

A Whale of a Time

A boatload of facts you didn't know about orcas, British Columbia's most popular tourist attractions **BY SHERI RADFORD**

500

More than 500 orcas have been identified along BC's coastline. Each is recognizable by its unique scars, its saddle patch, and the size and shape of its dorsal fin.

80

Female orcas live a maximum of 80 years, while males might reach 60 or 70. Females can breed until about age 40.

17

Being pregnant for nine months seems easy compared to the 16 or 17 months that an expectant orca carries a calf.

9.8

Orcas, also known as killer whales, are not in fact whales. They're the largest member of the dolphin family and can reach a length of 9.8 m (32 ft).

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How many human deaths have been attributed to orcas living in the wild? None. Orcas earned their "killer" moniker by being at the top of the food chain, eating everything from fish to birds to seals. Some have been spotted eating deer and moose foolish enough to venture into the ocean—plus at least one great white shark. **W**

