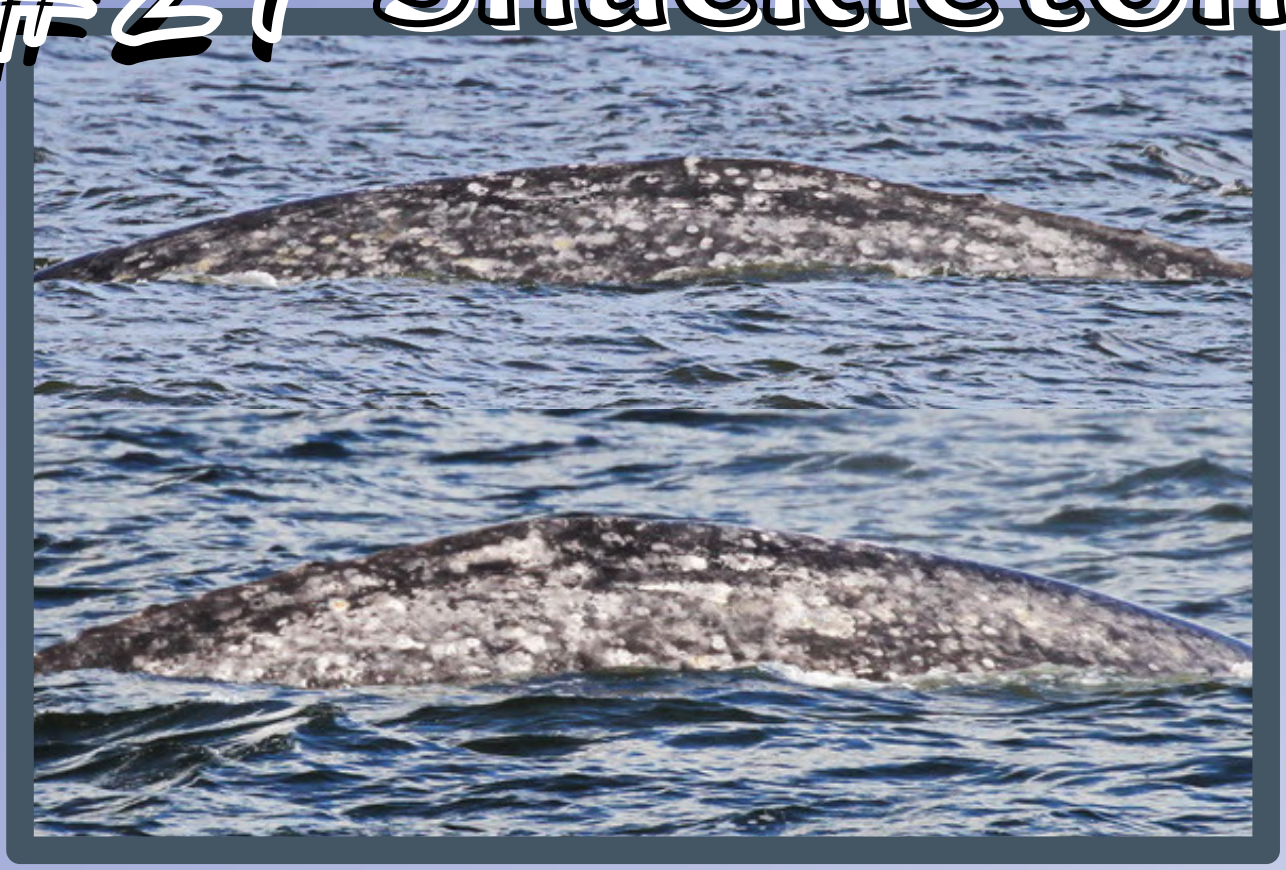
SOUNDERS

#21 Shackleton



Sex: Male

First Seen: May 3, 1990

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Shackleton is named after polar explorer Ernest Shackleton - it is thought he was one of the first to explore the shallow waters to feed in North Puget Sound.

SOUNDERS

#21 Shackleton

SOUNDERS FACT:

Shackleton has a special relationship with Earhart. They were first documented together in 1990 utilizing the North Puget Sound area to feed. They have been frequently sighted together ever since!

Shackleton sustained an injury to his tailstock at some point, possibly a result of entanglement, which may impede his ability to raise his fluke. It is extremely rare to see him lift his tail!

