

Mendocino Coast Whale Fests!

Each and every March, coastal Mendocino County celebrates the migration of gray whales. Fun for locals and visitors alike, you'll find wine walks, foot races, beer tastings, interactive science demonstrations, even a margarita competition – all in celebration of the most majestic of marine mammals. Check out the numerous events and activities – there are fun happenings for everyone in the family!

Mendocino Whale Festival

Saturday, March 1 – Chowder Tasting Event

Back by popular demand...it's the Chowder Tasting event at Crown Hall. Savor and sample Chowders from several local restaurants! Event is from 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (or until chowder runs out).

Saturday, March 1 – Wine Walk

Meander through the village of Mendocino and duck into shops that are hosting wineries. Hop onboard the MTA Trolley for a scenic ride to each participating wine-tasting venue. Tickets available for purchase. 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM.

Sunday, March 2 – Gray Whale Information Station

Learn more about gray whales, how to spot them, why we celebrate and learn about more fun Whale Festival activities led by California State Park Interpreters throughout the month of March. All ages welcome; binoculars provided. Ford House Visitor Center. 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

Sunday, March 2 – Guided Whale Walks

Scout for spouts on this guided walk through the Mendocino Headlands! California State Park Interpreters will guide visitors through the headlands to watch for the magnificent migrating Eastern Pacific Gray Whale. Join us to learn the incredible story of this fascinating population of cetaceans! Free, dog-friendly event; not suitable for strollers as trail is bumpy. Binoculars provided. Ford House Visitor Center. 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM

Little River Whale Festival

Friday, March 7 – Van Damme Beach Campfire Program

Join California State Park Interpreters for an evening of songs, stories, trivia, and s'mores celebrating the Whale Festival. Cozy up around the campfire, sip some cocoa, and watch the sunset on the beach in Van Damme State Park while learning why we celebrate the charismatic cetacean of the season- the Eastern Pacific Gray Whale! Free event. 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM.

Saturday, March 8 – Spring Ranch Whale Walk

Join a California State Park Interpreter to walk the historic Van Damme Spring Ranch property while spotting gray whales. Learn why whales migrate and why we celebrate the Whale Festival. Participants can park and meet in the Highway 1 pull-out, north of Spring Ranch barns and across from Gordon Lane in Mendocino. This is a bumpy trail, so strollers are not recommended. This is a free event and binoculars are provided. Donations for MendoParks are graciously accepted. 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM and 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM.

Saturday, March 8 – Margarita Madness

Held in beautiful Little River, CA at the stunning Little River Inn, as part of the Little River Whale Fest, is the Margarita Madness Competition! Join the fun and watch the battle as professional and amateur bartenders go head-to-head for glory and prizes. Judge up to six margaritas and vote for your favorite. Tickets are \$75 for this fundraiser for MendoParks, helping to support ten coastal state parks from Westport to Manchester. 12:00 PM – 3:30 PM.

Fort Bragg Whale Festival

Friday, March 14 – Welcome Ceremony for the Whales

Community members, whale scientists, ocean enthusiasts will unite to greet and thank the whales for being our neighbors and recommit to being good neighbors to the whales and stewards of the ocean. Expect musical offerings, a meaningful sunset ceremony, and words of gratitude from a variety of community members to kick off the whale season in our region.

Crow's Nest Fort Bragg Headlands, FREE, 6:00 – 8:00 PM.

Saturday, March 15 – 37th Annual Whale Run & Fun Walk

Join other race enthusiasts for a run and fun walk along the coastal trail in Fort Bragg. This popular event features a Kiddie Race, 10K Run, 5K Run and 5K Fun Walk. It's one of the most beautiful places for a race! Sign up deadline is March 9th. Soroptimist International of Fort Bragg and Noyo Sunrise is proud to sponsor and host this annual event. 8:30 AM – 12:00 PM.

Saturday, March 15 – Chowder Tasting Competition

Start your day with a taste of chowder from many local restaurants and then vote for your favorite chowder as this event marks a return during Whale Fest Weekend. Get tickets and chowder at the City Hall gymnasium on Laurel & Franklin Streets in downtown Fort Bragg. 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (or until chowder runs out).

Saturday, March 15 – Whale Tale Trail

Follow MacKerricher State Park's "Whale Tale Trail" to scout for spouts! All are welcome to come and visit our 3 "Cetacean Stations" to learn all about the Eastern Pacific Gray Whale and why we celebrate the Whale Festival! Trails are ADA accessible. Donations to MendoParks are gratefully accepted. Laguna Point in MacKerricher State Park. Walks are at 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

Saturday, March 15 – Downtown Wine Walk

Enjoy beautiful wines and hors d'oeuvres from over a dozen wineries from Mendocino County while visiting local shops and the quaint downtown Fort Bragg. Whale watch from miles of beaches including along the coastal trail in Fort Bragg. Tickets available for purchase. 12:00 PM – 3:00 PM.

