

Harbor Porpoise Project

Marine Wildlife Observation

Study Site Guide

Use this guide to look up basic information about a handful of good marine wildlife observation locations on public park land on Fidalgo and Whidbey Islands. This guide is not meant to be comprehensive; if you are unfamiliar with a location, check it out for yourself to determine whether it will be a suitable observation location for you, and if so, what materials you will need to bring to observe in comfort.

Many good observation sites are not listed here. If you know of another coastal lookout point with an elevated vantage point, feel free to observe there and let us know about it. Use landmarks or a rangefinding tool to help define the study area radius (up to 1000 m); the radius should not exceed 20x your elevation. Find your location's elevation at www.geoplaner.com.

All locations should be considered potentially hazardous during and after heavy rain, extreme weather, etc. Heed all warning signs. Use common sense and do not endanger yourself. And dress appropriately, including shoes with good tread.

QUESTIONS? Email us:

porpoise@pacificbio.org

FIDALGO ISLAND

Roadside Park

RP65

Hillside above Guemes Channel/Ship Harbor with paved walking trail, armored shoreline, and cobble beach below. Field of view restricted by trees.

Directions:	Park at Roadside Park on Oakes Avenue and take the stairs as though to reach the Guemes Channel Trail. A cleared observation spot is accessible off the right side of the trail before the second set of stairs. Or walk along the Guemes Channel Trail and take the stairs up.
Landmark:	None. Max study area radius: 300 m.
Accessability:	Easy to moderate. Flight of stairs and short, relatively even trail.
Elevation:	15 m
Hazards:	Some uneven areas of trails.

FIDALGO ISLAND Cap Sante Viewpoint

CS11



High rocky bluff with several possible spots to sit and observe. Sometimes busy with people enjoying the view of Anacortes and surroundings.

Directions: From downtown Anacortes, take 4th St to V Ave and turn right. Follow the road up the hill to the viewpoint parking lot.

Landmark: 1000 m. Use buoy closest to refinery dock OR nearest corner of Anacortes Marina.

Accessability: Very easy to moderate. You may choose to climb over exposed bedrock to find a suitable lookout, or observe from a bench.

Elevation: 60 m

Hazards: Bluff rocks and soil can be slippery during/after wet weather.

FIDALGO ISLAND Rotary Park

RP12

View of Cap Sante Marina and Fidalgo Bay. Shoreline visible. Relatively few passersby.

Directions: Park in Rotary Park lot or Cap Sante Marina lot, then walk along paved Rotary Park trail at the base of Cap Sante. At the end, climb the stairs and continue on the trail, veering right to reach a small clearing overlooking the water.

Landmark: 400 m. Use middle of channel between rock jetty and breakwater.

Accessability: Easy-moderate. Trail is about ½ mile long and last, short portion is unpaved, rough and steep.

Elevation: 20 m

Hazards: Some uneven areas of trail.



FIDALGO ISLAND Washington Park

WP01, WP02, WP03, WP04, WP05

WP01: Green Point (ADA parking)



WP02: West Beach bench



WP03: Juniper Point (hiking required)

WP04: Juniper Point bench

WP05: Burrows Pass overlook (hiking optional, but must traverse unimproved bedrock)



Views of Rosario Strait and Burrows Pass. Many passersby, especially in good weather. Rocky bluffs and intertidal zones with offshore kelp beds.

Directions:	Park is located at the northwest corner of Fidalgo Island, west of WA State Ferry terminal. Follow signs for park loop road and either park in the main lot and walk, or drive around the 2¼ mi loop and pull off near one of the 4 viewpoints.
Landmark:	WP02: 200 m; beginning of rocks past beach. WP05: 500 m; Burrows Island.
Accessibility:	Easy to moderate. Some locations accessed by trail.
Elevation:	WP01-05: 5 m, 10 m, 25 m, 40 m, 15-60 (see www.geoplaner.com)
Hazards:	Some uneven areas of trails. Bluff rocks and soil are very slippery during/after wet weather.

FIDALGO ISLAND

Sharpe Park – Sares Head

SP31



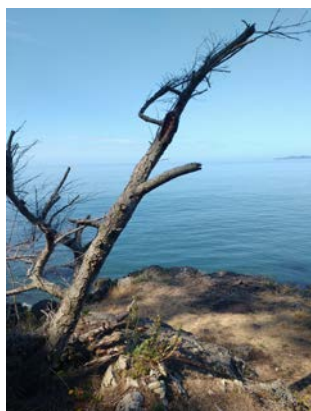
Expansive views of Rosario Strait. Better for marine mammal viewing than for birds. High, rocky bluff.

