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www.naturenorth.com/OCA/index.html

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www.naturenorth.com/OCA/OCAsightings.htm

New Website & Sightings

To improve our ability to share research results with northern communities, we've moved our Orcas of the Canadian Arctic (OCA) site to NatureNorth.com, a website about Manitoba wildlife and plants. You can see the new website at:

www.naturenorth.com/OCA/index.html

In 2012, we received 14 reports of killer whales, but we hear that some sightings haven't been reported yet. If you see killer whales, please send us a Sightings Form. These forms help us learn where killer whales are going, how many there are, and how they may impact the marine mammal stocks that northern communities depend on (see page 2-3 for an example). All of this valuable information is shared with your community, so your reports are very important.

Our Sightings Forms are now available online, making it easier for you to send them. You can see the forms, as well as a map of other sightings, at:

www.naturenorth.com/OCA/OCAsightings.htm



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Their Tails Tell the Tale

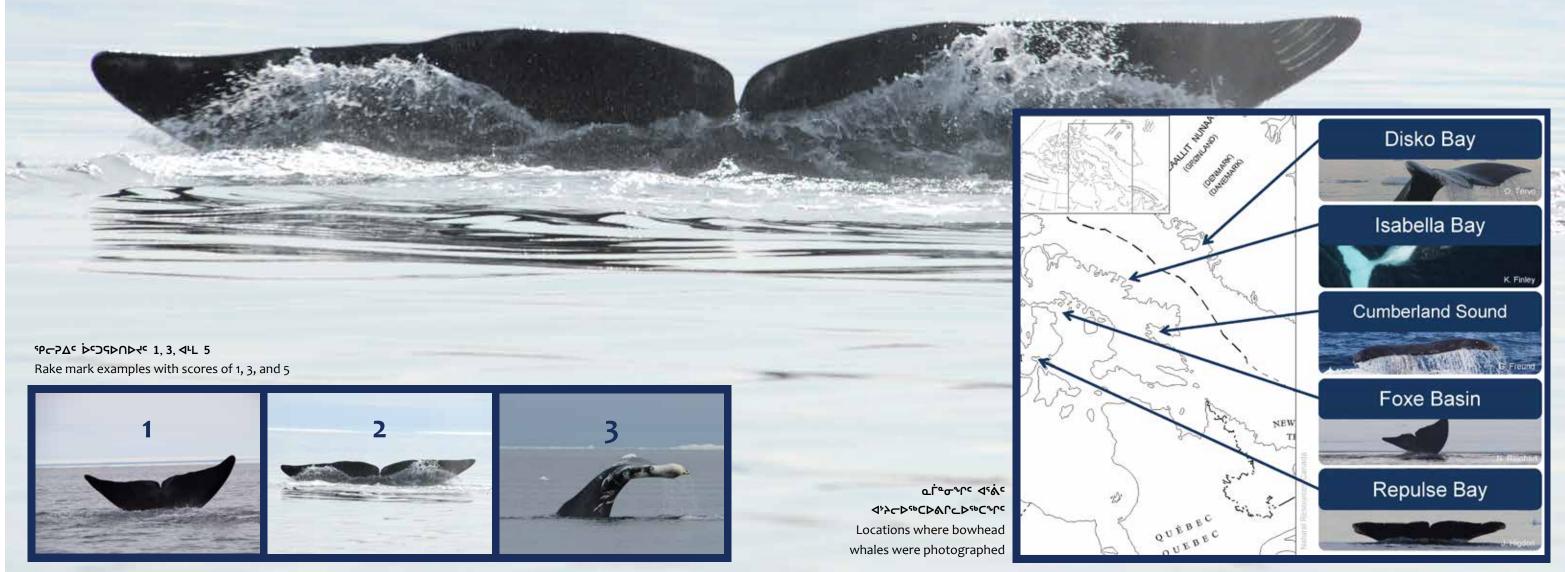
When killer whales attempt to capture bowhead whales, they leave unique scars — called rake marks — on their tails. We know these rake marks are from killer whales because they match the spacing and shape of their teeth.

Traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and science indicate that Eastern Arctic population of bowhead whales is recovering from commercial whaling. Therefore, frequency of rake mark on bowhead whales could tell us if killer whale predation is slowing their recovery. Graduate student Natalie Reinhart's study, which is summarized below, will help us learn more.

Natalie collected photographs of bowheads from five areas and scored each whale for the amount of scaring. This was on a scale of 1-5, with ones having no scars and fives having the most.

From her photographs, Natalie identified 823 individual whales, 10% of which had rake marks. Old animals had more rake marks than young animals, and more rake marks were found in recent photos than in older photos. This could be because killer whale populations are increasing in the Eastern Canada Arctic.

Based on her findings, Natalie concluded that killer whales may limit the recovery of Eastern Canada – West Greenland population of bowhead whales. However, more research is needed to confirm this, and Natalie will continue her study in 2013.



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Inukjuak Killer Whale Entrapment

For several days this winter, killer whales became entrapped in ice northwest of Inukjuak, Nunavik (Quebec). We would like to thank everyone who shared entrapment photos and videos with us or Kristin Westdal from Oceans North (www.oceansnorth.org/). We will use the images, along with future sightings, to learn about the behaviour, health, and fate of the entrapped animals. The more images we get, the more we will all learn, so please keep sharing them through our Sightings Forms at: www.naturenorth.com/OCA/OCAsightings.html

We also respect traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) and would like to hear about past entrapments or sightings. If you have some information to share, please contact us at: OCA@dfo-mpo.gc.ca

We will share what we have learned about the entrapment whales in our 2013 issue of the Aarluk News.





Orcas of the Canadian Arctic (OCA) - www.naturenorth.com/OCA/index.htm