

Follow That Whale!



Introduction

Granny and her clan are always on the move. Each day, these orcas travel 75 to 100 miles through the Salish Sea searching for food. We see the orcas as they surface to breathe, chase a school of salmon, leap from the water to play or float quietly as they rest. But the orcas only spend about 5% of their time at the surface. The other 95% of the time, they are underwater and out of our view.

One way to protect these endangered orcas is to track their movements and learn more about how they live their lives and find food. Throughout the Salish Sea region, people help orca scientists who track Granny's clan by watching for orcas. People on whale-watching boats, ferries, freighters, Coast Guard ships and fishing boats as well as people on shore are always on the lookout for orcas. Whenever they see orcas, people can contact a special sightings network to report their orca observations. With hundreds of people watching for orcas and gathering information about their movements, scientists have learned much more about where orcas travel and how they use their habitat. Another tool that helps scientists locate the orcas is a network of underwater hydrophones that turn on whenever the orcas pass by.

Key Concepts

- ◆ Granny's clan travels 75-100 miles per day through their home range to search for food.
- ◆ People on boats and along the coast of the Salish Sea watch for orcas and report their sightings to scientists.
- ◆ Scientists use information from these sightings to learn about orca travel patterns and habitat use.

National Science Education Standards

Science as Inquiry – Ability to Do Scientific Inquiry, Understanding About Scientific Inquiry (K-4)

Life Science – Characteristics of Organisms, Organisms and their Environments (K-4)

Characteristics and Changes in Populations (K-4)

**National Council for Teachers of English/
International Reading Association Standards:**

4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
12. Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.

Inquiry Questions

- ◆ Why do scientists want to track the movements of the orcas of Granny's clan?
- ◆ Why do orcas travel so far each day?
- ◆ What can we learn from tracking orca travel movements?
- ◆ How do the orcas stay together and find their way while traveling?
- ◆ Why do humans travel? How do we stay together? How do we find our way?
- ◆ Where do you have breakfast, lunch and dinner? Where do you sleep? Go to school? Play?
- ◆ How is human and orca travel similar? Different?
- ◆ Why is it important for the US and Canada to work together to protect the orcas and their habitat?

Follow That Whale! (Continued pg 2)

Activity #1-Track a Pod

In this activity, students learn how scientists track an orca pod and follow their activities.

Procedure: Take a virtual trip to the Salish Sea to learn how scientists follow the orca whales.

1. Join a team of scientists as they track the orcas: <http://www.whaleresearch.com/encounters.html>
2. Read about recent orca sightings: <http://www.orcanetwork.org/sightings/map.html#recent>
3. Learn how to report an orca sighting: <http://www.orcanetwork.org/sightings/reportpage.html>
4. Listen to orca calls from hydrophones as the orcas pass by: <http://www.orcasound.net/>
5. Follow blogs that track orca activities: <http://whale-of-a-porpoise.blogspot.com/search?q>

Activity #2 -Wish You Were Here

In this activity, students design a postcard and stamp and write messages about taking a trip to see the orcas of Granny's clan.

Materials Needed: blank index cards, colored pencils and markers, glue, drawing paper

Procedure:

1. Students imagine that they are taking a boat trip to watch orcas and track their movements.
2. Each student designs a postcard and stamp using Wish You Were Here worksheet.
3. On the postcard, students write messages to their families or friends describing what it's like to spend a day watching and tracking the orcas of Granny's clan. What was their day like? What did they see? What did the orcas do? How far did they travel?
4. Create a design for the stamp. Include country name (USA) and give it a value. (e.g., \$.44 or 44 fish)
5. Address the postcard to a friend or relative and glue on stamp.

Activity #3 -Design an Orca Passport

In this activity, students design a passport for an orca in Granny's clan. Because the orcas travel back and forth through US and Canadian waters, they are protected in both countries. Using the **Orca Passport** worksheet, students design an **Orca Passport**.

Granny's Clan: A Tale of Wild Orcas
Dr. Sally Hodson

WISH YOU WERE HERE

DESIGN AN ORCA STAMP

Procedure:

Design a postcard and stamp about watching the orcas.
Write your message. Address postcard. Glue on stamp.



DESIGN AN ORCA POSTCARD

| <i>Message</i> | <i>Address</i> | <i>Stamp</i> |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| | <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> | |

Draw a picture about your whale-watching trip



ORCA PASSPORT

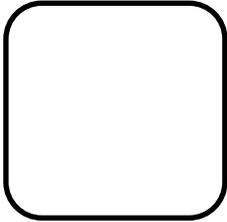
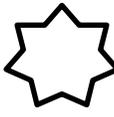
| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| Name | Date |
|-------------|-------------|

Materials Needed: drawing and construction paper, glue, stamps, crayons, markers, colored pencils

Procedure: Create an **Orca Passport** for one of the orcas in Granny's clan. Fold construction paper in half to make passport cover and decorate. Design passport stamps for US and Canada. Glue **Orca Passport** page to inside page.

SAMPLE

| | |
|----------------------|--------|
| US | Canada |
| ORCA PASSPORT | |
| Orca Name | _____ |
| Orca Pod | _____ |
| Orca Number | _____ |
| Weight | _____ |
| Length | _____ |
| Birth Year | _____ |
| Birth Place | _____ |
| Description | _____ |
| Reason for Visit | _____ |

| | |
|---|---|
|  | |
| Orca Dorsal fin & Saddle-patch ID | |
| _____ | |
|  |  |
| United States | Canada |