

**REGULATIONS**

Canadian laws for watching marine wildlife

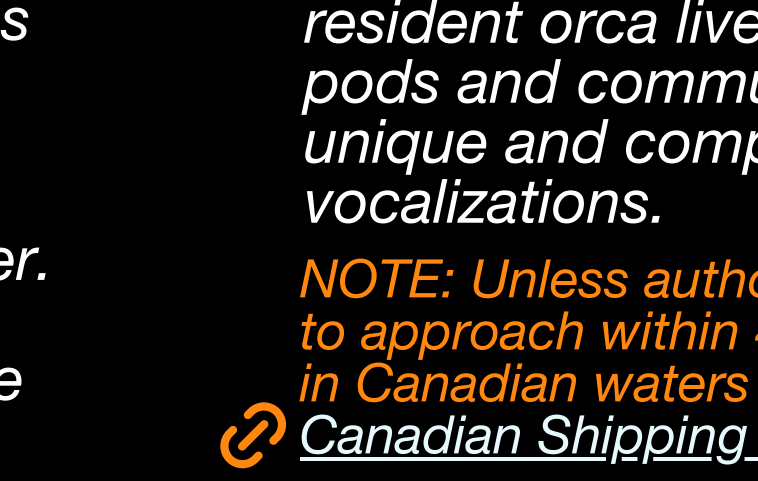
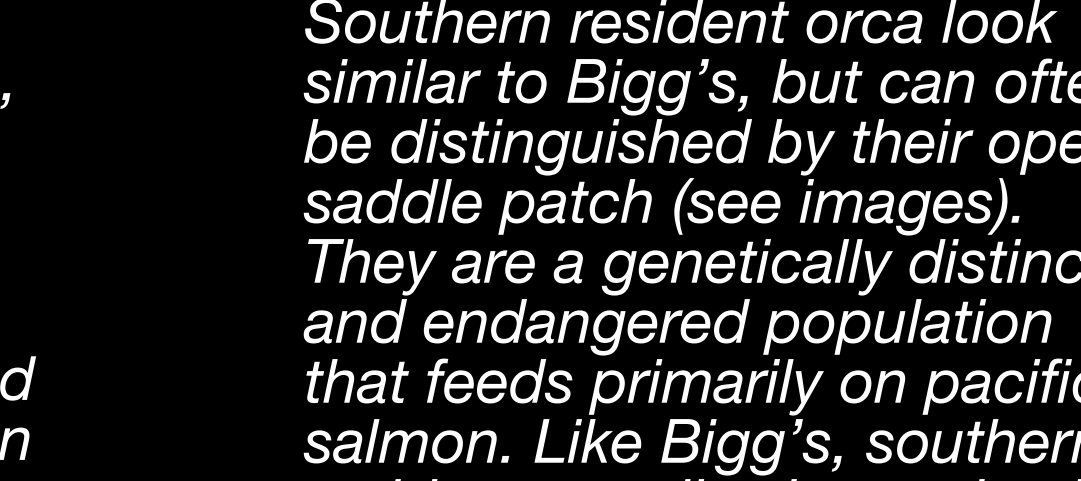
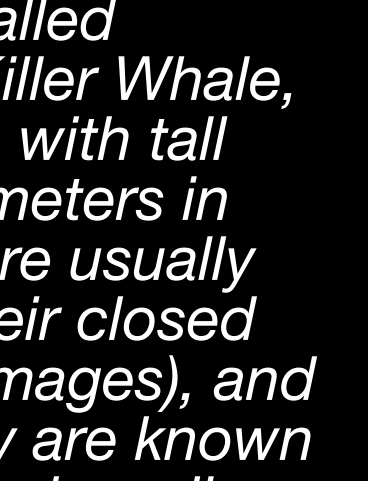
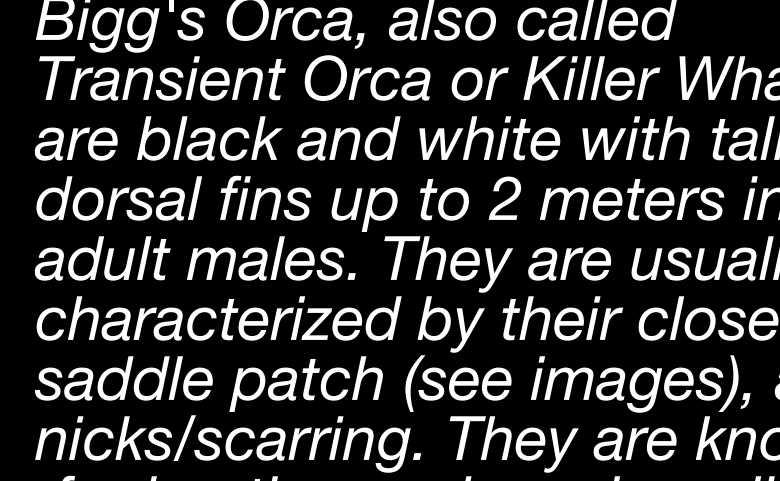
**REPORTING**

