

Student: Kate Gorbunova

Aesthetic Plan

Project Title: Whale Trail Cruises

“Elevator Pitch” Project Intro

Whale Trail is a series of sites to view marine mammals along the Pacific Coast, as the sightings follow the Puget Sound.

Our app will guide you through your next cruise with live notifications of attractions around you and help you explore the best sightings areas around Washington state. Download the app to learn fun facts about the whales you spot on your trip, keep yourself entertained with our educational whale trivia, and enter a raffle for your next whale watching.

1. Remember your personas and stories

Primary: Matthew Dawson ([Figma Link](#))

Matthew is a 34 y.o. data scientist from Seattle, WA. He moved to the Pacific Northwest eight years ago and loves living so close to nature now. Matthew spends a lot of time in the office at his job, so he tries to spend most of his time outdoors on the weekends. He is passionate about sustainability and volunteering.

Matthew loves exploring nature and going on hikes. One of Matthew’s hobbies is photography, so he has a good eye for aesthetics. He appreciates clean color palettes inspired by nature.

As a young software engineer working in a tech company, Matthew feels confident around technology and primarily uses mobile applications over websites. He values his time a lot, and prefers designs that give him quick access to his tasks and use a lot of visuals to guide him.

Matthew’s job also requires him to constantly work through large volumes of complex data, so, outside of work, he avoids applications overcrowded with information or a lot of text, because they give him decision fatigue and remind of work too much.

Secondary: Mary Coleman ([Figma Link](#))

Mrs. Coleman is a 62 y.o. elementary school teaching from Kirkland, WA. She was born and raised in Greater Seattle Area and now owns a house in Kirkland with her husband. She is passionate about creating exciting learning opportunities for her students: taking them out to museums, whale watching trips, and science fairs. Having two kids and one grandchild of her own, she knows how to grasp children's attention, and by educating herself on new technology, she is able to better connect with the youngest generation.

Mary enjoys drawing and sewing in her free time, so she knows a lot about color pairings and recognizes good visuals. Being an elementary school teacher, she is also constantly reminded by her students how to stay playful with colors through art and handmade applications.

As a teacher, she usually dresses modestly and prefers plain calm colors in her clothes.

Given her age, Mary needs reading glasses for smaller fonts and appreciates visual icons that can enhance the design for her and make it easy to follow. She is having troubles with reading text written in non high contrast color palettes.

Mary is not always very comfortable with technology, but tries to stay up to date on new technology to keep in touch with her children and use technology with her students to enhance their learning. She appreciates products that clearly explain the steps of the process and guide her through the experience.

2. Explain exactly what the aesthetic needs of the persona using your app, whether that person is aware of them or not.

Primary: Matthew Dawson ([Figma Link](#))

Since Matthew uses applications a lot over websites, he anticipates apps to look a certain way and have some familiar aspects, like bottom bar navigation, icons for navigating pages and clickable interactive maps, photos and buttons. He expects the app to suggest to him the most important features through home page and visible navigation and leave other additional features to the secondary menu.

As an explorer who lives in PNW and appreciates local nature, he expects the whale watching app to be in a natural color palette, with mostly blue colors dominating the design.

As a photographer himself, Matthew expects to see a lot of pictures in the app dedicated to whale watching to get inspired for his own photography too.

Secondary: Mary Coleman ([Figma Link](#))

As a teacher who wants to deliver knowledge to her students in a fun and playful way through quizzes, music and pictures, Mary expects the whale watching app to be fun and engaging to use to both her and her students while learning. The trivia and other insights about whales in the app is an important part of her school trip.

Mary prefers clean designs and modest palettes and appreciates when the colors don't distract her from the information of the app. Moreover, she is looking for colors to guide her through the app and use some sort of color coding system to get familiar with the app quicker.

Mary is used to making all her appointments/bookings over the phone, but has been recently annoyed with automatic responses and prefers to book everything online now. Therefore, she is looking for an app to easily use for bookings and also have all of her tickets for upcoming trips in the same place. From the aesthetics perspective, she wants the information to be easily findable and only a click away with the number of tickets for upcoming reservations displayed right there for her.

Mary loves PNW nature and wants to show her students the beauty of it, so she is looking for big photos to display to kids before, during and after the trip. If she can get the photos of specific whales or species from the trip, that would especially spark the students' attention.

