



## VOLUNTARY PROTECTION ZONE FOR SHIPPING

Annual Report 2022

### **The Project Committee acknowledges that vessels are increasingly staying outside of the Voluntary Protection Zone for Shipping since coming into effect in September 2020**

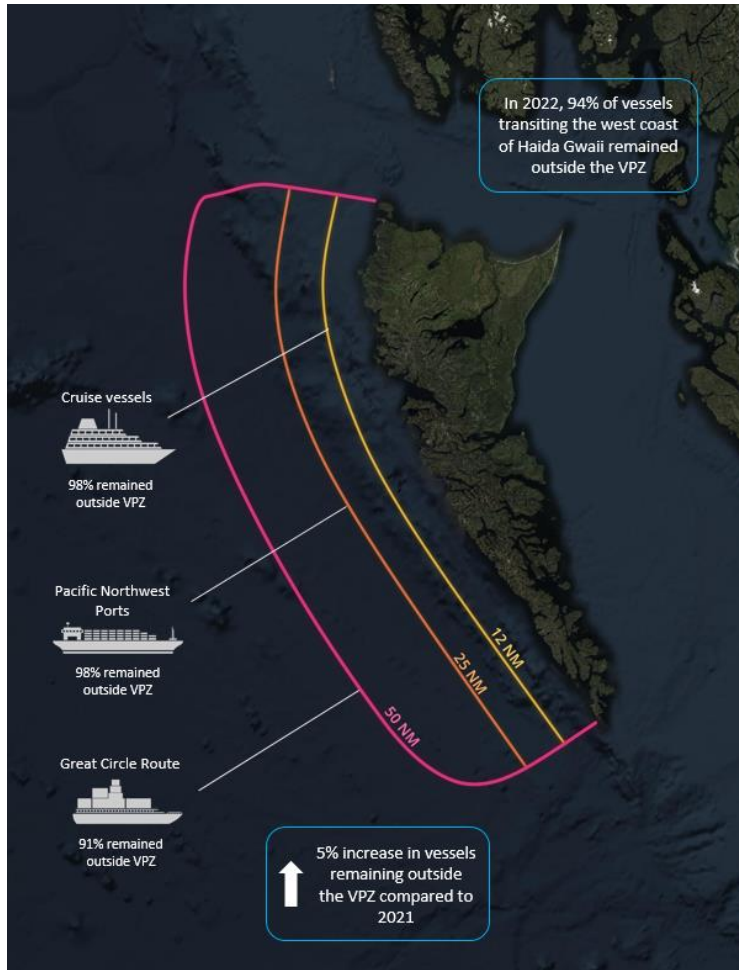
Haida Gwaii is a remote archipelago located on the north Pacific Coast and is home to a rich abundance and diversity of marine life, lush rainforests, and the Haida people who have lived there for thousands of years. Its remote location, rugged coastline, variable sea and weather conditions, and rich ecological and cultural heritage make Haida Gwaii vulnerable to the potential for pollution from ship breakdowns and accidents. The Voluntary Protection Zone (VPZ) for Shipping asks vessels to observe greater distances when transiting on the west coast of Haida Gwaii. The goal of the VPZ is to increase the likelihood for a towing vessel to respond to a vessel that is disabled or drifting, or for a vessel to conduct repairs, thereby reducing the risk of grounding and oil spills.

The project represents significant and unprecedented collaboration between the Council of the Haida Nation, the Government of Canada, and the maritime shipping industry, along with many other advisors and partners, and supports commitments made by the Government of Canada to advance collaboration in the spirit of Haida reconciliation.

When navigationally safe to do so, vessels 500 gross tonnage or greater transiting along the west coast of Haida Gwaii are asked to observe a minimum distance of 50 nm offshore, with the following exceptions:

- Cruise vessels, who are asked to observe a minimum 12 nm distance from shore;
- Vessels transiting between Pacific Northwest ports (British Columbia, Washington and Alaska), who are asked to observe a minimum 25 nm distance from shore;
- Tugs and barges (including pushing and towing alongside); and
- Fishing vessels.

**In 2022, 94% of vessels transiting the west coast of Haida Gwaii observed the VPZ**



While overall traffic on the west coast of Haida Gwaii has increased since 2021, there has been a decrease in the number of vessels inside the VPZ. Similar to 2021, vessels on a Great Circle Route traveling between North American and Asian ports represented the majority of transits inside the VPZ in 2022. However, there has been a decrease in the number of vessels on a Great Circle Route inside the VPZ since 2021.

