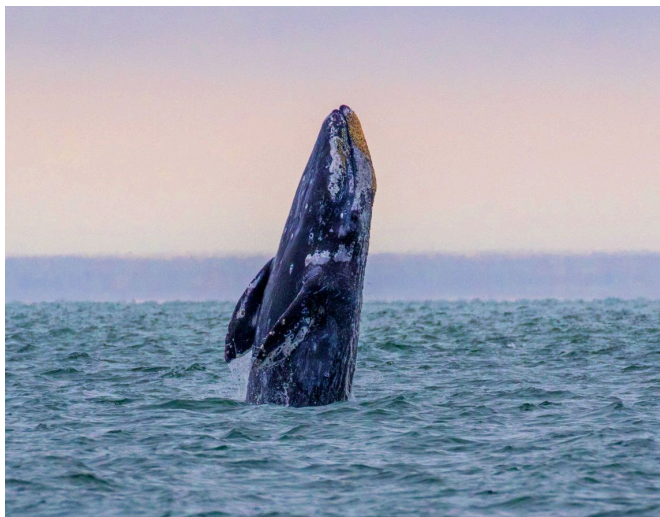


Oregon Coast to hold Whale Watch Week in person for the first time since 2019

December 21, 2022



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

Previous Whale Watching events were cancelled during the pandemic.

Every year thousands of Gray whales migrate south through Oregon's waters at the end of December, and Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) 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,” OPRD Park Ranger Peter McBride said. “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 19,000 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.

In a previous interview with Country Media, OPRD spokesman Chris Havel said people are fascinated by the whales 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 adds that 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.

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.

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