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April 11, 2023

### **Winter 2023 Bigg's Killer Whale Population Update**

The Bigg's killer whale population is listed as Threatened in Canada. Population censusing by photo-identification is a key research activity outlined in the action plan for Bigg's killer whales (Fisheries and Ocean Canada 2016) and has been conducted on the population each year since 1974. Since then, the Bigg's killer whale population in Canada has undertaken significant growth due to immigration, low mortality, and high rates of reproduction that are presumably correlated with increased prey availability. At the end of 2018 the subset of the population most often found in coastal waters totaled 349 individuals and had grown at an average rate of 4.1% per year since 2012 (Towers et al. 2019). The following list provides names of individuals confirmed to have been born and those presumed deceased since the last update provided on January 3, 2023, as well as a correction to the sex of one individual. Population updates will continue to be provided on a quarterly basis.

T174A2 (born 2019)  
T168A2 (born 2021)  
T250D (born 2022)  
T117B1 (born 2023)  
T069A6 (born 2023)  
T075C2 (presumed dead)  
T077B (presumed dead)  
T250C (presumed dead)  
Correction: T109A2A is male

### **References**

Fisheries and Oceans Canada. 2016. Action Plan for the Transient (Bigg's) Killer Whale (*Orcinus orca*) in Canada [Draft]. *Species at Risk Act* Action Plan Series. Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Ottawa. iv + 29 pp.

Towers, J.R., Sutton, G.J., Shaw, T.J.H., Malleeson, M., Matkin, D., Gisborne, B., Forde, J., Ellifrit, D., Ellis, G.M., Ford, J.K.B. and Doniol-Valcroze, T. 2019. Photo-identification catalogue, population status, and distribution of Bigg's killer whales known from coastal waters of British Columbia, Canada. *Can. Tech. Rep. Fish. Aquat. Sci.* 3311: vi + 299 p