

# CASCADIA RESEARCH COLLECTIVE

## WEBSITE REDESIGN



## CASE STUDY

Ketric Petersen | DSGN 372

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

## BRIEF

For this project you will be researching, designing, prototyping, and testing a redesign of a website. Redesign the website for a non-profit organization or cultural institution. The goal is to update the visual design, information architecture, and overall usability for a target audience. Provide clear information, promote the purpose of the organization, and highlight ways to engage with its services, events, or products. Design a multiple page, responsive website for desktop and mobile.

## CLIENT

Cascadia Research Collective is a nonprofit organization based in Olympia, Washington, dedicated to the study and conservation of marine mammals and ecosystems. Since 1979, they've conducted field research, published scientific findings, and engaged in public education across the Pacific and beyond. Their work combines rigorous science with a strong commitment to environmental stewardship and community outreach.

# PROJECT BACKGROUND

## PROBLEM

Cascadia Research Collective's existing website is outdated, bland, difficult to navigate, and not mobile-friendly, making it hard for users to access research, learn about the organization, or make donations. The visual design lacks consistency and does not reflect the professionalism or scientific credibility of the organization. As a result, key audiences of researchers, educators, and potential donors were not effectively engaged or supported.

## SOLUTION

The redesigned website delivers a modern experience that reflects Cascadia Research Collective's scientific integrity. Key improvements include a streamlined information architecture, updated visual identity, and dedicated pathways for research access and donations. The result is a more engaging, user-friendly platform that better serves scientists and supporters alike.

# CURRENT SITE

## HOME PAGE

  
Home Projects Publications About

  
**THE SOUNDERS**  
I update on the life's gray whales.  
[Read More](#)

**About Cascadia Research Collective**  
Cascadia Research, a non-profit Washington State corporation recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization, has conducted scientific research and education for over 45 years. Since incorporation in 1979, Cascadia Research has received grants and contracts, primarily from government agencies, to pursue research in a variety of areas. Most of this research has been in the fields of marine mammal and bird biology, animal behavior, ecology, and population dynamics. Measurements of abundance, a primary concern of our research, have been made by direct counts, photo-identification, and acoustic methods reported with an emphasis on high quality as well as true completion. Cascadia also makes educational presentations to a variety of audiences from technical talks to scientists to presentations to elementary school children. Based out of offices in downtown Olympia, Cascadia has conducted field research in the Canadian Arctic, Alaska, British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, California, Florida, Mexico, and the waters off Central America. Cascadia's office is located on the ancestral territory of the Squaxin, Cowlitz, Coast Salish, and Nisqually People who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.

If you are interested in supporting our work, please see our [donations page](#).

**Announcements**

Cascadia's John Caillardoff featured in ABC World News article about whale swallowing kayaker (Feb 2022)

Cascadia research on false killer whale fisheries interactions featured in Environment Now! article (Jan 2023)

Cascadia paper on fisheries impacts among endangered Hawaiian false killer whales featured in Civil Beat article (Dec 2024)

Mink whale found dead in Tofino was killed by a ship (Nov 2024)

Recordings from Cascadia 45th anniversary party on October 12th (Oct 2024)

Online silent auction to raise funds open until October 13th at 4pm (Oct 2024)

Mass talk on endangered false killer whales available online (Jul 2024)

**Reporting marine mammal sightings or strandings**

To report a dead, injured, or stranded marine mammal anywhere in Washington State, please call the West Coast Marine Mammal Sounding Hotline at 1-866-767-6114. For strandings of large whales in the state or strandings of any marine mammal in Thurston or Mason Counties you can call the West Coast Marine Mammal Sounding Hotline at 1-866-767-6114 or email: [soundings@cascadiaresearch.org](mailto:soundings@cascadiaresearch.org). We will want to know the date, time, location, description, and your name and number.

We also appreciate hearing about unusual sightings of marine mammals in Washington State especially those of large whales. Please note the date, time, and location of the sighting and a description of the animal, and number seen and your contact information. Call us at 360-943-7325.

