



A Program of Maritime Blue

# Quiet Sound Advisory Committee (ORCAs) Meeting Summary

Dec 19, 2025

Meeting notes v. 1/05/2026

## Action Items & Decisions

Action Items	Who
Coordinate offline regarding early-stage notification protocols for hydrophone deployment.	Gonzalo Banda-Cruz (Quiet Sound) & Margaret Moran-Dour (Navy)
Gather feedback from AWO members on candidate hydrophone site selection and waterway conditions.	Liam Morcroft, AWO
Follow up with Orca Behavior Institute regarding existing behavioral data near candidate sites.	Gonzalo/Jason Wood, SMRU
Update members on the reciprocal data-sharing agreement with Whale Alert.	Alex Mitchell, Ocean Wise
Circulate information and digital copies of the new "State of Our Watersheds" report.	Randy Lumper, NWIFC
Disseminate "Passenger-only Ferry Best Practices" via social media and email lists.	Stephanie Raymond, Orca Network

# Meeting Notes

## Welcome/Introductions

The meeting was facilitated by Rachel Aronson, who provided a land and water acknowledgement for the Duwamish Tribe. Candice Emmons of NOAA shared an "Orca Moment" regarding a new K-pod calf, **K47**, born to K36. This is the first surviving calf for K36 and a significant event for the pod. The meeting began with introductions and a short icebreaker activity.

## Visual Sightings Project Update

Gonzalo Banda-Cruz presented an update on the visual sightings project. He gave an overview of the procurement process for contracting a visual sightings network. The process resulted in the selection of Orca Network.

## Long-Term Hydrophone Project Update

Gonzalo Banda-Cruz also provided an update on the long-term hydrophone project. And Jason Wood provided an update on site selection:

- **Site Ranking:** SMRU analyzed candidate sites based on depth (target 20-30m), vessel traffic, and power proximity. **Point No Point** and **Fort Flagler** are the top candidates.

## Questions and Comments:

- **Q:** Are you considering the current? Some of these locations have strong currents.  
**A:** Yes, definitely. In addition to that being bad for stability of equipment, it also introduces sound.
- **Q:** What is the estimated cost of the system? **A:** Quiet Sound would like to raise \$400,000 to include equipment purchase, installation and a period of operation time.
- **Comment:** Point No Point - lighthouse was interested in community science projects, could be good for future collaborative projects.
- **Q:** Is proximity to ferry lanes a consideration, such as at Fort Flagler? **A:** Yes.
- **Comment:** Point No Point is a good location, given whales spend significant amounts of time there.
- **Comment:** Navy would like to be notified before hydrophones are deployed.
- **Q (Quiet Sound):** Should we look into streaming the hydrophone data publicly?

- **Comment:** There was strong support for streaming audio publicly to increase advocacy, with attendants noting the cost is negligible compared to the total build.
  - **Q:** What would the data look like to the general public? **A:** It could be short clips of sound. Also could be like the Whale Museum at Limekiln that is a YouTube channel with an audio stream. People could listen but not do real-time acoustic analyses.
- **Comment:** A previous hydrophone study found many systems were discontinued due to lack of long-term funding for maintenance and data analysis; Quiet Sound should consider a sustainable timeframe.
- **Comment:** AWO will reach out to members to see if they have feedback on waterway conditions and vessel operations for those potential sites.
- **Comment (NOAA):** The hydrophone presents the benefit of measuring Quiet Sound's slowdown, knowing how often SRKWs share waters with vessels.
- **Comment:** OBI and CWR have been collecting behavioral data while doing drone/hydrophone work both this and last November in Puget Sound. This has included observation time near most of the candidate hydrophones sites. If there's some insight there that would be of use in site assessment, OBI is happy to chat further about this offline.

## Project Updates: Admiralty Inlet Slowdown Discussion

Sara Adams provided an update on the Admiralty Inlet slowdown, which began on September 14, 2025 and remains in effect through January 11, 2026.

- The slowdown parameters remain the same as 24-25 season: 14.5 knots for car carriers, cruise ships, and containers; and 11 knots for general cargo, bulkers, and tankers. We have discontinued the speed target for tugs running lite.
- **Preliminary Participation:** 64% of transits met the speed reduction goals in the first 12 weeks.

## Questions and Comments:

- **Comment:** Pilots noted that heavy rainfall has caused currents to run significantly stronger than predicted, suggesting the use of the "Deep Zoom" website for better visualization of predicted currents.

## Project Updates: Passenger-only Ferry Best Practices

Sara Adams announced that the Best Practices document for passenger-only ferries is now finalized and published on the website.

**Legislative Engagement:** The team worked with state agencies to suggest language for the "Mosquito Fleet Bill" to ensure future ferry expansion considers SRKW safety.

## Member updates

- **Ocean Wise:** Alex Mitchell announced 2026 fundraising efforts to integrate whale alerts directly into mariner navigation software via AIS.
- **NWIFC:** Randy Lumper announced the release of the "State of Our Watersheds" report, which tracks habitat changes in Puget Sound.
- **GSRO:** Tara Galuska noted the Governor's budget is expected shortly and may include \$7 million for DFW enforcement.

## Attendees:

1. Adrienne Stutes, Washington State Ferries
2. Alex Mitchell, OceanWise
3. Alexis Morrigan, The Whale Museum
4. Andrea Doyle, AltaGas
5. Anthony Pinto, USCG
6. Candice Emmons, NOAA
7. David Bain, Orca Conservancy
8. Derek White, VFPA ECHO Program
9. Donna Spalding, CLIA
10. Gonzalo Banda-Cruz, Quiet Sound
11. Grace Ferrara, NOAA
12. Jackie Shaff, Marine Mammal Commission
13. Jason Wood, SMRU
14. Jostein Kalvøy, Puget Sound Pilots
15. Julie Watson, WDFW
16. Kathleen Hurley, Port of Seattle
17. Liam Morcroft, AWO
18. Maggie Dour, U.S. Navy
19. Marla Holt, NOAA
20. Meghan Reckmeyer, NWSA
21. Miguela Marzolf, Seattle Aquarium
22. Mike Moore, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association

23. Monika Wieland Shields, Orca Behavioral Institute
24. Peter Schrappen, AWO
25. Rachel Aronson, Quiet Sound
26. Randy Lumper, NWIFC
27. Sara Adams, Quiet Sound
28. Stephanie Raymond, Orca Network
29. Tara Galuska, GSRO
30. Terry Federer, King County Water Taxi