



**The Whale Museum's Soundwatch Boater Education Program** promotes responsible boater behavior around marine wildlife. The **Kayak Education & Leadership Program, K.E.L.P.**, 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](http://www.whalemuseum.org)

NOAA Fisheries, Northwest Region  
[www.nwr.noaa.gov](http://www.nwr.noaa.gov)

Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife  
[www.wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/orca/](http://www.wdfw.wa.gov/conservation/orca/)

**To report marine mammal strandings/sightings:**  
1-800-562-8832 or [hotline@whalemuseum.org](mailto:hotline@whalemuseum.org)

**To report a marine mammal disturbance or harassment:**  
U.S. NOAA Fisheries, Office for Law Enforcement  
1-800-853-1964 or [www.bewhalewise.org](http://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 approval from NOAA Fisheries and the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife.*

## **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 maneuverability, limited sight distance, 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.

*The Kayakers' Code of Conduct is a set of San Juan Island, killer whale specific guidelines meant to be used along with regional Be Whale Wise Marine Wildlife guidelines and current Federal Vessel Laws for Killer Whales to assist kayakers in being lawful.*

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.

#### **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.



**SJIK**  
San Juan Island  
Kayak Association

## **NEW 2011 FEDERAL VESSEL REGULATIONS: IN THE INLAND WATERS OF WASHINGTON STATE, IT IS UNLAWFUL \* TO:**

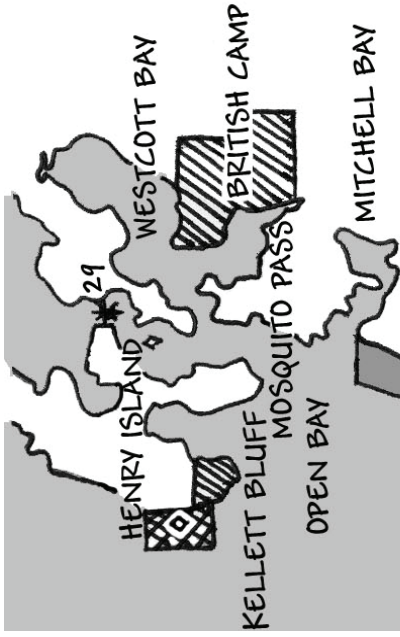
*\*Some exemptions (including safety, vessels actively fishing commercially, cargo vessels travelling in established shipping lanes, and government and permitted research vessels) apply.*

- Cause a vessel to approach, in any manner, any killer whale within 200 yards.
- Position a vessel to be in the path of any killer whale at any point located within 400 yards. The new rules go into effect May 16, 2011 and apply to all types of boats, including motor boats, sail boats and kayaks.

### **KAYAKERS' CODE 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 safely launch as long as they can maintain at least a 200 yard distance and avoid the 400 yard corridor in front of on-coming whales considered to be the whales' path. Preferably, kayakers 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. Preferably kayakers will choose to paddle on the inshore side of whales. If paddling in a group, kayakers should stay close together.
3. To avoid being in the path of whales, kayakers will need to start moving out of the path of on-coming whales well before the whales are within 400 yards.
  - Kayakers will need to determine if by moving to shore they can maintain a 200 yard distance from whales and if it is possible to 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 200 yards of whales and to avoid being in the whales' path.
4. If kayakers decide to remain where they are, or to move inshore of whales, or offshore of whales, they can remain paddling, or choose to stop paddling and raft-up, as long as they can maintain at least a 200 yard distance and avoid the path of the whales. Kayakers may need to continuously alter their course and/or position to keep out of the whales' path.
5. If whales are approaching to within 200 yards of shore, inshore kayakers will move in as close to shore as possible (ideally in help 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.
- 6. If kayakers have taken all measures to maintain a 200 yard distance and stay out of the path from whales and still unexpectedly find themselves out of compliance with the laws they shall:**
  - **Paddle out of the on-coming path of whales 400-200 yards from whales;**
  - **Immediately stop paddling within 200 yards until the whales have passed.**
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. 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 the local stranding network hot-line number on this brochure.

