

Panel 15

UNDERSTANDING ORCAS – THE INDIGENOUS VIEW

For Indigenous peoples on the northwest coast of North America, everything in the oceans, lands, and skies is connected. All beings—all species—are related.

When orcas are considered ancestors and kin, they are treated as family and respected like elders.

Indigenous peoples remember, through oral histories, when orcas walked on land. In stories that have been told since time immemorial, orcas can transform themselves into humans or other animals. They can communicate with people, and with all beings, to share wisdom, wealth, power and healing.

They can enter our world and sometimes people enter theirs.

Ahljii ahluu áayaad hawaan sGaanee iitl' kilguudanggang. / And so even today, the [killer] whales understand our speech.

— Chief 'Láanaas Sdang, Adam Bell, Haida Nation, telling the Haida Story of the Two Brothers at Tiiiaan.