Report a marine mammal in distress (DFO): 1-800-465-4336 Email

Report a whale sighting (Whale Report Alert System)

iNaturalist

**ODONTOCETES**



**Bigg's Orca**  
(*Spp. Orcinus orca*)

**Southern Resident Orca**  
(*Spp. Orcinus orca*)

ENDANGERED POPULATION

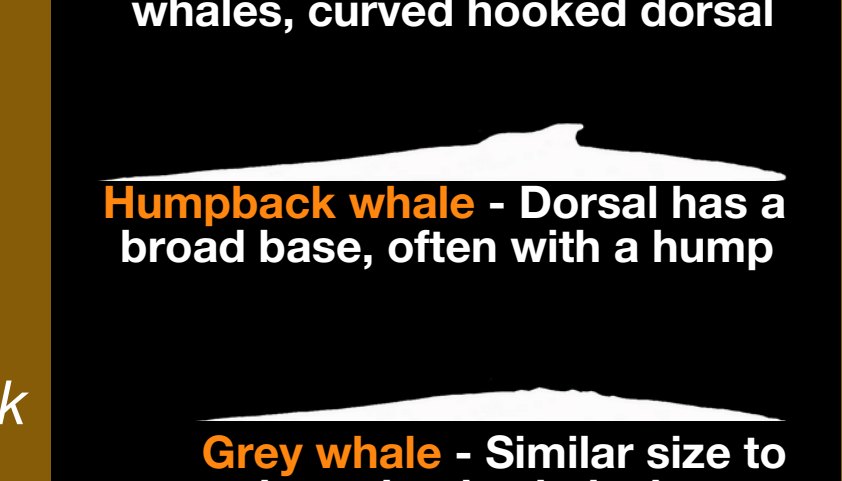
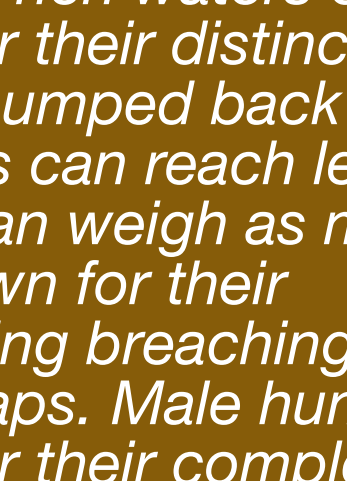
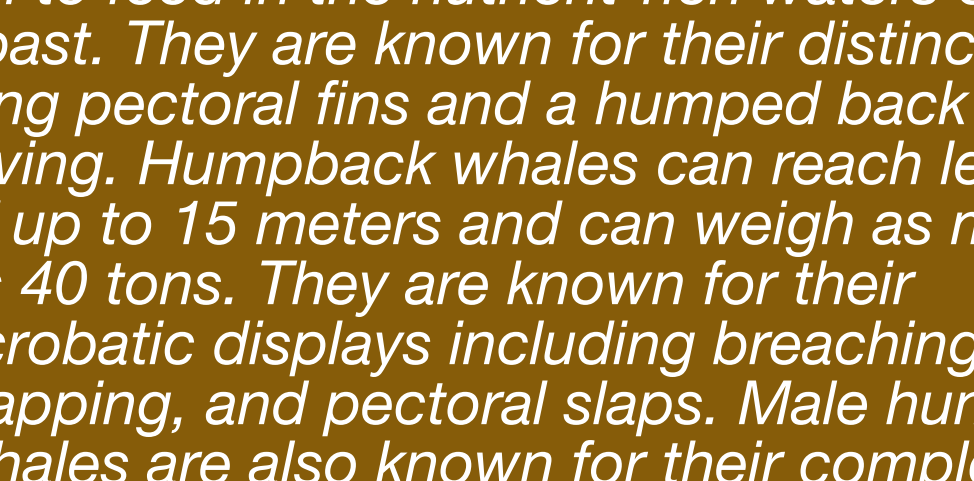
Bigg's orca photo ID catalogue