SCAN ME

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SOUNDERS

#22 Earhart

Sex: Female

First Seen: May 3, 1990

Earhart is named after female pioneer Amelia Earhart for her pioneering feeding technique in the intertidal waters.

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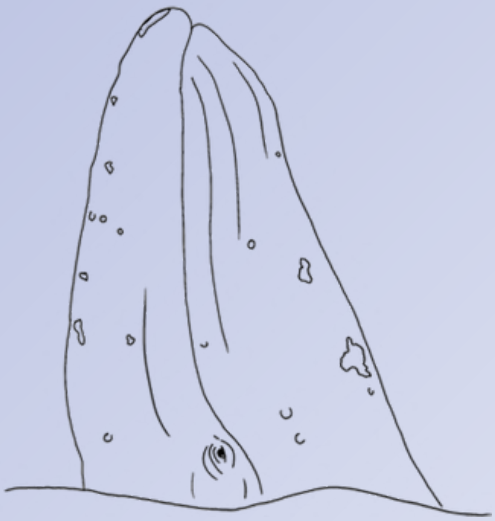

SOUNDERS

#22 Earhart

SOUNDERS FACT:

It is suspected that female Sounders do not enter the Puget Sound when they have a calf as their feeding strategy is risky and there may be a greater chance of killer whale encounters.

In 2017, Earhart was struck by a vessel as she surfaced. Thankfully her injuries were minor! When boating, it is important to be aware you are in whale territory and to proceed with caution.

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SOUNDERS

#53 Little Patch

Sex: Male

First Seen: April 17, 1991

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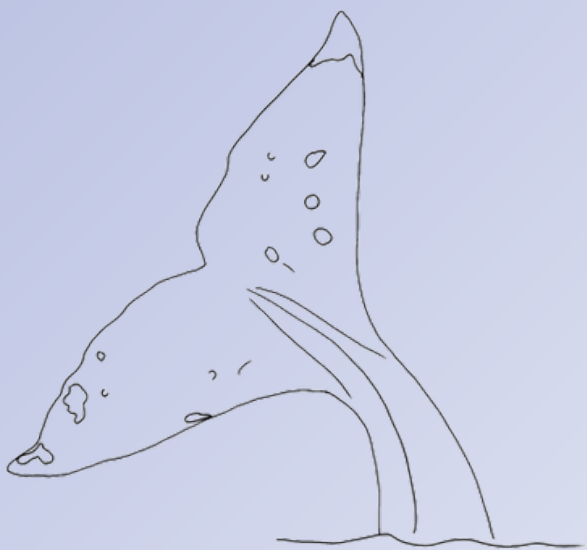
Little Patch is named and known for his distinctive white patch on his left side.



SOUNDERS

#53 Little Patch

SOUNDERS FACT:

The Sounders visit the Northern Puget Sound region each year typically between March-May to feed on ghost shrimp beds.

Little Patch has been known to arrive earlier than other Sounders on some years to begin feeding in the winter months and has been sighted as early as December!

SCAN ME

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SOUNDERS

#44 Dubnuck

Sex: Male

First Seen: March 6, 1991

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Dubnuck was named for his double knuckles along his back behind his dorsal hump.

SOUNDERS

#44 Dubnuck

SOUNDERS FACT:

The Sounders create large pits in the sediment when foraging. These pits can be seen from the shore at low tide, and are big enough to be seen via satellite images!

Dubnuck was first sighted wandering Southern Puget Sound in 1991, and made it as far south as Budd Inlet. By April 25 1991, he was seen in Port Susan, near the regular feeding grounds.

