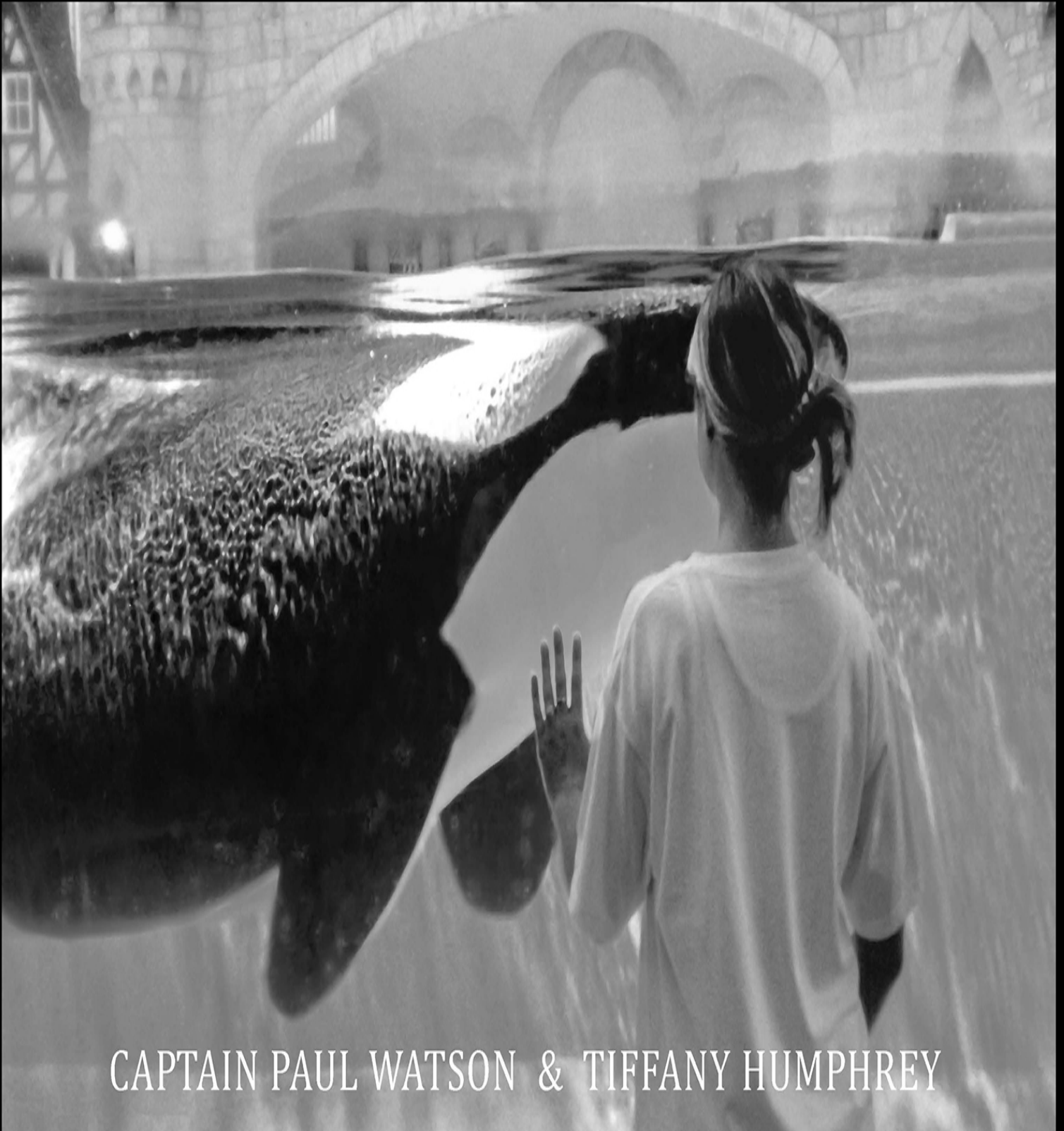


ORCAPEDIA

A guide to the victims of the International Orca Slave Trade



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INTRODUCTION

Marine mammals from the order cetacea include whales, dolphins, and porpoises. *Orcinus orca* are the largest members of the family Delphinidae although they are commonly referred to as killer whales. Other names used are Orca, blackfish, and grampus. Orcas are odontocetes, meaning they have teeth as opposed to baleen. Although they have a cosmopolitan distribution, their numbers are only around 50,000. Orcas are at the top of their trophic level and have no predators. Their diets range between ecotypes and can include fish, birds, cephalopods, elasmobranchs, and marine mammals such as other whales, porpoises, and sea otters. They eat on average 4% of their body weight each day.

