

# QUIET SOUND

## Admiralty Inlet 2023-24 voluntary ship slowdown

### A collaborative effort to reduce underwater noise for endangered whales

Admiralty Inlet and Puget Sound are critical habitat for the endangered southern resident killer whales (SRKW). During the fall and winter, these killer whales swim, rest and forage for salmon in these waters. Underwater noise is identified by Canada and the United States as one of the main threats to killer whales due to its interference with their ability to hunt, navigate, and communicate.

The [Quiet Sound program](#) was created with the goal of reducing the acoustic impacts of large commercial vessels on these endangered whales in Washington. In 2022, a coalition of federal, state, tribal, port, maritime industry, scientist, and NGO representatives developed the first [trial voluntary slowdown](#) in Admiralty Inlet and north Puget Sound. **By slowing down, large vessels reduce their underwater noise output. In 2022-23, 70% of vessel transits slowed down, leading to a 45% reduction in underwater noise intensity when whales were present.**

### Slowdown parameters for 2023-24

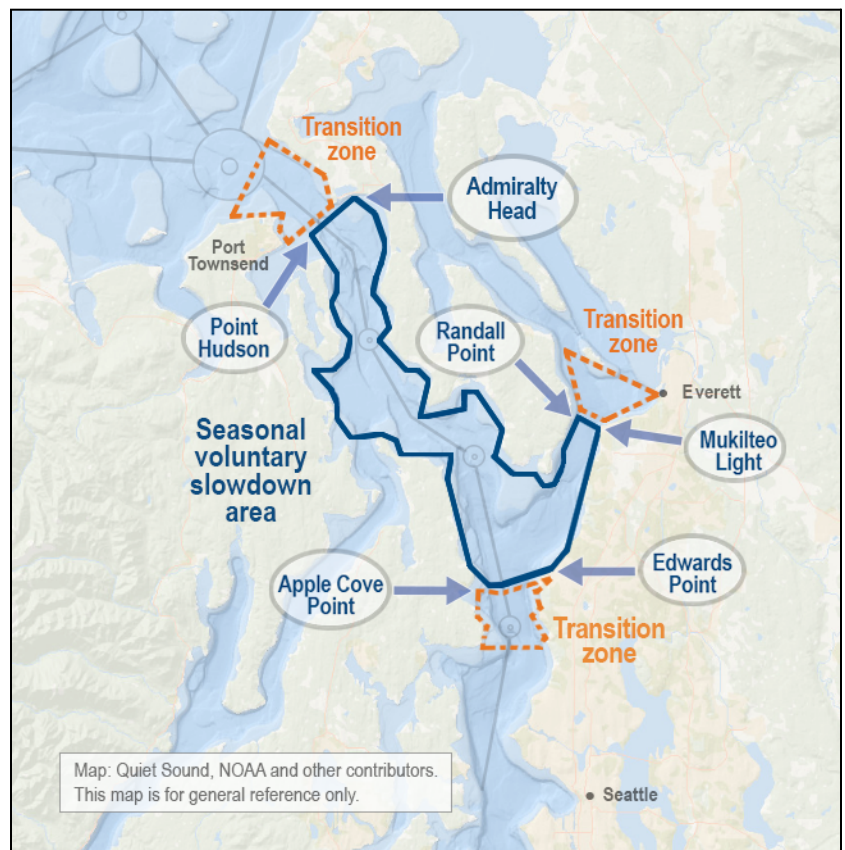
**Dates: As early as October 1, 2023-January 12, 2024**

The slowdown will begin when SRKW are detected south of Admiralty Head Light, at the earliest October 1. This slowdown has a fixed end date of January 12.

### Location: Admiralty Inlet and north Puget Sound

The voluntary vessel slowdown trial takes place in the inbound and outbound lanes of the shipping lanes within these boundaries:

Northwest boundary of the slowdown: a line drawn between Pt Hudson (48.117264, -122.748907) and Admiralty Head (48.154217, -122.679503)



Northeast boundary of the slowdown: a line drawn between Randall Pt (47.983237, -122.352871) and the Mukilteo Lighthouse (47.948181, -122.308043)

Southern boundary of the slowdown: a line drawn between Apple Cove Pt (47.815535, -122.480885) and Edwards Pt (47.803340, -122.394924)

The slowdown area excludes Hood Canal.

For a full-size map of the slowdown area [click here](#).

