

Progress Report 20 July 2007

Monitoring, Tagging, Feeding Studies, and Restoration of Killer Whales in Prince William Sound/Kenai Fjords in 2007

We have completed three trips in 2007. One in Prince William Sound 28 April – 4 May and one in Kenai Fjords 9-14 June and our most recent trip in Prince William Sound on 1-13 July. We worked with Youth Area Watch on 12 and 13 May and successfully encountered and worked on whales with the students. We have had some problems with weather, particularly on the first trip in April which was considerably shortened by weather. Our next trip will be 30 July-8 August and another trip will be 15 July-26 August and a final trip 7-21 September. We expect to deploy the remaining tags and complete monitoring and gather additional feeding habit data.

Tags have been deployed on 4 whales and we obtained 10 biopsy samples and 5 scale samples on completed trips. We have identified all members of the AD5 pod, AD16 pod, AK pod, AI pod and part of AB and part of AJ pod and part of the AT1 population in our annual monitoring of individuals.

Tags were placed successfully on AK1, AD6, AT109, and AJ25. Unfortunately the tag on AJ 25 proved defective and did not transmit properly. Attached (Figure 1-3) are recent tracklines from three tagged whales.

We were able to resight and document the healing of wounds from tag attachment in 2006 on two whales. The flesh was completely healed and smooth on both animals (AK1 and AJ21) with only a small depression visible from a posterior view of the fin marking the location where the tag had been.

Additionally, we are on track with our publishing schedule having completed “Ongoing population level impacts on killer whales (*Orcinus orca*) eighteen years following the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill in Prince William Sound, Alaska” as promised in the original proposal. It was submitted and accepted by Marine Ecological Progress Series pending changes based on reviewers comments.

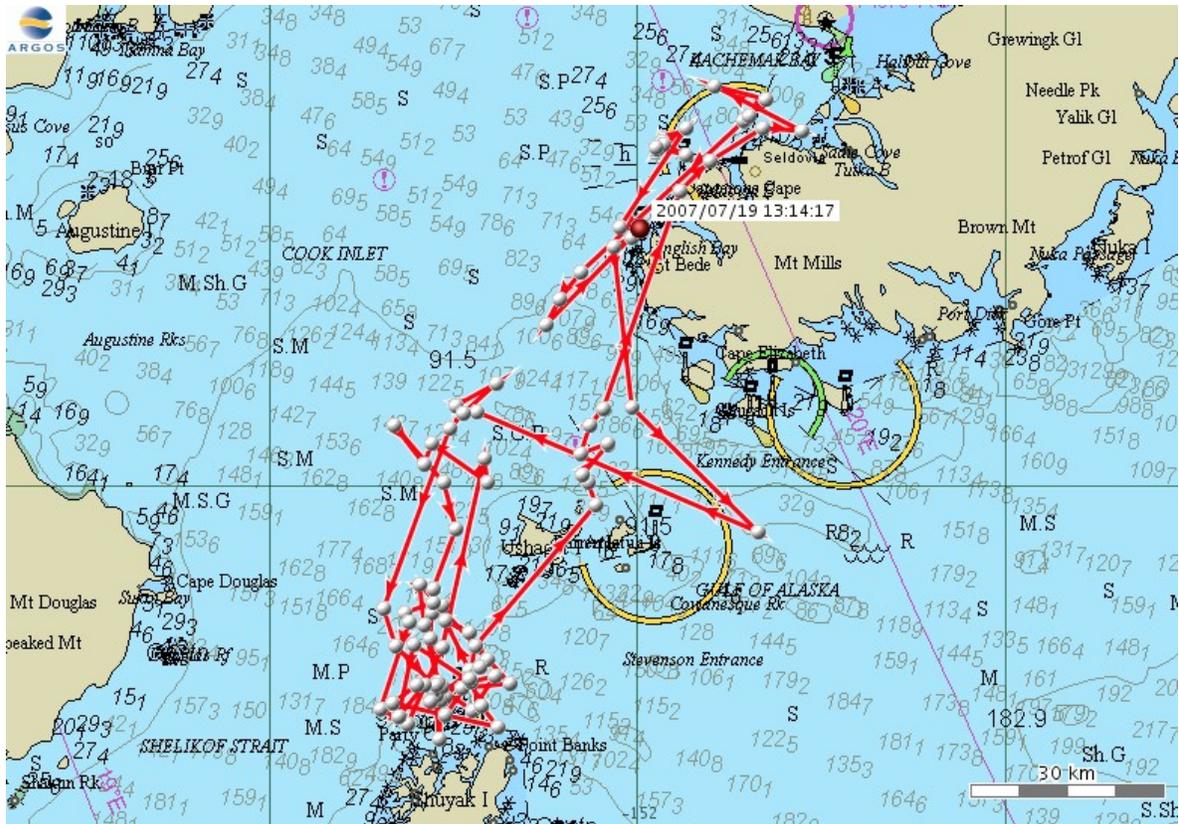


Figure 2. Trackline of AD06 (AD05 pod) for 10-19 July. After using Kenai Fjords/Resurrection Bay for most of May and until mid June, this pod then moved quickly to the Barren Islands/Shuyak area where they have been since that time, with a recent movement into Kachemak Bay



Figure 3. Trackline of Gulf of Alaska transient (mammal eating) killer whale AT109 who has covered over 300km of coastal waters in the 10-19 July period.