



## Haro Strait and Boundary Pass 2021 voluntary vessel slowdown

### Working together to reduce underwater noise effects on whales

Southern resident killer whales (SRKW) are listed as endangered under both the *Species at Risk Act* in Canada and the *Endangered Species Act* in the U.S. Both countries' governments recognize the need to take measures to reduce underwater noise generated by vessels, which has been shown to interfere with killer whales' ability to hunt, navigate and communicate via echolocation.

Since 2017, the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority-led Enhancing Cetacean Habitat and Observation (ECHO) Program has been working with the marine transportation industry, environmental groups, Indigenous advisors, and government to coordinate voluntary vessel slowdowns and lateral displacements in key feeding areas within SRKW critical habitat.

Thanks to the marine transportation industry's high participation rates in last year's slowdown in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass, **underwater sound intensity was reduced by nearly 50%**.

### Slowdown parameters for 2021

#### Where: Haro Strait and Boundary Pass

As in previous years, the 2021 slowdown will take place in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass, a total distance of 29.6 nautical miles.

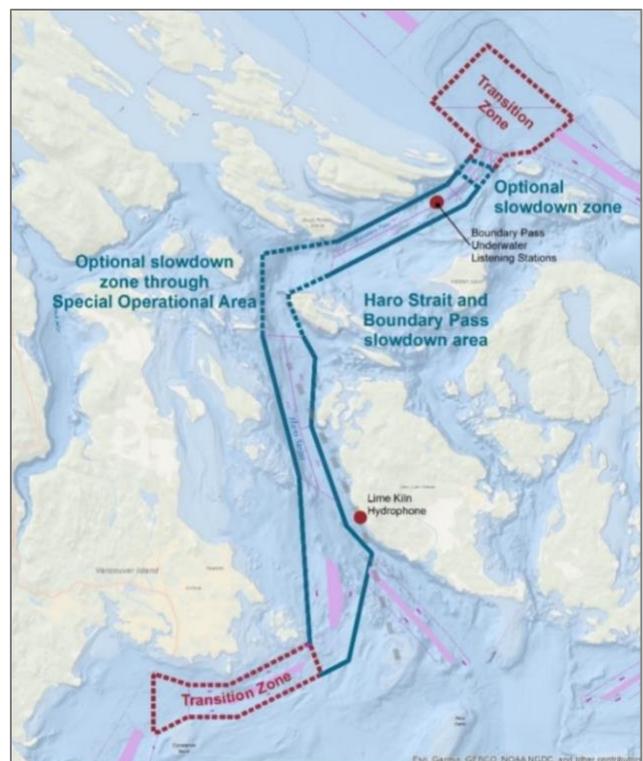
There are two optional slowdown zones where vessel operators should participate only if it is navigationally safe to do so. There are also transition zones where vessel operators are encouraged to slow down to the appropriate speed prior to entering the slowdown zone.

#### When: Approx. June 1 – November 30

The slowdown could begin as early as June 1, and run for as long as November 30, dependent on SRKW presence.

Start and end dates will be communicated through a Navigational Warning issued by the Canadian Coast Guard, as well as through the Pacific Pilotage Authority, BC Coast Pilots, shipping associations and agents, and the ECHO Program website and newsletter.

- **Earliest slowdown start date:** June 1, 2021  
Start date will be determined once SRKW presence is confirmed through hydrophone data and trusted observers.
- **Latest slowdown end date:** November 30, 2021  
Slowdown period will run until at least October 31, with two-week extensions to no later than November 30 if whale presence is confirmed in the area.



For a full size map of the slowdown area, [click here](#).

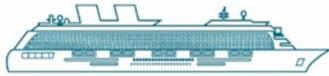
### Speed:

The speed through water target for bulkers, tankers, ferries, and government vessels has been lowered to 11 knots, a half knot less than in 2020. The speed through water target for vehicle carriers, cruise, and container vessels remains at 14.5 knots the same as 2020.

When it is safe and operationally feasible, vessels are encouraged to transit the slowdown area at or below the following speeds through the water:

### 14.5 knots

speed through the water **or less**  
for vehicle carriers, cruise and container vessels



### 11 knots

speed through the water **or less**  
for bulkers, tankers, ferries and government vessels



### Estimated transit time impacts:

Transiting Haro Strait and Boundary Pass at these reduced speeds could add between **16 and 41** minutes to the total transit time, depending on the vessel type.

Vessel type	Expected transit time (in minutes)
Bulker	29 minutes
Car carrier	16 minutes
Container	28 minutes
Cruise	41 minutes
Tanker	34 minutes

\* Includes time in transition zones

### Participation goal: 90%

In order to reduce underwater noise levels as much as possible in 2021, the ECHO Program is again seeking high levels of support with a participation goal of 90%.

Participation rates by sector will be reported regularly throughout the slowdown period in the ECHO Program newsletter.

### Monitoring and reporting:

The ECHO Program will monitor underwater noise levels before and during the slowdown period using underwater listening devices located in Haro Strait and Boundary Pass. SRKW presence will be monitored and recorded by hydrophones and human observers.

Participation rates will be provided through the bi-weekly ECHO Program newsletter. At the end of the slowdown period, the ECHO Program team will conduct an analysis to evaluate its effectiveness and results will be published on our website.

### For more information

- Learn more about the ECHO Program's initiatives: [www.portvancouver.com/echo/projects](http://www.portvancouver.com/echo/projects)
- Learn more about the ECHO Program: [www.portvancouver.com/echo](http://www.portvancouver.com/echo)
- Sign up for our newsletter [here](#)
- Questions? Contact us at [echo@portvancouver.com](mailto:echo@portvancouver.com) or through the Vancouver Fraser Port Authority Operations Centre, which is available 24/7 at 604.665.9086