

# The Greatest Threats

**Grade:** 9-12

**Subject:** Social Studies

**Duration:** Two - three lessons

## Objectives

*It is expected that students will:*

- Identify human activities that are threatening killer whale populations in British Columbia
- Plan a variety of strategies to protect B.C. killer whales

Background information is available in the killer whale section of the *Conservation in Action* website.

<http://www.vanaqua.org/conservationinaction>

## Overview and Background

Pacific Canada is one of the best places in the world to see and study killer whales. Unfortunately, these animals are threatened by a number of human activities. In this lesson, students will learn about the threats facing killer whales and critically evaluate ways to protect them.

Policy-makers must often make difficult choices when deciding how to best protect species at risk. This problem provides an excellent opportunity for students to apply their skills to an interesting and important conservation issue in Canada.

## Notes for teachers:

For more information about the *Measures to Protect Listed Wildlife Species and General Prohibitions* visit:

[http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/the\\_act/HTML/Part9a\\_e.cfm](http://www.sararegistry.gc.ca/the_act/HTML/Part9a_e.cfm)

To view the draft *Killer Whale Recovery Strategy*, which has an extensive list of threats and actions, visit:

[http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/marinemammals/RKWrecoverystrategy\\_e.htm](http://www-comm.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pages/consultations/marinemammals/RKWrecoverystrategy_e.htm)

**Procedures**

Students:

1. Work in groups to thoroughly research one threat facing killer whales in Pacific Canada, and brainstorm and evaluate actions that can be taken to reduce the impact of that threat. Use the *Assessing Actions* sheet to guide your work.
2. Form new groups that include one person who has researched each threat. Discuss each threat and the actions proposed to reduce the threat. Organize and compile the information. Identify gaps in your knowledge.
3. As a group, choose the first three actions you would implement based on the information you have available from your research. Identify who will need to take action (e.g. individuals, governments, businesses, etc). Justify your decisions.
4. Outline the steps you would take to implement the actions.

**Materials and Resources**

- Computer and Internet connection
- Blackline master: *Assessing Actions to Protect Threatened Killer Whale Populations*

**Extensions**

Research and discuss laws that are used to protect species at risk in Canada. Draft a law that will help protect killer whale populations. Research and discuss actions individuals and community groups are taking to protect killer whales in British Columbia.

**Evaluation**

Use the following to assess student work during the lesson.

Sample Criteria	
To what extent did the student:	
1. demonstrate that he/she gathered appropriate background information	5 4 3 2 1 0
2. consider the consequences of his/her proposed solutions for different groups	5 4 3 2 1 0
3. consider evidence against his/her views and revise these views should the evidence warrant	5 4 3 2 1 0
4. demonstrate careful thought about the issues and consideration for other perspectives	5 4 3 2 1 0
5. use a graphic organizer (e.g., web charts, diagrams, "pro and con" charts) to record findings	5 4 3 2 1 0
6. demonstrate willingness to defend a particular point of view	5 4 3 2 1 0
7. identify criteria to determine the reasonableness and effectiveness of the proposed actions	5 4 3 2 1 0

## Assessing Actions to Protect Threatened Killer Whale Populations

1. Name and describe a threat to killer whale populations.
2. Describe how this threat might harm killer whale populations. Note the sources of your information.
3. What actions can Canadians take to decrease this threat? Consider actions that can be taken by the media, individuals, businesses and governments.
4. Brainstorm the possible positive and negative outcomes of each action for the environment and the economy:

Action Canadians can take to decrease this threat	Environment		Economy	
	Positive Outcomes	Negative Outcomes	Positive Outcomes	Negative Outcomes

5. What additional information would you like to have before you make a decision to implement one or all of these actions?