

Reduced Environmental Impact, Enhanced Eco-adventure Experience

Prince of Whales' new vessel adds industry-leading viewing platform for all passengers

VICTORIA, B.C. – The Salish Sea Eclipse – Prince of Whales' new, \$3.5-million environmentally friendly, custom-built catamaran – will further reduce the environmental footprint of B.C.'s premier whale-watching company while offering safe, more comfortable eco-adventures for passengers.

The height of the catamaran's top platform ensures the best possible viewing experience for all 95 passengers while increasing distance from marine mammals, an environmental advantage important to Prince of Whales, an industry leader in sustainability.

"The Salish Sea Eclipse promises an improved experience for our passengers and the marine environment," said Ben Duthie, general manager of Prince of Whales Whale & Marine Wildlife Adventures. "This kind of innovation is the perfect platform for education and conservation."

Designed on Vancouver Island and constructed in North Vancouver, the Salish Sea Eclipse is the second purpose-built, wildlife viewing vessel to enter the fleet in less than two years. The 80-foot Eclipse is even more quiet and fuel efficient than the high standard set by its sister ship. The new catamaran can carry 95 passengers and five crew, allowing more people to experience the wonder of the West Coast's landscape and marine wildlife while minimizing the environmental impact.

"One reason we're moving to these larger vessels is to reduce the overall acoustic footprint," said Duthie. "This new vessel can accommodate 95 passengers which is equivalent to more than seven zodiacs. With more people on a larger vessel we are reducing our overall environmental footprint as well as the overall acoustic profile."

The catamaran's innovative design employs a robust water jet propulsion system, increasing overall speed, decreasing noise, reducing fuel consumption and improving marine wildlife safety.

"The jets mean there are no underwater propellers hanging below the hull that could harm marine wildlife," said marine engineer Matt Dilay, with Gregory C. Marshall Naval Architect Ltd. of Saanich.

Interior acoustics have also been improved, affording passengers a quieter experience inside the cabin. Floor-to-ceiling windows in the lower-deck cabin provide a 365-degree panoramic view. With seats for every passenger both inside the cabin and out on the deck, everyone can enjoy a great view.

Prince of Whales is one of the oldest marine tour companies in British Columbia and is the industry leader when it comes to eco-tourism and environmental conservation, recently committing \$1 million over five years to orca-based science programs and chinook salmon recovery projects in British Columbia. The investment will come from a \$5-per-passenger ecological surcharge.

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