3. Explain the goals of the aesthetic portion of your app from the publisher's point of view.

The Whale Trail Cruises app wants to closely resemble the ocean and whale colors, and give the users the feeling of being on the water. For high contrast definition on “favorites” the chosen color is dark red, which is a complimentary color in the palette and adds an emphasis on the favorites values. Because the symbol used for favorites is often a heart, the red color works well for the information it is highlighting.

The new user to the whale watching experience wants to immediately see photos of the whales and other marine animals to understand what they are going to see on a trip.

The users, being on a moving boat, might prefer a font that’s easy to read or avoid text altogether where icons can be used.

4. Now that you know what each party needs, construct a plan to satisfy both.

- The app uses a color palette based on the shadow Navy (**#314C6F**) that closely resembles water and whale colors. It satisfies Matthew’s appreciation for color palettes based on nature, Mary’s preference for calm toned down colors that don’t distract her from the app, and general audience association with whale watching.
- The map uses the color for the water that’s part of the bigger palette and, therefore, looks more appealing to the user.
- The two main fonts used for the app are Voces <https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Voces> and Inria Sans <https://fonts.google.com/specimen/Inria+Sans>, which are both sans serif, provide a rounded wavy feeling to a general user and satisfy Mary’s preference for a text that’s easier to read. Sans serif fonts are easier to read on device screens, because they have a clean and simple design.
- To introduce new users to whale watching and showcase the beauty of these majestic creatures, the app also wants to take advantage of big pictures.
- Certain commonly used designs are used in the app, like favorite icons in the shape of hearts and a blue dot for the user’s current location.

5. Explain how your aesthetic plan will avoid degrading the user's overall experience by even a tiny little bit.

All elements of the design work together to explain the functionalities of the app.

- The color palette is consistent through all elements of the app, even map, which gives the user a more pleasant experience overall. It also uses natural and deep dark colors, which allows the user to look at the app for a long time (whale watching trips are usually about 3-5 hours) and not get eye fatigue.
- The photos on the info pages for species and individual whales balance the heavy text on the bottom and allow learning through both text and photos. The user doesn't get lost in the text and doesn't get overwhelmed by long paragraphs.
- Each page has a header to remind the user of which tab they're currently in, which are all kept at the same level along with "back" buttons. That way, the user can easily navigate back and forth between pages and explore the app freely (knowing they will never get lost and can get back with the back buttons). The only screen that doesn't use the header is the "Sightings" because the user could benefit from a bigger map space and also doesn't need to be reminded where they are in the app, since that page is pretty unique and different to others.

6. Explain how and why your aesthetic plan will enhance your UX.

- The bottom navigation bar uses color to highlight the page the user is currently on and uses icons with short text to explain what the app is about.
- From the color palette, the only non-blue shade used is dark red, which helps differentiate between favorite whales on the map and all throughout the app.
- Colors are consistent and the whole app follows one color palette, from map to icon to text colors (tool used: <https://mycolor.space/?hex=%23314C6F&sub=1>)
- All colors pass accessibility test for high contrast:
 - Navy (#314C6F) on white (#FFFFFF)
 - White (#FFFFFF) on navy (#314C6F)
 - Dark Red (#6D3C4A) on white (#FFFFFF)
 - White (#FFFFFF) on Dark Red (#6D3C4A)

Final Prototypes

1. A report to walk us briefly through your project and the prototype

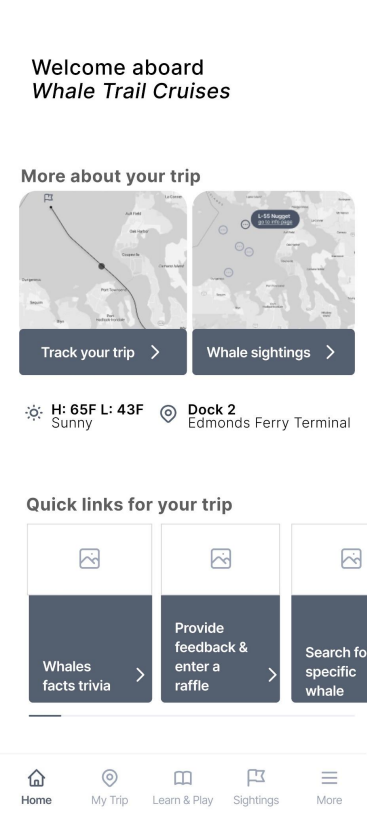
1.1. Plan of changes after user testing

(Observations and changes in [Figma](#), below is the summary of *changes* only)