### **Speed Targets:**

When it is safe and feasible, ships are encouraged to transit the slowdown area at or below the following speeds through water:

**14.5 knots** - speed through water or less for **vehicle carriers, cruise ships, and container vessels**

**11.0 knots** - speed through water or less for **bulklers and tankers**

### **Turn off Ultrasonic Anti-Fouling Systems:**

In the slowdown area, please turn off ultrasonic anti-fouling systems on vessels to further reduce noise pollution in the frequencies that killer whales use to hunt and communicate.

### **Benefits to Participants**

Participating fleets are eligible for recognition certificates, which can be used for ESG and to meet a criterion in the Underwater Noise performance indicator for their [Green Marine](#) certification. Email [info@quietsound.org](mailto:info@quietsound.org) for more information on recognition certificates.

### **Watch for Whales**

Endangered whales can be found outside this slowdown area and in the area beyond the dates of the slowdown. Quiet Sound encourages mariners to sign up for the WhaleReport Alert System to receive text alerts when you are within 10 nm of a verified whale sighting. If you belong to a professional marine organization and are a pilot or member of the bridge crew of a ship, please contact the WRAS Project Manager at [WRAS@ocean.org](mailto:WRAS@ocean.org) to request access to the WhaleReport Alert System.

Quiet Sound gratefully acknowledges all the partners who are working to provide Washington mariners with real-time whale locations, including: [Ocean Wise](#), [Orca Network](#), [Acartia](#), [Conserve.io](#), and all the members of the public who report sightings.

### **Goals, monitoring and reporting:**

Our goals for this second season of the voluntary slowdown are:

- To improve the conservation benefit of voluntary changes to vessel operations over time with minimal impact to maritime trade
- To develop effective communications with mariners by improving our rates of communications throughout the slowdown season
- See a promising level of vessel participation rates
  - Measure 60% of transits by the targeted vessels participating in the slowdown as seen in AIS
  - Measure 80% pilot-reported vessel participation
- Collect data on how noise reduction varies with participation rates

Quiet Sound will monitor multiple elements to determine the success of the trial slowdown:

- Underwater noise levels will be monitored during and after the slowdown period.
- Whale presence will be recorded and reported out to mariners in real time through the [WhaleReport Alert System](#).
- AIS data and pilot feedback will be used to track vessel participation.
- We will monitor rates of vessel overtaking to ensure there are no impacts to maritime safety and commercial vessels moving into tribal fishery areas.

During the slowdown, periodic newsletters will go out via email with updates on the program. After the slowdown ends, all of the data will be analyzed for a final report on the results of the trial slowdown area.

### How can the public help this initiative?

Members of the public can help commercial mariners avoid whales by reporting whale sightings through:

- Orca Network, [www.orcanetwork.org/report-sightings](http://www.orcanetwork.org/report-sightings)
- The WhaleReport app (available on Apple or Google devices)
- The Whale Alert app (available on Apple or Google devices)

### For more information:

- Learn more about Quiet Sound: [quietsound.org](http://quietsound.org)
- Learn more about the trial slowdown area: [quietsound.org/admiralty-inlet-slowdown](http://quietsound.org/admiralty-inlet-slowdown)
- Sign up for the Quiet Sound slowdown newsletter [here](#)
- If you belong to a professional marine organization and are a pilot or member of the bridge crew of a ship, please contact the WRAS Project Manager at [WRAS@ocean.org](mailto:WRAS@ocean.org) to request access to the WhaleReport Alert System.
- Questions? Contact us at [info@quietsound.org](mailto:info@quietsound.org). Pilots with questions about the slowdown can text or call Quiet Sound at (360) 218-2307 from 8 am to 5 pm.
- Learn more about concurrent slowdowns for whale protection in Canadian waters on the [ECHO](#) site

## Acknowledgements:

Quiet Sound recognizes the essential contributions of the [Leadership Committee and working groups](#) who provided input on the seasonal slowdowns. We also thank the [ECHO](#) program for their continued mentorship and partnership in operationalizing these programs. [Puget Sound Pilots](#) are playing a pivotal role in the on-water success of this effort. The [Marine Exchange of Puget Sound](#) is providing AIS data, and the Marine Exchange and [Pacific Merchant Shipping Association](#) have been key partners in communicating the slowdown to the maritime industry.

We thank all the tribal governments who considered our proposal to put forward this program for vessels traveling through their usual and accustomed fishing areas.

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Funding for the slowdown and whale reporting services is provided by the Washington State Legislature, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Northwest Seaport Alliance, Port of Seattle and Port of Tacoma. The Port of Seattle provided translation services and printing for informational handouts for mariners.