

# FACT SHEET



## *The Whale Warning Flag*

Only 75 endangered Southern Resident killer whales remain. The population faces numerous threats, but the three most pressing include lack of Chinook salmon, their primary prey, high toxin loads, and disturbance from boats. San Juan County and the Marine Resources Committee are working with partners to reduce the impacts of vessels through a combination of traditional outreach efforts and social marketing techniques to shift boater behavior and increase awareness of whales and best boating practices in the region. This has involved introducing the whale warning flag.

The flags were introduced in 2018 and their use continues to grow. The flags are now in use throughout the coastal waters of the Pacific Northwest by eco-tour companies, researchers, enforcement, charter cruises, and recreational boaters. We work with Soundwatch to track flag use and influence of the flag on boater behavior near whales. You can check out the more information about the flag and how to get one at [www.whaleflag.org](http://www.whaleflag.org)

### *What does the flag do?*

The Whale Warning flag is used by boaters and land stations to alert others that whales are in the vicinity. It is a cue (like a diver-down flag) that boaters must slow down, be prepared to change course and [Be Whale Wise](#).



**San Juan County**  
[www.sanjuanco.com](http://www.sanjuanco.com)

## ***Project Funding***

Funding for this effort was secured through grants from the Marine Mammal Commission, The Northwest Straits Foundation, The Marine Resources Committee, The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and San Juan County.

## ***Get your own flag***

Join the effort by becoming a whale steward and flying your own flag. To learn more about the project and how to get your own flag please visit [whaleflag.org](http://whaleflag.org)



### **Contact For More Information:**

Frances C. Robertson

San Juan County Environmental Stewardship

360-375-5271 | [francesr@sanjuanco.com](mailto:francesr@sanjuanco.com)



***San Juan County  
Marine Program***