

SB 5886-S.E - DIGEST

(AS OF SENATE 2ND READING 3/03/18)

Establishes the orca protection act.

Requires the department of fish and wildlife to: (1) In order to facilitate the enforcement of RCW 77.15.740, provide extra protection to newborn calves, and protect critical feeding areas, conduct patrols during the twenty-two most active weeks for southern resident killer whale viewing activity each year and prioritize Wednesday through Monday patrols when the activity is most active;

(2) In the event that orca whales are not present, place emphasis on patrols that protect living marine resources in northern Puget Sound;

(3) Coordinate with appropriate federal, tribal, county, and nongovernmental partners to identify research and management actions undertaken that relate to impacts from human-generated marine noise; and

(4) Identify relevant research findings and management actions undertaken and identify options and recommendations on potential actions the state can take.

Includes as a natural resource infraction, when a person causes: (1) An aircraft to approach within two hundred yards of a southern resident orca whale; or

(2) A vessel to exceed a speed over ground of seven knots within four hundred yards of a southern resident orca whale.

Requires the Salish Sea institute at Western Washington University to: (1) Convene a meeting to improve the coordination of recovery strategies for southern resident killer whales between Washington and British Columbia; and

(2) Establish timelines for recovery actions.

Increases the endangered wildlife special license plate fees and requires at least five dollars for each initial or renewal plate to be used for orca-related activities.