



Searching for Killer Whales Field Protocol

Your step-by-step guide to
completing an observation



TO DO BEFORE HEADING OUT

1. Complete the online training

2. Download Survey 123 application and Searching for Killer Whales Project



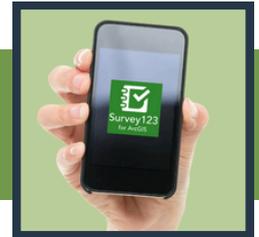
- Use the QR code or [this link](#)

Note: if you do not already have Survey 123 loaded on your device, you will need to visit the QR code or link two times.

3. Plan your adventure

- Gather a friend or group of adventure buddies.
- Choose your adventure type and location along the Oregon coast, up to 3 miles offshore.

What you need:



1. Smartphone with Survey 123 app and the Searching for Killer Whales project loaded
2. A device to take videos and photos.

NOTE: binoculars and a camera with a telephoto lens are not required, but can be helpful to capture observations clearly and from a longer distance.

Observation Basics

- Visually scan the open water for signs of whale presence.
- Keep in mind, there is a high likelihood that you might not see a whale or pod of whales.

That's okay! Absence data (not seeing whales) is also valid and necessary for this project. You will be recording an observation, whether you see whales or not.

When you see a whale...

Begin taking video of the whale(s) behavior. At the same time, take photos of the dorsal fin and saddle patch of each whale you see.

Do not worry about the Survey 123 application right now, this media (photos and video) is the most important part of a whale sighting observation.

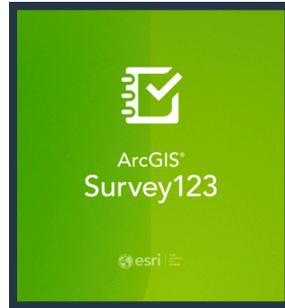


Entering Data in Survey 123

1. No whales sighted, begin on page 4 (this page).
2. Whale(s) sighted, begin on page 11

Entering Absence Data (no whales sighted)

1. Open the Survey 123 App.



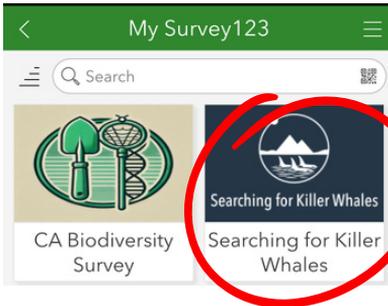
2. Click "Continue without signing in"



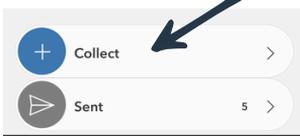
Entering Absence Data cont'd

(no whales sighted)

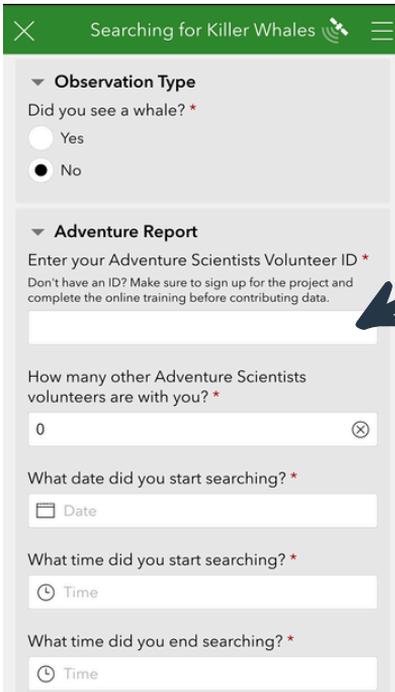
3. Click the "Searching for Killer Whales Project"



4. Click "Collect"



5. Begin entering observation data

A screenshot of a mobile application interface for the "Searching for Killer Whales" survey. The header is green with a close button, the title "Searching for Killer Whales", a location icon, and a menu icon. The form contains several sections: "Observation Type" with a question "Did you see a whale?*" and radio buttons for "Yes" and "No"; "Adventure Report" with a question "Enter your Adventure Scientists Volunteer ID*" and a text input field; "How many other Adventure Scientists volunteers are with you?*" with a numeric input field containing "0"; "What date did you start searching?*" with a date picker; "What time did you start searching?*" with a time picker; and "What time did you end searching?*" with a time picker.

