

Victoria BC: Whale Watching At Its Best!

By Ron Kirstein

Photos Courtesy of [Orca Girl](#)



A Transient whale in pursuit of a meal
Photo by "Orca Girl" Chantelle Tucker

I always tell visitors to Victoria and Vancouver Island that there are four world class tourism activities to take part in while in Victoria. One of those is the incredible whale watching that is available. Between May and September, there are three resident whale pods that travel the waters near Victoria: J, K, and L pod - between 80 and 100 whales, in all. On two different occasions I had the great fortune of being in a location where all three pods came together. It was a spectacular display of breaching and diving and all of the other behaviors shown in the pictures in this article - over and over again.



Sky Hopping Whale
Photo by "Orca Girl" Chantelle Tucker



A whale tail slapping
Photo by "Orca Girl" Chantelle Tucker

The hundreds of people that go whale watching each trip believe that they are watching the whales. Guess what? The whales are watching you, too. They're often seen "sky hopping". This is when they come up and have a good look around. Sometimes, they do this right by boats and certainly seem to be checking everyone out.

It is also spectacular to see whales slapping their tails on the water as is the whale in the photo above right.



A Breaching Whale

Photo by "Orca Girl" Chantelle Tucker



The Dorsal Fin of a Large Male

Photo by "Orca Girl" Chantelle Tucker

One of the most spectacular activities is the breach. When a whale jumps clear out of the water, you can hear the *ooohs* and *aaawws* coming from all of the human spectators. It is very difficult to catch these breaches in pictures because they happen so fast. When the males grow into adulthood, their dorsal fins become huge. It is one of the ways that you can see the whales coming from far off. They are black and sometimes hard to see in the water, but not when there is a large dorsal fin heading your way.



**Whales passing the shoreline near
the Victoria Golf Course**

Photo by "Orca Girl" Chantelle Tucker



Porpoise, common in our waters

Photo Courtesy of Ron Kirstein

Sometimes you may have to travel up to an hour in distance to find the whales, and other times you get lucky and they are right off the Victoria waterfront. For example, the whale in the above left photo is checking out some golfers on the Victoria Golf Course. When you travel our waters, there are many other sights you will see. Dahl's Porpoises are common and they love to play in the wake of boats. They often chase boats and then criss-cross the bow as the boat travels through the water. You are likely to see seals and sometimes sea lions and a number of other whales like humpbacks and minkys. If you see Orcas chasing seals or sea lions, they are most likely transient whales. The resident Orcas are "civilized" and only eat salmon.



Seals are a common sight in our waters
Photo Courtesy of Ron Kirstein



A highspeed catamaran
Photo Courtesy of Wildcat

There are a number of ways to get to the whales. All of them go fast. If you want pure excitement, there is nothing better than the Zodiac Style, rubber-inflatable hard-bottom boats. If you like comfort, then you may choose a boat with a cabin on it. There are lots of choices as can be seen below, so check them all out. You might want to ask what you do when you have to go to the bathroom, as you will be on the water for three hours. You might also want to plan ahead, so that you don't need to go to the bathroom. Bon voyage! Enjoy one of our world class activities. Check out these whale watching companies [on our web site.](#)



High Speed fiberglass boat
Photo Courtesy of Eagle Wing



Zodiac style hard bottom inflatable
Photo Courtesy of Sea Coast



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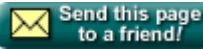
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