

## Major Investment Supports Wild Salmon Habitat, Endangered Orcas

VICTORIA, B.C. – One of British Columbia’s oldest marine tourism companies is making a significant donation supporting wild salmon habitat restoration as part of a multi-year, \$1 million commitment to orca conservation.

Prince of Whales Whale & Marine Wildlife Adventures is contributing \$25,000 to the Pacific Salmon Foundation, a charitable organization dedicated to conserving and restoring wild Pacific salmon populations. The donation is the first to come from an enhanced passenger levy, called a Conservation Fee, which is being dedicated to salmon enhancement projects and orca-based science programs.

“Chinook salmon are the primary source of food for the endangered southern resident orcas,” said Alan McGillivray, owner of Prince of Whales. “By restoring wild salmon populations, we are supporting the natural ecosystem and assisting the orca population.”

From its locations in Victoria, Vancouver and Telegraph Cove on northern Vancouver Island, Prince of Whales’ charges each passenger a \$5 conservation fee which is expected to generate \$1 million over the next five years, all of which will be used to enhance salmon habitat, orca research and marine conservation.

The \$25,000 donation to the Pacific Salmon Foundation will be directed to the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project, a research and restoration program focused on the Strait of Georgia. The project, which includes 60 partner organizations in Canada and the United States, is studying all facets of the ecosystem which could impact salmon health including habitat loss, climate change, fishing and predation. Recommendations for governments and communities are expected in 2020.

“Pacific salmon are a keystone species central to the health of B.C. ecosystems. They support more than 130 different species including southern resident orcas,” said Michael Meneer, president and CEO of the Pacific Salmon Foundation. “The Salish Sea Marine Survival Project is an ongoing effort to address all factors that could be limiting salmon, because salmon recovery means restoring our ecosystems as a whole. This investment will make a meaningful difference as we conduct targeted research and restoration projects and share our findings with governments, First Nations and communities.”

In the coming months, Prince of Whales expects to grant funding to other merit-based initiatives aimed at marine conservation and orca-based scientific research. Recently, Prince of Whales raised \$10,000 on World Oceans Day which will be divided equally between the Goldstream Volunteer Salmonid Enhancement Association and the South Vancouver Island Anglers Coalition Salmon Enhancement Program.

Prince of Whales is one of the oldest marine tour companies in British Columbia and is the industry leader when it comes to eco-tourism and environmental conservation, recently committing \$1 million over five years to orca-based science programs and chinook salmon recovery projects in British Columbia. The investment will come from a \$5-per-passenger ecological surcharge.

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