SCAN ME

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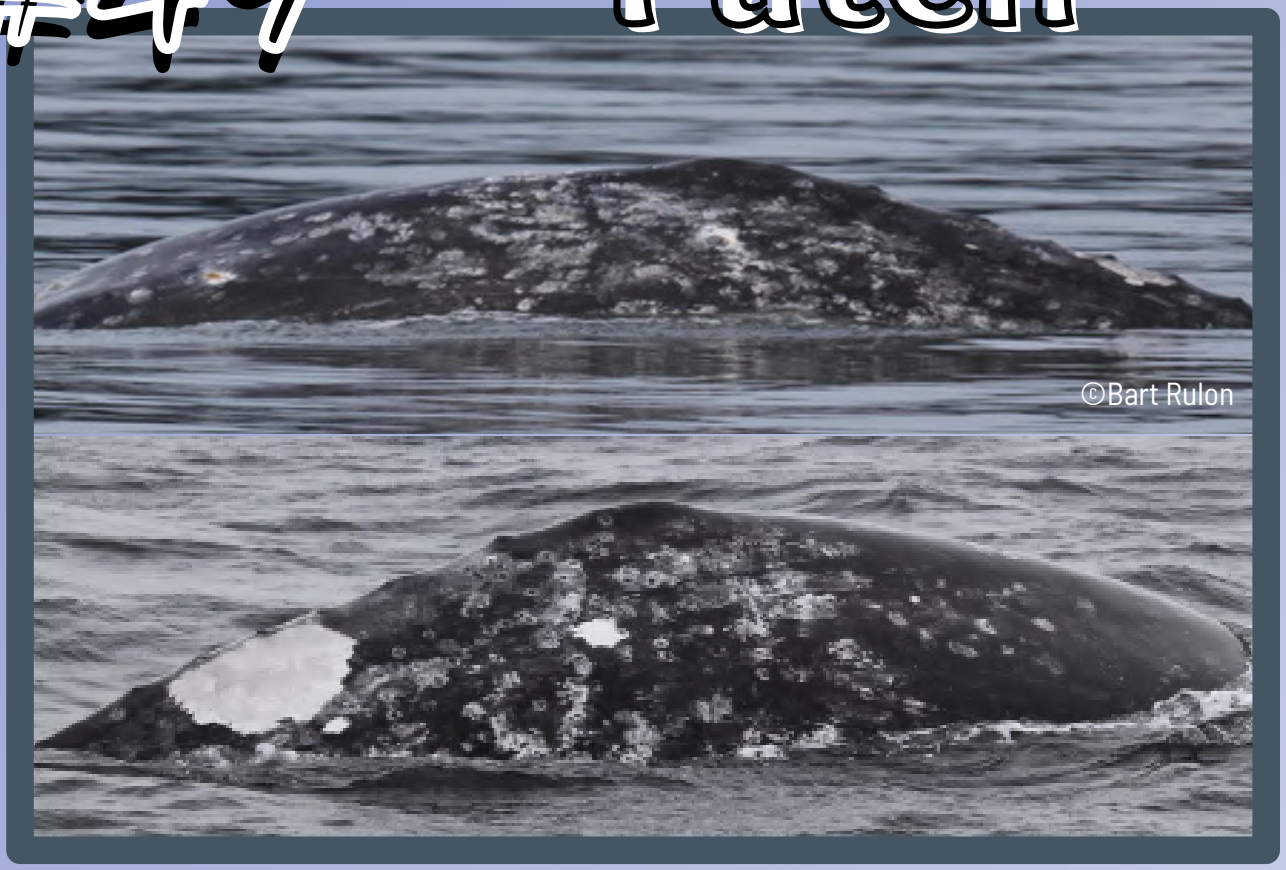
SOUNDERS

#49 Patch



Sex: Male

First Seen: April 17, 1991

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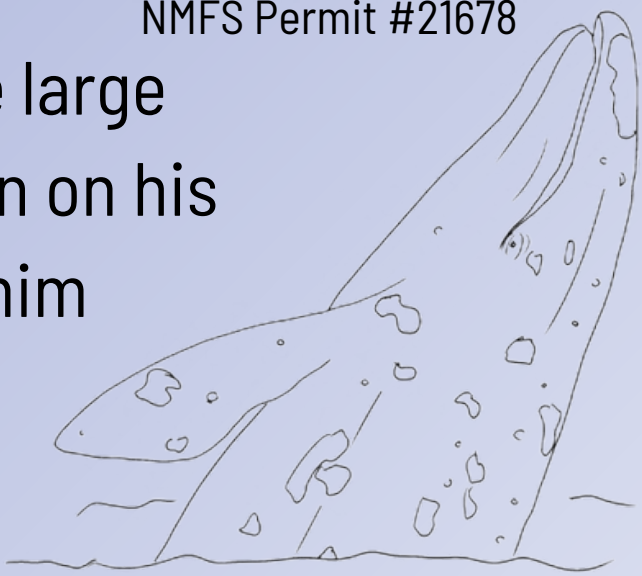
Patch is named for the large area of depigmentation on his right side that makes him very easy to spot!



