

News Release

Coastal Conservation Association

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CCA PROPOSES ALTERNATIVES TO NOAA TO PROTECT ESA-LISTED KILLER WHALES

NOAA proposal would impact recreational fishing and local economy

On January 15, Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) Washington formally submitted comments and alternatives to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) regarding proposed regulations to protect the ESA-listed resident killer whale population along the west side of San Juan Island.

Bryan Irwin, CCA Executive Director, said, "CCA Washington's alternatives propose a 7 knot Go-Slow-Zone in the San Juan Island waters described by NOAA, enforcement of the current Washington State 100 yard approach regulation, and improved monitoring and communication efforts with the public in the immediate vicinity." He went on to say that CCA Washington fully supports protecting the ESA-listed killer whale population, but that NOAA's proposal to arbitrarily prohibit recreational angling vessels was not supported by the science or data underlying the proposal. The proposal would have a serious detrimental impact on recreational fishing and on the local economy, without any demonstrably positive benefit for the local killer whale population. Specifically, CCA's alternative suggestions include:

- The seasonal half mile proposed No-Go Zone should instead be a seasonal half mile Go-Slow Zone where vessels would be restricted to a 7 knot speed limit in the area during the seasonal restriction.

- NOAA should rely upon the current 100-yard approach regulation which is consistent with the Revised Code of Washington 77.15.740 and US/Canada regional unified guidelines.

- CCA supports the need for a proposed restriction prohibiting vessels from parking within 400-yards in front of the whales' path.

- CCA supports increased efforts by NOAA to improve public awareness with educational efforts and outreach to the community.

- CCA believes NOAA needs to develop a proactive plan for implementation, effectiveness monitoring, and enforcement of rules, working jointly with WDFW

and San Juan County. Federal funding should be provided to the local and state agencies that will ultimately be responsible for enforcement, monitoring and education.

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About CCA: Coastal Conservation Association is a non-profit organization comprised of 200 chapters in 17 coastal states spanning the Gulf of Mexico, Atlantic and Pacific coasts. In 2007, CCA expanded into the Pacific Northwest and the organization has quickly grown to more than 9,000 members and continues to launch chapters in both Oregon and Washington. As the largest marine conservation organization in the country, CCA's strength is drawn from the tens of thousands of recreational anglers who make up its membership. Across the country, CCA's grassroots influence is felt through state capitals, U.S. Congress and, most importantly, in the conservation and restoration of our marine resources.