

Watchers alert as migrating whales pass Oregon Coast

Gray whales make their annual journey to summer feeding areas

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

Locals and spring break visitors had the opportunity to spot gray whales swimming north, part of the 6,000-mile round-trip migration the mammals make each year.

Ecola State Park was one of the 24 designated sites for the Spring Whale Watch Week hosted by Oregon State Parks and Recreation.

About 300 volunteers were stationed along the coast last week from March 19 to 26, helping state park visitors identify and learn about the expected 20,000 gray whales heading to summer feeding grounds in the Arctic's Bering and Chukchi seas.

Volunteers spotted 1,552 gray whales statewide, the state reported.

Ecola State Park whale-watching volunteers

had already spotted 14 whales on the morning of March 22.

"It's a good day to see them," said volunteer Carl Hosticka, from Tualatin, using binoculars to look for whale spouts. "The sun illuminates the spouts so they will be easier to see."

Gray whales will keep swimming past the coast until October or November, Oregon State Parks and Recreation ranger Luke Parsons said.

About 200 resident gray whales that stay along the Oregon Coast area will also show up later this spring.

"These whales are the first-wave migration, the males and the immature females," Parsons said. "The majority of the mothers and the calves start showing up in late April and May."

The mothers have to wait in Mexico with their babies for a month or two so the ba-



LYRA FONTAINE/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Volunteer Carl Hosticka helps visitors scan for whales.

bies can gain enough blubber to stay warm in the cold water, said Bill Hanshumaker, senior instructor at Oregon State University's Hatfield Marine Science Center in Newport. When it gets dark in the

Arctic around October, gray whales head back south. Hosticka also volunteered for the Winter Whale Watch Week in December, when gray whales can be seen traveling from the Arctic to lagoons in Baja Cal-

ifornia, Mexico, where they mate and give birth.

Volunteers, trained with the Whale Watching Spoken Here program, taught visitors about whale migration and feeding habits.

Gray whales, which prefer to eat organisms near the bottom of the ocean such as small crustaceans, do not eat much while migrating.

"There isn't much for them to eat along here," Hosticka said. "They bulk up and swim day and night."

Instead of teeth, gray whales have rows of bristly plates called baleens, which allow them to filter the food and water they scoop off the ocean floor with their mouths.

"When feeding, you'll see them do a blow about three of four successive times, then you'll see their tail," Hanshumaker said. "They scoop up the marine sediment and use the baleen to filter out the amphipods that are in that sediment."

How long does it take for gray whales to migrate to

the Arctic? It depends on the whale.

"Some of them are in a hurry and it will take them three or four months, and for some it takes even longer," Parsons said. "The mothers will travel quite a bit slower with their little babies. It's nonstop for several months just to get there. They're dedicated animals."

The length of an average female gray whale, 45 feet, was displayed in the grass using measuring tape. Females are usually larger than males, and their milk is rich, made up of more than 50 percent fat, Hosticka said.

Mother gray whales protect their babies from predators like killer whales and great white sharks by staying close to shore, Hanshumaker said.

On the journey north from Baja California, the babies continue to nurse and begin learning how to eat.

"The mothers are teaching them tricks of the trade," Parsons said.

Two rescued turtles headed for SeaWorld

By Lyra Fontaine
Cannon Beach Gazette

It's been a rough year for sea turtles, especially for the endangered olive ridleys. But for two turtles rescued after winter storms, a happy ending is in sight.

After treatment at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, Thunder and Lightning are headed to SeaWorld in San Diego, escorted by the U.S. Coast Guard and a rehabilitation team in March.

Thunder and Lightning were found comatose, hypothermic and malnourished following two large storms that hit the Oregon Coast in December.

Lightning was found in Pacific City and Thunder washed ashore in Gearhart.

"We had a series of strong winter storms and they can strand for a number of reasons," Lance Beck of the Oregon Coast Aquarium said Monday. "But typically when we see them, they're hypothermic."

As turtles become hypothermic, their metabolism slows and they go into a state where they're alive but would almost appear dead

if found, Beck said. "That's why it's critical that they get into care as soon as possible."

Beck said it's a slow process of raising the animal's temperature no more than 1 to 2 degrees per day.

Thunder — the Gearhart turtle — is one of the larger and stronger turtles to come through the Newport aquarium, he said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Coast Guard will fly Thunder and Lightning back to warmer waters as part of a training mission.

The trip was originally scheduled for earlier this month, but had to be delayed due to aircraft scheduling issues.

The mission to San Diego is being included in Coast Guard drills as an opportunity to train for other emergency situations that could involve not only animals in distress, but also passengers requiring critical care.

After Thunder and Lightning leave Newport, they will complete their rehabilitation at SeaWorld San Diego, preparing for release later this summer.

Lancetfish finding puts jogger on guard

Strange creature washed ashore at Arcadia Beach

By R.J. Marx
Cannon Beach Gazette

Imagine seeing this as you go for a jog: a jet-black, nearly 6-foot-long creature with a dorsal fin like barbed wire and teeth sharp as razors. With lifeless eyes, it looks like it emerged from Steven Spielberg's imagination.