  
**Sounders Gray Whale 2259 found deceased in San Francisco Bay - struck by ship**

## PROJECTS PAGE

  
Home Projects Publications About

**Projects**

**Current Cascadia Projects**

**Washington State**

- Studies of N Puget Sound gray whales**  
Cascadia Research has been conducting research on the gray whales that feed each spring in the waters around Whidbey and Camano Islands since 1990 but has recently expanded this work to examine details of their feeding in this region. This study has included deployments of suction cup attached video tags on gray whales in both 2005 and 2006. See [Cascadia's YouTube channel](#) for clips from deployments and from the tag.
- Strandings of cetaceans and pinnipeds in Washington State**  
Long-term monitoring of the incidence of strandings of cetaceans and pinnipeds with an emphasis on large whales in Washington State. Includes active responses and examination of stranded animals and associated data on causes of death, contaminants, pathology, and the history. Funded by NOAA's Preselect Marine Mammal Stranding Grant Program.
- MARINE: Minority and Race Inclusion in the Natural sciences and Education Committee**  
Cascadia started a committee to look at increasing the diversity of our organization and therefore the community of marine mammal researchers through a variety of paths. Click here to learn more about this.

**US West Coast**

Cascadia conduct surveys and collaborate with other researchers to track the movements and abundance of gray whales using photographic identification off northern California, Oregon, and British Columbia. Funded by National Marine Mammal Laboratory, NOAA. See a [2019 updated analysis of abundance and population structure of seasonal gray whales](#) in the PRRW (1996-2016).

**Humpback and blue whale photo-ID**

Cascadia Research conducts long-term research on humpback and blue whales both along the West Coast of the United States as well as off Central America. We began this photo-identification research in 1986 and have continued annual survey each year since. Cascadia also relies on contributions from a number of opportunistic sources (including citizen science) as well as collaborators to provide sighting information and photo-IDs. Cascadia was also the principal organization conducting and coordinating the SPLASH humpback whale research effort from 2004-2006. Cascadia conducting the matching but also coordinated all efforts for US West Coast and Central America.

**Large whale surveys off Washington and Oregon**

This three year study began in late 2000 and is being conducted in collaboration with the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (DOWF) and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and is supported by a NOAA program to allow states to gather information on threatened and endangered species. The research will include line-transect surveys three times a year, photographic identification, and satellite tagging of different listed large whales including humpback, blue, fin, and sperm whales off Washington and Oregon. It will also examine human threats including ship strikes, entanglement, and other fishery interactions. See report on the recent sighting of a blue whale on the Washington coast.

**Abundance and movements of humpback and blue whales off the U.S. West Coast**

Ongoing abundance monitoring of humpback and blue whales using photographic identification of individual animals to track distribution, movements, abundance, trends, and other parameters. Funded by National Marine Mammal Laboratory, NOAA. Primary support from Southwest Fisheries Science Center, NOAA and part support from the National Marine Sanctuary Program as well as private donors. See PDF for publication on humpback and blue whale abundance.

**Research on blue whales near shipping lanes off southern California**

At least five individuals were killed in 2010 in an area of high marine traffic in Southern California. Three of these animals, were documented in the vicinity of the Santa Barbara Channel. This level of mortality was so higher than had been seen in any previous year and if there were additional deaths of animals that did not wash up, could be significant to this population. Cascadia Research in collaboration with Scripps Institution of Oceanography and with the support of the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and National Marine Fisheries Service initiated research in 2008 on some of the factors possibly responsible for this mortality. Also see publication on ship strike mortality of whales in the Pacific Northwest.

**Dolphinid-Behavioral Response Study**

A collaborative project, started in June 2007, examining the potential behavioral responses of free-ranging oceanic dolphin using controlled exposure experiments (CEEs).

**SOCAL Behavioral Response Study**

Cascadia Research is a leading participant in this collaborative study to examine the behavioral response of dolphins to Navy mid-frequency sonar from 2000-2006 off southern California. Other principal participants include Southwest Environmental Associates, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, Duke University, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, and Naval Undersea Warfare Center. The project is funded by the US Navy. Cascadia is serving as the prime contractor for the study including providing the observers, vessel charters, and small boat operations and tag deployments for the project as well as participating in the analysis and write-up of results. See a [report on Behavioral Responses of whales to playback of sonar sounds from March 2011](#). Also see [Oceans Mystery II cruise](#) featuring Cascadia project on Navy sonar and the orcas. See trailer (first aired 10 Feb 2014).

