

Out of the Blue: Migrating whales along Oregon's Coast

March 12, 2022



The spring whale migration is underway this month along the Oregon Coast.

Some 25,000 gray whales will pass by the shores from late March to June on their way to cool Alaskan waters. Many will be accompanied by their calves, born during the winter in the warm lagoons off the coast of Baja, Mexico.

According to the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department's communication representative Chris Havel, people are fascinated by the large, wild animals for good reason.

"People are clever and good at inventing and building ways to survive and thrive, and wildlife like whales do the same thing through sheer awesome power," he said. "There's still some mystery about their lives, and seeing them in action is a thrill. Seeing them in real life is also a reminder of how we affect all marine life, and have a responsibility to eliminate pollution and be careful stewards of the planet's resources."

Havel said people are naturally attracted to the whales' beauty, mystery, and power.

"But we also appreciate being reminded of our place in these natural systems," and it makes us all feel part of the family," he said.

Designated whale watching sites offer the best chances of spotting whales because of their locations, usually slightly elevated above the ocean and in areas where whales are more easily seen.

Havel urges anyone seeking a good location to view to the migration, to do so cautiously.

Take care to stay well back of cliff edges. There are fences in some places, and respect them, but not everywhere. Be your own best safety coach and be careful. After rain and wind storms, cliff edges are unstable and can give way without warning.

Check the weather and bring the right clothing to stay warm and dry.

Trained volunteers will not be on site and the Spring Whale Week hosted by OPRD and volunteers is canceled for 2022.

Although the Whale Watch Center in Depoe Bay remains closed, OPRD is bringing back the popular whale watching livestream on the Oregon State Parks YouTube channel. The livestreams are scheduled daily from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 21-25.

The Whale Watch Center will reopen to visitors in late spring 2022.

Lean more about the whale migration at <https://stateparks.oregon.gov> and following the links.