Saturday, March 15 – Fort Bragg Rotary Beer Fest

It's a party at the annual Rotary Beer Fest – featuring live music and BBQ for purchase at Eagles Hall. Sample local and regional craft beers, meet the brewmasters and have a heck of a good time! Taste the ales and watch the whales! Tickets available for purchase. Must be over 21; ID required. No kids, no pets. Free bus rides. 12:00 PM – 4:00 PM.

Saturday & Sunday, March 15 & 16 – Town Hall Craft Fair

The Soroptimists are hosting a whale of a sale at Town Hall. Treat yourself to a unique shopping experience at two craft fairs — one inside and one outside. You'll find a wide variety of amazing, handcrafted items, from quilts and toys to ironworks, pottery, knits and crochet, jewelry, paintings, tools, and puzzles. You won't find a better place to get a one-of-a-kind gift for a fan of Fort Bragg. 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

Saturday, March 15 – Mendocino Whale War Whale Activist and Panel & Discussion

A panel and temporary exhibition at the Kelley House featuring some of the people who were instrumental in the Mendocino Whale War of 1976. During the Q&A portion of the panel, Noyo staff will be available to help answer questions about the state of whaling today, how whale populations have rebounded off the US West Coast after marine mammal protection act came into law in 1972 and how whale recovery has helped our fisheries to recover. Also, a great opportunity to snag your vintage design Save the Whales t-shirt! This co-hosted event by Noyo Center and Kelley House Museum is \$7 for members and \$10 for non-members. Kelley House Museum 4:00 – 5:30 PM.

Saturday, March 15 – MacKerricher Whale Festival Campfire Program

Join California State Park Interpreters for an evening of songs, stories, trivia, and s'mores around the campfire in MacKerricher State Park's Campfire Center. Visitors will learn why we celebrate this charismatic cetacean while sipping hot cocoa as the sun sets. Free event. Located MacKerricher Campfire Center, across from park entrance kiosk and visitor center. Parking in the group camp. 6:00 PM – 7:00 PM.

Saturday – Sunday, March 15 & 16 – Symphony of the Redwoods Spring Concert

The theme of water unifies favorite classics with orchestral virtuosic masterpieces and a rhythmic American premiere. Mexican – Japanese flautist Rayó Furuta joins SoR in the American Premiere of Alexis Aranda's "Acqua."

which explores the water signs of the zodiac with soaring melodies and driving Latin rhythms. Both Shows at Cotton Auditorium. Saturday at 7:30 PM; Sunday at 2:00 PM.

Sunday, March 16 – Mendonoma Whale & Seal Study

Mendonoma Whale & Seal Study's Scott and Tree Mercer will be on hand at the Crow's Nest to do a daily count of migrating gray whales. They'll help visitors spot whales and answer questions about these incredible creatures. While there, enjoy the marine science exhibits at the Crow's Nest. Crow's Nest Interpretive Center – Noyo Headlands South Trail. 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Sunday, March 16 – MacKerricher Whale Skeleton Painting

Throw on that old painting shirt and apply another coat of paint to the whale skeleton in MacKerricher State Park! Come to paint, sip cocoa, and learn the fascinating history of MacKerricher's fully articulated gray whale skeleton. Help ensure that these amazing bones are preserved for years to come. Free event adjacent to the park kiosk and visitor center. 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

March 16 & 22 – Guided Whale Walks

Join Noyo Center docents for this one-hour walk along the Coastal Trail and learn about the gray whale migration and local marine life. South Coastal Trail. Start at the parking lot of the South Coastal Trail on the Noyo Headlands and end at the Crow's Nest Interpretive Center. Noyo Headlands South Trail. Free (suggested \$10 donation) 12:00 PM – 1:00 PM.

Monthlong – Crow's Nest Interpretive Center

Visit our headlands facility to view special marine mammal specimens, in addition to the tidepool aquarium, marine mammal exhibits, and a deck from which to watch for passing whales. Crow's Nest Interpretive Center, Noyo Headlands South Trail. Free. Hours are 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM; extended hours March 15 & 16; 22 & 23 from 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

Monthlong – Mendocino Whale Wars Exhibit

It has been 50 years since the Mendocino Whale War. In 1975, when Greenpeace captured footage of a Russian vessel slaughtering whales off the coast of Cape Mendocino, the event became the catalyst for a small group of citizens. This resulted in a dramatic anti-whaling campaign off the coast. Subsequently, the first Whale Festival was held in 1976 to educate the public about the plight of the endangered whales. Visit Kelley House Museum during March for their curated Whale War exhibit and catch the film, "*The Boy Who Talks to Whales*" on March 2nd, from 1:00 – 3:00 PM.

For more information please visit: WWW.VISITMENDOCINO.COM/EVENTS