SOUNDERS

#49 Patch

SOUNDERS FACT:

The WA DNR and Cascadia Research conducted surveys which changed the regulations to suspend ghost shrimp harvest during the Sounders' feeding months.

Patch was harassed by a group of transient killer whales in 2010 in Saratoga Passage, he was observed rolling over during the encounter before the killer whales left the scene.

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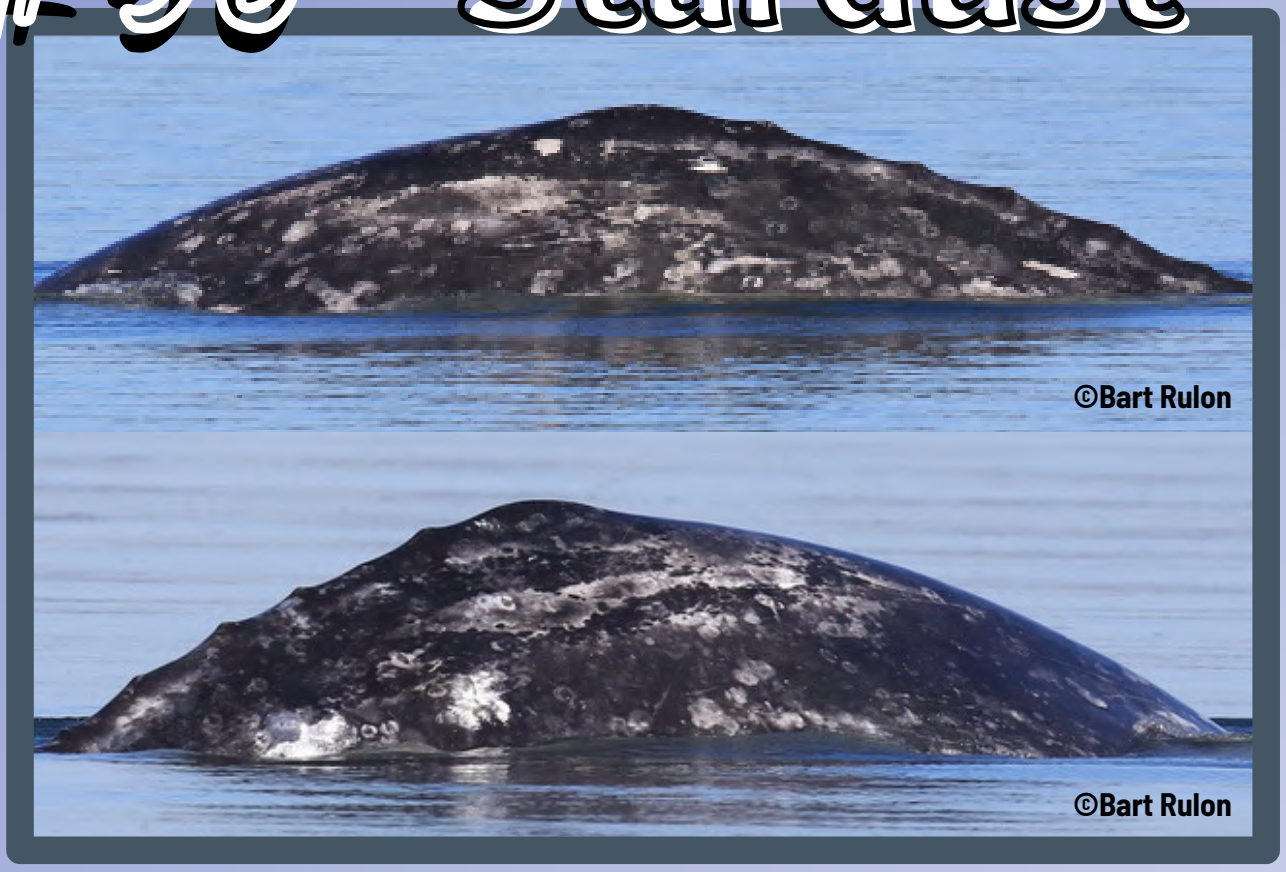
SOUNDERS