Resident Orcas live in a matrilineal society in which sons remain with their mother (the matriarch) throughout their lives, while daughters may leave in order to form their own matriline. Several matrilines will come together to form a pod and spend time together.

Males can grow up to 32 feet in length and weigh up to 22,000 pounds, while females can grow up to 29 feet in length and weigh 16,000 pounds. Females are reproductive between the ages of 11 and 45 and have a gestation period between fifteen and eighteen months. Orcas are polygynandrous, both males and females having multiple mates throughout a breeding season and they do not interbreed within their own pod. Mating usually in the summer, but can occur during any season. Calves are born tail first between 7 – 8 feet long and weigh an average of 400 pounds. Females give birth around once every five years and will have around three to five calves in their lifetime (take note in Chapter 4 of when the females in captivity are forced to reproduce). Males become sexually mature between 12 - 15 years.

In the wild, females live on average 50 years while males live on average 30 years. The oldest recorded female Orca was J2 (Granny) from the Southern Resident community who was 105 years old when she passed away in the fall of 2016. The oldest recorded male, J1 or Ruffles, lived to

around 60 years old. Life spans in captivity are two and a half times shorter than their wild counterparts.

Sexual dimorphism is shown in the pectoral flippers, girths, tail flukes, and dorsal fins in the males, which can grow to six feet tall. The dorsal fin acts like a keel on a sailboat, stabilizing the whale. Orcas can be identified by their saddle patches, the light area behind the dorsal fin, which can be compared to a human fingerprint in that no two are alike.

Orcas use echolocation to locate their prey and their ears are well developed. This highly attuned sense of hearing does not bode well in a small concrete pool of captivity where reverberations from loud music, cheering crowds, construction work, and banging on glass view windows are constantly bombarding the animals.

Different pods have unique dialects, further differentiating Orca ecotypes. Calves are not born with a full set of repertoire sounds, rather they are learned from the adults. Take note in Chapter 4 where each whale originates from and which Orcas they are forced to live with in captivity.

The Southern Residents off the Northwest Pacific Coast of the United States can swim up to 100 miles a day in search of food and can reach speeds up to 32 mph. Take note in Chapter 4 of the pool tank dimensions captive Orcas are forced to live in.

Orca sightings are common along the coasts of the U.S. North Pacific, Argentina, Australia, Norway, east and west coasts of Canada, Antarctica, Galapagos, Europe, Bahamas, New Zealand, and Iceland. Although sightings are rare, one could see them while whale watching in Hawaii as well.

CHAPTER 1: The Beginning

Since the mid 1800's, marine mammals have been caught and imprisoned for entertainment. P.T Barnum displayed dolphins and belugas and in the late 1800's the Brighton Aquarium in England displayed harbor porpoises. By the 1870's whales and dolphins were being captured and sold to parks in the United States and Europe. Marine Studios opened in Florida in 1938 and housed bottlenose dolphins. Marineland of the Pacific opened in 1954 and closed in 1987 when SeaWorld San Diego purchased the park. Miami SeaAquarium opened its doors in 1955 and to this day continues to house an Orca, a lone female named Lolita. In 1946, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) was formed by fifteen whaling nations in order to regulate whaling and maintain whale stocks. Japanese whalers slaughtered 1,178 Orcas between 1954 and 1997 and the Norwegians killed an average of 57 Orcas per year between 1938 and 1980 (~2,394). In the 1950's, the US Navy regularly shot at Orcas for target practice.

A Browning machine gun was installed on a lookout point on the Campbell River, near the northeast side of Vancouver Island, B.C. after local fishing organizations met with the Department of Fisheries to find a solution to stop Orcas from eating *their* salmon. In the end, the Department of Fisheries determined it was too dan-gerous for passerbys and the gun was never fired.