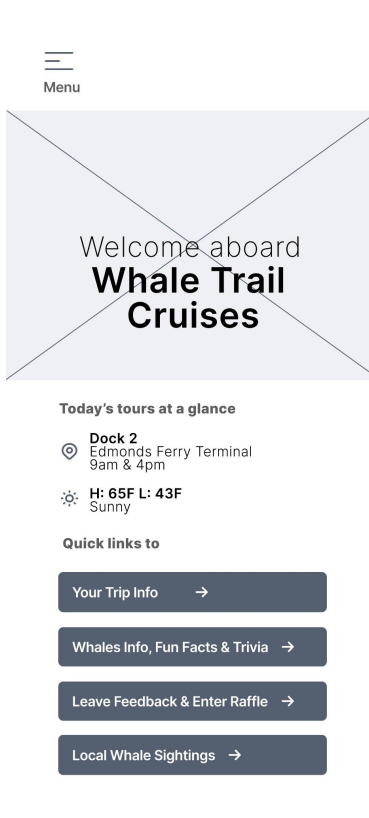
Change 1: Use the bottom menu for navigation with the Home button available from every screen.

Implemented: All main features are discoverable through the bottom navigation bar that is visible on every page. Home button is replaced with a more actionable landing screen about “My Trip”.

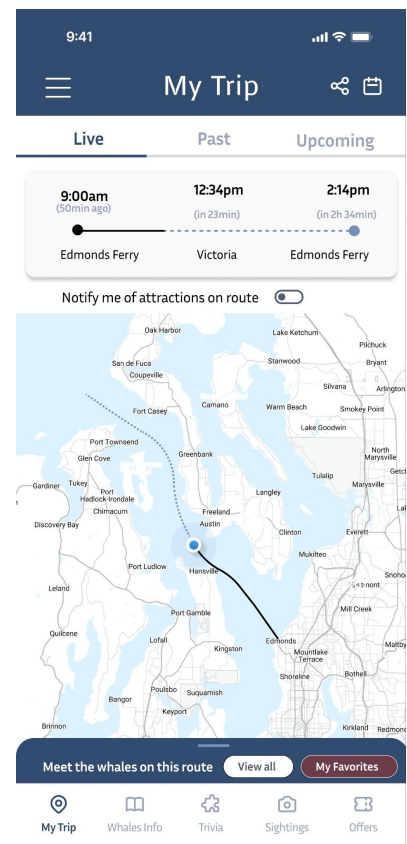
UI 1



UI 2



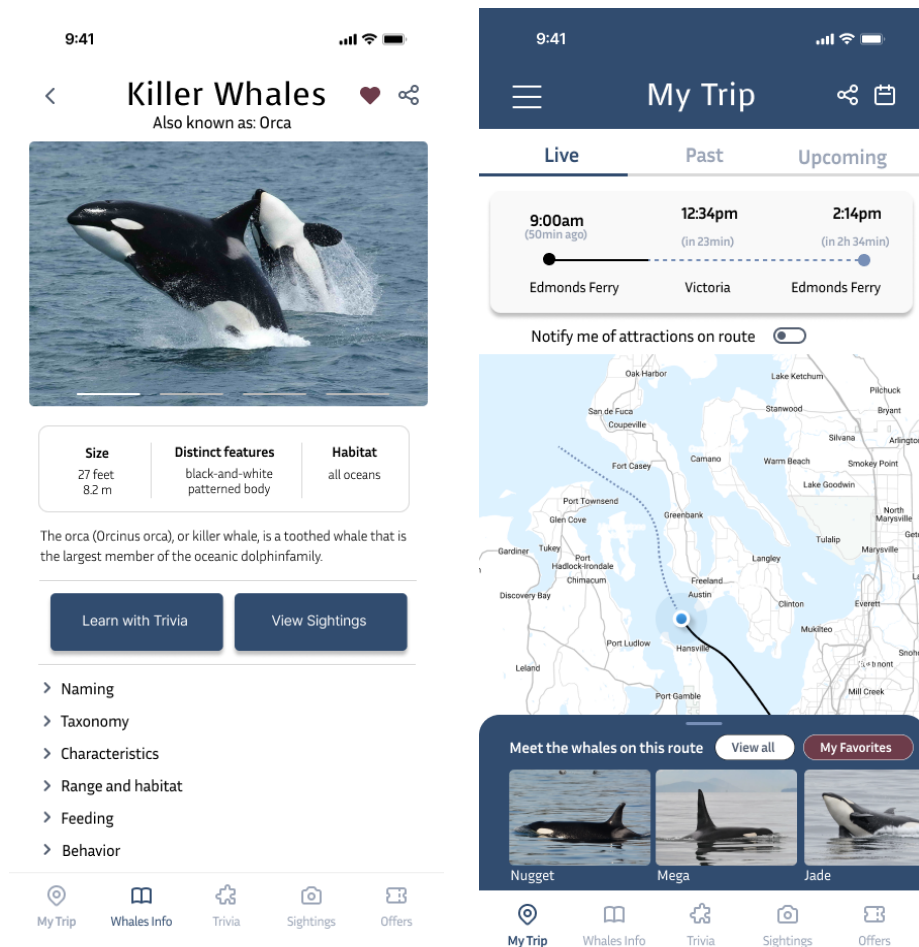
Final Prototype



Change 2: Include more links across features to connect the screens and learning opportunities. Specifically, on My Trip page have links to sightings and whales on this trip, on Search by the Whale have links to maps and species information, on Sightings be able to click on specific whales, species or map that on the trip info.

