

Whale Watch Week to start December 28 despite blustery weather

December 27, 2022



Whale Watch Week is set to open tomorrow, Dec. 28, despite a blustery Whale Watch eve that brought downed trees, power outages and high water to the Oregon Coast.

The high winds and water that buffeted the coast today are expected to subside by tonight or early Wednesday morning. Only one of the 17 Whale Watch sites, Cape Meares State Scenic Viewpoint, was closed. It is expected to reopen in time to participate.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department encourages visitors to check the weather forecast and TripCheck before traveling to the Oregon Coast. Be prepared for wind, rain, possible high water and potential power outages. Follow all posted signs, dress for the weather and follow these safety tips.

High wind and power outages also affected parks across the state. Ecola State Park closed due to high wind, and the day-use area at Sunset Bay closed due to flooding. Silver Falls State Park closed all trailheads due to hazardous trees. The park also lost power. Cape Lookout, Cottonwood Canyon and Stub Stewart lost power but remained open. Please check stateparks.oregon.gov/ and search by park before visiting.

More about Whale Watch Week:

For the first time since 2019, Oregon State Parks will host Whale Watch Week in person along the Oregon Coast Dec. 28 – Jan. 1.

Every year thousands of Gray whales migrate south through Oregon's waters at the end of December, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department invites visitors to the coast to see their journey.

Trained volunteers will be stationed at most of the 17 sites to help visitors spot whales, share information and answer questions from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. daily. The sites are some of the best places to watch for whales on the Oregon Coast.

"We really enjoy getting folks out to the coast for Whale Watch Week," said Park Ranger Peter McBride.

"It's something that Oregon State Parks has been doing for more than 40 years now, and we're really glad to be able to bring it back in person," he said.

A map of volunteer-staffed sites is available online on the official event webpage:

https://oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=thingstodo.dsp_whaleWatching

An estimated 17,000 Gray whales are expected to swim past Oregon's shores over the next several weeks as part of their annual migration south to the warm calving lagoons near Baja, Mexico. The end of December is the peak time for their migration; roughly 30 whales pass by per hour.

The Whale Watching Center in Depoe Bay will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

Visitors to the center can enjoy interactive whale exhibits and take in the panoramic ocean views. Binoculars are provided. Rangers from Oregon State Parks will also be on hand to answer questions about the whales.

All Whale Watch Week visitors are encouraged to dress for the weather, to bring binoculars and to follow beach safety guidelines such as remaining out of fenced areas, knowing the tide schedule and keeping an eye on the surf at all times. Go to <https://visittheoregoncoast.com/beach-safety/> for a list of safety tips.

Several campgrounds lost power Tuesday and did not have an estimate for when service would return. For more information about coast parks and campgrounds, visit oregonstateparks.org.