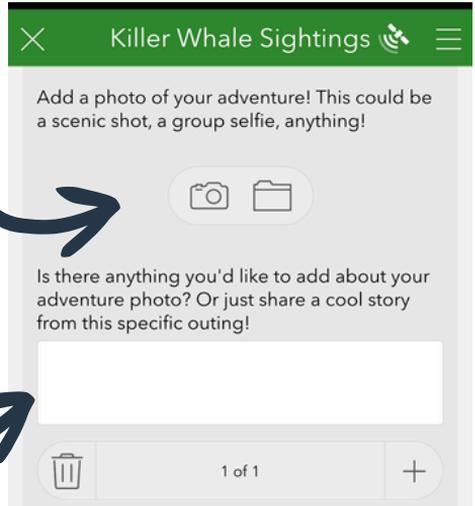
This was emailed to you when you signed up for the project. You can also retrieve it [here](#)

Entering Absence Data cont'd

(no whales sighted)

6. Share a fun photo with us from your adventure!

7. Add any details about your experience you would like to share

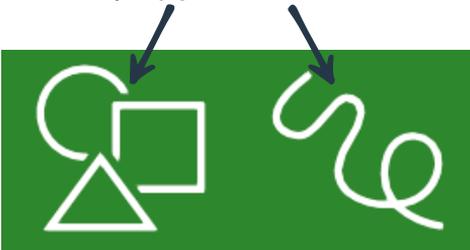


8. Record your adventure route.



Click to open the map.

Select either the polygon or line tool.



Entering Absence Data cont'd

(no whales sighted)

Using the drawing tools



Pro-Tip

The polygon tool is great for activities where you are in one location while searching.

For example: on the shore preparing to catch waves on your surfboard and looking out into open water.

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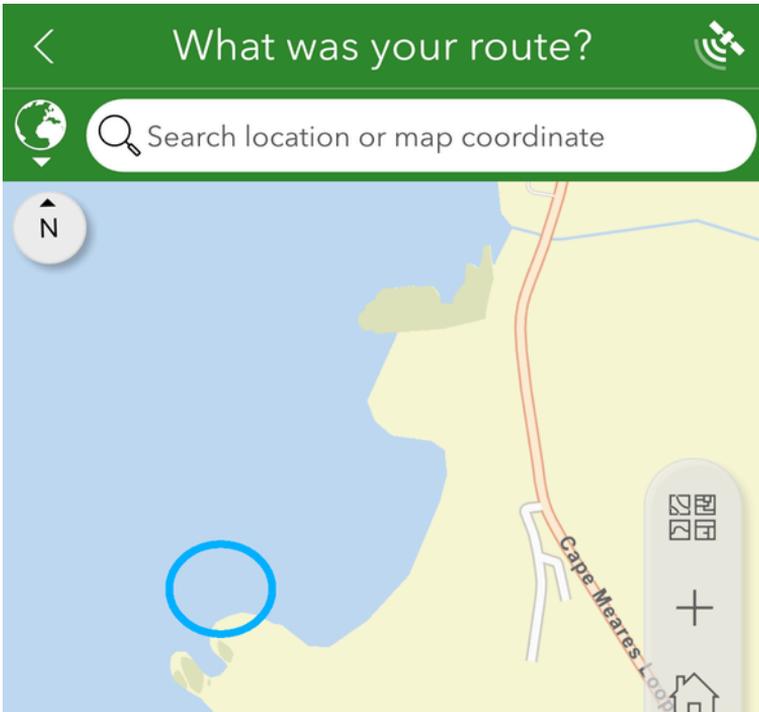
The line tool is great to show activities where movement takes place.

For example: a hike, walk, or run along the shore, or a kayak paddle in open water.

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Using the polygon tool

Click the  symbol then use your finger to draw a polygon shape showing where you were able to make the observation. In other words, what was your line of sight? Once you finish drawing, the application will turn your drawing into a polygon figure.



