

From: [Steve Box](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Crowded Waters
Date: Friday, February 21, 2020 11:20:48 AM

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Thank you for putting together this task force. I believe it's a much needed forum. I am a life long Juneau resident and have raised my family here in this truly amazing place. As the numbers of visitors climb and climb at an alarming rate, it's hard to be in a conversation without the talk of when or if, this steady climb will end. With a large population of locals now being more concerned with the lifestyle of summer in Juneau being quickly transformed to an industrial tourism port, we need to take some action. My main concern is with the whale watching industry.

First off, I am a commercial fisherman and also own a cabin on shelter island and have spent most of my summers for the last 40 years on the water. I have seen whale watching tours first hand grow to what it has become today. It's become more and more about how many trips in a day and how many boats can be filled. There is constant pressure on both the animals and the environment from an expanding season to an expanding number of trips per day to an expanding fleet of boats. Some regulations have been put in place as to how close they can be to the whales and how long they can be on a particular whale, those regulations are unenforced and clearly not followed by all. As it becomes more and more crowded around the whales, the competition between companies and captains becomes increasingly higher to get close and give their clients the best views. I watch it happen every time I pass through the whale zone. I believe some management tools

need to be put in place. Hours per day, numbers of boats, days per week, size of vessels, even areas off limits. These are a few things that should be considered.

Secondly, as a commercial fisherman I am constantly over at either the drive down dock or unloading product at our locally owned seafood processor Alaska Glacier Seafoods or often called AGS. It has become increasingly harder to do any business at the outside of the drive down dock or tied to the AGS piling due to constant wave activity. On a flat calm summer day it becomes dangerous for a smaller boat to do any business in this area due to constant wave activity. A single set of waves is not a problem. What happens is they build on top of each other and rebound back and forth between the Fritz Cove road side and the Indian Cove side and build to an unexpected large wave or set of waves. A speed limit for all whale watching boats should be in place all the way out to Coghland Island. Also allowing all that traffic through the Coghland Cut should be eliminated. All whale traffic should be required to go around Coghland Island on the south side only. These are safety issues that need to be addressed. As we add more whale boats this summer to keep up with demand, this issue is only going to get worse.

Along with attempting to keep Juneau a great place to live in the summer, we want to make sure the experience for our visitors along with maintaining a healthy environment for our marine life is a primary goal. An unregulated industry has the potential to destroy all of this and from what I am witnessing, we are on that path. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Steve Box

Lifelong Juneau Resident/Commercial Fisherman