

Panel 27

WHALE WATCHING

Whale watching charters exist almost everywhere whales do. After researcher Michael Bigg photographed and catalogued orcas in Telegraph Cove, BC, in the 1970s, the captain he worked with launched the world's first whale watching tours focusing on orcas—or, as they were known then, killer whales. That was in 1980. As whale watching grew in popularity in BC and Washington State, regulations were created to respect and protect the whales. Elsewhere, there are few such regulations. In 2019, Canada and the US set new laws, requiring whale watchers to stay at least 400 metres away from the endangered Southern Residents and creating new sanctuary zones to make it easier for the Southern Residents to eat in peace. Perhaps this initiative and others will inspire the creation of more marine sanctuary zones around the world.