#56 Stardust



Sex: Male

First Seen: May 15, 1991

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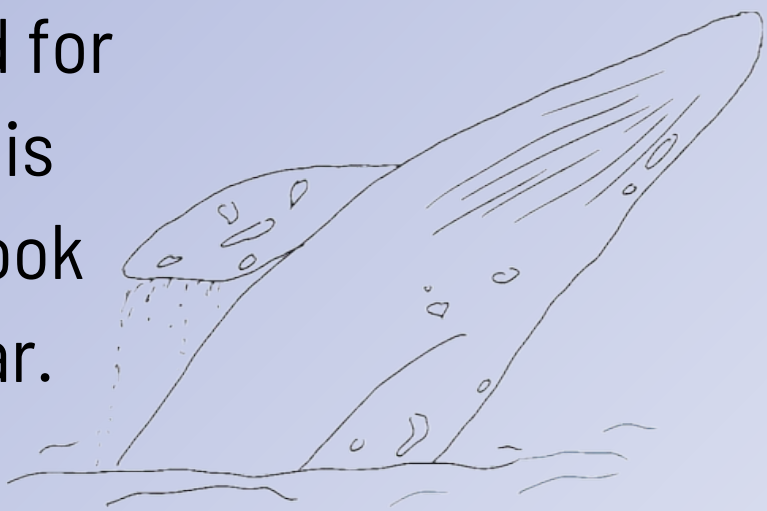
Stardust is named for the markings on his right side which look like a shooting star.



SOUNDERS

#56 Stardust

SOUNDERS FACT:

The Sounders do not appear to be part of a larger group of whales who feed along the West Coast called the Pacific Group Feeding Group, also known as the PCFG.

Stardust has a reputation for avoiding boats, which can make him difficult to track, but he has returned to the Puget Sound every year since 2003!

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SOUNDERS

#185 Gisborne

Sex: Male

First Seen: August 13, 1996

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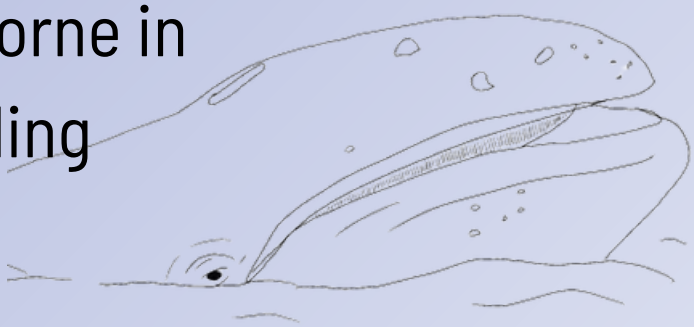
Gisborne has been sighted hundreds of times by CRC contributor Brian Gisborne in the Pacific Coast Feeding Group of gray whales.



SOUNDERS

#185 Gisborne

SOUNDERS FACT:

Gisborne made his way into the North Puget Sound area in March of 2018 and has returned every year since.

Gisborne is part of the PCFG group of gray whales, which consists of ~200 individuals that feed from Northern California to British Columbia each spring, summer and fall, instead of migrating further north with the Eastern North Pacific population.

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SOUNDERS

#356 Carson

Sex: Male

First Seen: April 2, 1999

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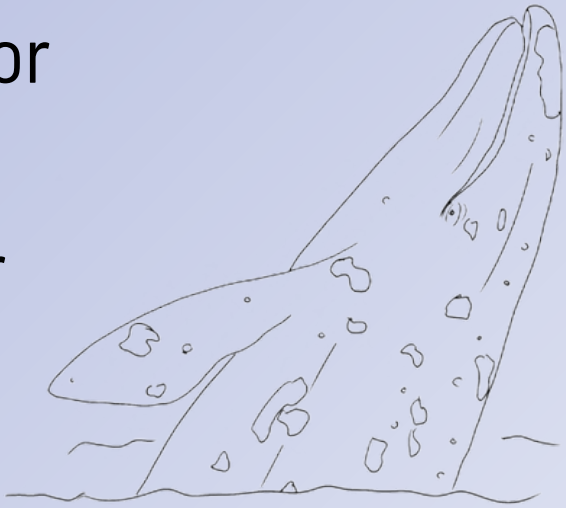
Carson is named in honor of Rachel Carson, a marine biologist, author and conservationist.



SOUNDERS

#356 Carson

SOUNDERS FACT:

Carson does not return to the Puget Sound every year, sometimes skipping the 100 mile journey off the migration route multiple years in a row.

Carson arrived in the secondary wave of animals joining the group in 1999-2000, coinciding with an Unusual Mortality Event for gray whales, where he were potentially searching for new food sources.

