WWF

FACTSHEET

2013

Marine

# WWF-Canada: Turning Down the Volume on Underwater Noise

© CHAD GRAHAM / WWF-CANADA

## REDUCING UNDERWATER NOISE IS CRITICAL TO PROTECTING OCEAN SPECIES

## Introduction

Increasing underwater noise pollution off Canada's Pacific coast is affecting whales, dolphins and other marine animals that use sound to communicate, find food and avoid predators. Shipping traffic and related port operations and infrastructure development are all sources of harmful underwater sound. For WWF, reducing disruptive undersea noise is critical to ensuring sustainable use of coastal marine environments – and protecting the many species that keep our oceans healthy.

In 2011, WWF-Canada, Pacific region, began a multi-year project applying the best of our global expertise in marine science and policy to reducing the noise-related effects of development on British Columbia's ocean and coastal environments.

Our work with the shipping and ports sectors on marine noise is described in this information sheet.

## National and International Policy and Outreach

WWF-Pacific's policy objectives around underwater noise are to support initiatives informing marine planning, to help create new marine protected areas, to improve management of existing MPAs, and to develop solutions to mitigate underwater noise pollution.

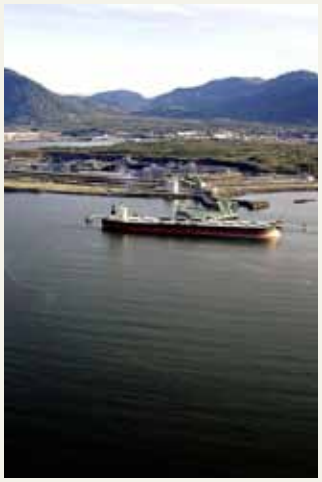
- WWF-Canada participates on a WWF International Working Group on Sustainable Shipping. WWF has Observer status at the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and our representatives regularly attend IMO meetings.
- WWF-Canada is participating in the Government of Canada's input to the IMO Correspondence Group on Guidelines for Minimizing Underwater Noise.
- WWF-Canada participated in the Port Metro Vancouver Sustainability Report Review Panel (December 2012).
- WWF-Canada is a Supporter of Green Marine, and a member of its West Coast Advisory Committee.
- We have written advocacy and policy briefs to strengthen the revised Marine Mammal Regulations, which address approach distances for whale-watching boats.
- WWF-Canada and Canada Steamship Lines have worked together for the past six years, including a partnership on defining climate leadership in the shipping sector, protecting whales, and on a study comparing the social and environmental impacts of Great Lakes Short Sea Shipping compared to similar movements on road and rail.

## Science and Management of Underwater Noise

Our science objectives include generating information, tools and products to help measure and assess noise pollution from human activities, and effects on marine animals.

- In January 2012, WWF-Canada held a workshop on understanding underwater noise on British Columbia's Pacific Coast. A workshop report and presentations can be found at www.wwf.ca/oceannoise. This workshop brought together government, industry and academic experts on marine mammals and underwater noise from BC, the USA, Australia, and Europe.
- To help visualise and understand areas of concern regarding noise pollution in Canada's Pacific, WWF-Canada has commissioned models and maps of shipping-related underwater noise in BC's waters.
- In 2013, WWF-Canada led a second multi-stakeholder workshop on underwater noise, this time on management solutions.

**OBJECTIVES INCLUDE FINDING WAYS TO MITIGATE UNDERWATER NOISE POLLUTION**



© MIKE AMBACH / WWF-CANADA


**For further information, please contact:**

**Linda Nowlan,** JD, MA
Director
Pacific Conservation
WWF-Canada
Pacific Region
lnowlan@wwfcanada.org

**Louise Blight,** PhD
Senior Marine Science & Planning Officer
WWF-Canada
Pacific Region
lblight@wwfcanada.org


**Why we are here**
We are creating solutions to the most serious conservation challenges facing our planet, helping people and nature thrive.

wwf.ca