**Hawaiian odontocete stock structure**

Collection of identification photographs of false killer whales, bottlenose dolphins, rough-toothed dolphins, melon-headed whales, pygmy killer whales, short-finned

## DONATIONS PAGE

  
Home Projects Publications About

**Donating to Cascadia**

Cascadia Research Collective is a 501(c)3 non-profit research and education organization, and donations to Cascadia are tax deductible. Want to support our research and education efforts? Donations can be made to support our overall mission or can be designated specifically for one of our programs (West Coast photo-ID or entanglement research, stranding response, or Hawaii photo-ID or false killer whale research, for example).



**How to donate via Paypal or Venmo**

You can donate via [Paypal here](#)  
Or using this QR code:



You can donate via [Venmo here](#)  
Or using this QR code:



**How to donate stocks or appreciated assets**

Donations of stock or other appreciated securities may help you avoid paying capital gains tax. Cascadia would benefit from the full current value and your tax deduction may be for the full value (check with your tax or financial advisor for specific information). The double benefit of the tax deductibility of the current value of the stock and savings on capital gains can substantially reduce the cost to you of the donation. If you are interested in this option please contact Connie Holland at [CConnie@CascadiaResearch.org](mailto:CConnie@CascadiaResearch.org) or call 360-943-7328 for more information.

**How to donate by check**

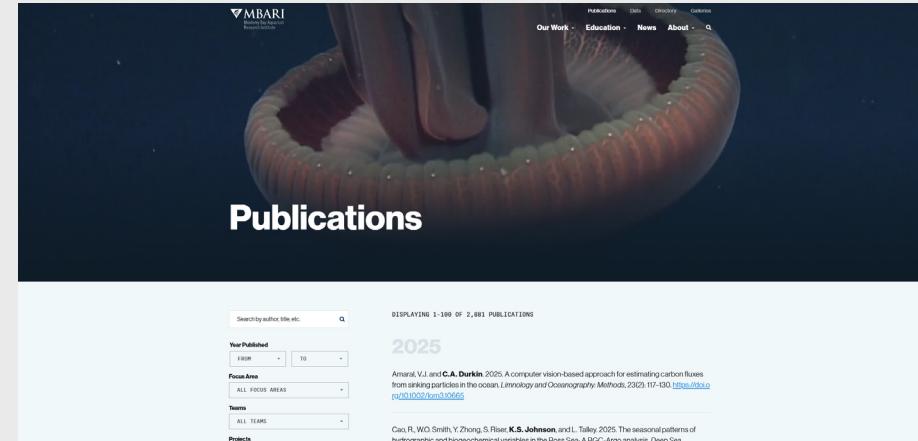
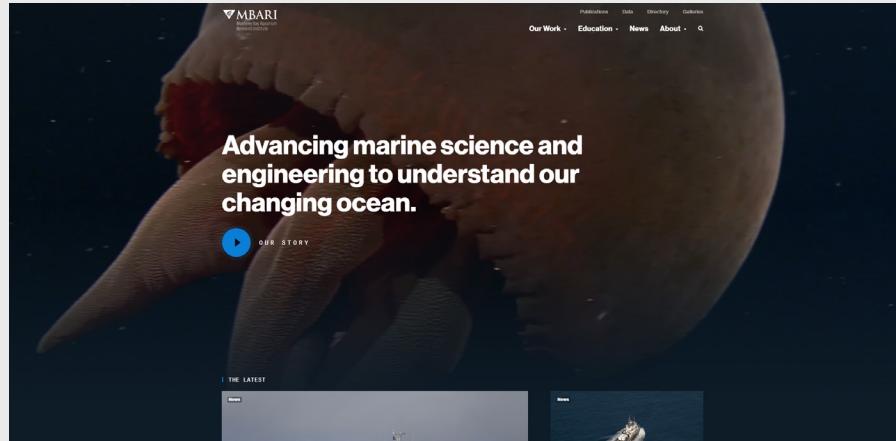
You can mail your check (made out to Cascadia Research Collective) to our office at the following address:

Cascadia Research Collective, 281 1/2 W 4th Ave., Olympia, WA 98501 USA

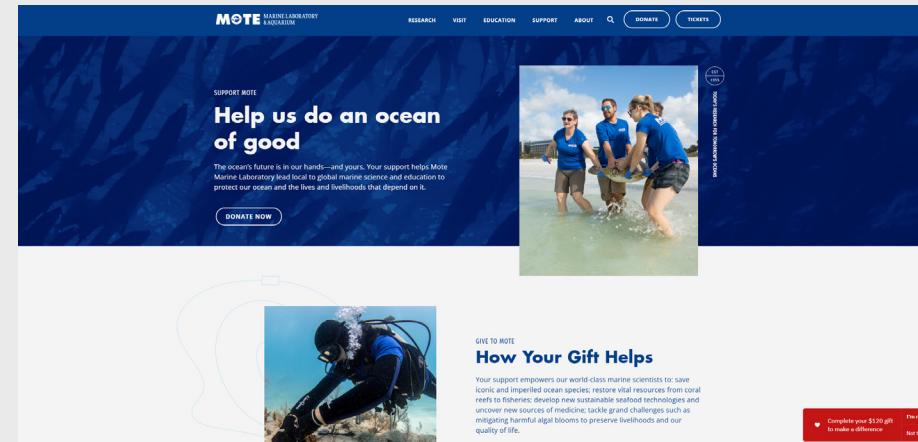
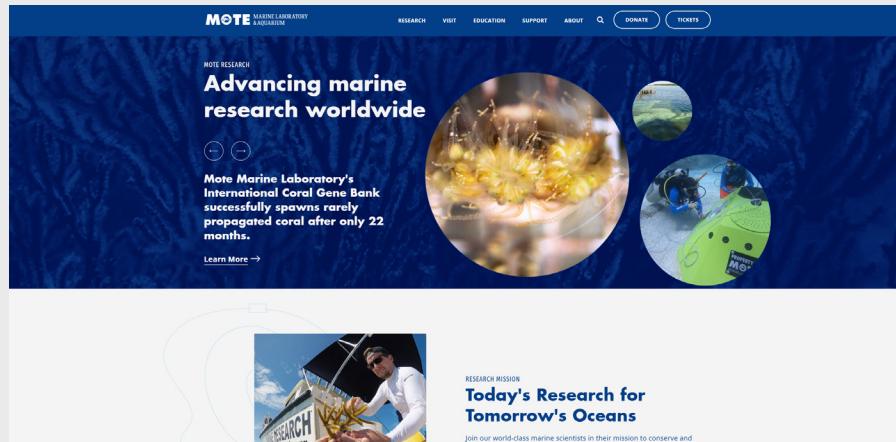


# COMPETITION

## Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute (MBARI)



## Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium



# TARGET AUDIENCE



# WIREFRAMES



# REDESIGNS

## HOME PAGE

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Cascadia Research Collective website. At the top, there is a dark header bar with the organization's logo on the left and navigation links for Home, Projects, Publications, About, and Donate. Below the header is a large banner featuring a whale breaching in the ocean, with the text "ADVANCING MARINE SCIENCE FOR OVER 45 YEARS". The banner includes left and right arrows for navigation and a small set of dots at the bottom center. Below the banner, the page is divided into three main sections: RESEARCH, CONSERVATION, and EDUCATION. The RESEARCH section contains a paragraph about the organization's history and focus on marine mammal and ecosystem research. The CONSERVATION and EDUCATION sections are currently empty. At the bottom of the page, there are two columns: Publications and Announcements. The Publications column lists several research papers and studies, while the Announcements column lists recent news items and events.

Cascadia Research Collective

Home Projects Publications About Donate

ADVANCING MARINE SCIENCE FOR OVER 45 YEARS

RESEARCH CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Cascadia Research is a nonprofit based in Olympia, Washington, dedicated to marine mammal and ecosystem research since 1979. For over 45 years, we've conducted high-quality, government-supported studies across the Pacific and Atlantic, from Alaska to Central America. We share our findings through scientific publications and public education, from expert talks to classroom visits.

**Publications**

- Exposure and Response of Satellite-Tagged Blainville's Beaked Whales to Mid-Frequency Active Sonar off Kaua'i, Hawai'i
- Marine Mammal Stranding Networks in the 21st Century: Whence and Whither?
- Dynamics of Foraging Interactions Between Cookiecutter Sharks (*Isistius spp.*) and Short-Finned Pilot Whales (*Globicephala macrorhynchus*) in Hawai'i
- Neonatal Facial Pigmentation of Pygmy Killer Whales (*Feresa attenuata*): A Description from Repeated Observations of Individuals in the Wild
- Organic Ligands in Whale Excrement Support Iron Availability and Reduce Copper Toxicity to the Surface Ocean