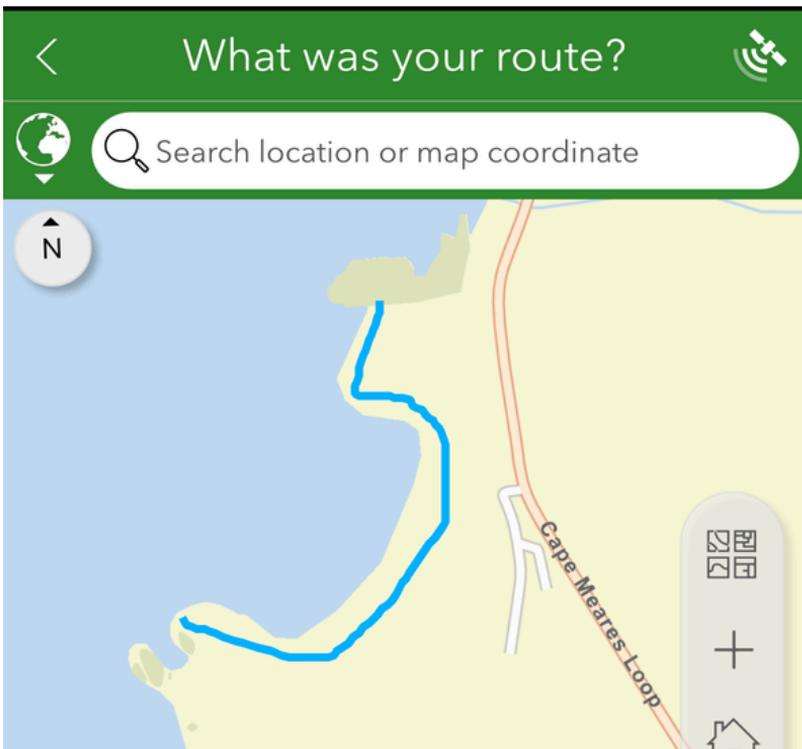
If you do not like the shape created, press the polygon symbol again to redo. Otherwise, click the arrow in the bottom right corner to accept.

Using the line tool

Click the  symbol then use your finger to draw a line demonstrating the route of your activity.

NOTE: Once you pick up your finger, you can no longer draw a line. In other words, you must draw the entire route with one continuous motion.

If you do not like the line created or accidentally pick up your finger too soon, press the line symbol again to redo. Otherwise, click the arrow in the bottom right corner to accept.



The line you draw does not need to be perfect. It is used to understand the location of your activity and observation.

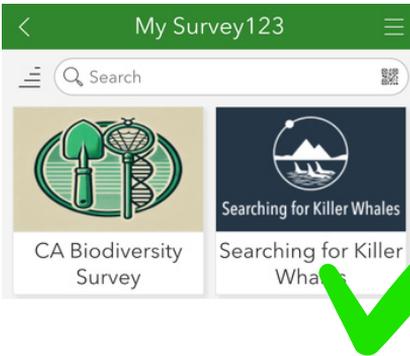
Entering Absence Data cont'd

(no whales sighted)

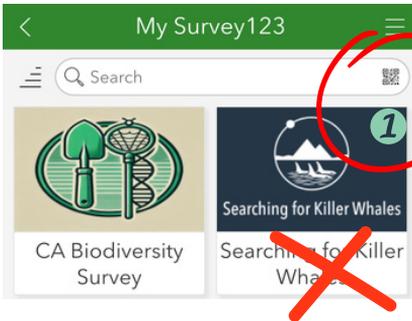
9. Click the check mark in the bottom right corner to submit your observation data.

10. Check that your data was submitted.

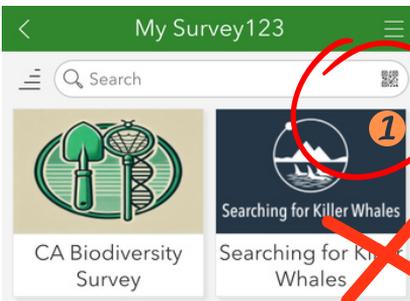
Close the application then reopen.



All data is submitted!



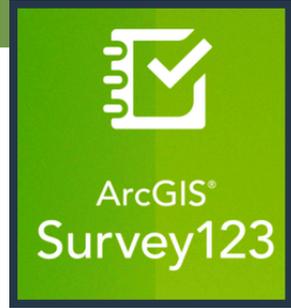
Data is not yet submitted.



Open the project and submit.

Entering Whale Sighting data

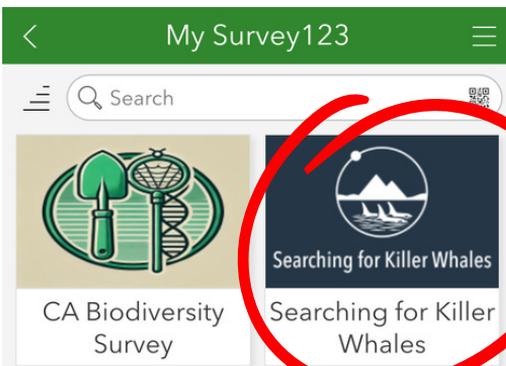
1. Open the Survey 123 App.