Implemented: Apart from the bottom navigation bar that allows the user to explore the app and jump between pages, all features are now integrated more into each other (e.g. Learning page has “Learn with Trivia” and “View Sightings”, sightings have quick links to learn about most commonly spotted whales)

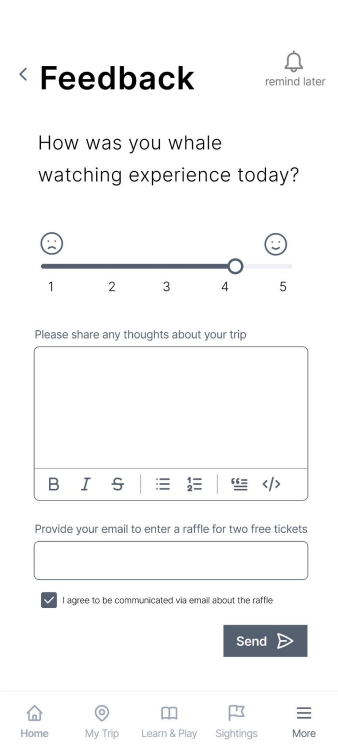
Final Prototype



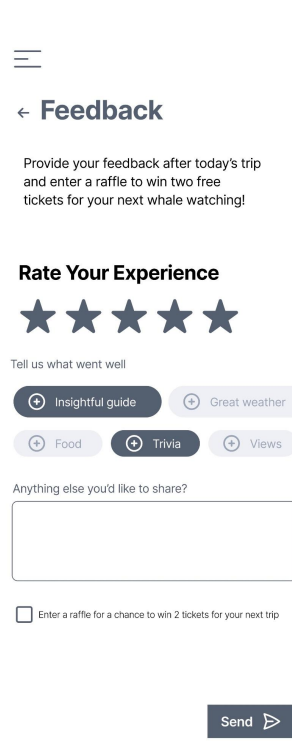
Change 3: Have a bigger, more prominent box for signing up for a raffle on the feedback page, show the box for the email only after, put a disclaimer that the person agrees to be communicated about the raffle by providing their feedback.

Implemented: The feature is displayed in a “reward first, task second” way now. Specifically, the app doesn’t ask the user to *first* provide feedback and *then* informs them of the raffle, now the raffle is shown as part of bigger “Offers” page, which explains you have to leave feedback in order to participate.

