

In the Puget Sound in Washington State, Whales have always been here and will continue to be here if the interaction from human influences decrease. Being new to mapping in this class, I tried my best to create a map that demonstrates the impact of fishing, public transportation vessels, large cargo and oil/chemical tankers, military vessels, and even recreational vessels pose on whales and the other species in the sound.

Over fishing is one of the biggest threats to the food chain that allow whales to feed. Fish that are being targeted are food sources for seals and whales. With the decrease in fish due to over fishing and increase in fishing lines and gear in the water, this is lessening the number of fish for seals and whales to eat. With seals not being able to find food or eating whatever it can find causes a drop in seal population, which cause whales to find other sources in food that may not be beneficial to them.

However, public transportation such as ferries or even cruise ships and military vessels such as aircraft carriers and destroyers, use sonar which cause high pitch noises that distress whales causing them to surface. Whales can surface at any time due to this high pitch sound and results in whales being hit by these types of vessels. Also, by any vessel that is not following the whale slowdown that is put in place in the sound.

Lastly, oil/chemical tankers and cargo vessels are at risk of hitting whales when the surface as well as the potential for an oil spill or running around causing the leaking of oil. We all know the damage an oil spill does to ecosystems in the ocean. This can damage many ecosystems that kill food chains and species.

With the relaxation of human pressures, I do not believe it could go back to exactly the way that it was before human interaction. The human race has done so much damage that some species are on the break of extinction or need laws to be protected. And with the pollution humans do with plastics it is hard to come back from what has already been done. However, I do believe that if we make certain changes in the way humans interreact with whales and the ecosystems around it, we may be able to steady the populations rather than decrease them.