	2021		2022	
	Number of Transits	Percent	Number of Transits	Percent
<b>Vessel Passages Inside VPZ</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>6%</b>
Great Circle Route	194	14%	106	9%
Pacific Northwest Ports	15	4%	8	2%
Cruise	2	2%	7	2%
<b>Vessel Passages Outside VPZ</b>	<b>1,661</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>1,889</b>	<b>94%</b>
Great Circle Route	1,200	86%	1,099	91%
Pacific Northwest Ports	374	96%	417	98%
Cruise	88	98%	373	98%

Below are vessel tracks for cruise vessels (orange), vessels travelling between Pacific Northwest Ports (blue), and vessels on a Great Circle route (green) that entered the VPZ during 2022. There were relatively few cruise vessels and vessels travelling between Pacific Northwest Ports inside the VPZ. Vessels on a Great Circle Route most commonly entered the VPZ near the north west corner and the south west corner.

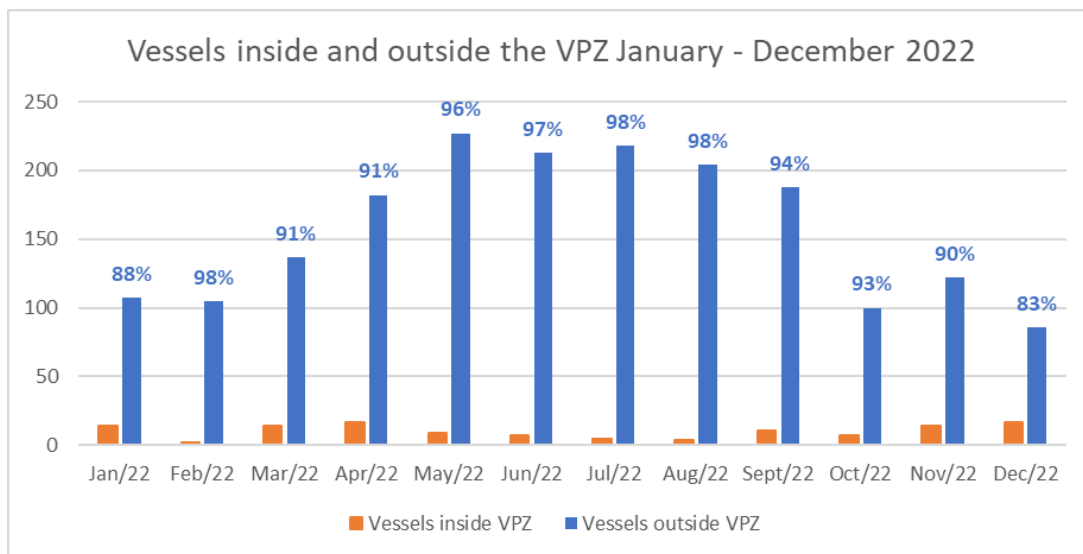


Cruise vessels inside the VPZ

Vessels travelling between Pacific Northwest ports inside the VPZ

GCR vessels inside the VPZ

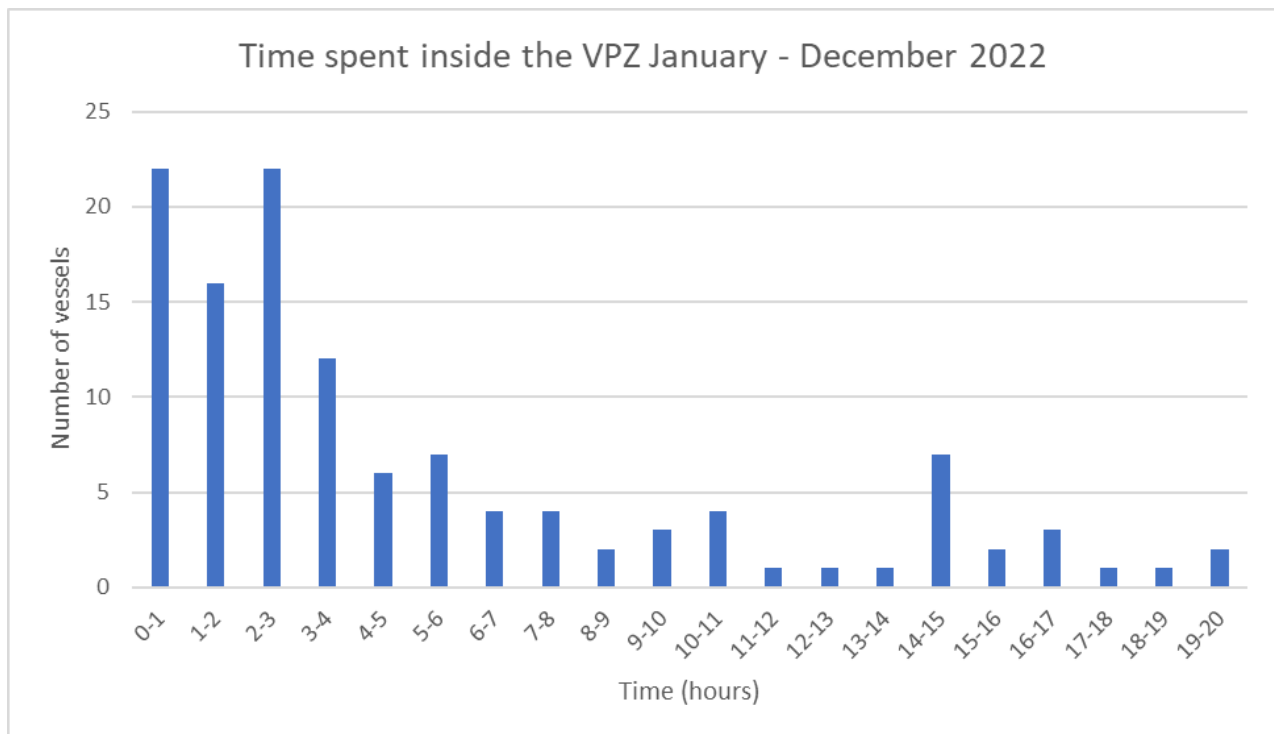
Monitoring data gathered from the Enhanced Maritime Situational Awareness (EMSA) system indicate that vessels entered the VPZ more frequently in the winter months compared to the summer months. Meanwhile, overall traffic volume on the west coast of Haida Gwaii increases in the summer, which includes cruise ships traveling to and from Alaska.



In 2022, the duration of time that vessels spent inside the VPZ ranged between 6 minutes and 19 hours. Not only did fewer vessels enter the VPZ during the summer months, vessels also spent less time inside the VPZ from July to September.

Months	Average time inside the VPZ (hours)	Median time inside the VPZ (hours)
January-March	5.15	4.04
April-June	6.72	4.16
July-September	2.87	2.03
October-December	5.35	3.13

Despite the broad range of time spent inside the VPZ, nearly half of vessels spent less than 3 hours inside the VPZ.



### Feedback from mariners indicate high awareness of the VPZ

The project committee follows up with vessels that have entered the VPZ to better understand mariners' awareness of the Zone and to gain insight into the factors that influence their routing decisions. In 2022, 74% of vessels that entered the VPZ indicated that they were aware of the Zone. Routing to avoid adverse weather was the most common reason for entering the VPZ.