In 1956, the US Navy was sent to destroy the entire population of Orcas in Iceland (see appendix for newspaper clipping). According to Guardians of the Whales by Obee and Ellis, "...one-quarter of the Orcas caught for aquariums in the 1960s and '70s bore bullet wounds."

The first Orca was captured in 1961. A lone female Orca was spotted near Newport Harbor off the southern tip of California on November 18, 1961. Frank Brocato from Marineland of the Pacific was in charge of collecting the whale for the park's marine mammal collection. Frank and his team captured the whale and drove her to Marineland in Palos Verdes where she was named Wanda. The next day Wanda began to strike the tank walls and convulse. On November 20, 1961 Wanda died after only 42 hours in captivity. In September of 1962, Frank Brocato travelled to Puget Sound, Washington in search of another Orca. His crew came across a male and female inside Haro Strait between Victoria, B.C. and San Juan Island. A

lasso was thrown over the female, but the rope got entangled in the boat's propeller. The female called out to the male and both Orcas charged the immobile boat. Frank shot the male one time and the female ten times with a .375 magnum rifle. No one knows the fate of the male whale as it disappeared after being shot. After towing the female carcass back to Bellingham, Washington she was processed and sold as dog food, but not before Frank removed her teeth and kept them as souvenirs.

In 1964, the Vancouver Aquarium commissioned an artist by the name of Samuel Burich to kill an Orca in order to make a life-sized sculpture for an aquarium exhibit. Samuel set up a harpoon gun on Saturna Island, northeast of Victoria, B.C. and waited two months for a pod of whales to swim past the harpoon. On July 16, 1964 a pod swam by the Island and Samuel harpooned a young (~5-7 yr old) Orca. Members of the pod came to the young whale's aid pushing it to the surface to breathe. Samuel shot the whale with his rifle several times, but the whale did not die. Murray Newman, the manager of the Vancouver Aquarium, decided to try and save the whale and so it was towed over sixteen hours back to Vancouver Harbor and placed in a sea pen. The public voted on a name and at the time it was presumed to be female and so Moby Doll was chosen. Moby Doll finally began to eat after fifty-five days in captivity, but unfortunately a month later on October 9, 1964 *he* died. Not until the necropsy did scientists discover that Moby Doll was in fact a male. Moby Doll was the very first Orca ever to be on public display. It was later determined that Moby Doll was a southern resident from the J pod.

In June of 1965, William Lechkobit found two Orcas in his salmon net off the coast of British Columbia. The adult Orca was able to escape the net, but the calf would not follow. A few days later William checked the net to find the calf gone and the adult inside. By this time, word was getting out that fishermen could make a profit selling caught Orcas instead of releasing them and so William sold the Orca to Ted Griffin of the Seattle Marine Aquarium for \$8,000. The whale was transferred via floating sea pen to the Seattle Public Aquarium where he was named Namu, after the location where he was caught. A movie about Namu was made and two weeks before the release on July 9, 1966 Namu died from an infection due to the

polluted water in his sea pen (see appendix for movie poster). He was held captive for eleven months.

On October 31, 1965 Ted Griffin and Don Goldsberry attempted to capture a female in order to mate with Namu. In the Carr Inlet west of Tacoma, Washington the crew harpooned a Southern Resident female Orca. The mother's calf followed the mother as she was being towed back to Seattle, but along the way the mother drowned. Even though the female calf was too young (3 years old) to mate with Namu, Ted decided to keep her. By combining the name Namu with the word *she*, the female calf would be the first ever Shamu. Ted sold Shamu to SeaWorld San Diego for \$75,000 and on December 20, 1965 Shamu was shipped to the California park. On April 19, 1971 SeaWorld secretary Annette Eckis entered the pool with Shamu for a photo shoot. After climbing onto the whale's back, she rode Shamu around the pool one time and then Shamu began to buck. After she was thrown into the water, Shamu grabbed a hold of her leg and pushed her around the pool periodically dunking her just under the water's surface. A trainer swam to Annette and grabbed her but could not get her out of Shamu's mouth. Another trainer held out a pole for Annette to pull herself out of the pool, but Shamu rammed into her again causing her to let go of the pole. Another pole was stretched out and Annette was pulled up to the side of the pool with Shamu still attached to her left calf. A trainer finally persuaded Shamu to release the woman and she was pulled to safety. Annette was rushed to the hospital where it took one hundred stitches to close her wound. Because of this incident, Shamu was moved to SeaWorld's breeding program, as trainers were not allowed back in the water with her. On August 29, 1971 just four months after the incident, Shamu died of pyometra, an infection of the uterus (see appendix for photo).

