

New Online Learning Resource Listens to Orcas

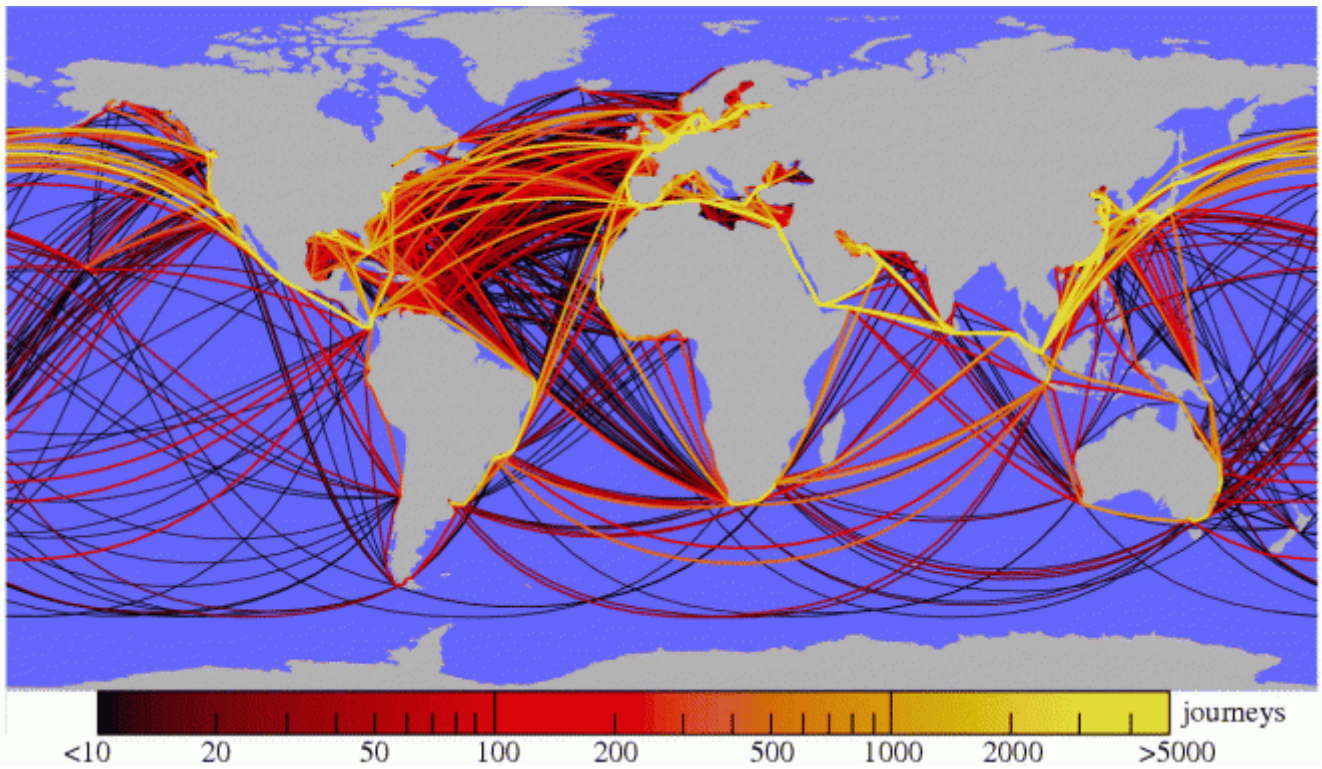
Submitted by Virginia Keast Tue, 2014-09-23 12:44

As students in BC and across Canada return to school, Ocean Networks Canada (ONC) and Open School BC (OSBC) are delighted to announce the release of *Shouting Whales*, a new marine science educational resource for teachers and educators, that is available free of charge.

Aimed at middle school students from grades six to eight, *Shouting Whales* is a unique resource that brings together science, problem-based learning, multimedia, and advocacy for an in-depth exploration of the oceanic soundscape.

Exploring noise pollution beneath the surface of the sea

In particular, students are asked to think about the ocean from the perspective of the orca whale, an animal that relies on sounds rather than visual cues. Through the activities outlined in this resource, students will explore the properties of sound, learn how scientists are studying ocean noise and come to understand how increasing noise pollution is threatening the orca whale's way of life.



World map showing shipping routes and numbers of journeys in 2008. Shipping noise poses a threat to marine mammals by increasing noise in the ocean soundscape.

As a culminating activity, students are tasked with creating an action plan to inform, elicit action, or inspire legislation about the marine environment.

“Our goal with this resource was to create something that teachers can use easily, even if they have no previous experience with marine science,” says Jennifer Riddel, an educational project manager at OSBC. “Comprehensiveness and flexibility were key considerations. We wanted to provide everything that a teacher would need to implement the unit as it is, as well as the opportunity to adapt the lessons to suit their particular students and learning environment.”

