

## Information to our customers

The occurrence of killer whales in coastal waters of northern Norway is related to the presence of their main type of prey, Norwegian spring spawning (NSS) herring. This fish population has a dynamic migration pattern, where the adult fish moves between spawning (late winter-early spring), feeding (late spring and summer) and wintering (fall – winter) grounds. The NSS herring feeds in areas of Norwegian Sea with high plankton production during spring and summer, and spend late fall and winter without feeding. The location of the wintering grounds of this fish stock has gone through major changes during the last centuries, possibly as an antipredator strategy. During 1987 – 2001 the majority of the herring stock was overwintering in the Tysfjord, Ofotfjord and Vestfjord area in Northern Norway. Since then the wintering grounds have moved gradually into more offshore waters.

The change in the wintering pattern of herring affects the occurrence of killer whales in the fjord system. Some of the herring still enters the fjords and are followed by killer whales. Therefore the chance of seeing killer whales still remains high during November – January. In 2008 killer whales were encountered on 50 % of the trips arranged by Lofoten Opplevelser.

It is important to underline that it is impossible to predict how the season 2009/10 will be, however the distribution of herring in September – mid October suggests that the distribution of herring and therefore also the occurrence of killer whales will be similar to 2008.

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