That's what Melinda Sage Bruton found Wednesday, March 30, as she headed south on a run to Arcadia Beach.

At first the Cannon Beach woman thought it was a barracuda washed ashore.

But after sending a photo to the Seaside Aquarium, she learned it was a lancetfish, one of two or three reported each year, according to Keith Chandler, the aquarium's general manager.

"Those are just the ones reported," Chandler said. "They get devoured pretty fast by

gulls and other scavengers."

After examining Bruton's photos, Chandler said the fish had "quite a bit of damage to its jaw," indicating it could have been the victim of another lancetfish or predator.

"Look at those teeth — they're pointed backwards," Chandler said. "Once they get hold of something with those, it's a one-way ticket."

Melissa Keyser, program coordinator of the Haystack Rock Awareness Program, determined the discovery was a longnose lancetfish, a species that submerges as far down as 6,000 feet below the surface of the sea but may occasionally surface.

"They can reach up to 6 feet in length and are very common off of the Oregon Coast," Keyser said. "While they are somewhat of a rare find on Oregon beaches, there are usually a few reported sightings each year."

Bruton is an astute observer of sea life.

Last year she photographed what she described as a "sort of jelly creature," later identified as a salp, washing up on the shore. The salp looks like a jellyfish, but is a



MELINDA SAGE BRUTON

A lancetfish washed to the shore at Arcadia Beach.

type of tunicate — a marine invertebrate — which, Bruton said, "is surprisingly closer in relation to humans than to jellyfish."

On the same day Bruton found the salp, a small white shark also washed up.

Bruton draws lessons from her sightings. "The magnif-

icence and majestic power the ocean brings to the local communities living along the coastline welcome a reminder to the travelers visiting here of our responsibility to maintain its home to the many marvelous and abundant creatures; to respect; to look after and protect," she said in an email.

the Local Grill & Scoop

Experience Family Dining in a Relaxed & Friendly Environment

Serving Seafood, Pizza, Sandwiches, Espressos, Beer, Wine, Ice Cream and our Homemade Desserts

Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

"TO-GO" Orders Welcome

156 N. Hemlock • Cannon Beach
503.436.9551

Owned and Operated by the Cleary Family

PELICAN BREWING COMPANY

Pelican Brewing Company is hiring & training staff for the new Pelican in Cannon Beach and we want YOU on our TEAM!

NOW HIRING

Line Cooks, Prep Cooks, Dishwashers, Managers, Servers, Bartenders, Hosts, Bussers – All positions!

Apply in person at:
1371 SW Hemlock, Cannon Beach

or send your resume to:
Employment@Pelicanbrewing.com

www.yourlittlebeachtown.com/employment

Questions? Call Stephanie 503-965-7779 ext. 307

THE WINE SHACK
EST. 1977
CANNON BEACH

CANNON BEACH'S LARGEST SELECTION OF OREGON AND WASHINGTON WINE!

UPCOMING TASTINGS

Apr 9 • Puffin Rose' Release
Apr 16 • Spring Fling Wines
Apr 23 • Wine Shack Favorites
Apr 30 • Sunny Day Wines!
May 7 • Best of the Northwest
May 14 • Puffin Wines!

"Best Wine Shop"
- 2016 Reader's Choice Award

Shack Hours
Sun-Thurs • 11am to 5pm
Fri-Sat • 11am to 6pm

Tasting Room Hours
Saturdays • 1 to 5pm

124 N. HEMLOCK, CANNON BEACH
503.436.1100 - WWW.BEACHWINE.COM

Making Sweet Memories for Over 50 Years

Freshest Homemade:
Saltwater Taffy
Chocolates
Caramel Corn
Caramel Apples
& MORE!!
Wedding Treats & Gift Baskets Available!

TWO LOCATIONS
Downtown Cannon Beach & Seaside Outlet Mall

THE ONLY TAFFY MADE IN CANNON BEACH!

Making Sweet Memories Since 1969

Bruce's Candy Kitchen

WE CAN SHIP CANDY DIRECTLY TO YOU!

www.brucescandy.com • 503-436-2641 • 503-738-7828

Find us on Facebook

\$519,000

THE PEARL OF NEDONNA BEACH

Breathtakingly beautiful Craftsman home graces the edge of quiet & attractive neighborhood at North end of Rockaway's 7.5 mile long sandy beach. Backs to wooded greenspace. The easy care yard provides endless nature scenes less all the yardwork! Inside, the grand foyer hints at the style and quality prevailing throughout. Massive beams, distinctive designer fixtures, rich woodwork, slab granite counters, granite window sills. Ground floor living makes life a breeze. 3 bdrms, 2.5 baths, family room, 2 eating areas, 3212 sq ft, finished in 2013. Contact broker today for an appointment to view this elegant home.

"Pam's Homes by the Water"

For a personal tour
Contact Pam Today 503-906-4903
www.PamZielinski.com (Netarts Direct)

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY HomeServices
Northwest Real Estate