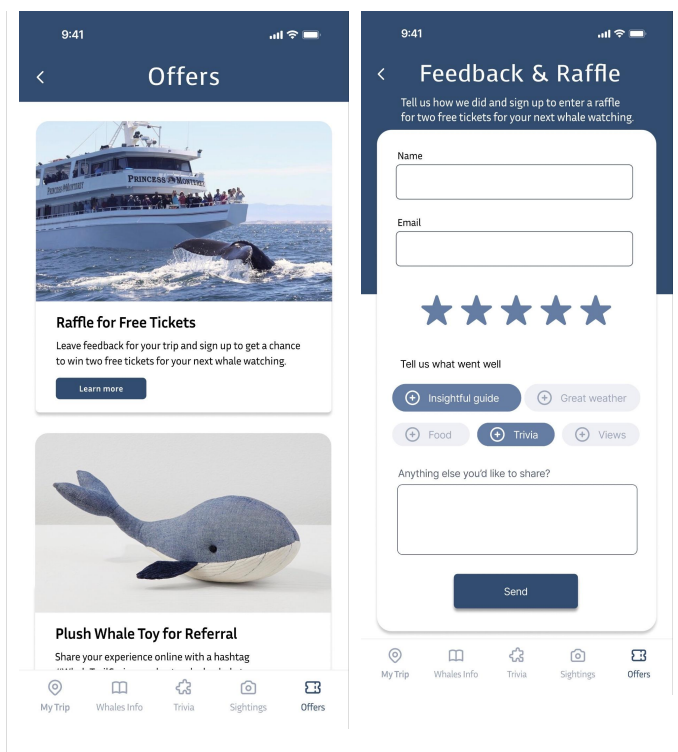
UI 1



UI 2



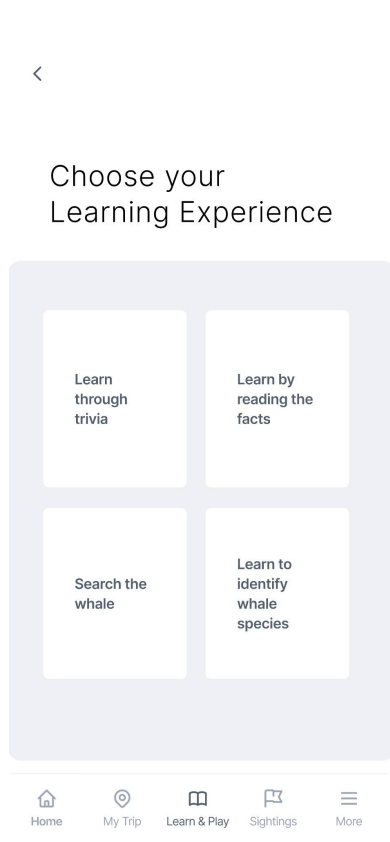
Final Prototype



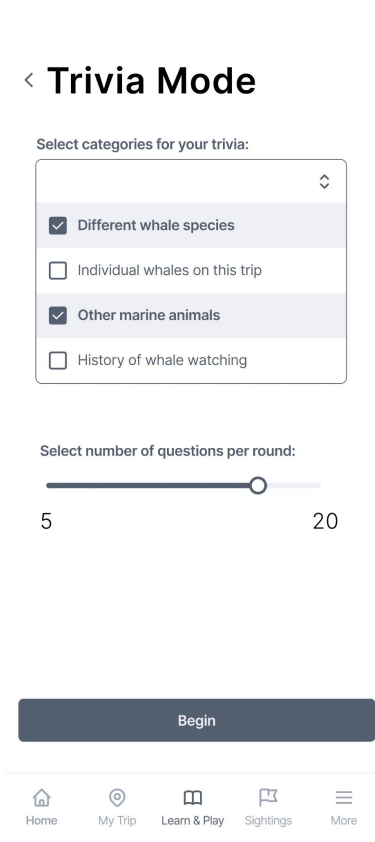
Change 4: Change the wording on the Learn boxes menu, use icons, bigger text, fewer text.

Implemented: Trivia is separated into a separate tab from the “search by whale” search and other educational info. The navigation uses icons and more straightforward text to explain to the user their next steps.