**Species profile**  
Bigg's Orca, also called Transient Orca or Killer Whale, are black and white with tall dorsal fins up to 2 meters in adult males. They are usually characterized by their closed saddle patch (see images), and nicks/scarring. They are known for hunting seals and sea lions by coordinating with their matriarchal family pods, and their complex vocalizations to communicate with one another. As apex predators, they are essential to the balance of the marine ecosystem.

**Species profile**  
Southern resident orca look similar to Bigg's, but can often be distinguished by their open saddle patch (see images). They are a genetically distinct and endangered population that feeds primarily on pacific salmon. Like Bigg's, southern resident orca live in matriarchal pods and communicate using unique and complex vocalizations.

NOTE: Unless authorized, it is illegal to approach within 400m of an orca in Canadian waters as per the Canadian Shipping Act.

**MYSTICETES**



**Humpback Whale** (*Spp. Megoptera novaeangliae*)

Humpback whale photo ID catalogue

**Species profile**  
Humpback whales migrate from the tropics to the Salish Sea every spring, summer, and fall to feed in the nutrient-rich waters off our coast. They are known for their distinctive long pectoral fins and a humped back when diving. Humpback whales can reach lengths of up to 15 meters and can weigh as much as 40 tons. They are known for their acrobatic displays including breaching, tail slapping, and pectoral slaps. Male humpback whales are also known for their complex songs, which evolve from season to season and are thought to be related to mating. Despite being hunted almost to extinction in the past, humpback whales have made a significant recovery and are now considered a conservation success story.

**Similar Species Dorsal Comparison**

**Minke whale** - small compared to other baleen whales, curved hooked dorsal

**Humpback whale** - Dorsal has a broad base, often with a hump

**Grey whale** - Similar size to humpback whale, but no obvious dorsal fin

**Fin whale** - Very large baleen whale, curved/hooked dorsal

**PINNIPEDS**



No bump

External ear flap



Bump on head (males)