# 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

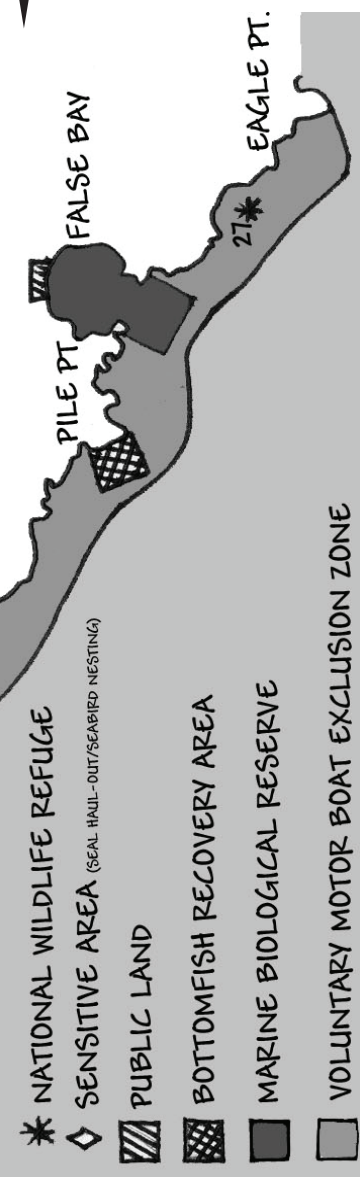
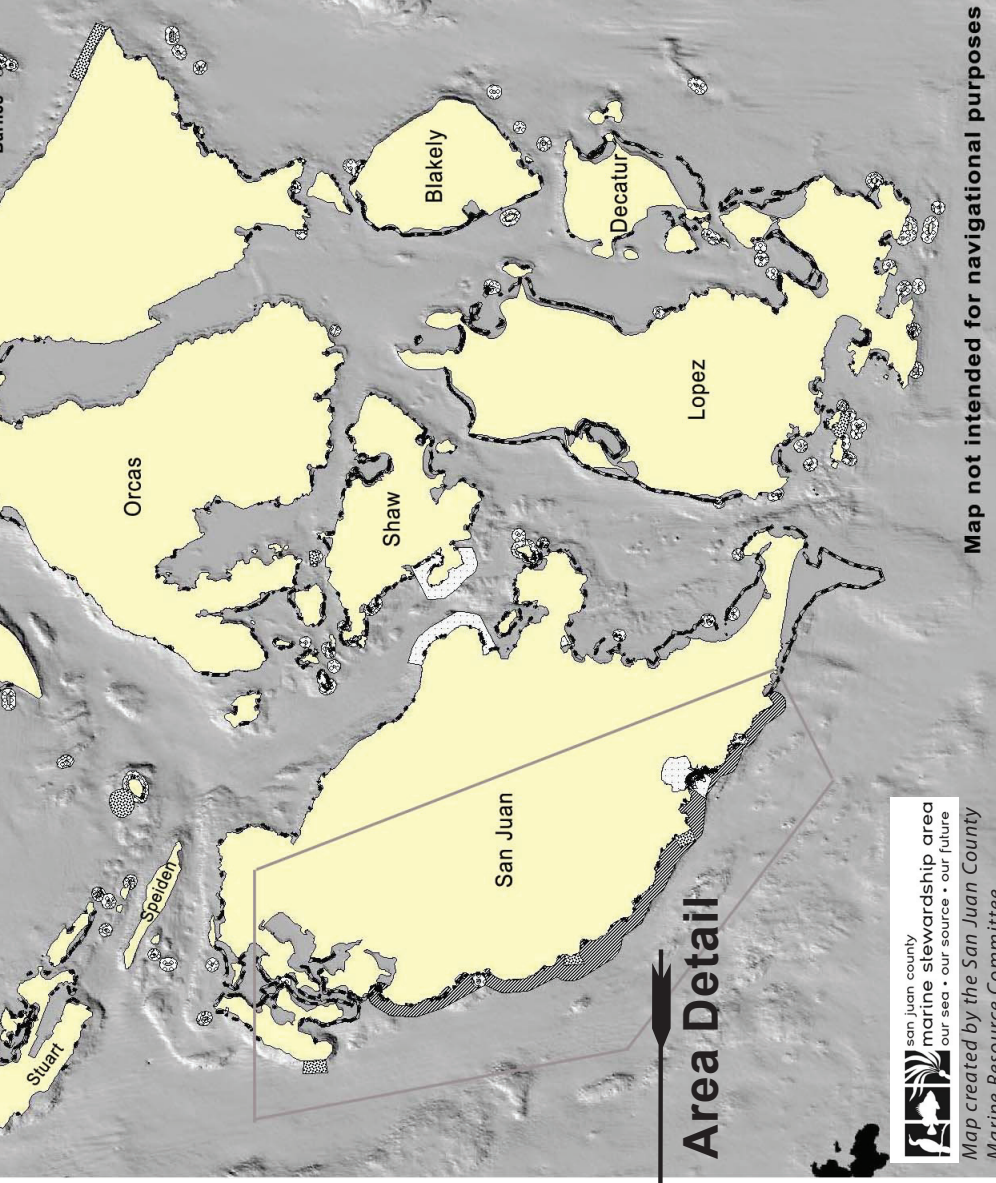
Guideline: no bottom fishing within 1/4 mile offshore to protect and restore regional fishing; 8 locations.

### • 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.



san juan county  
marine stewardship area  
our sea • our source • our future  
Map created by the San Juan County  
Marine Resource Committee

Map not intended for navigational purposes