2. Click "Continue without signing in"

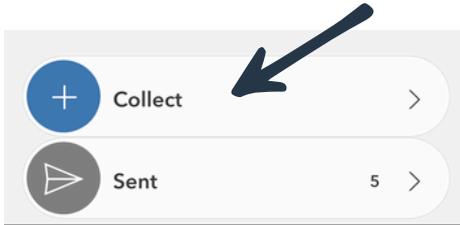


3. Click the "Searching for Killer Whales Project"

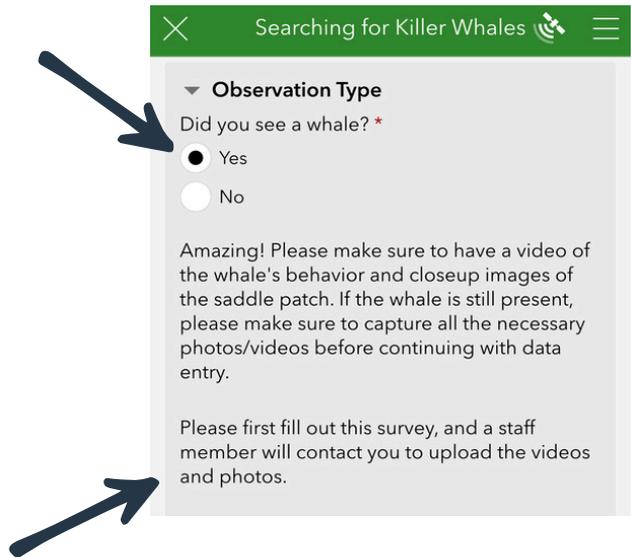


Entering Whale Sighting data cont'd

4. Click "Collect"



5. Begin filling in observation data.



NOTE: You will not share whale observation photos or videos in this application. An email will be sent to you to share this media AFTER you submit this observation in the application. This will allow for you to share higher quality (larger file size) photos and videos that are limited within this application.

Entering Whale Sighting data cont'd

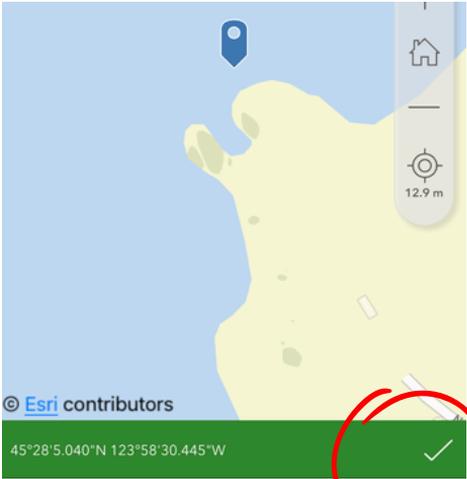
6. Enter the whale sighting location.

Click this icon to mark your location right now. Use this if you are in the exact location of the sighting.



Click this icon to open a map and select the observation location. This is a great choice if you are no longer in the observation location or to choose a more accurate exact location.

Pro-Tip:
Using the map icon provides the most accessible way to mark an exact observation point.



Click here to accept the location.

Entering Whale Sighting data cont'd

6. Enter additional observational data.

What day did you see the whale? *

What time did you see the whale? *

How many whales did you see? *

What species was the whale? *

Killer Whale

Other

7. Enter travel direction information.

For help, click
this prompt,
and useful
information
appears!

What was the direction of travel? *

Need a reminder of how to articulate whale travel directions?

Please show some examples of whale travel directions

Use cardinal directions: N, S, E, W. If a whale is going north but then turns around and goes south, type "N then S". If a whale is not going in any particular direction, type "mill". If a group splits, use "and" to denote both directions "N and W".

Entering Whale Sighting data cont'd

8. Enter behavioral data.

Note, if you click one behavior at a time, more information about the behavior is shared to help you.

You do not have to be an expert here, that's why there is an opportunity to rate your confidence level.

You can also add any notes you would like about what you saw.

The screenshot shows a mobile application interface for recording whale sightings. At the top, there is a green header with a close button (X), the title 'Killer Whale Sightings', and a menu icon (three horizontal lines). Below the header, the form is titled 'Select whale behavior: *'. It features four radio button options: 'Foraging' (which is selected with a checkmark), 'Traveling', 'Resting', and 'Socializing'. Below these options is a detailed text description for 'Foraging', explaining that it involves various methods to obtain food, such as deep dives to find prey, and notes that Southern Resident Killer Whales primarily eat salmon. Underneath the description is a section for 'Note your confidence in identifying the behavior being displayed: *', which includes a scale from 1 to 5. The scale consists of five radio buttons, with the button for '5' (highly confident) selected. At the bottom of the form is a 'Comments' section with the prompt 'Add helpful context to your observation' and a text input field.

