



High School Program

Educator Resource Guide

Coextinction

DIRECTOR: Gloria Pancrazi + Elena Jean
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN: Canada
RUNNING TIME: 95 min.
LANGUAGE: English

[Website & Trailer](#)



Captivating images and voices of the Salish Sea tell a tale of survival for its apex species: the southern resident killer whale. From the northern edges of Vancouver Island to Oregon's Lower Snake Rivers, two passionate filmmakers connect with activists, Indigenous leaders, and renowned scientists to understand the fate of the orcas and find solutions to our most pressing environmental threats. Called to action, this sprawling debut documentary evolved into a justice-driven dissertation on the science, politics and many systems that must be in equilibrium to sustain life in this ecosystem. A vital, eye-opening analysis of interdependence, humbly offering the next generation a conscious path forward.

Primary Curriculum Interest

- Environmental Science 11+12
- Social Justice 12
- Political Studies 12
- Human Geography 12
- Social Studies 9 + 10

Other Curriculum Interests

- Explorations in Social Studies 11
- BC First Peoples 12

Read more about these curriculums at curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum

Content consideration for teachers

If you have any questions about this film and its content, please contact VIFF at education@viff.org.

About VIFF

VIFF is the leading presenter of international cinema in Western Canada. Operating both the annual Vancouver International Film Festival and the VIFF Centre, VIFF brings hundreds of films from dozens of countries to British Columbia screens every year.

Why are film festivals important?

- Film festivals such as VIFF generally include screenings, talks, and events that serve as a catalyst for a diverse community to discover, discuss and share the creativity and craft of storytelling on screen.

- For filmmakers, showcasing their film at an international festival such as VIFF allows them to build an audience, meet other filmmakers and even win awards to help fund future films.
- It is in VIFF's mandate to encourage understanding of the world's cultures through the art of cinema.

Before Viewing

What environmental issues and news have students heard about in recent years?

Does anyone remember how, in 2018, an orca carried her dead calf on her back for 17 days along the coast?

Show news clips or screenshots of this event. Review vocabulary including apex predators, ecosystem, indicator species, reconciliation.

After Viewing

- What social and environmental issues are explored in the film? What sources of information does the filmmakers consult?
- What are some of the tensions at play between the various interests and perspectives? What do they have in common?
- Who or what is to blame for the crisis facing salmon and orcas? (Hint, there is not one, but many interconnected factors and interests at play.)
- Which global industries operate along the coast, and how have they each impacted the ecosystem of the Pacific Northwest for salmon and orcas over the last century?
- What aspects or scenes of the film stood out to you? What images stayed with you? What surprised you?
- How did the filmmakers and researchers tell this story? What were some of the different methods and film elements that were used? (Animation, aerial and underwater footage, evocative music, interviews, archival materials, different expert voices both settler and Indigenous)
- What measures have the Indigenous and conservationist communities and their allies taken to defend the environment for salmon and orcas? What challenges have they faced?
- What effect do salmon populations have on the forest's ecosystem? How do they aid in transporting nutrients from the ocean to the soil? Can you think of other moments in the film that address the theme of interconnectedness?
- What are some of the solutions that the subjects of this film present regarding the sustainability and preservation of the ecosystem for orcas and salmon?
- How is salmon viewed and valued differently between scientists and conservationists, Indigenous communities, and industries that supply many North American restaurants and supermarkets?
- The world *reconciliation* extends beyond awareness of Canada's Residential School history. As we see many Indigenous activists working to raise awareness and challenge industry threats impacting salmon and orcas in this film, how might we consider environmental preservation to also be an important part of reconciliation?

Activity: What Can Be Done?

This film introduced us to many factors threatening the ecosystem for southern resident killer whales and salmon. What's happening this year since filming ended? What is the current state of the Southern Resident Whale population, have there been any new births since 2018? Have students seek out current updates about: the TransMountain Pipeline expansion, open water salmon farms in BC, the Snake River dams, 2021 salmon run levels, and whale research about the pod. Seek out news about Indigenous communities, whale researchers, scientists, and industry. What would students like to see happen, and what barriers prevent some of their ideas solutions from happening (ex: what might industry say in response and why)? What does it mean to be an engaged citizen and what can citizens do? Have them research and present on organizations or actions they come up with.

Director Profiles



Gloria Pancrazi
Director

Gloria Pancrazi is a Canadian documentary filmmaker. She has worked on environmental and Indigenous justice documentaries including *The Country* (2018) and *Impossible to Contain* (2017). After witnessing firsthand the impending extinction of the Southern Resident orcas, she decided to take matters into her own hands and create *Coextinction*, a documentary that would educate and inspire people worldwide to take action.



Elena Jean
Director

Elena Jean is a Canadian documentary filmmaker based out of Tofino, within the traditional territory of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation. She has filmed endangered species around the world with world-renowned organizations like SeaLegacy and Milkywire. Her passion is to tell stories about hope, ingenuity, and wild beauty, and to show the interconnected patterns of extinction.