. We hope that as you read her story you will be inspired to become a better steward to help her family as well as the entire marine ecosystem.



Gray Whale Skull and Baleen Exhibit

The skull you are looking at is from a one-year-old male gray whale fondly nicknamed ‘Stinky Bill.’ He is the star of a popular program called the Gray Whale Project that allows students to articulate his bones and discover his cause of death. On the wall above his skull, you can watch a video entitled ‘Gray Whale Obstacle Course’ by Jean-Michel Cousteau that tells the story of the amazing gray whale migration. Here you can also read about different types of baleen whales and their feeding techniques. Please be gentle as you touch the baleen samples and notice their differences and similarities.

For Further Exploration Downstairs



Saving Springer: Orphan Orca

Watch this engaging and inspirational documentary about the efforts to help reunite a lost

little orca with her family. (Spoiler alert: Springer's reintroduction to her family was successful and in 2013, she was spotted with her first calf!)



Whale Watching Info

Whale watching can be an incredible experience, whether by land or sea. We encourage you to try to see the whales when you can. Before you do, please make an informed choice on how you would like to see them and do it responsibly. Afterwards, please do your part to help them recover and thrive.

We are glad you chose to visit The Whale Museum! Please feel free to explore as long as you like and ask us questions. We hope you enjoyed your visit today and that you will now become stewards for the Salish Sea ecosystem.

There are many things you can do to help the Southern Resident orcas as well as the other fascinating animals found here. Recycling, cleaning garbage from a beach, limiting your use of water and electricity, using biodegradable cleaning products, and supporting sustainable fisheries are just a few of the ways you can help. Most importantly, please go home and spread the word! By telling others what you have learned you can help create more stewards to protect this special area. For more information on how you can help, please ask for an Orca Action Guide to take with you.

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