The idea to develop an educational resource that discusses noise pollution came from one of the stories in ONC's first episode of Ocean Alive. Orca whales are an iconic symbol of BC's West Coast and gaining a better understanding of their vocalizations and how they are affected by increasing human-induced noise is crucial for creating policies and conservation programs. Ocean Networks Canada has numerous hydrophones located on the NEPTUNE, VENUS ocean observatories off the coast of southern BC and in the Arctic . These underwater microphones passively listen to the world around them. Recordings of whale vocalizations, shipping noises and even earthquakes can be heard in the [archived audio clips](#) on the ONC website and [Soundcloud channel](#). For more information on the curricula and teaching guide visit the [Shouting Whales resource](#) on Ocean Networks Canada's [teaching resources page](#).

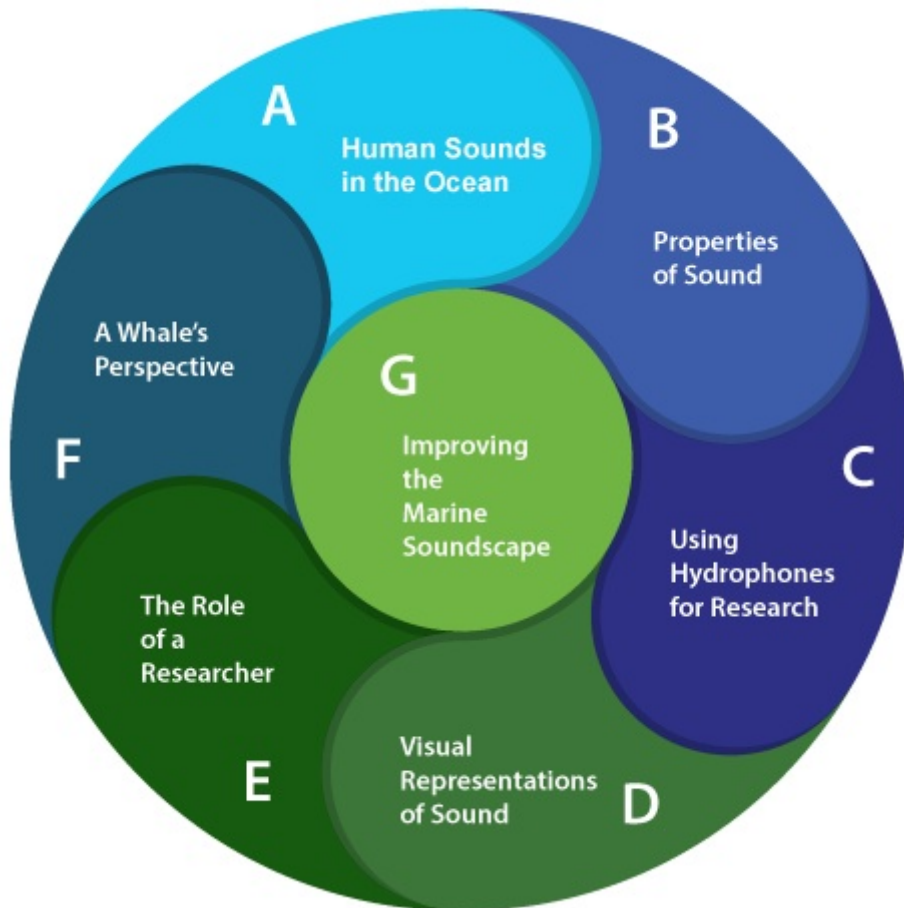
“Bringing together 'Ocean Alive' and hydrophone clips with problem-based learning, seemed like a natural fit for an exciting marine science educational resource,” said Natasha Ewing, ONC's K-12 Education Coordinator. “It is important for students to be aware of ocean threats and to provide them with the background information and tools to assist them in forming their own educated decisions.”

How to Access the Resource

Shouting Whales is available at [Open School BC - Shouting Whales](#)

Designed with teachers in mind, this resource is:

- Free and fully downloadable
 - If you don't have internet access in your classroom, you can download each lesson package and access everything from your local drive
- Comprehensive
 - It contains all the media you need to implement the lesson plans as well as links to relevant websites
- Flexible
 - Lessons can be presented in any order and can be used independently or as a complete unit
- Adaptable
 - Lessons and rubrics are provided in Microsoft Word format so they can be easily modified to suit individual needs



Seven unique lessons are offered as part of shouting whales.

Who is Open School BC?

Open School BC designs, develops and distributes educational resources and services to public sector clients and K-12 schools. Operating on a cost-recovery basis within the Ministry of Education, their projects are diverse. The resources they develop range from simple print publications to interactive educational tools and video. Their nationally recognized educational multimedia has won awards at The Canadian Network for Innovation in Education Media Festivals.

About Ocean Networks Canada

Ocean Networks Canada (ONC), a non-for-profit initiative of the University of Victoria, operates world-leading observatories off the west coast of British Columbia and in the Arctic Ocean, for the advancement of science and the benefit of Canada. ONC is helping to change the way we study oceans by collecting data and information from hundreds of instruments and sensors located on the seafloor, in the water column and on land, and making them available for free through an Internet portal.

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