Entering Whale(s) Sighting data cont'd

9. Environmental Data Entry

✕ Killer Whale Sightings  

▼ **Environmental Conditions**

Weather: *

Sunny - The sky is mostly clear with little to no cloud cover (0%-10%)

Mixed (Partly Cloudy / Partly Sunny / Intermittent) - A combination of sun and clouds throughout the day. Cloud cover us typically 30% to 70%

Cloudy - The sky is completely or almost completely covered with clouds (70% - 100%)

Was fog present? *

Yes

No

Rain: *

No Rain - No rain falling

Light Rain - Thin, gentle rain; barely noticeable at times

Moderate Rain - Steady and visible rain

Heavy Rain - Intense downpour; can reduce visibility

Wave Height: *

Calm (<0.5 m)

Moderate (0.5-2.5 m)

Rough (>2.5 m)

Approximate temperature in Fahrenheit (°F) *

Entering Whale Sighting data cont'd

10. Adventure Report

This was emailed to you when you signed up for the project. You can also retrieve it [here](#)

Searching for Killer Whales

▼ **Adventure Report**

Enter your Adventure Scientists Volunteer ID *
Don't have an ID? Make sure to sign up for the project and complete the online training before contributing data.

How many other Adventure Scientists volunteers are with you? *
0

What date did you start searching? *
Date

What time did you start searching? *
Time

What time did you end searching? *
Time

Add a photo of your adventure! This could be a scenic shot, a group selfie, anything!

Is there anything you'd like to add about your adventure photo? Or just share a cool story from this specific outing!

Share a fun photo with us. Remember, these are not your dorsal fin, saddle patch, or whale behavior photos.

Add any details about your experience you would like to share

11. Record your activity route.

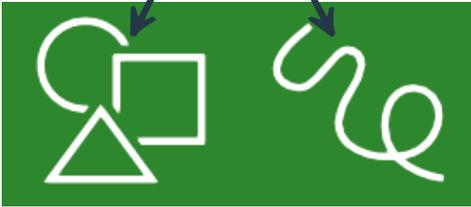
What was your route? *

Once you click this icon, a map will appear.
(continue to the next page for more details about this step.)

Entering Whale Sighting data cont'd

Recording the route.

Select either the polygon or line tool.



Pro-Tip

The polygon tool is great for activities where you are in one location while searching.

For example: on the shore preparing to catch waves on your surfboard and looking out into open water.