SCAN ME

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SOUNDERS

#383 Cascade

Sex: Male

First Seen: April 6, 1999

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Cascade was named after the Cascade mountain range of the Pacific Northwest, which overlooks the waters of Puget Sound.

SOUNDERS

#383 Cascade

SOUNDERS FACT:

The Sounders have been thought to have discovered Puget Sound when looking for extra food sources during years of unusual mortality events.

Cascade has visited Puget Sound every year since 2003! He is notorious for fluking nearly every time he takes a deep dive and seems to have a gregarious nature as he is frequently sighted with other whales.

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SOUNDERS

#531 Gretchen

Sex: Female

First Seen: March 15, 2000

CRCID 531 was given the name Gretchen to honor long-time researcher Gretchen Steiger, who passed away in 2019.

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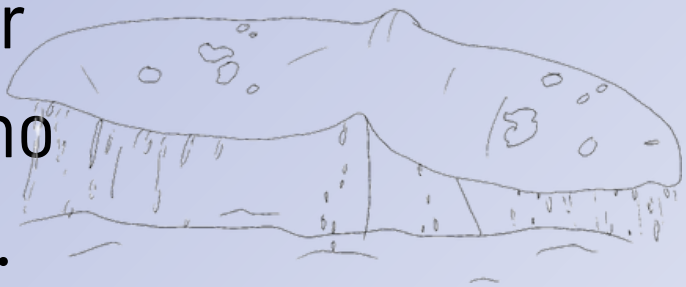

SOUNDERS

#531 Gretchen

SOUNDERS FACT:

Gray whales are considered mid-size baleen whales that can grow up to 45 feet long and weigh as much as 30-40 tons!

It is presumed Gretchen had calves in 2012 and 2015 when she was absent from North Puget Sound during the typical feeding months.

SCAN ME

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SOUNDERS

#723 Lucyfer

Sex: Male

First Seen: June 2, 2000

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Lucyfer was originally called "Lucy," but upon discovering he was a male, Cascadia proposed the name "Lucyfer" since gray whales were once called "devil fish" by whalers.

SOUNDERS

#723 Lucyfer

SOUNDERS FACT:

The Sounders are spotted feeding around Whidbey and Camano Islands, Saratoga Passage, Port Susan, Gedney/Hat Island, and the Snohomish Delta in Washington's Salish Sea.

Gray whales are primarily benthic feeders, which means they feed off the ocean floor. Gray whales turn on their sides in shallow water and take in sediment and prey, then use their baleen to filter the water out retaining the prey.

SCAN ME

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SOUNDERS

#2246 Azulão

Sex: Female

First Seen: March 18, 2018

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Azulão honors the bold spirit of a sailor who voyaged from Santa Barbara to Italy, and reflects the fearless nature of this whale, who survived a killer whale attack during their travels.

SOUNDERS

#2246 Azulão

SOUNDERS FACT:

Gray whales are filter feeders. They have a narrow head with around 300 plates of yellowish-white baleen that makes up their filter!

Azulão, which is Portuguese for bluebird, has very distinctive knuckles (ridges along the animal's back). This varies among individuals, and researchers use the shape and spacing of the knuckles to make matches between individuals.

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SOUNDERS

#2249 Hattie

Sex: Unknown

First Seen: April 4, 2019

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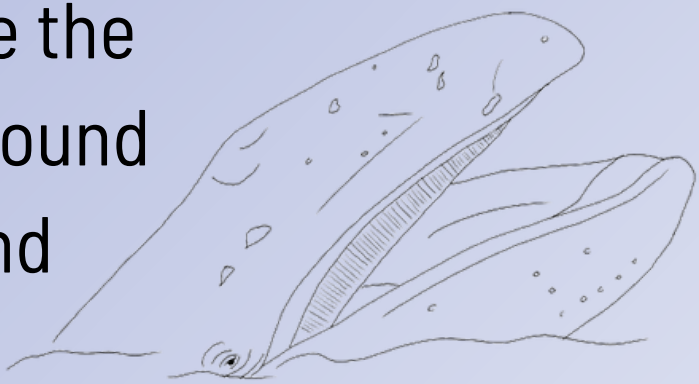
Hattie was named after Hat Island, an area where the Sounders are often found feeding, traveling, and socializing.



SOUNDERS

#2249 Hattie

SOUNDERS FACT:

Gray whales have distinct coloration and markings that can be used to identify them and track their movements over time.

