

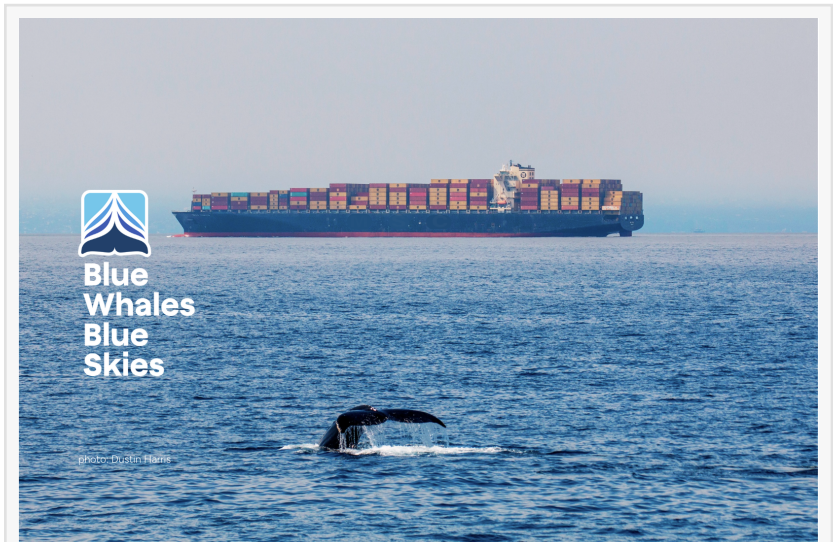
49 International Shipping Companies Opt In to Protect Endangered Whales & Reduce Air Pollution in Coastal Communities

Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies Program 2024 Results and Rankings

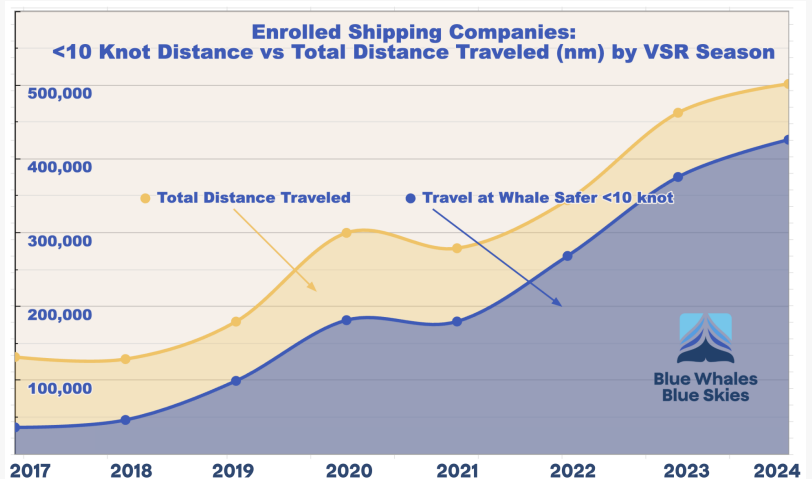
CA, UNITED STATES, February 19, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Vessels are critical to our economy, with over 80% of the world's trade facilitated by the maritime industry. The average container ship measures approximately four football fields, carrying about 15,000 standard 20-foot containers. These vessels carry goods and materials across the world's oceans, often overlapping with important habitat for marine life. For marine species like whales, which have not evolved to avoid these massive ships, this can result in deadly collisions known as ship strikes.

Ship strikes are a major contributor of mortality to whales around the globe and are especially of concern in whale hotspots that overlap with major international shipping routes.

However, if large vessels reduce their speeds to 10 knots or less in these areas when the likelihood of whale presence is highest, the risk of fatal strikes is reduced by 50% or more. Furthermore, reduced speeds result in fewer emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases. This is why [Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies](#) (BWBS) works to incentivize global shipping lines to voluntarily participate in vessel speed reduction measures in key areas off of the California coast.



Container ship and whale fluke



Graph showing cumulative travel at whale safer speeds during VSR seasons

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The [Vessel Speed Reduction \(VSR\) Season](#) is designed to coincide with endangered whale migration as well as peak ozone seasons for California coastal communities. In the 2024 Season, BWBS verified that 743 vessels, across 49 of the world's largest shipping lines, opted-in to reduce their speeds. BWBS' 2024 Season – the program's 10-year anniversary – was the most significant yet, marking a jump in total participating shipping lines – from 33 to 49 – and an increase in distance traveled at “whale-safer” speeds.



Two blue whales in Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary

Shipping Lines Ranked In Top Tier for Performance Almost Doubles

In 2024, the number of shipping lines that qualified for the top award tier (“Sapphire,” with 85%+ total miles traveled in the VSR zones at 10 knots or less) almost doubled from the prior season, from 13 to 23. They are:

CMA CGM; Connaught Shipmanagement HK; COSCO Shipping; CSL Americas; Hong Kong Top Honor Shipping; ISM Ship Management Ltd; Maersk; Marathon Petroleum; MSC; NYK Ro-Ro; Ocean Network Express; OOCL; OSG Ship Management, Inc.; Pilon Navigation; ConocoPhillips - Polar Tankers; Starbulk SA; STX Marine Service Co; Swire Shipping; Teo Shipping Corporation; Tomini Transports LLC; Toyofuji; Wallenius Wilhelmsen; and Yang Ming Marine Transport Corp.

The shipping lines that qualified for the next award tier (Gold, 60-84% cooperation rate) included:

Campbell Shipping Company, D'Amico Group; Dockendale; Empire Bulker Ltd.; Evergreen; Hapag-Lloyd; HMC Shipmanagement Co Ltd; Hyundai Glovis; K Line; Mol ACE; Pacific Basin Shipping Ltd.; Raffles Shipmanagement Services; Scorpio Group; Temm Maritime Co Ltd; Unisea Shipping Ltd; Venture Shipping Ltd; Veritas Shipmanagement and Wan Hai.

Overall Fleet Cooperation Continues to Rise

In 2024, cumulative program cooperation rates continued to trend upward in both the San Francisco and Southern California VSR zones. Program-wide, 85% of the total distance traveled by participating vessels – equating to 425,981 nautical miles – was traveled at the requested whale-safer speeds of 10 knots or less. Out of all of the traffic traveling within the VSR zones, 78% of all container ships and 97% of all auto/RORO ships elected to participate in the BWBS program.

About BWBS

BWBS is a collaborative partnership among federal and local government agencies, foundations, and environmental nonprofits, including the California Marine Sanctuary Foundation; the Bay Area Air Quality Management District; Santa Barbara County, Ventura County, and San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control Districts; Monterey Bay Air Resources District; Channel Islands, Monterey Bay, Greater Farallones, and Cordell Bank National Marine Sanctuaries; and Benioff Ocean Science Laboratory. Container, car carrier, bulk and fuel carrier ships are eligible to participate in BWBS, which complements the NOAA, U.S. Coast Guard, and Environmental Protection Agency voluntary requests for all vessels 300 gross tons or larger to reduce speeds during the months of peak air pollution and endangered blue, humpback, and fin whale abundance to protect them from one of their top threats — fatal ship strikes — and to reduce air pollution. For more information about how to enroll, how BWBS verifies cooperation and what types of companies and entities are eligible for the ambassador program, visit:

www.bluewhalesblueskies.org.

For shipping companies and bulk operators interested in learning more, contact Jess Morten at jessica.morten@noaa.gov. For logistics companies, freight forwarders, ports and product companies interested in learning about our Ambassador program, contact Becca Tucker, at becca@californiaMSF.org.

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