In August 1970, the largest Orca round up occurred in Penn Cove southeast of the San Juan Islands, Washington. Griffin and Goldsberry were again in charge of the captures. Eighty Southern Resident Orcas were caught in a large purse seine net (see appendix for photo). Seven Orcas were chosen for parks and three babies died in the net. The bellies of the deceased Orcas were slit open and filled with rocks in order to sink the carcasses. The permit allowed for seven Orcas to be taken and the three dead ones would

have counted towards that quota. Only one Orca from that capture remains alive in captivity today, a lone female at the Miami Seaquarium named Lolita. Ken Balcomb of the Center for Whale Research estimated that the population of Southern Residents before the captures in the 60's and 70's was 112 and by 1976 there were only 68. By 1991, the population was depleted to 92 individuals; had the captures never taken place, there would have been 135 Orcas. More than fifty Orcas had been taken from the Pacific Northwest by the mid 1970's and sent to aquariums around the world. On the other side of the world, the Soviet Union killed 916 Orcas in the waters off Antarctica between 1979 and 1980. They typically took around twenty-five per whaling season before this massive slaughter.

The U.S. Congress enacted the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) in 1972 in order to “prevent marine mammal species and population stocks from declining beyond the point where they ceased to be significant functioning elements of the ecosystems of which they are a part.” The Marine Mammal Protection Act does not restrict taking marine mammals for public display or the commercial fishing of Orcas for scientific research (see appendix). Under the MMPA the AT1 Transient Orcas are listed as depleted due to the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill near Puget Sound, Washington. To learn about the MMPA visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

The U.S. Congress passed the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in 1973 for “the conservation of species that are endangered or threatened throughout all or a significant portion of their range, and the conservation of the ecosystems on which they depend.” The ESA is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Commerce Department's National Marine Fisheries Service. Under the ESA, the Southern Resident killer whales (J, K and L pods) are listed as endangered. To learn more about the ESA visit <http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov>

Also in 1973 the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) was adopted to regulate the worldwide commercial trade in wild animal and plant species. The number of member countries as of 2020 is 183. To learn more about CITES visit www.cites.org

Which Agency protects what species in the U.S.?

- Whales, Dolphins, Porpoises, Seals, Sea Lions – The Department of Commerce through the National Marine Fisheries Service
- Walrus, Manatees, Otters, Polar Bears – Department of the Interior through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Captive Marine Mammals – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, part of the Department of Agriculture

Other countries have also adopted agreements such as New Zealand, which enacted a Marine Mammal Protection Act in 1978 and Australia, which adopted the Whale Protection Act in 1980.

As recent as 2018, Orcas have been hunted for their meat near St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), a small Caribbean island east of Barbados. The island is exempt from the 1986 Global Moratorium on Whaling that was put into place by the IWC. SVG has slaughtered 28 humpback whales (which have been endangered since 1970) between 2000 and 2015. SVG has hunted hundreds of pilot whales, Orcas, porpoises and dolphins annually since the early twentieth century. The IWC does not regulate the killing of smaller cetaceans such as Orcas. On July 12, 2015 four Orcas were killed for their meat, oil and blubber even though Orcas are known to contain high levels of mercury, lead and polychlorinated hydrocarbons (PCBs). Eight Orcas in total were killed in 2015, two of them being pregnant. There is a small export market of the cetacean meat to the nearby island of Barbados. The Argyle International Airport at SVG opened in 2017, which aims to boost tourism to the country lending itself to the possibility of whale watching, scuba diving, and water sports. In 2017, passengers on a touring boat were watching a pod of four Orcas when a hunting boat approached and killed two of the Orcas with a harpoon gun. This incident led Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves to announce he would introduce legislation to ban the hunting of Orcas, but in 2018, three more Orcas, one male and two females, were killed and he has yet to introduce any such ban.

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society is currently working with local officials to end the barbaric hunt. To volunteer or donate please visit www.seashepherd.org.

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