

# Life *in the* Valley

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Boats, including a crabbing boat, is docked at the Newport Bayfront. ANDRE' HAGESTEDT / BEACHCONNECTION.NET

## The coast's second summer

### Why fall is the best time to visit Newport

Right now, from September through mid October, is the best weather of the entire year on the Oregon Coast. Locals call it "Second Summer" (and sometimes wryly call it the "first summer"), with more stretches of sunny and windless days in the 60s and 70s than you'll find at any other time.

On top of this meteorological wonder, Newport has some distinctive features that literally make this the most inviting part of the whole year. The crowds and traffic have lessened, lodging prices begin to nosedive, the town hosts an unusually large array of outdoor restaurants and, best of all, the whale watching goes through the roof. Currently, gray whales and Humpback whales are the big show.

Also hot in the area: ocean crabbing and crabbing in the bay, where officials say the catches are of a good, meaty quality.

#### Whale numbers are awesome right now

According to Oregon State Parks and Recreation's Luke Parsons, the Whale Watch Center in Depoe Bay is reporting seeing five to 10 whales a day at that location alone. Those kinds of numbers are quite steady through much of Lincoln County, but the whale watch tours are encountering much more than that.

Newport hosts about 10 such whale watch businesses. Parsons said the tour boats are seeing more than one whale on each run.

Gray whales are aplenty, hanging out in this area to fatten up before their big migration in December. Yet Humpback whales also are in good numbers at times.

Parsons said to expect these kinds of numbers throughout September and probably early October as well. On top of the food sources, which keep them around, these calm, Second Summer conditions also cajole them and make it much easier to spot them.

#### Stellar weather

You need only to look at the latest forecasts to see plenty of 70-degree days in Newport. This second summer phenomenon usually goes well into the middle of October, and then conditions begin turning toward more blustery days. However, about 50 percent of the time, some nice runs of warm weather still appear in the final two weeks of October.

The science behind it is interesting, and it begins with the summer season having heated up the ocean by this



Mike Dill, 36, of Philomath, tosses a crabbing cage into the Yaquina Bay as his son Noah Dill, 5, watches in Newport on Aug. 19. Crabbing is even better in September and October. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

time. This exerts a stronger warming influence on the surrounding air. Then, the temperature differences between inland Oregon and the coast are not as pronounced, which allows more easterly and southerly winds to come in — thus warming things up even more.

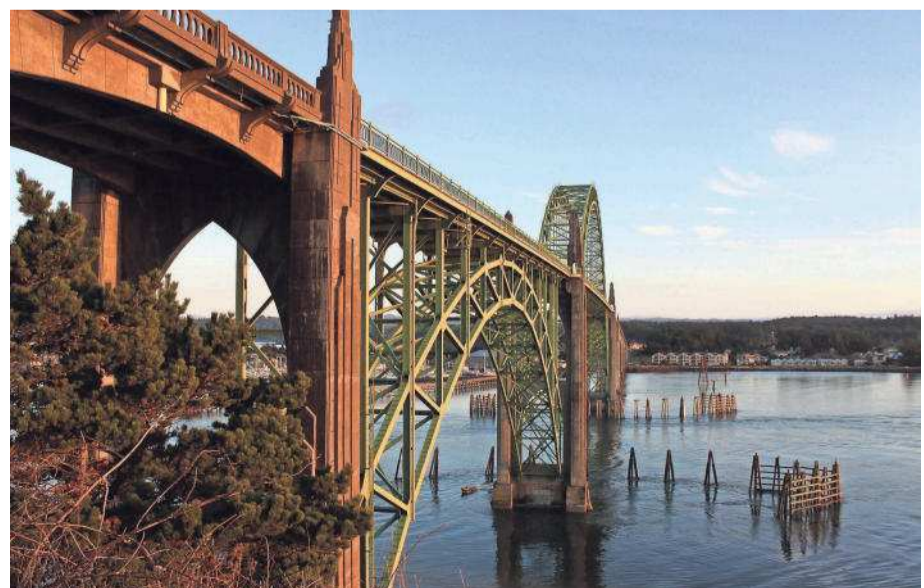
These conditions help produce less upwelling from the ocean, which brings the wind factor down even further. All of this combines to create the second summer phenomenon from September through October.

#### Crabbing around Newport

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife reports that right about now crabs have grown into their shells and are larger and meatier. ODFW said catches are increasing along the entire coast. Newport's Yaquina Bay has long been an excellent spot for crabbing off the docks, and it's home to several fishing charter boats.

#### Lodging prices and less crowds

On top of the whales, crabbing and great weather, this also is when Newport gets less crowded and hotel rates start dipping. Lodging prices in the middle of the week are especially enticing, but when October begins, those drop even further, according to Newport Chamber PR Manager Courtney



September and October on the coast have that kind of low-angle sunlight quality about them. It's even more pronounced at dusk. ANDRE' HAGESTEDT / BEACHCONNECTION.NET

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"Later in the season, hotels will run packages and promotions; often times all you have to do is ask if they have any specials," she said.

Meanwhile, summer crowds are mostly gone, but there's still summer weather.

#### Outdoor restaurants

Newport boasts what is likely the largest number of restaurants with outdoor seating along the entire coast. The Chamber said there are about 13. These are perfect for soaking in the warm coastal air of this season.