**Announcements**

- Cascadia's John Calambokidis featured in ABC World News article about whale swallowing kayaker (Feb 2025)
- Cascadia research on false killer whale fisheries interactions featured in Environment Hawai'i article (Jan 2025)
- Cascadia paper on fisheries injuries among endangered Hawaiian false killer whales featured in Civil Beat article (Dec 2024)
- Mink whale found dead in Tacoma was killed by a ship (Nov 2024)
- Recordings from Cascadia 45th anniversary party on October 12th (Oct 2024)
- Online silent auction to raise funds open until October 13th at 6pm PDT (Sep 2024)

# REDESIGNS

## PROJECTS PAGE

 Cascadia Research Collective

Home Projects Publications About Donate

### Directory

**US Mainland**

- North Puget Sound Gray Whales
- **Stranding Response**
- Pacific Coast Feeding Group (PCFG) Gray Whales
- Return of Humpback Whales to the Salish Sea
- Humpback and Blue Whale Photo-ID
- Delphinid-Behavioral Response Study
- SOCIAL-Behavioral Response Study
- Blue Whale Ship Strikes

**Hawai'i**

- Hawaiian Cetacean Studies
- Updates from the field
- Hawaiian Dolphin and Whale Species
- Publications from our work
- Hawaiian Pelagic Cephalopods
- Hawaiian Sea Turtles
- Hawaiian Seabirds
- Conservation

**Initiatives**

- Providing Cameras for Fishermen to Support Photo-ID Efforts
- Finmount Satellite Tags to Aid Stranding Response
- MARINE Committee



#### North Puget Sound Gray Whales

Cascadia Research has been conducting research on the gray whales that feed each spring in the waters around Whidbey and Camano Islands since 1990 but has recently expanded this work to examine details of their feeding in this region. This study has included deployments of suction cup attached video tags on gray whales in both 2015 and 2016.

>



#### Stranding Response

Long-term monitoring of the incidence of strandings of cetaceans and pinnipeds with an emphasis on large whales in Washington State. Includes active responses and examination of stranded animals and associated data on causes of death, contaminants, pathology, and life history.

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#### Pacific Coast Feeding Group (PCFG)

This is a long term study Cascadia began in the 1980s and since 1998 has coordinated a collaborative photo-ID effort along the US West Coast tracking identified gray whales. Over 2,000 different individuals are tracked by their natural markings as a part of this research and used to estimate abundance, trends, and movements.

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#### Humpback Whales to Salish Sea

As a part of the Northwest Marine Mammal Stranding Network, Cascadia is active in responding to strandings of cetaceans and pinnipeds.

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#### Humpback and Blue Whale Photo-ID

Cascadia Research conducts long-term research on humpback and blue whales both along the West Coast of the United States as well as off Central America. We began this photo-identification research in 1986 and have continued annual surveys each year since then.

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# REDESIGNS

## DONATIONS PAGE



< Return

For over 45 years, Cascadia Research has advanced the understanding of marine mammals and ecosystems through rigorous fieldwork, peer-reviewed science, and public education. Your donation helps fund critical research on whales and marine health, informing conservation efforts across the Pacific.

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, all contributions are tax-deductible and support our research, outreach, and field operations.

### Your gift helps us:

- Conduct year-round field studies on marine mammals
- Publish data to inform science-based conservation
- Engage students, communities, and scientists
- Respond to stranding events and marine emergencies

Every contribution counts.

### Choose Payment

VISA

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# TAKEAWAYS

## CHALLENGES

One of the key challenges of this project was understanding and designing for a diverse target audience. While maintaining a professional tone to align with Cascadia Research's grant-based funding model, the site also needed to feel welcoming and accessible to public supporters and casual visitors. Striking the right balance between scientific credibility and user-friendly design was a central focus throughout the redesign process.

## REFLECTION

Redesigning Cascadia Research Collective's website was a good learning experience. The goal was to create a site that felt both professional for researchers and welcoming to the general public. Through improved content organization and cohesive design, the new site better supports the organization's mission and makes it easier for users to explore research, learn, and donate.

# **GROWTH**

## **FUTURE GOALS**

Looking ahead, future goals for the site include building out more features such as a searchable research archive and donation impact tracker, this way visitors are further engaged in seeing the impact of donating and the depth of Cascadia's work is better showcased. Improving accessibility and integrating more multimedia content like videos are also priorities and things I would continue to work towards if this project were to continue.