Gray whales adjust their feeding strategy to the available prey, having been known to surface skim to take in prey in the water column as well as feed on ghost shrimp in shallow intertidal areas.

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SOUNDERS

#2255

Sex: Female

First Seen: April 25, 2019

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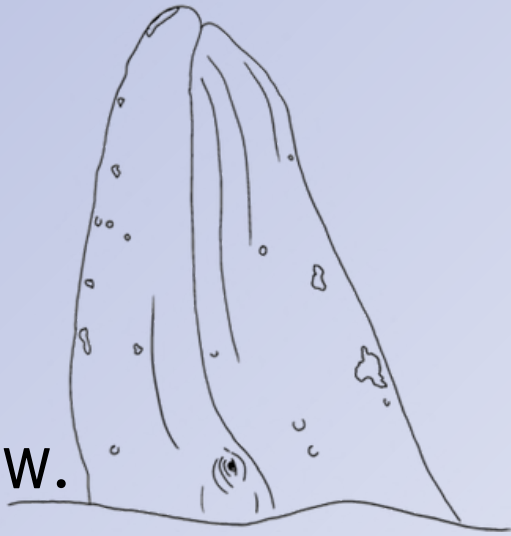
CRCID 2255 was first documented in the North Puget Sound region in 2019 during the UME, and has returned three years in a row.



SOUNDERS

#2255

SOUNDERS FACT:

Gray whales are currently threatened by ship strikes, pollution, climate change, habitat destruction and entanglement from fishing gear.

Most of the Eastern North Pacific gray whales complete a 10,000 to 12,000 mile round trip migration each year, one of the longest of any mammal! It is thought the Sounders continue north after they leave Puget Sound.

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SOUNDERS

#2259

Sex: Male

First Seen: April 6, 2020

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NMFS Permit #21678

CRCID 2259 has been known to spy hop and occasionally investigate boats.

SOUNDERS

#2259

SOUNDERS FACT:

Other names for the Sounders include "Puget Sound Regulars" and "Saratoga Grays."

CRCID 2259's large depigmentation patches on their left side make this individual easy to spot and match between encounters.

SCAN ME

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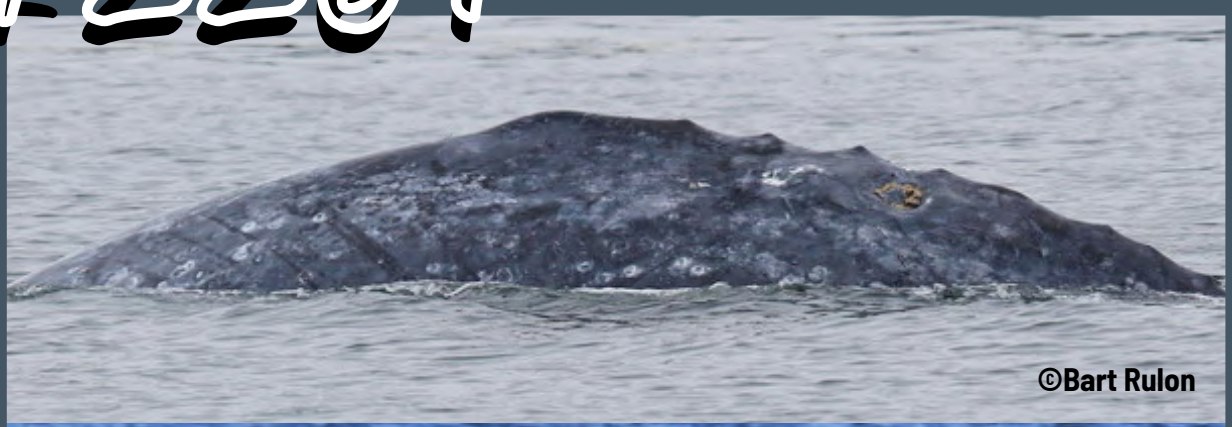
SOUNDERS #2261



