



# Orca Regulations Communications Advisory (ORCA) Group Meeting 1 Summary

Photo courtesy of NOAA

## Meeting Details

Date	Thursday April 18, 2024
Time	1:00 PM – 4:00 PM, PDT
Location	Zoom Webinar
Link to Agenda	<a href="#">Link to Agenda</a>

## Follow-up Action Items

- Ross Strategic and WDFW will coordinate on sharing draft FY24 communications materials with the ORCA Group for their overview.
- Ross Strategic and WDFW will coordinate with the ORCA Group Members on the small group on the Recreational Boater Workshops.
  - ORCA Group members will let Shelby Thomas know if they'd like to join the small working group.

## Summary of Meeting Topics and High-level Discussion Points

### Welcome, Introductions and Public Comment

Shelby Thomas (Ross Strategic) opened the meeting and welcomed the Orca Regulations Communications Advisory (ORCA) Group Members and the members of the public who registered to observe to the second meeting. ORCA Group Members each provided brief introductions and then Shelby invited the public observers to provide public comment. None of the members of the public present at the meeting elected to provide public comment.

### ORCA Group Purpose and Process

Shelby Thomas then provided an overview of the ORCA Group's revised process, going over the timeline and highlighting the desired outcomes for each of the upcoming ORCA Group Meetings. A timeline of the revised ORCA Group process and the desired outcomes for upcoming ORCA Group Meetings can be found on slides 10 and 11 of the Meeting Presentation.

### FY24 Communications Investment Priorities

Susan Hayman (Ross Strategic) then introduced Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Southern Resident Killer Whale- (SRKW) and vessel-related communications goals. In FY24, WDFW must ensure boaters are aware of current setback laws for SRKW (300 yards side-to-side and 400 yards front-to-back) as well as the 1,000-yard setback and speed regulations that will be implemented on January 1st, 2025. Discussion on the description of the FY24 Goals on slide 13 are as follows:

- ORCA Group members discussed the use of the general word ‘boater’, noting that the new regulations will not apply to all boaters or vessel operators.
- Multiple ORCA Group members thought the ‘How’ for compliance could be expanded to include all of the tools available to boaters to help comply, as well as potential different actions for complying with the regulations depending on the distance a boater is from a SRKW.
- One ORCA Group member raised enforcement of the new regulations as a topic that should be covered within WDFW’s communications goals for FY24, since they believe that a strong message on enforcement that is aligned with the U.S. Coast Guard would do the most for compliance.
- Connecting with Washington State Parks and Department of Licensing were identified as potential routes for furthering WDFW’s communications goals, like adding the new regulations to boater education cards.

After the discussion, Susan then provided an overview of a potential budget approach option that the ORCA Group could take for the FY24 and FY25 appropriations they are tasked with providing input to WDFW on: WDFW will spend \$110,000 in FY24, which is a combination of its base \$60,000 budget and \$50,000 allocated for ORCA Group engagement on its current FY24 plan. WDFW will reallocate \$50,000 of its base \$60,000 FY25 budget to the \$50k that will be directed by the ORCA Group, bringing the total FY25 amount for ORCA Group consideration to \$100,000 in communication investments. After a brief discussion, ORCA Group members agreed to this budget approach. Susan then facilitated a discussion of important target audiences that WDFW could reach out to with the FY24 communications allocation. The highlights of this discussion are as follows:

- An ORCA Group Member raised that it would be helpful for them to know how many members of the recreational boater target audience should be reached with the FY24 communications in order for the efforts to be meaningful.
- WDFW has some general goals for communications approaches that can be shared on an individual basis that they will identify and share with the ORCA Group Members.
- An ORCA Group Member shared a University of Washington site that tracks registered boats within the State of Washington, it is currently estimated that there are around 200,000 boaters within the State.
- Out of state boaters were identified as an additional target audience that would be good to reach out to.
- Boat clubs that have multiple individuals using the same boats for recreation were identified as a target audience that should be reached out to identify how many boaters belong to these clubs.
- Paddle craft boaters (e.g., kayaks and stand-up paddle boards) were identified as a target audience that might require additional messaging since they may not understand the new regulations apply to their craft and to all marine mammals.
- Multiple ORCA Group Members raised that the term ‘vessels’ needs to be specific to the type of vessel being messaged to since the regulations apply differently depending on the vessel type.

