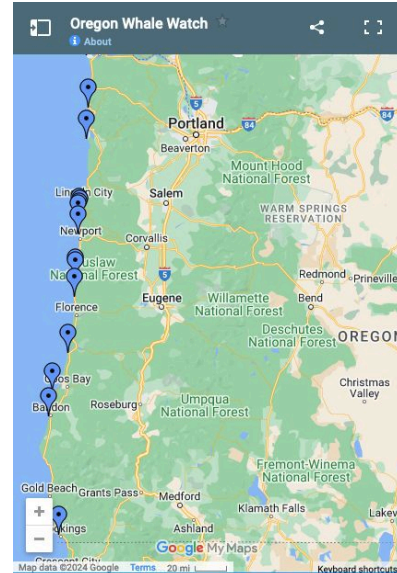


Photos - Whale Watching returns to the Oregon Coast Dec. 27-31

December 26, 2024





Residents from around state often spend the last few days of December visiting the Oregon Coast for a glimpse of the annual gray whale migration.

Oregon State Parks will host Winter Whale Watch Week on the Oregon Coast Friday, Dec. 27 through Tuesday, Dec. 31.

Trained Oregon State Park volunteers will be stationed at 15 sites along the Oregon Coast from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. to help visitors spot gray whales on their southward migration to the calving lagoons in Mexico.

The sites are some of the best places to watch for whales on the Oregon Coast. A map of volunteer-staffed sites is available online at the official event webpage: https://oregonstateparks.org/index.cfm?do=thingstodo.dsp_whaleWatching

“Now is a perfect time to see the whales as their population rebounds on the Oregon Coast,” OPRD Park Ranger Peter McBride said.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) announced an end to an Unusual Mortality Event impacting gray whales. Since then, the estimated population has increased by roughly 30% from 14,530 last year to 19,260 this year, according to NOAA. The numbers are on the rise overall, but the calf count is still low as the population continues to rebound.

“While there are more gray whales to see now on the Oregon Coast, the calves remain a rare and important sight,” NOAA Fisheries Public Affairs Officer Michael Milstein said.

Winter Whale Watch Week provides an opportunity to see not only the gray whales but other coastal wildlife including birds and other marine mammals with help from trained volunteers and rangers.

The Whale Watching Center in Depoe Bay will be open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Dec. 27-31. 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 always keeping

an eye on the surf. Go to <https://visittheoregoncoast.com/beach-safety/> for a list of safety tips.

For more information about coast parks and campgrounds, visit oregonstateparks.org.

Visitors are encouraged to share their photos and videos from Winter Whale Watch Week on social media using #OregonStateParks and #ORWhaleWatch24.