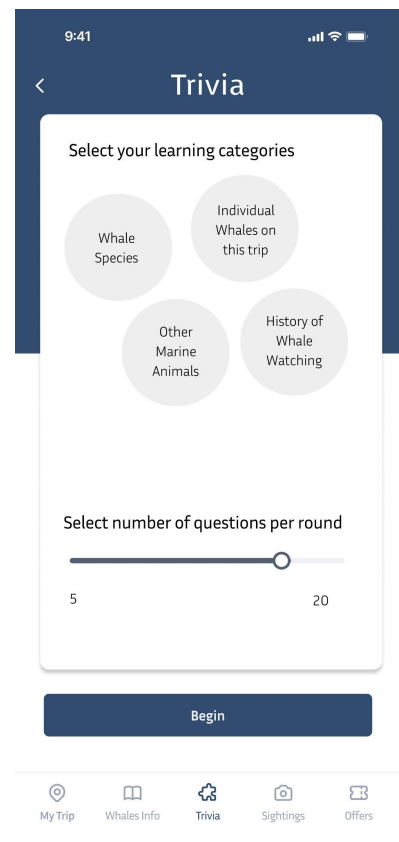
UI 1



UI 2



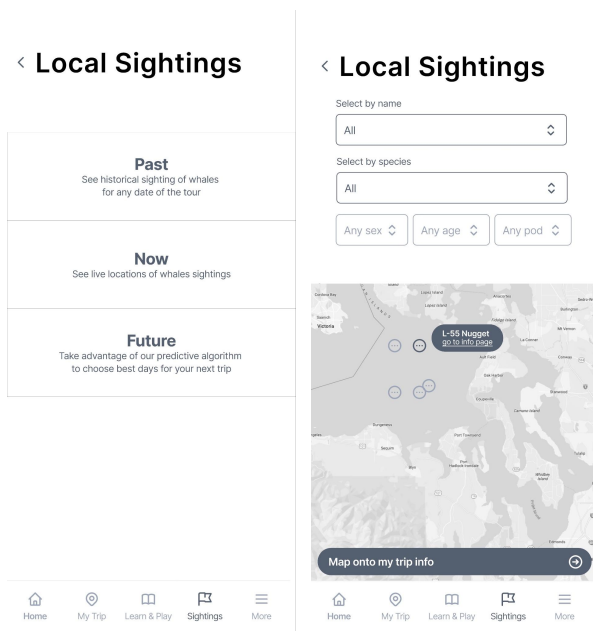
Final Prototype



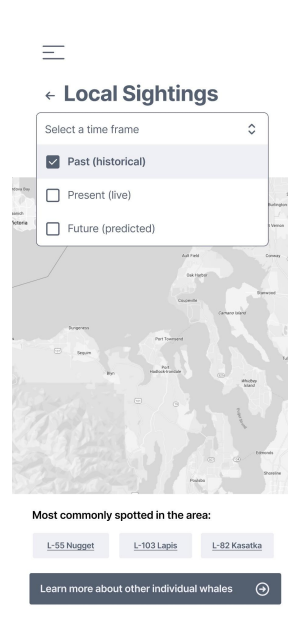
Change 5: Change the filter in Sightings page to allow for date selection. Add links between individual whales and sightings map, as “spotted”. Allow to change the area of the map and choose specific dates.

Implemented: The map is fully interactive and allows users to search any area. The filters on top are made to select any timeframe and whale name/species/pod.

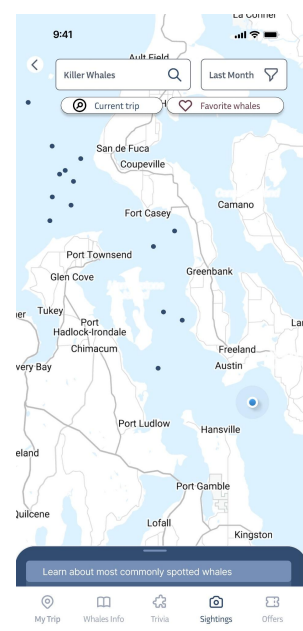
UI 1



UI 2



Final Prototype



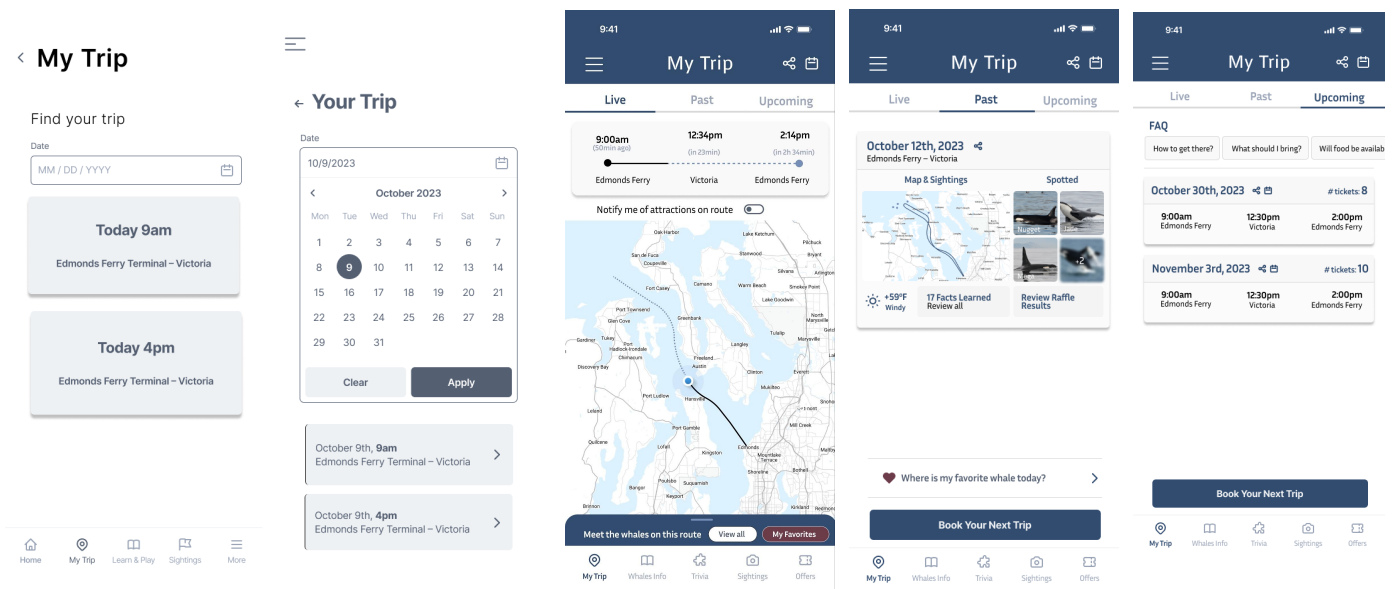
Change 6: Do not display the screen for choosing your trip, especially not every time they click on the “Trip Info”. Either have it already connected through other services, or ask them to identify the trip they’re on once and proceed with the app