**Steller Sea Lion**  
(*Spp. Eumetopias jubatus*)

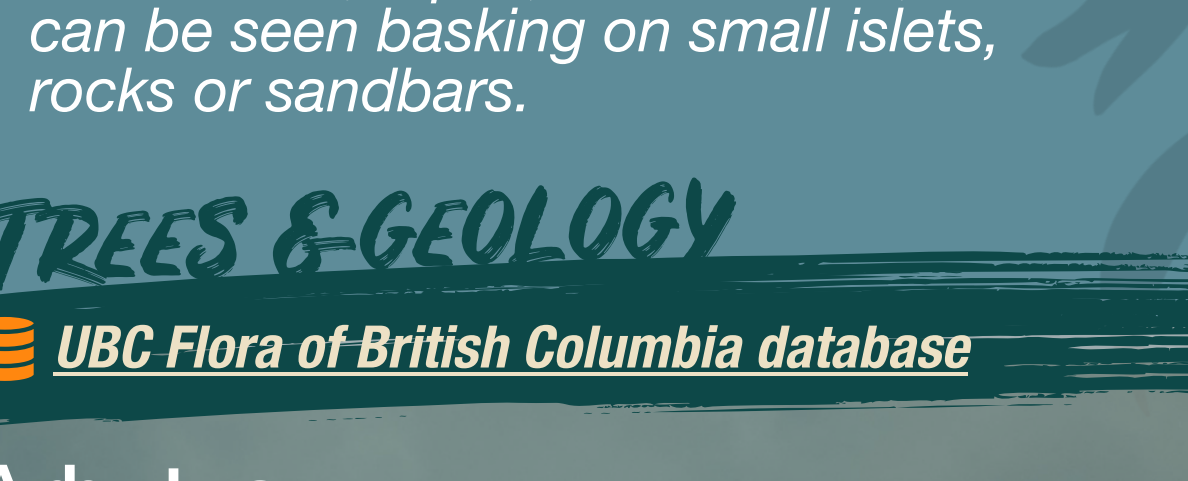
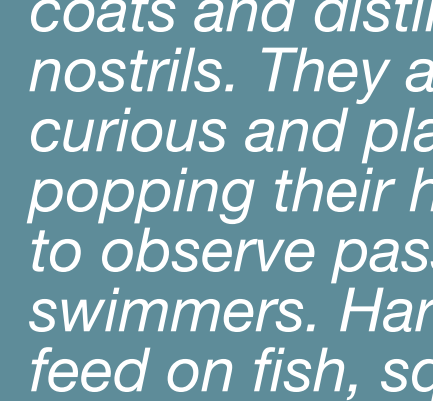
**California Sea Lion**  
(*Spp. Zalophus Californianus*)

**Species Profile**  
Steller sea lions are the largest sea lion species in the world and can weigh up to 1000 kg. Steller sea lions are highly social animals and can be observed in large groups, often lounging on rocky shores, swimming in the water, and vocalizing their distinctive roars. They feed on a variety of fish and squid, and their diet can vary depending on the season and location.

**Species profile**  
California sea lions are smaller than Steller sea lions and have a sleeker, more streamlined appearance. They have a distinctive vocalization that sounds a lot like a dog bark, and are often seen hauled out on rocks amongst seller sea lions and harbour seals. California sea lions feed primarily on fish and squid and can be found in both coastal and offshore waters.



V-shaped nostrils



**Harbour Seal**  
(*Spp. Phoca vitulina*)

**Species profile**  
Harbour seals can be identified by their sleek, grey or brownish-grey coats and distinctive "V"-shaped nostrils. They are known for their curious and playful nature, often popping their heads out of the water to observe passing boats or swimmers. Harbour seals primarily feed on fish, squid, and shellfish, and can be seen on small islets, rocks or sandbars.

**SEAWEED**

**Rockweed**  
(*Spp. Fucus distichus*)

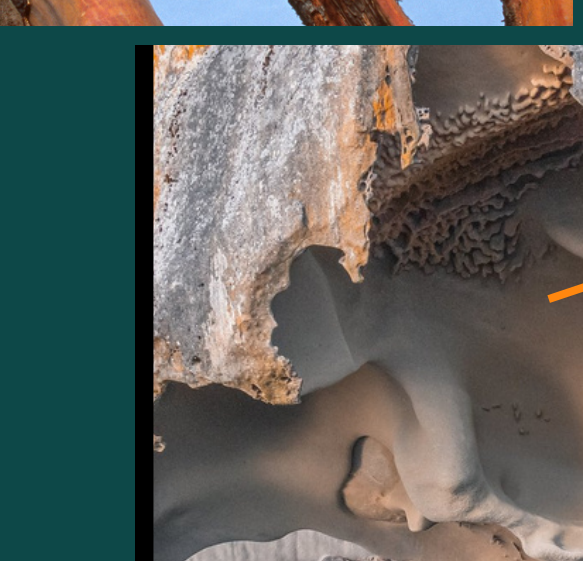
**Bull Kelp**  
(*Spp. Nereocystis luetkeana*)



