



A timeline for endangered resident killer whales

- In 1999, northern and southern resident killer whales were listed respectively as threatened and endangered under COSEWIC.
- In 2003, southern and northern resident killer whales were listed under SARA, Canada's Species at Risk Act.
- In 2004, a scientific recovery team was established that consisted of independent and government killer whale experts.
- In 2006, the Recovery Team completed a *Draft Recovery Strategy*. The draft identified key biological and geophysical aspects of critical habitat. It also identified three key threats to habitat: *reduction in prey availability, pollution and acoustic disturbance*
- In June 2007, the *Proposed Recovery Strategy* was posted to the SARA Registry, a year past its due date.
- In March 2008, the *Final [Resident Killer Whale Recovery Strategy \(PDF\)](#)* was released. Under SARA, DFO was legally required to release the *Final Recovery Strategy* by September 2007.
- In both cases, the delay was attributed to attempts by federal government departments to remove references and threats to critical habitat.
- In September 2008, without consulting the Recovery Team, DFO issued a Protection Statement purporting that Resident Killer Whale Critical Habitat was protected by existing laws and policies. Raincoast and other NGOs disagreed.
- In the fall of 2008, [Ecojustice](#), on behalf of Raincoast and others, filed the first lawsuit. It was largely based on the Protection Statement's failure to protect all aspects of critical habitat. It failed to specify biological (food), chemical (water & food quality), and acoustic qualities of critical habitat.
- In April 2009, the federal minister for DFO tried to have the case dismissed.
- In June 2010, the case was heard in federal court.
- In December 2010, the judge ruled in favour of the whales, citing DFO's failure to protect critical habitat. See Raincoast's [website](#) for lawsuit details.
- In January 2011, DFO filed to appeal a key part of the decision.
- In December 2011, the appeal case was heard in the federal Court of Appeal.
- In February 2012, the appeal court upheld the lower court decision, again ruling in favour of the whales.
- In March, 2014 the federal government released a long overdue *Draft [Action Plan \(PDF\)](#)*.
- In April 2014, Raincoast and others [critiqued the Action Plan \(PDF\)](#).
- By April 2015, no final action plan has been released. [Tired of waiting](#), Raincoast and others decide to draft their own recovery plan for southern resident killer whales.