### Participating organizations working together to improve safety on the west coast of Haida Gwaii

The Project Committee thanks participating industry associations for their commitments to observe and improve awareness of the VPZ. Through the partnership established between the Council of the Haida

Nation, Government of Canada, and maritime shipping industry, the contributions made by industry have been invaluable to the implementation and ongoing success of the VPZ.

- Chamber of Shipping
- Shipping Federation of Canada
- International Shipowners Alliance of Canada
- Cruise Lines International Association – North West & Canada
- Council of Marine Carriers
- Pacific Merchant Shipping Association
- Marine Exchange of Puget Sound



“The Haida Gwaii Voluntary Protection Zone for Shipping is a key measure to keep Haida Gwaii’s coasts and waterways safe. Partnerships and collaboration are core components of the Oceans Protection Plan and of this Voluntary Protection Zone project. Together with the Council of the Haida Nation, and with thanks to the many vessel operators participating in these voluntary measures, we are ensuring our oceans and coastlines will be cleaner and safer for generations to come.”

*The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez  
Minister of Transport*

“The Council of the Haida Nation acknowledges the ongoing efforts by industry and partner organizations to support the continued success of the Voluntary Protection Zone for Shipping on the west coast of Haida Gwaii. The VPZ represents an important first step towards long-term protection, and is an integral component of various collaborative initiatives that are ongoing to protect Haida Gwaii and the livelihoods that have long depended on the unique cultural and biological diversity of this area.”

*Gaagwiis Jason Alsop  
President of the Council of the Haida Nation*

### **Follow updates on the VPZ**

For more information on the VPZ and to view related resources, media releases and monthly progress reports, please visit [haidagwaii-vpz.ca](http://haidagwaii-vpz.ca). If you have questions, please contact [info@haidagwaii-vpz.ca](mailto:info@haidagwaii-vpz.ca).