



Track the whales

Where are they and why are they there?

Orca Scientists,

The inland waters of Washington State are home to one of the most heavily studied and observed killer whales on the planet. Since 1976, scientists have been researching and recording the whales as they move around our waters going about their daily whale business. Now, just like real scientists, we can too.

In association with the Orca Network, you too can chart, record and hypothesize just like everyday researchers. Monitor the whales each day and see what kind of theories you can come up with about the whales and their use of habitat.

Supplies:

Paper and Pencil
Map or chart of the regions inland waters
Bulletin board to display the map on
Colored push pins or post it notes
Access to the internet or a teacher's email account

Preparation:

Join the Orca Network's sighting network at www.orcanetwork.org

Hands on:

Hang your map/chart and have the students help you to create a key for it. Assign a different color for each pod, *Blue for J Pod, Red for K-pod, Yellow for L-pod*, etc... Perhaps assign other colors for different species, as the network often gets reports of whales other than orcas.

Each day check to see if you have received an email from the Orca Network describing a recent sighting. Make note of the location, time and any identifying details of the whales that were sighted. Mark that position on map.

Begin to notice the habitat use of the orcas and the distances they travel. Have student theorize what may be drawing the orcas to each location. What does it mean the frequency of sightings or lack there of?

Have them speculate where the orcas might be seen next.

Additional:

Record the specific behaviors listed in the emails.

- make note of what they are doing, as well as where they are doing it.

Make graphs of sightings for certain areas

Create and write out stories about the daily life of the whales

(It is possible for this activity to go on for the whole year. Early fall and spring there are many orca reports and grey whales show up around April. Be patient you may go sometime without a report)



Killer Whale Tales

www.killerwhaletales.org

Killer Whale Tales is a (501)(c)(3) environmental education program dedicated to promoting the understanding and active stewardship of the Puget Sound killer whales and their habitat by students through experiential science activities and storytelling. By using a unique approach—bringing the field directly to the classroom—the program fosters informed decision making as students explore their relationship and responsibility to the world and the whales around them.

This last school year (2003-2004) Killer Whale Tales reached over 1200 elementary school students throughout the region, raising their Orca awareness by an average of 60%. To bring our program to your school please call our office at 206-660-0835.

Or visit our website at www.killerwhaletales.org

Killer Whale Tales is a 501 (c) 3 non profit organization and requires your help to reach students throughout the state. To make a contribution please contact us at:

Killer Whale Tales, P.O. Box 2462, Vashon, WA 98070

donations@killerwhaletales.org

Phone 206-660-0835.

Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent the law allows.