**TREES & GEOLOGY**

UBC Flora of British Columbia database

**Arbutus**  
(*Spp. Arbutus menziesii*)



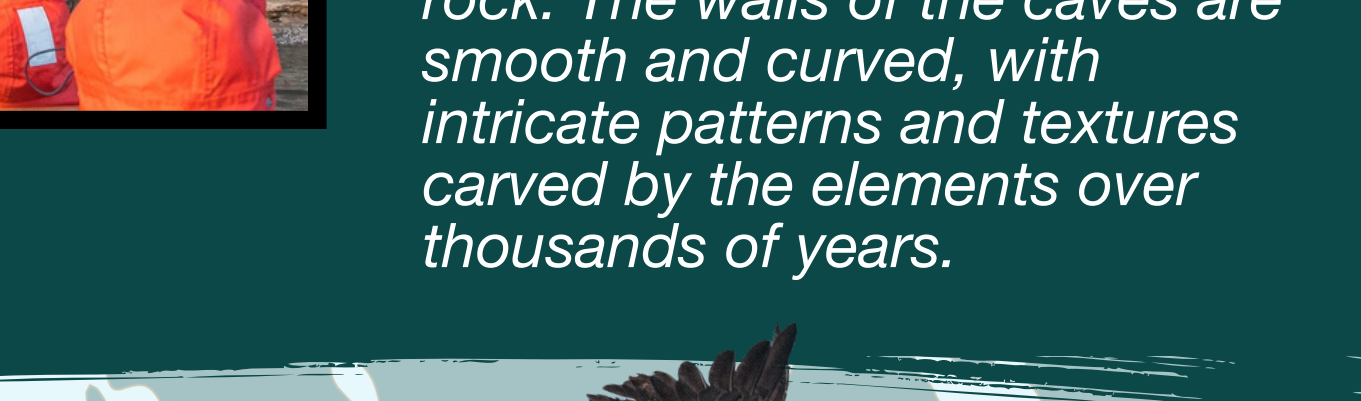
Orange trunk

Peeling bark



Needles  
Seed cone with 3-pointed bracts  
**Douglas Fir**  
(*Spp. Pseudotsuga menziesii*)

**Species profile**



Scales (no needles)  
**Western Redcedar**  
(*Spp. Thuja plicata*)

**Species profile**



**Sandstone Caves**  
(Found in the intertidal zone)

Sandstone caves are a unique geological feature found in the Gulf Islands of the Salish Sea. These caves are the erosive power of tides, waves and wind on the soft sandstone rock. The walls of the caves are smooth and curved, with intricate patterns and textures carved by the elements over thousands of years.

**BIRDS**

Cornell E-Bird database

**Bald Eagle**  
(*Spp. Haliaeetus leucocephalus*)

**Species profile**  
The iconic bald eagle is a large and majestic bird of prey that can be seen soaring over the Salish Sea, hunting for fish and marine birds. It is also a conservation success story, recovering from near extinction in North America to more than 300,000 individuals today.



**Great Blue Heron**  
(*Spp. Ardea herodias*)

**Species profile**



**Cormorants**

There are three species of cormorants in the Salish Sea: Double-Crested (below) are the largest and have a yellow bill. Pelagic (right) are the smallest and have a dark bill. Brandt's (not pictured) have a dark bill and a characteristic tan cheek patch. Cormorants are diving birds that feed on fish. Their feathers are not waterproof, so they frequently perch on rocks or cliffs with their wings outstretched to dry them, as pictured below.

**Pelagic Cormorant**  
(*Spp. Phalacrocorax auritus*)

**Species profile**  
Dark bill



**Double-Crested Cormorant**  
(*Spp. Phalacrocorax auritus*)

**Species profile**  
Yellow bill

**Pigeon Guillemot**  
(*Spp. Cepphus columba*)

**Species profile**  
Red feet

