

New science funding to monitor marine environments and southern resident killer whale habitat

Submitted by Katie Shoemaker Wed, 2017-10-11 11:00

?Ocean Networks Canada is excited to be working with Fisheries and Oceans Canada to deliver products that align with the [Oceans Protection Plan](#) objectives.?
Dr. Kate Moran, President and CEO, Ocean Networks Canada.



At the Southern Resident Killer Whale Symposium in Vancouver on Wednesday, 11 October 2017 (l-r) Jessica Stigant, ONC Strategic Partnerships Officer; David Castle, Vice President Research, University of Victoria; Kate Moran, CEO and President, ONC; the Right Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard; and Terry Beech MP, Burnaby North-Seymour.

On Wednesday, 11 October 2017, the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, announced \$7.2 million in new science funding for Ocean Networks Canada (ONC) to support technology and data that monitors our country's ocean and coastlines, including endangered killer whale habitat. This match funding builds on

ONC's core funding provided through the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

Under this initiative, ONC's existing network of oceanographic radars and underwater hydrophones—funded through an investment made by Transport Canada, Western Economic Diversification, and IBM Canada in 2014—will be augmented with additional equipment to monitor sea surface currents and underwater noise in key areas along British Columbia's coast.

The data collected by these Smart Ocean? Systems contribute to Canada's marine safety and marine mammal protection. Oceanographic radar provides real time information on the speed and direction of surface currents and waves to better inform navigation and emergency response, including ships in distress and oil spills. ONC will use data from hydrophone networks to measure and monitor underwater noise in key marine mammal habitats, and to inform mitigation strategies to protect marine mammals, including killer whales.



The endangered southern resident killer whale population has recently dropped to 77 individuals.

ONC has been providing infrastructure and data management for Vancouver Fraser Port Authority's world-leading ECHO program since 2015. With the support of JASCO Applied Sciences, this underwater listening station monitors shipping noise in the Strait of Georgia. Underwater noise has been identified as one of three key threats to at-risk whales, alongside the availability of food sources (such as salmon) and man-made stressors (such as climate change).



There are three major stressors that are impacting southern resident killer whales: noise, food supply, and human impacts.

This match-funding announcement was made during the Symposium on Protection and Recovery of Southern Resident Killer Whales, taking place 11-12 October in Vancouver, British Columbia. This timely event is adopting a coordinated approach to develop world-leading strategies and solutions to protect marine mammals. Participants include scientists, ports, tech developers, NGO's, and governments who will address key issues affecting the endangered killer whales.

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Fisheries and Oceans Canada media release

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