Directions:	Look for Sharpe Park Montgomery-Duban Headlands sign on the west side of Rosario Rd, north of Rosario Beach area of Deception Pass State Park. Park in lot and follow trail signs for Sares Head. Observe from lower tier of bluff.
Landmark:	850 m. Use Northwest Island.
Accessibility:	Moderate – 0.6 mi groomed hiking trail, some elevation gain. Lower Trail rec'd.
Elevation:	100 m
Hazards:	Some uneven areas of trail. Walk across rocky bluff face (can be slippery if wet).

FIDALGO ISLAND

Sharpe Park – Bluff Trail

SP32



Multiple views of Rosario Strait. Expect few other people to brave the very difficult trails to reach the viewpoints. Rocky bluff and intertidal zone with offshore kelp beds.

Directions:	As above, but take the first two right turns after passing the wetland, then the next two left turns and a right, following signs for the bluff. Two best viewing points (pictured) are within 0.9 difficult miles of the trailhead.
Landmarks	None. Max study area radius: 200 m.
Accessibility:	Extremely challenging – rough, steep, narrow trails. High physical fitness required.
Elevation:	10 m
Hazards:	Slipping and tripping hazards abound. Narrow clifftop trail without safety barriers. Observe with a partner for your safety.

FIDALGO ISLAND Deception Pass State Park

DP51, DP52

(DP51, Rosario Head) Panoramic views of Rosario Strait. Interaction with passersby somewhat likely. Rocky bluff with offshore kelp beds.

Directions:	Take Rosario Road to Cougar Gap Road and continue down the hill to the Rosario Beach parking lot. From the parking lot, take the path and turn right to reach Rosario Head. Take the trail to the left (south) or up the middle of the Head for easiest access. Access fee: \$10 or Discover Pass.
Landmark:	400 m. Use Coffin Rocks, to the south of Rosario Head.
Accessibility:	Easy-moderate – short hiking trail with some elevation gain.
Elevation:	20 m
Hazards:	Trail has moderately steep/rough spots. No safety barriers at clifftop.

DP51: Rosario Head



DP52: Lighthouse Point Trail

(DP52, Lighthouse Point Trail) Views of Deception Pass. Interaction with passersby somewhat likely. Low, rocky bluff with offshore kelp beds.

Directions:	Take Rosario Road to Bowman Bay Road. From the parking lot, take the beachside path and continue onto Lighthouse Point Trail. Viewpoints along southernmost shore. Access fee: \$10 or Discover Pass.
Landmark:	None. Max study area radius: 200 m.
Accessibility:	Moderate – trail has steep/rough stretches.
Elevation:	10 m
Hazards:	Trail has moderately steep/rough spots. No safety barriers at clifftop.

WHIDBEY ISLAND

Fort Ebey State Park

FE41



Panoramic views. When wind is westerly, a popular spot for model airplane enthusiasts and paragliders. Feeder bluff, cobble beach, and offshore kelp beds.

Directions:	Take Highway 20 to W Libbey Rd, near Penn Cove. After about 0.9 mi, turn left on Hill Valley Dr, right at the first park gate, and left after passing the park fee booth. Access fee: \$10 or Discover Pass.
Landmark:	None. Bell buoy is at ~1500 m. Max study area radius: 1000 m.
Accessability:	Easy – walk across mown grass, staircase
Elevation:	55 m
Hazards:	Unbarricaded bluff edge. Watch for undercut areas.

WHIDBEY ISLAND

Fort Ebey State Park – Bluff Trail

FE42

Multiple viewing spots just off or along Bluff Trail. Interaction with passersby less likely here. Feeder bluff, cobble beach, and offshore kelp beds.

Directions:	As above, but turn right after passing the park fee booth, toward beach access/Lake Pondilla. From the parking lot, follow signs for Bluff Trail. Two good viewing spots are within ¼ mile of parking lot. Access fee: \$10 or Discover Pass.
Landmark:	None. Max study area radius: 400 m.
Accessability:	Moderate – well-worn hiking trail with some elevation gain.
Elevation:	20 m
Hazards:	Beware of undercut areas and comply with all warning signs/barricades.