Implemented: The Trip page includes three subcategories “Past”, “Live” and “Upcoming” to display the best option for the user automatically instead of them having to specify the trip they are not multiple times.

UI 1

UI 2

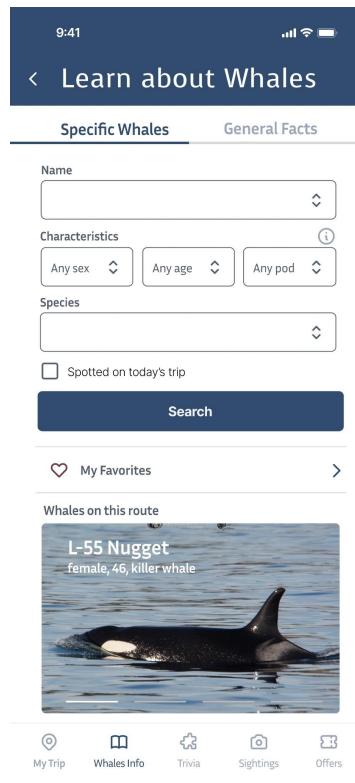
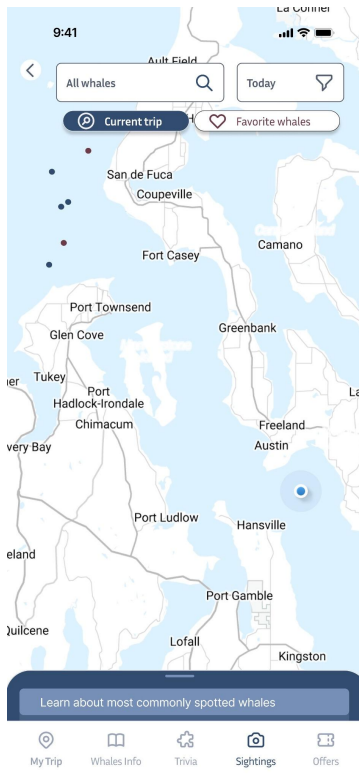
Final Prototype



Change 7: Create the separation between learning about all and any whale in general and the ones specifically spotted on this trip. Have links on My Trip to whales of this trip. Have a filter on learning experiences to learn about whales only on this trip.

Implemented: Both the Learn page and Sightings now have a filter for whales on this specific trip.

Final Prototype



Change 8: Explain a little more in the app that after the trivia you can also review all those facts you learned with your right and wrong answers displayed. Make the button more visible and actionable by having it stand alone, remove Home (redundant with the menu) and move Share to the top.

