A Partnership for Cleaner Air, Safer Whales, and a Quieter Ocean

As a voluntary Vessel Speed Reduction (VSR) Program along the California coast, we incentivize companies to incorporate sustainable shipping practices across their global supply chain. By creating seasonal and predictable slow-speed zones, we help these companies protect endangered whales, reduce fuel use and regional greenhouse gas emissions, and improve air quality and human health outcomes.

www.bluewhalesblueskies.org

2022 Highlights

- 23 global shipping companies & 684 ships participated
- Total slow-speed distance: 266,148 nautical miles
- Emissions reductions:

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- 921 tons of smog-forming NOx
- 32,604 metric tons of regional GHGs
- Ocean noise reduction:
 4.6 dB/transit
- 44% reduction in risk of ship strikes on whales



2022 Program Summary

The 2022 VSR Program was implemented successfully from May 1 to December 15, 2022, the time period that coincides with peak ozone levels as well as the presence of endangered blue, humpback, and fin whales near the California coast. Operators of container ships, auto carriers, bulk, and general cargo vessels were asked to slow down to 10 knots or less in these highly trafficked vessel speed reduction (VSR) zones, which helped reduce air pollution and protect endangered whales. Companies that slowed down a large portion of their fleet were eligible for awards and recognition. For the 2022 season, cooperation levels continued to rise with 78% of the distance traveled by participating ships at 10 knots or less.

SF Bay Region VSR Zones

SoCal Region VSR Zones





2022 Fleet Cooperation Awards

Participating companies received awards and recognition based on the percentage of total nautical miles traveled at 10 knots or less by each company's fleet of vessels.

Sapphire Tier (85-100%):













Gold Tier (60-84%):













Blue Sky Tier (35-59%):









2014-2022 VSR Incentive Program Summary Table

The table below shows participation, cooperation, and benefits of the VSR incentive program. The metrics for reductions in air pollution, noise, and fatal ship strike risk are modeled results and represent benefits from only the enrolled companies operating during the incentive VSR time period within specified zones.

"Protecting Blue Whales and Blue Skies" Vessel Speed Reduction Program								
Program Year	2014	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
VSR Zone	Santa Barbara Channel Region		Santa Barbara Channel Region & San Francisco Bay Region			Southern California Region & San Francisco Bay Region		
# Companies	7	10	11	12	15	16	18	23
# Vessels	14	25	44	295	349	483	545	684
Slow-speed Distance (nautical miles)	2,700	5,000	12,630	46,026	99,019	181,306	179,530	266,148
Overall Fleet Cooperation	-			36%	55%	60%	64%	78%
NOx Reductions (tons)	12.4	25.6	84	266	536	748	650	921
Regional GHG Reductions (metric tons)	535	1,005	2,630	8,668	17,026	24,258	22,201	32,604
Ocean Noise Reduction * (Decibels (dB) / transit)				1.0		2.3	4.1	4.6
Ship Strike Risk Reduction **	-					35%	50%	44%
* Represents the decrease in noise from participating vessels in the Southern California Region.								

Since 2014, the voluntary VSR incentive program has seen increasing success and participation each year. We look forward to reducing air emissions, protecting endangered whales, and reducing anthropogenic noise pollution for the 2023 VSR season.

Giving Back

Thank you to the fourteen companies who generously declined their 2022 financial incentives and reinvested them into the 2023 program!







SWIRE BULK





















Program Partners





















