



Killer Whale Research and Conservation

NFWF CONTACTS

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ABOUT NFWF

Chartered by Congress in 1984, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) protects and restores the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats. Working with federal, corporate and individual partners, NFWF has funded more than 5,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$6.1 billion.

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Three orcas in Puget Sound

BACKGROUND

Killer whales are a defining feature of the ecological and cultural fabric of Pacific Northwest communities. The Southern Resident population of killer whales in the Salish Sea are the only known resident population in the United States. This population declined sharply in the early 1970s, and actions were taken to protect critical habitat and reduce threats. Unfortunately, even with more than two decades of increased protection, the population stands at less than 80 individuals and does not show signs of recovery. Coordinated efforts are needed to understand why the population continues to decline and how strategic investments can aid recovery.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Killer Whale Research and Conservation Program was established in 2015 to support efforts to advance understanding and conservation of killer whales. The primary focus of the program is on activities that aid in the recovery of the Southern Resident killer whale population in the Pacific Northwest. Focused support is provided for three priority strategies:

- Increase prey availability through restoration of important salmon runs
- Improve water quality and reduce disturbance in critical habitat
- Fill critical research gaps in health, demographics and stressors

RESULTS TO DATE

In the first six years, the program has awarded 38 grants totaling \$4.4 million, drawing an additional \$8.4 million in grantee match for a total conservation investment of more than \$12.8 million. These awards have fostered collaborative efforts in all three strategies partnering science with management action and restoration activities. NFWF has taken a comprehensive food-web approach to recovering this apex predator and works with state and transboundary management to implement recovery actions.

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