After this discussion, Aaron Provencio (WDFW) provided the ORCA Group with an overview of a funding table of identified target audiences and anticipated messages by medium, with anticipated costs based

on past communications outreach. After the overview, the ORCA Group discussed gaps in the table. Highlights of the discussion are as follows:

- ORCA Group members identified 48 Degrees, The Seattle Area Racing Calendar, and tide chart books as additional print mediums that would be worth advertising through to reach Salish Sea boaters.
- ORCA Group members highlighted Seattle Times' paywall as a barrier for potential boaters to view WDFW outreach through this venue and that the newspaper may not reach the intended audience.
- Digital advertisements through social media were elevated as productive engagement options by ORCA Group members that currently provide outreach to boaters for their associations. Outreach through Facebook, Instagram and YouTube were named by members as productive venues to reach boaters.
- Direct outreach by WDFW to yacht clubs and marinas was raised as an additional strategy for reaching boaters.
- Many ORCA Group members agreed that providing updated flyers and waterproof signs with the current and upcoming regulations at docks, fueling stations, on ferries, and any other location where past SRKW-viewing regulations were distributed should be a high priority communications action for providing the most current regulations with a consistent message to current and potential boaters.
- Production costs associated with developing new messages for the FY24 communications will not come out of the allocated funds that the ORCA Group is advising WDFW on.
- ORCA Group members suggested placing temporary buoys at 1,000-yards from marinas and docks to provide boaters with a visual cue for what an Orca would like at the forthcoming setback distance. (Note there could be permitting issues or Tribal issues with this practice that should be addressed beforehand.)
- Upcoming boat shows like the Anacortes Boat Show were identified as high-quality venues for reaching both in and out of state boaters.
- WDFW will share draft communications materials with the ORCA Group in advance of their distribution for their overview.

After this discussion, ORCA Group members agreed that WDFW should move forward with the proposed communications approach within funding proposal table in FY24.

### FY25 Communication Assessment Outcomes

Shelby Thomas then facilitated a discussion with the ORCA Group on initial communications information to consider for FY25, including WDFW's overarching communications goal of helping boaters comply with the SRKW 1,000-yard setback and speed regulations. The highlights of this discussion are as follows:

- ORCA Group members shared that it would be best to start communications to boaters on the new regulations and when they come into effect starting in summer 2024 to prepare them for the January 1, 2025 start date.
- Updating the information on the Be Whale Wise site and materials was identified as a high-priority action to prepare boaters of the new regulations.

- Holding boater outreach and education meetings in the fall 2024 were raised as potential avenues for informing boaters of the new regulations.
- Multiple ORCA Group members agreed that the SRKW's annual migration paths and locations, or "the whale year," should guide WDFW on where to start messaging the new regulations to boaters.
- Clear messaging for paddle-craft recreators like kayaks and stand-up paddleboards on how the new regulations impact them was raised as a key point for communications materials.

### Recreational Boater Workshops

Shelby then facilitated a discussion with the ORCA Group on considerations for pending Recreation Boater Workshops which have the goal of engaging with boaters on upcoming regulations and messaging in support of the ORCA Group. The highlights of this discussion are as follows:

- ORCA Group Members that represent boaters professionally or identify as a boater volunteered to be a part of small working group for advising WDFW and the Project Team on the Recreational Boater Workshops.
- Multiple ORCA Group Members shared that the Boater Workshops should be action oriented and should be used to verify or 'ground truth' draft messages and assumptions WDFW and the ORCA Group have made for the FY24 communications efforts.
- Multiple ORCA Group Members raised that the Boater Workshops should start with the reasoning behind the new regulations to provide boater with an overview for why they should comply with the new regulations.

**Meeting Attendees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
<b>Web Hutchins</b>	NA	---
<b>George Harris</b>	Northwest Marine Trade Association	<b>X</b>
<b>Erin Gless</b>	Pacific Whale Watch Association	<b>X</b>
<b>John Boyd</b>	Western Prince	<b>X</b>
<b>April Rebollo</b>	NA	<b>X</b>
<b>David Willis</b>	Recreation Boaters Association of Washington	---
<b>Donna Sandstrom</b>	The Whale Trail	<b>X</b>
<b>Justine Asohmbom</b>	Washington State Department of Ecology	<b>X</b>
<b>Chairman Thomas Wooten</b>	Samish Indian Nation	<b>X</b>
<b>Tisa Annette</b>	Puget Sound Orcas	<b>X</b>
<b>Stephanie Raymond</b>	Orca Network	<b>X</b>
<b>David Bain</b>	The Orca Conservancy	<b>X</b>
<b>Frances Robertson</b>	San Juan County	<b>X</b>
<b>Nate Pamplin</b>	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	<b>X</b>
<b>Julie Watson</b>	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	<b>X</b>
<b>Aaron Provencio</b>	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	<b>X</b>
<b>Ben Anderson</b>	Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife	<b>X</b>
<b>Shelby Thomas</b>	Ross Strategic	<b>X</b>
<b>Susan Hayman</b>	Ross Strategic	<b>X</b>
<b>Alec Ege</b>	Ross Strategic	<b>X</b>

April Rebollo  
 David Bain  
 Donna Sandstrom  
 Erin Gless

Frances Robertson  
 John Boyd  
 Justine Asohmbom  
 George Harris

Stephanie Raymond  
 Tisa Annette  
 Tom Wooten

**Project Team Members:**

Aaron Provencio, WDFW  
 Alec Ege, Ross Strategic  
 Ben Anderson, WDFW  
 Julie Watson, WDFW

Nate Pamplin, WDFW  
 Shelby Thomas, Ross  
 Strategic

Susan Hayman, Ross  
 Strategic

**Members of the Public:**

Samiksha Gulrajani  
 Tara Galuska