UI 1

< Trivia: Round 1

Round 1 Complete!
Correct Answers: 12/15

- Share
- Review Facts
- Home

Go to next round

- Home
- My Trip
- Learn & Play
- Sightings
- More

UI 2

< Trivia: Round 1

Round 1 Complete!
Correct Answers: 12/15

- Share
- Home

Go to next round

Choose new learning experience

Final Prototype

9:41 Round 1

Round 1 Complete!
Correct Answers: 12/15

- Review Facts

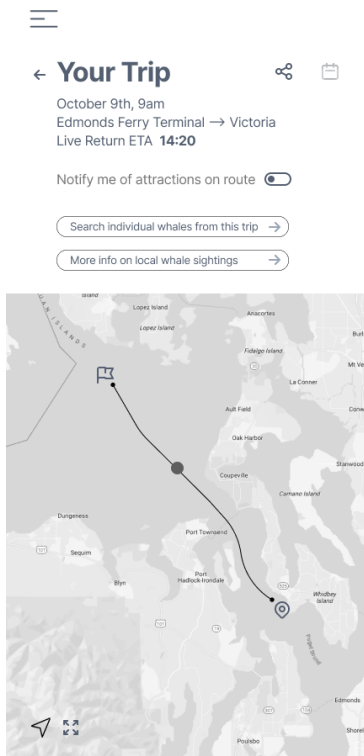
Back to Trivia Menu

- My Trip
- Whales Info
- Trivia
- Sightings
- Offers

Change 9: Make the attractions on the route notifications feature more prominent on the My Trip Info page at the top. “Advertise” the feature by explaining it on the top screen or sending a push notification/pop-up.

Implemented: The option for notifications is on the main landing screen right below the main information.

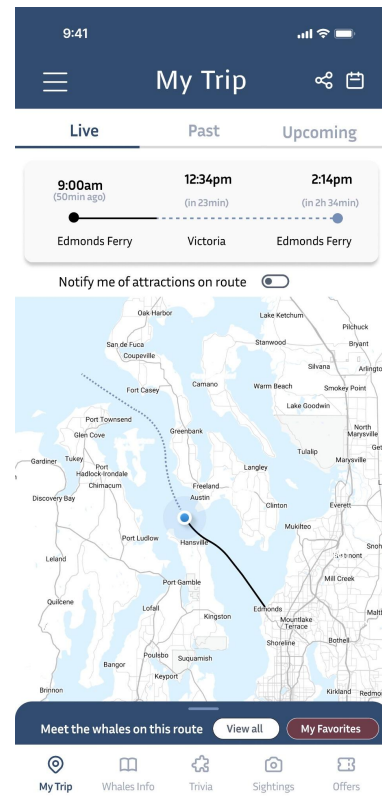
UI 1



UI 2



Final Prototype



1.2. Challenges and Solutions

1. Landing on “My Trip” page when the user is not on the trip

Even though the app is specifically focused on whale watching, my user testing after the final prototype reminded me that different personas might also want to access the app *before* or *after* the trip. Because the app contains a lot of educational information about whales, it can be used outside the trip context as well. In that regard it resembles the apps for museums more than the apps for services like taxi or food orders.

However, after the initial user testing, I have decided to remove the “Home” screen because the links on that page were mostly repetitive. Therefore, the landing page for the user became “My Trip”, since 90% of users will open the app for the first time on the trip. However, I still felt the need to accommodate other use cases without having to reintroduce the Home page, so I also downloaded multiple museum apps to see their user flows. I saw some apps deliberately asking “Are you in Museum right now?” and then sending the user to the respective flow. So in a similar fashion, I decided to implement “Live”, “Future”, “Past” tabs in the My Trip page. The idea is that the user will have the tickets already connected to the app in the first place, which will allow them to automatically land on the respective page.

2. Giving the users filtering options vs deciding “for them”

Throughout all pages of the app I had to make a decision on how customizable something should be. For example, in learning about whales page I give various filters to find a specific whale (name, species, sex, age, pod). I also provide the user with the opportunity to just click on the pictures if they don't *know* any of the characteristics.

When I was designing a “General Facts” tab on that page I also first wanted to give the user an option to select the topic (e.g. which marine animals to learn about), the view (e.g. do you display the pictures with facts, do you go through facts in a list/in a scroll/etc).

However, I realized that people don't always have strong preferences to look for something specific. So if you're prompting them to filter for things on every page, they might get decision fatigue. Which is why for general facts I decided to present the facts without any customization, but keep filters for those features where they're needed more: individual whale search and sightings.

2. Link to Figma prototype

<https://www.figma.com/proto/4dlYVf0gfCxVuqaWpkdkHk/Term-Project---Kate-Gorbunova?type=design&node-id=1757-1501&t=XSODN3KyCiiB6QeU-1&scaling=scale-down&page-id=1%3A9&starting-point-node-id=1757%3A1501&mode=design>

3. YouTube link to the short (up to 8 min) demo video of the prototype

<https://youtu.be/ly3nGvKRmN4>

References

Icons: Wireframe Starting Kit

Color palette: <https://mycolor.space/?hex=%23314C6F&sub=1>

Custom map: <https://snazzymaps.com/editor/customize/352070>

Photos of whales: <https://killerwhales.fandom.com/wiki/>

Music for the video: Cosmopolitan by Møme