Sex: Unknown

First Seen: April 14, 2020

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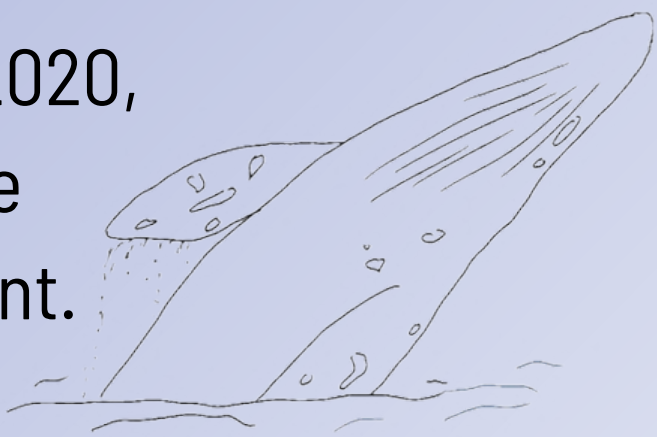
CRCID 2261 found the North Puget Sound area in 2020, the second year of the unusual mortality event.



SOUNDERS

#2261

SOUNDERS FACT:

Gray whales have been observed closely associating with one another, camera tags deployed by Cascadia have shown the whales bump and rub against each other under the surface.

Cascadia has used photos taken during field efforts and contributed by the public, as well as satellite imagery, camera tag deployments, and biopsies for genetic analysis to understand gray whale feeding, health and use of the area.

SCAN ME

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SOUNDERS

#2356 Stalwart

Sex: Unknown

First Seen: April 28, 2010

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NMFS Permit #21678

Stalwart, which is a synonym for "survivor," had a run-in with killer whales at some point, evident by the rake marks on the dorsal hump on its the left side.

SOUNDERS

#2356 Stalwart

SOUNDERS FACT:

The Unusual Mortality Event has triggered increased research on gray whales to assess their body condition and use of the North Puget Sound area across years.

Stalwart has been observed spy hopping, which is when a whale lifts its head above the water, and breaching, which is when a whale throws its body out of the water.

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SOUNDERS

#2362 Thidwick

Sex: Female

First Seen: March 27, 2021

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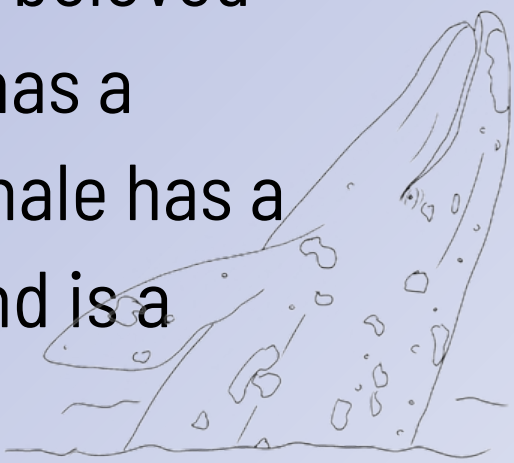
Thidwick is named after a beloved Dr. Seuss character, and has a double meaning as this whale has a prominent dorsal hump and is a robust or "thick" whale.



SOUNDERS

#2362 Thidwick

SOUNDERS FACT:

You can help protect gray whales by reporting sightings to public sighting platforms like Orca Network, supporting research efforts, and following whale watch guidelines.

The underside of the fluke can also be used to tell individual whales apart, each animal has a unique shape, ridging, and markings. Thidwick has quite the unique fluke!

SCAN ME

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SOUNDERS

#2440 Tahoma

Sex: Unknown

First Seen: January 16, 2022

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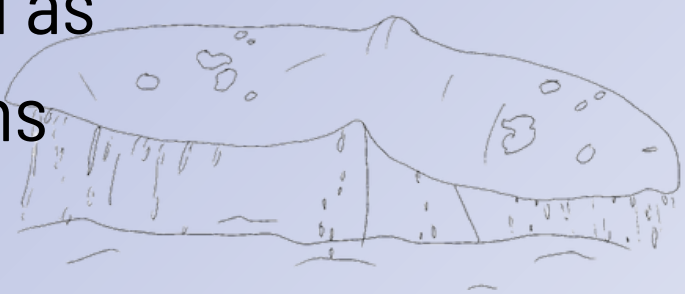
Tahoma was named after the native Puyallup name for Mt. Rainier as well as the glacier, and means "mother of waters."



SOUNDERS

#2440 Tahoma

SOUNDERS FACT:

Tahoma does not appear to have left the Salish Sea since their arrival in January 2022 - they appear to have forgone normal migration to stay and feed.

Tahoma caused quite the uproar in 2022 when someone mistook 2440's white patches for buoys and thought the whale was entangled.

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