

Quiet Sound (Sara Adams)

Quiet Sound's study of the overlap between vessel intensity and whale presence shows that tugs in Rosario Strait are likely to share the waters with Southern Resident killer whales between February-October, with a potential peak in March and April. We recommend that tug escorts and tank vessels be required to review real-time whale presence information in the Whale Report Alert System in the pre-escort conference. Tugs running lite on their way to/from escorting should use the Whale Report Alert System and understand that it is a best practice to avoid whales by steering away if they sight a fin or blow.

Further, acoustic analyses of the 2024-25 Admiralty Inlet slowdown showed that tugs transiting over 11 knots produce significantly more noise. As such, we recommend that tugs running lite transit below 10 knots when safe and feasible to do so. The 2024-25 slowdown report, which includes analyses of tug speed and contribution to the underwater soundscape in Admiralty Inlet, will be published in August, but is not final at the time of this comment.