



# Killer Whale Conservation Program

## NFWF CONTACTS

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## FUNDING PARTNERS

- BNSF Railway
- SeaWorld Entertainment
- U.S. Navy
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

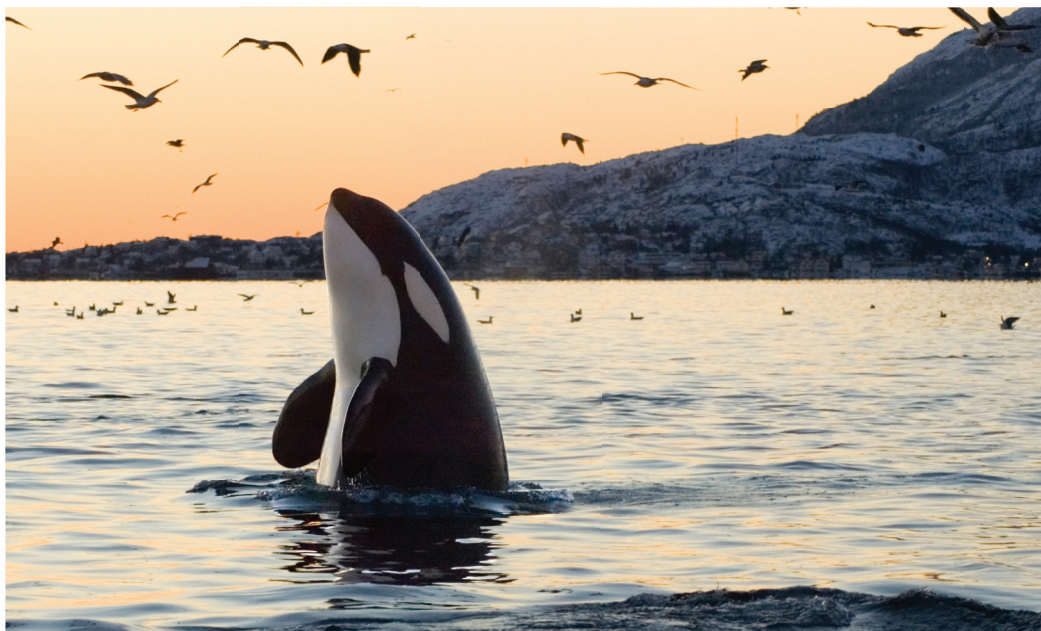
## ABOUT NFWF

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 6,000 organizations and generated a total conservation impact of \$8.1 billion.

Learn more at [www.nfwf.org](http://www.nfwf.org)

## NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

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Killer whale

## OVERVIEW

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 even with more than two decades of increased protection, the population stands at less than 80 individuals and has shown few signs of recovery.

The Killer Whale Conservation Program was established in 2015 to support efforts to advance understanding and conservation of the Southern Resident killer whale population in the Pacific Northwest. This objective is supported by increasing prey availability through restoring salmon runs, improving water quality and reducing disturbance in their habitat, and filling critical research gaps in the health, demographics and stressors of this population.

In 2024, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), BNSF Railway, SeaWorld Entertainment, the U.S. Navy, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration announced 10 new grant awards totaling more than \$1.8 million. The 10 awards announced will generate more than \$1.7 million in matching contributions from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of more than \$3.5 million.

NFWF takes a full life-cycle approach to increasing the Southern Resident population's priority prey, Chinook salmon, by restoring key freshwater and nearshore habitats for juvenile and adult salmon and the forage fish that they rely on for food. This year's slate will not only support longer-term habitat restoration projects both big and small, but also mid-term strategies to reduce disturbances from small and large vessels to increase hunting success.

*(continued)*



Killer whale in Washington

**2023 GRANTS**

The following 10 projects seek to restore and enhance critical Southern Resident killer whale habitat in the Pacific Northwest. Projects will monitor the health of individuals, expand outreach across the Northwest, implement various activities to improve prey availability of Chinook salmon and establish new information for management of this population.

**Clayton Beach Shoreline and Eelgrass Restoration (WA)**

Grantee: Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Foundation  
 Grant Amount: .....\$500,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$650,000  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$1,150,000  
 Restore nearshore and eelgrass habitat to support surf smelt, Pacific sand lance, and herring spawning and nearshore salmonid use on the border of Skagit and Whatcom counties. Project will remove 1,300 linear feet of rock armor and remnant pilings from the mid-intertidal zone and begin restoration of a 13-acre dredge hole to re-establish eelgrass habitat.

