

# 2020-001-02276

## Ottawa

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HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## Ottawa

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## Constituency

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*Elizabeth May*  
Member of Parliament / Député(e)  
Saanich — Gulf Islands

## Circonscription

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The Honourable Marc Garneau  
Minister of Transport

The Honourable Bernadette Jordan  
Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson  
Minister of Environment and Climate Change

September 8, 2020

Dear Ministers,

I am taking the liberty of writing all three of you in one letter as the actions for emergency protection for the Southern Resident Killer Whale population crosses a number of inter-departmental boundaries.

The creation of sanctuary zones was welcomed in my constituency of Saanich-Gulf Islands with the sanctuary zones in and around Pender and Saturna Islands, both within my riding.

The following notice is posted on the Parks Canada website:

*As of June 1, 2020, keep 400 metres away from killer whales when visiting Pacific Rim National Park Reserve and Gulf Islands National Park Reserve. It's the law.*

*Do not enter Interim Sanctuary Zones from June 1 to November 30:*

*- No fishing or boating in Interim Sanctuary Zones at Swiftsure bank, off the east coast of Saturna Island or the south-west of North Pender Island.*

*No recreational or commercial salmon fishing in portions of Southern Resident Killer Whale key foraging areas:*

*- Area-based fishing closures will be in effect August 1 - October 31, 2020 in the Juan de Fuca Strait and the Southern Gulf Islands for recreational and commercial salmon fisheries.*



Penalties can be applied by Transport Canada under the Canada Shipping Act. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans is involved in sharing the scientific research collected on Saturna Island from the non-profit science centre, the Saturna Island Marine Research and Education Society (SIMRES).

Last summer, when the regulations first took effect, enforcement was fairly non-existent and residents were told the focus was on awareness-raising. However, this summer we all expected to see enforcement and fines being levied.

That has decidedly not occurred. Local observers called the Saturna Sighting Network have data proving that more than 60% of the boats in the area are guilty of infractions in the ISZ. As of August 12, no fines have been issued.

The brazen defiance of the order and the failure to enforce it has already been covered in the news media: "[Citizens appalled as boaters defying whale sanctuary get off with warning](#)," Carl Meyer, National Observer, August 19, 2020.

One of my constituents, Suzie Washington-Smyth, a leading figure in the Saturna Sighting Network, is quoted in the article cited above: "They're a Band-Aid on a gunshot wound to begin with, in terms of being able to really help the orcas, but to not enforce the law is just beyond the pale. It's insulting to the taxpayer, and it does nothing to protect the whales."

I could not agree more. The failure to protect tiny little areas that offer some respite to the whales in key foraging areas is totally unacceptable. It is not adequate to give verbal or written warnings. Violators must face penalties. The season is nearly over.

I respectfully demand that the orders be enforced. Going to court to seek a mandamus order should not be necessary.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth May, O.C.  
Member of Parliament  
Saanich-Gulf Islands  
Parliamentary Leader of the Green Party of Canada