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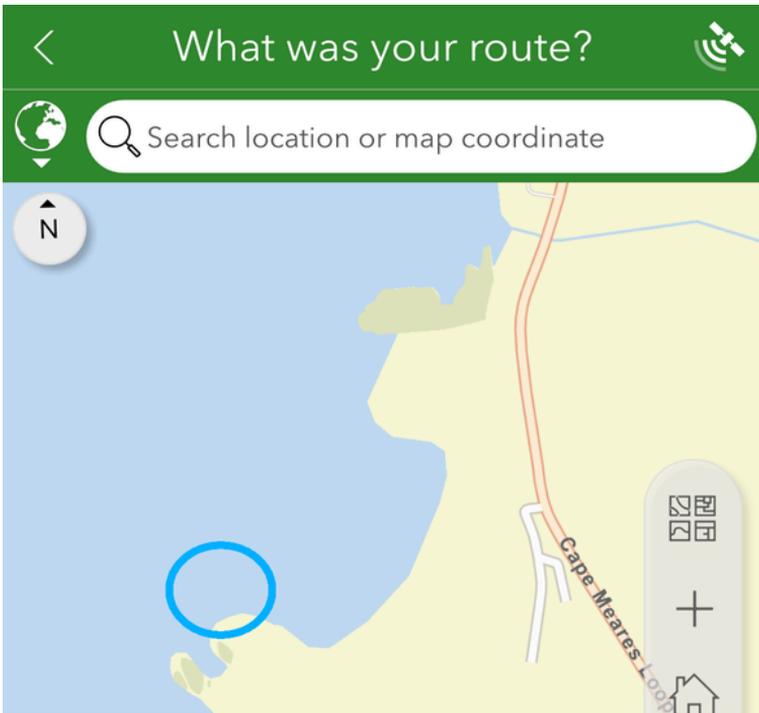
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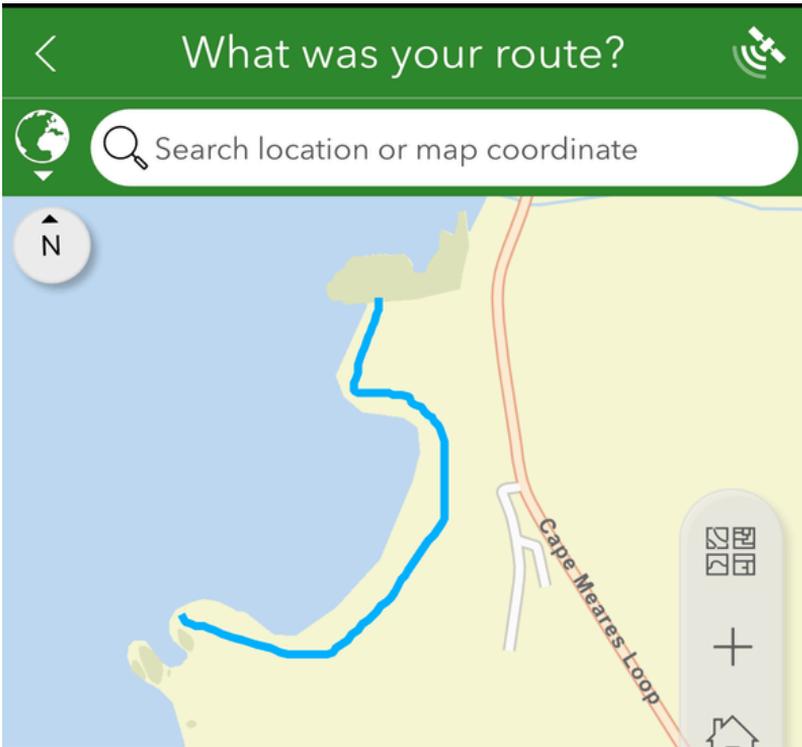
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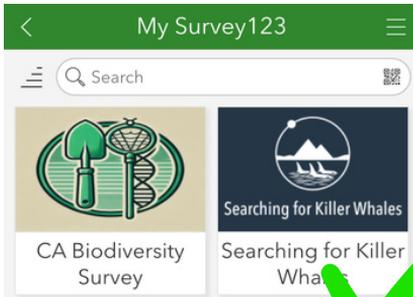
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Entering Whale Sighting data cont'd

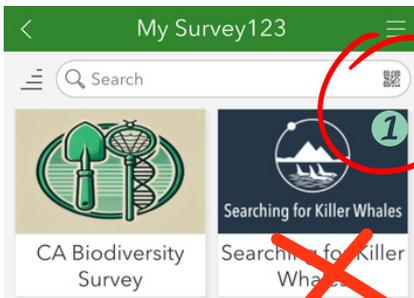
12. Click the check mark in the bottom right corner to submit your observation data.

13. Check that your data was submitted.

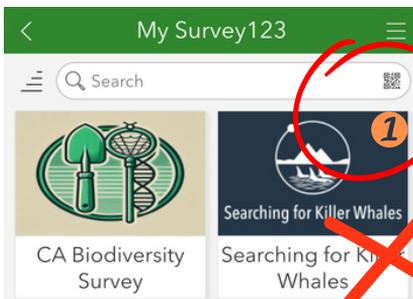
Close the application then reopen.



All data is submitted!



Data is not yet submitted.



Open the project and submit.

Submitting Whale(s) Sighting Media

After submitting your observation in Survey 123, an email will be sent to you with a special link to submit your photos and video(s).

While you wait for this email to arrive:



Organize your media, select the best dorsal fin and saddle patch photos for each whale observed.

Safety Considerations

As an Adventurer, you know that participating in outdoor activities such as hiking, biking, climbing, surfing, sailing, etc have inherent risks involved such as injury or wildlife encounters.

Before you head out on your adventure, familiarize yourself with potentially dangerous local wildlife encounters to consider (animal and plant), pack a first aid kit, and complete any additional safety preparation you feel is necessary for your adventure!

Pay close attention to and abide by all USCG, MMPA, and other maritime regulations in your area.

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

FIRST, CALL 911

Once you are in a safe situation, after the emergency, alert Adventure Scientists staff about the incident by contacting: (406) 579-9702.

ONLY contact this number if you are reporting an incident.

Have project-related questions?

Email: orcas@adventurescientists.org