**Coordinate Citizen Stormwater Monitoring Around the Salish Sea (WA)**

Grantee: Friends of Skagit Beaches  
 Grant Amount: .....\$90,400  
 Matching Funds: .....\$97,200  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$187,600  
 Conduct community science-based stormwater outfall monitoring to define baseline pollution levels, identify stormwater issues for city action and educate communities on the impact of stormwater pollution to the declining Southern

Resident killer whale population. Project will continue stormwater monitoring and initiate planning and partnership development to identify opportunities for expansion to at least two more communities.

**Developing a Southern Resident Killer Whale Health Monitoring Database (WA)**

Grantee: Center for Whale Research  
 Grant Amount: .....\$73,300  
 Matching Funds: .....\$70,000  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$143,300  
 Develop a collaborative online database to collate and disseminate data on the past and current health of individual Southern Resident killer whales. Project will provide information to managers and researchers to better understand individual and population status, inform management actions and understand the causes of population decline.

**Engaging Communities in Riparian Habitat Restoration for Chinook Salmon in the Nooksack River (WA)**

Grantee: Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association  
 Grant Amount: .....\$175,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$152,900  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$327,900  
 Restore 10 acres of streamside habitat in the Nooksack River basin in Whatcom County by engaging volunteers and salmon recovery partners through the Stream Stewards Program. Project will implement riparian restoration projects with guidance from expert habitat restoration staff, installing more than 10,000 trees and improving more than 20 lowland streams and sections of the Nooksack River through 40 public events.

(continued)



Killer whales

**Increasing Recreational Boater Compliance and Awareness of Regulations in Killer Whale Habitat (WA)**

Grantee: Ocean Wise Conservation Association  
 Grant Amount: .....\$123,300  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$68,800  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$192,100

Increase the compliance of recreational boaters with regulations within Southern Resident killer whale critical habitat and encourage the submission of real-time sighting reports to reduce ship-strike risk. Project will install displays at marinas describing vessel regulations and how to report sightings, update marine mammal regulation maps in WhaleReport smartphone application and analyze the effectiveness of the project to optimize future outreach efforts.

**Laying the Groundwork for New Voluntary Mariner Initiatives for Commercial Shipping (WA)**

Grantee: Washington Maritime Blue  
 Grant Amount: .....\$102,500  
 Matching Funds: .....\$250,000  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$352,500

Fill key data gaps and build stakeholder consensus for a second voluntary vessel slowdown location in Southern Resident killer whale critical habitat. Project will improve habitat quality by reducing noise pollution and vessel strike risk through stakeholder engagement, a vessel traffic study, an analysis of killer whale presence data and develop recommendations to the advisory committee.

**Protecting Puget Sound Chinook Salmon from Pinniped Predation (WA)**

Grantee: Oceans Initiative  
 Grant Amount: .....\$350,000  
 Matching Funds: .....\$200,000  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$550,000

Continue testing a pinniped predation reduction strategy to protect Deschutes River and Hood Canal Chinook salmon. Project will mitigate pinniped predation of juvenile salmon with sound startle devices at migration bottlenecks, which will increase the long-term abundance of this preferred prey species of the endangered Southern Resident killer whales.

**Restoring Spring Chinook Salmon Habitat in Snoquera – Lower Greenwater Designs (WA)**

Grantee: Trout Unlimited  
 Grant Amount: .....\$194,700  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$50,000  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$244,700

Prepare for restoration of 2 miles of instream and floodplain habitats to benefit Chinook salmon in the Greenwater River, a high-priority tributary of the Upper White/Puyallup River watershed. Project will finalize engineered design plans to 100 percent and secure agency permits for the first phase of implementation.

**Southern Resident Killer Whale Recovery through Priority Prey Habitat Restoration (WA)**

Grantee: Friends of the San Juans  
 Grant Amount: .....\$129,000  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$91,400  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$220,400

Protect and improve eelgrass habitat quality for spawning Pacific herring and out-migrating juvenile Chinook salmon to support the food chain that Southern Resident killer whales depend on. Project will work in priority eelgrass areas to remove derelict structures, relocate and upgrade mooring buoys to prevent scouring, and educate boaters to avoid anchoring in eelgrass meadows.

**Training and Evaluation of Techniques for Deterring Southern Resident Killer Whales from Oil Spills (WA)**

Grantee: Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife  
 Grant Amount: ..... \$89,300  
 Matching Funds: ..... \$95,600  
 Total Project Amount: .....\$184,900

Train responders on the protocols for whale deterrence through land-based coordination and vessel-based operations to protect Southern Resident killer whales from oil spill contamination in the Salish Sea. Project will prepare and inform more than 50 experts to implement the use of oikomi pipes swiftly and effectively in the event of an oil spill event as part of the Hazing Implementation Plan.